

MESA K-8 School
An Expeditionary Learning School in the Two Creeks Neighborhood

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A. Executive Summary

MESA's "why" is rooted in a simple truth: every kid deserves access to opportunities that help them grow into confident community leaders, regardless of their background or zip code. In a neighborhood that often feels forgotten by those who live there, MESA exists to create something different: A school built by, for, and of the community it serves.

The name itself tells the story. At MESA, every scholar has a seat at the table. They're never just students – they're stakeholders. This belief drives everything from who the school serves to how classrooms operate. When kids see themselves reflected in their teachers, their curriculum, and their community, they don't just show up – they lead. MESA creates a table where all scholars have access to challenging, joyful learning experiences.

Mission: *MESA provides an excellent educational experience through Expeditionary Learning and enrichment for all scholars.*

Vision: *MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders and lead tables where real world problems are solved*.

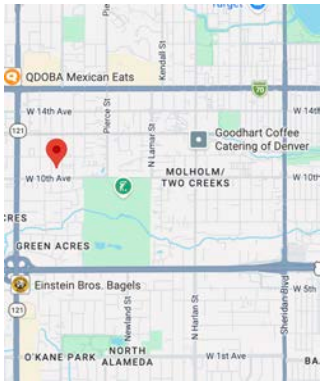
MESA will be the first K-8 Expeditionary Learning Jeffco school. This will be achieved through the cultivation of a safe, supportive, and service-oriented academic environment for Two Creeks neighborhood students in Kindergarten through 8th grade and by establishing a school community to which families are committed year after year. MESA will join other Jeffco Schools in achieving a performance rating on the State Performance Framework. Detailed objectives and targets for these goals and more are described below in Section C.

The academic intention of MESA is to provide the first Expeditionary Learning K-8 school in Jeffco. This Expeditionary Learning model will serve the needs of Jeffco students because of its alignment with the District's Jeffco Thrives Strategic plan. Priority 1, Goal 2 states: *All Jeffco students have extraordinary student experiences…*[1] Because MESA provides an "enrichment for all" approach for students, our scholars will have daily opportunities to be challenged and improve their skills. Additionally, MESA plans to offer four experiential learning opportunities for each cohort of scholars each year (i.e. expert visit, field trip) which supports the extraordinary experiences goal of Priority 1. To enhance the four field trips a year, scholars will collaborate on problem-based learning projects. At MESA, problem-based learning is when scholars engage in a student-centered instructional model in which they collaborate in small groups to investigate and solve real-world problems. An example would be second graders creating a plant and flower resource book describing the plant's benefits to pollinators as part of their pollinators' habitats module.

MESA also connects to and supports the Jeffco Generations Vision by customizing the student learning experience with meaningful, joyful and rigorous learning experiences. The chosen curricula for the school also include connections to the Generation Skills of: Civic and

[1] *Jeffco thrives 2025 Strategic Plan - Jeffco Public Schools*. Jeffco Jefferson County School District. (n.d.). https://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/about/jeffco-thrives

Global Engagement, Communication, Critical and Creative Thinking, and Collaboration and Leading by Influence.[2] The target population of MESA is a diverse student body typical of a student in the Two Creeks neighborhood area. The intention of the school is to create more access to enrichment programming for all students including multilingual learners (MLLs). Oftentimes, because of language development trajectories, cultural differences, or other factors, MLLs go underidentified in opportunities for gifted and talented approaches.



← 📍 Proposed area for MESA K-8
1100 Upham St, Lakewood, CO 80214

The proposed location is on the eastern boundary of the Jeffco School District with the intended boundaries of: North: Colfax Ave, East: Sheridan (Denver boundary), South: W 1st Avenue West: Wadsworth. This location was chosen because there is a higher than district average of students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) and higher representation of MLL students. The average FRL in this area is 77.7% of students and MLL is 37%. In addition, the surrounding schools in this area have a lower than district average of students identified as Gifted and Talented. Research shows that students who are MLLs and/or from low socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to experience exclusionary practices in schools.[3] MESA exists to serve all students and is created with emphasis to serve in the Two Creeks area. Our founding principal and founder both met and exceeded enrollment goals at the respective west Denver elementary schools. This means that there is a greater likelihood to increase enrollment from Denver's boundary to Jeffco's boundary through MESA.

There is a large and steady population of students in this area. 15,000 K-8 students live within ten minutes of MESA, and that number is projected to be steady through 2030. Additionally, based on in-depth demographic reports, schools within that ten minute radius of MESA (Jeffco and Denver) show minimal diversity in program model and small capture rates for students living in a school boundary attending their neighborhood school. During recruitment, it was evident that offering a new Expeditionary Learning School as an additional choice resonates strongly with families across a diverse student population. Data from this section can be found in the "Executive Summary" portion of the appendix.

Evidence of support comes from stakeholders across the community including residents, potential MESA families, businesses, and leaders in education. This is shown by 35 support letters and 143 signatures of support. Furthermore, thirty-five students (in the opening grades age range) intend to enroll based on parent Letters of Intent.

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[2] *Imagine learning el education*. Imagine Learning. (2024, September 20). https://www.imaginelearning.com/products/ela/el-education/
[3] *Should "gifted and talented" programs be open to all students? | all4ed*. All 4 Ed. (n.d.). https://all4ed.org/blog/should-gifted-and-talented-programs-be-open-to-all-students/

In accordance with state and district expectations, MESA students will also participate in Kindergarten Early Assessments, READ Act progress monitoring with DIBELS, CMAS state assessments, and ACCESS testing. Kindergarten through 8th grade students will be evaluated in math and literacy using the Measures of Academic Progress, or MAP test three to four times per year. This mirrors many District schools. MAP aligns with performance against Common Core State Standards and percentile rank amongst similar aged peers. MAP is evidence based and gives teachers and families solutions to better each individual student's achievement.[4]

MESA scholars will take end of unit assessments in all core content areas provided by Expeditionary Learning and Illustrative Math. On a more frequent basis, students will complete exit tickets, written responses, and culminating projects to show their mastery of skills and standards. This data will be used for teachers and leaders to monitor student progress at weekly data team meetings to inform instruction - whether acceleration, enrichment, or remediation and reteach are needed.

MESA's approach to student discipline is grounded in the belief that strong relationships, proactive structures, and clear expectations create the conditions for both safety and belonging. To cultivate a positive school culture, MESA embeds two daily 20-minute Crew meetings to intentionally build relationships, strengthen students' social and interpersonal skills, and foster a consistent sense of connection to peers and adults. The school implements Conscious Discipline School Family practices and professional development to equip staff and students with shared language and strategies for self-regulation, conflict resolution, and decision-making. MESA prioritizes preparedness and prevention through a full-time School Resource Officer and ongoing collaboration with school safety consultants and local law enforcement to ensure comprehensive safety planning. More details can be found in Appendix "Section T: Additional Information."

Aligned with Jeffco Public Schools' commitment to student safety and equity, MESA will implement the District's Family Handbook, Discipline Matrix, and Board policies to ensure consistency with federal civil rights law, special education law, and state statutes. Discipline practices emphasize accountability and restorative approaches, preserve relationships, and keep students engaged in learning whenever possible. Suspension and expulsion decisions will follow district guidelines and include collaborative planning with families and district partners to identify individualized supports ensuring each outcome prioritizes the student's long-term success.

MESA will be governed by a nonprofit board of directors responsible for ensuring the school remains mission focused, is in legal compliance, is fiscally healthy, and in alignment with meeting the academic goals. The board will operate in full accordance with the Colorado Charter Schools Act and the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act. The MESA governing board will consist of five voting members (and grow to seven as the school grows in grades and students served). This provides flexibility for the board to include a range of talents and

[4] NWEA: Advancing growth for all students. (2024). NWEA. https://www.nwea.org/about/

perspectives while remaining agile and effective in its decision-making. An odd number of board members to allow for a majority vote. Founding board members will serve for three-to-five years to allow for stability in the early years. After that, board members' terms will be staggered and last two years with two consecutive terms as the maximum number allowed.

MESA's board will reflect the school's core beliefs of collaboration, inclusion, community engagement, and experiential learning. Areas of expertise and representation prioritized in board recruitment will include: education background, finance and non-profit accounting, law and governance, facilities management and operations, inclusion, parent and community voice. To ensure family engagement, at least one board seat will be reserved for a parent or guardian of a MESA scholar. The board will also pursue members that reflect the demographics of the broader community. MESA's board will follow an intentional transparent process for recruiting and replacing members as explained in section H: Governance. MESA's governing board will maintain full transparency and legal compliance, including public notice of meetings and public posting of board rosters and term information, in accordance with Colorado's Open Meetings Law.

MESA will fund itself with identifiable and verifiable funding sources in order to operate fully and be financially viable. If approved by the Board of Education, MESA will budget off the per pupil rate set forth by the District. This sample budget is based off of the 2025-26 Jeffco Public Schools approved budget.[5] That base number is $11,038 per pupil (PPR). The budget was conservatively built with this PPR unchanging for the first five years. This MESA budget also assumes $0 of Federal funds, as those funds have been inconsistent and future plans are unclear at a national level. MESA is a finalist for up to two million dollars of start-up grant funding from various organizations, so the grants line reflects the anticipated award amount.

MESA First Five Years Draft Budget

Enrollment Revenue Overview (1 grade per year growth)					
	Year 1 (2027-28)	**Year 2 (2028-29)**	**Year 3 (2029-30)**	**Year 4 (2030-31)**	**Year 5 (2031-32)**
Grades Served	**K**	**K-2**	**K-3**	**K-4**	**K-5**
Kindergarten Class Size	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**
Kindergarten Classes	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*
1st Grade Class Size	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**
1st Grade Classes	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*
2nd Grade Class Size		**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**
2nd Grade Classes		*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*
3rd Grade Class Size			**24**	**24**	**24**

[5] Financial Transparency - Jeffco Public Schools. (2025). Jeffcopublicschools.org. https://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/services/financial-services/financial-transparency

3rd Grade Classes			*2*	*2*	*2*
4th Grade Class Size				**24**	**24**
4th Grade Classes				*2*	*2*
5th Grade Class Size					**24**
5th Grade Classes					*2*
6th Grade Class Size					
6th Grade Classes					
7th Grade Class Size					
7th Grade Classes					
8th Grade Class Size					
8th Grade Classes					
Total Enrollment	**96**	**144**	**192**	**240**	**288**
Average Class Size	24	24	24	24	24
Annual Growth		48	48	48	48
General Assumptions					
Jeffco Per Pupil Revenue	$11,038	$11,038	$11,038	$11,038	$11,038
MLO	$1,893	$1,893	$1,893	$1,893	$1,893
PPR + MLO	$12,931	$12,931	$12,931	$12,931	$12,931
Enrollment only revenue	$1,241,375	$1,862,063	$2,482,750	$3,103,438	$3,724,125
Other Revenues					
State Special Education Funds Per Pupil (ECEA) (~15% of students at $1750 pp)	$25,200	$37,800	$50,400	$63,000	$75,600
State Revenue Per Pupil (State Facilities Assistance, Capital Construction: ~$396 pp)	$38,016	$57,024	$76,032	$95,040	$114,048
Colorado READ Act	$51,552	$77,328	$103,104	$128,880	$154,656
Federal Revenue	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Local Revenue					
Grants (CSF, CSP, CSGF Seed, New Schools)	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000		
Donations					
Summary of Revenues					
MLO & PPR Revenues	$1,241,375	$1,862,063	$2,482,750	$3,103,438	$3,724,125
Non-PPR/MLO Revenues	$364,768	$422,152	$479,536	$286,920	$344,304
Total Revenue	**$1,606,143**	**$2,284,215**	**$2,962,286**	**$3,390,358**	**$4,068,429**

Per the Jeffco Board of Education resolution signed on May 3, 2018, the Mill Levy Override (MLO) sharing plan between the District and charters is that charters maintain 95% of MLOs and the District maintains 5%.

MESA will seek waivers in accordance with alignment to our core values, goals, and educational programming model. The instructional model at MESA requires flexibility in order to implement Expeditionary Learning with fidelity. MESA understands that waivers provide operational flexibility, not exemption from accountability. The school will be held accountable under the same state and district performance frameworks applicable to all public schools.

MESA is intentionally designed to serve the full continuum of learners—including students with disabilities, multilingual learners (MLLs), advanced learners, and students experiencing educational or economic disadvantage—through an inclusive, enrichment-for-all model that combines strong Tier 1 instruction with targeted, data-driven supports. All students benefit from strong academics, integrated social-emotional learning through Conscious Discipline, and proactive family supports, while those requiring additional assistance receive timely interventions in literacy, math, and behavior. Leadership teams monitor progress through weekly data meetings and coaching cycles to ensure responsiveness and accountability. To reduce barriers to enrollment, access, and retention, MESA plans for before- and after-school care, summer programming, extended learning time, and transportation options.

Students with IEPs are served in the least restrictive environment with individualized services delivered through push-in support, co-teaching, and small-group instruction, overseen by a SPED Lead to ensure compliance, progress monitoring, and strong family collaboration. Scholars with 504 plans receive consistent accommodations across settings through clearly defined systems and coordinator oversight. MLLs receive integrated, sheltered instruction aligned to WIDA standards. Gifted and Talented students engage in curriculum compacting, cluster grouping, and embedded extensions within EL Education and Illustrative Math, supported by identification practices and annually reviewed Advanced Learning Plans. In accordance with McKinney-Vento, students experiencing homelessness receive comprehensive wraparound support. Together, these structures ensure that every scholar has access, personalized pathways, and the conditions needed to thrive at MESA.

MESA is not in contract nor in an expected contract with an outside company or management entity. MESA aims to offer a different model as an additional excellent Jeffco choice for students and families.

MESA has been designed from exemplary research, places, and practices from across the country. The following entities and partners have been contributors to the plan of MESA's development.

Name of Entity	Contribution of Practices, Pedagogy or Partnership	Alignment to Mission and Vision
Imagine Learning (EL Education aka Dragonfly, Illustrative Math)[6]	Core curriculum	EL and IM are both problem based and real life examples that promote higher level thinking skills many opportunities to communicate and collaborate with standards driven goals

[6] Core Curriculum. (n.d.). Imagine Learning. https://www.imaginelearning.com/solutions/core-curriculum/

Teach Like a Champion by Doug Lemov [7]	Instructional strategies and Coaching practices	Research based practices that have been proven to increase student engagement, maximize learning time, quality of feedback for students, and anchor in accountability to high expectations for students and adults
Conscious Discipline by Dr. Becky Bailey [8]	School culture systems and social emotional learning based on brain development	Develops a sense of accountability to words and actions and how they impact others. The curriculum also offers best practices in creating a sense of school family and conflict resolution.
Relay Graduate School of Education [9]	Research and results based practices and protocols for instructional and operational systems (i.e. weekly data meetings, lesson planning, observation feedback, coaching, etc)	These practices bring accountability to life through intentional adult actions in the system to sustain those throughout all we do
Liberatory Design Mindsets from the National Equity Project[10]	Leadership mindset check-ins with an equity focus when planning systems and iterating change ideas	As MESA exists to serve students from all backgrounds, equity checks needs to be in place
Mountain Middle School Durango, CO	Exhibitions of learning[11]	This connects to the schoolwide enrichment model and increases strong language development skills for all
Teach Like a Champion: Guide to the Science of Reading by Doug Lemov et. al.	Instructional strategies aligned with the Science of Reading	These research based practices were used to prove how the educational model and programming at MESA will support the Science of Reading
Highline Academy Northeast Denver, CO[12]	Instructional strategies and coaching aligned with Teach Like a Champion and RELAY GSE, similar demographics and high achievement	Highline Academy Northeast has similar demographics to MESA's and has teaching and learning strategies and systems which align with MESA's mission and vision. The school has achieved and sustained a performance rating on the State Performance Framework.
Central Queens Academy (CQA) Queens, NY[13]	Instructional strategies and coaching aligned with Teach Like a Champion and RELAY GSE, similar demographics and high achievement, not only a strong school but a strong operational	CQA also believes in serving students from all backgrounds and is a model of high success of a K-8 in a high at-risk population. CQA has shown higher growth than DOE NYC schools with

[7] Lemov, D. (2021). Teach like a champion 3.0: 63 techniques that put students on the path to college. (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
[8] Rebecca Anne Bailey. (2001). Conscious discipline : 7 basic skills for brain smart classroom management. Conscious Discipline.
[9] About Relay & History | Relay / GSE. (2025). Relay.edu. https://www.relay.edu/about-relay-our-history
[10] Liberatory Design — National Equity Project. (2021). National Equity Project. National Equity Project. https://www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/liberatory-design
[11] Engaging in Civil Discourse: A 7th Grade Humanities Exhibition at Mountain Middle School. (2025). KSUT Public Radio. https://www.ksut.org/community-calendar/event/engaging-in-civil-discourse-a-7th-grade-humanities-exhibition-at-mountain-middle-school-21-02-2025-07-58-27
[12] Prospective Families - Highline Academy Charter Schools. (2020). Highlineacademy.org. https://www.highlineacademy.org/prospective-families
[13] Charter, A. (2024). Central Queens Academy Charter Schools. Central Queens Academy Charter Schools. https://www.centralqueensacademy.org/

	organization	MLLs and is a hub of the community.
The Council for Great City Schools[14]	Research and best practices for MTSS	The Council for Great City Schools is composed of educators who serve in similar sized areas with similar student populations as MESA. This aligns to making sure we meet the needs of the diverse learners of the area.
Renzulli Center for Creativity at the University of Connecticut[15]	Instructional strategies and professional development aligned with enrichment for all scholars	MESA's belief in providing enrichment for scholars of all backgrounds

Bookmarked Links to Resumes of Founding Leadership Team

Jennifer Norris, M.Ed. (link)	Founder, Executive Director
Darby West (link)	Founding Principal of K-3
Trevon Brandhorst (link)	Founding Director of Enrollment and Engagement

The MESA Founding Leadership Team collectively has over forty years of experience working in public education. They all have a history of success working with underserved families and show a commitment to inclusion and reducing barriers.

The core values of MESA are: Motivation, Engagement, Service, and Accountability.



MESA's added value lies in our key programmatic features that scholars engage in problem-based learning through motivating enrichment approaches. Unlike *project-based learning*, which often focuses on creating a final product, *problem-based learning* emphasizes the process of analyzing and resolving a problem as the core learning experience. Students are typically presented with a challenging problem upfront—without predefined solutions—and must research and apply knowledge to propose evidence-based solutions. The goal is to develop problem-solving skills, deepen understanding of the subject matter, and promote lifelong learning habits which tie directly back to the vision statement for students to become exceptional community leaders.

MESA offers problem-based learning through the Expeditionary Learning and Illustrative Math curricula. Both Expeditionary Learning and Illustrative Math offer real-word problem

[14] Council of the Great City Schools / Council of the Great City Schools - Homepage. (n.d.). Http. https://www.cgcs.org/
[15] Siamak Vahidi. (2015, July 31). SEM-R Overview | Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development. Uconn.edu. https://gifted.uconn.edu/semr-overview/

solving in their approaches to teach content. For example, the third grade literacy curriculum dives into access to clean water while first grade math connects double-digit addition to bags of trash collected during a beach clean up. Along with problem solving to grow care for the world, MESA scholars will have expansive experiences four times per year (i.e. field trip, expert speaker, assembly, etc) to directly relate to their learning connections. The end of unit experience will pair with a culminating project based assessment. This end of unit culmination will include a group and individual exhibition to which the community is invited and children will publicly share their deep work and learning.

Last, but certainly not least, MESA believes firmly in the brilliance of all children and will implement enrichment teaching practices for all students across all grade levels and content areas. This approach fosters a growth mindset and more flexible thinking through strategies like differentiated instruction, cluster grouping, collaborative projects, and student choice in how to demonstrate mastered learning. These factors will ensure MESA's mission and vision are accordingly lived out.

This model comes out of research on the Center for Talent Development at the University of Connecticut. It uses higher order thinking skills, service learning approaches, and accelerated work for all students which promote engaging, enjoyable, and challenging work for all scholars. [16] This is also reaffirmed by research and partnership between the University of Denver and highly diverse rural Colorado schools.[17] The implementation of differentiated instruction and enrichment pedagogy showed high achievement and no statistical achievement gaps between suburban and urban schools.[18] This shows that enrichment for all was as or more effective than traditional approaches. Pillars of this enrichment approach include: student reflection portfolios, student selected enrichment blocks of learning, and teacher professional development for curriculum internalization for strong differentiated instruction.

MESA's plan for enrollment is to start with our youngest learners and grow with and for them. The 5-year goal is to be a K-5th grade center with 288 students total, or about 48 pupils per grade level. MESA will grow to the intended full K-8th grade levels by 2033-34 school year with around 400 students total. If enrollment patterns and community desire are strong, MESA will add grade levels as needed with the intent to serve up to 700 students long-term on our single-site campus.

Per the Colorado Department of Education 2024 District Performance Rating, Jeffco's overall student body is: 30.9% FRL, 36.1% Minority students, 7.9% Multilingual Learners, 12% Gifted and Talented and 13.2% Students with an IEP. The anticipated rates for free and

[16] Renzulli, J. S. (1996). Schools for talent development: A practical plan for total school improvement. The School Administrator, 53(1), 20–22.
[17] Hesbol, K. (2022, April 25). Making Learning Accessible to Rural Students: Critical Approaches to Access and Pedagogy [Roundtable Presentation Making Learning Accessible to Rural Students: Critical Approaches to Access and Pedagogy]. https://www.aera.net/Publications/Online-Paper-Repository/AERA-Online-Paper-Repository-Viewer/ID/1895286
[18] Reis, S. M., McCoach, D. B., Little, C. A., Muller, L. M., & Kaniskan, R. B. (2011). The Effects of Differentiated Instruction and Enrichment Pedagogy on Reading Achievement in Five Elementary Schools. American Educational Research Journal, 48(2), 462–501. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831210382891

reduced lunch (FRL), multilingual learners (MLL), and students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) were calculated by creating a school model to increase access to programming for students in those groups. This enrollment projection data is based on CDE reported enrollment data of neighboring schools. MESA will have a higher than average representation of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch (~10% higher than Jeffco district average or 60% overall MESA enrollment) and/or are multilingual learners (~10% higher than Jeffco district average or 18% overall MESA enrollment). The anticipated students with IEPs calculation is slightly higher than the district average (~2% higher at 15% overall MESA enrollment). The enrollment of minority students will be similar to or slightly above the Jeffco average (~38% or more overall MESA enrollment).

MESA First Five Years Enrollment Plan

1 grade per year growth	**Year 1 (2027-28)**	**Year 2 (2028-29)**	**Year 3 (2029-30)**	**Year 4 (2030-31)**	**Year 5 (2031-32)**
Grades Served	**K**	**K-2**	**K-3**	**K-4**	**K-5**
Kindergarten Class Size	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**
Kindergarten Classes	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*
1st Grade Class Size	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**
1st Grade Classes	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*
2nd Grade Class Size		**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**
2nd Grade Classes		*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*
3rd Grade Class Size			**24**	**24**	**24**
3rd Grade Classes			*2*	*2*	*2*
4th Grade Class Size				**24**	**24**
4th Grade Classes				*2*	*2*
5th Grade Class Size					**24**
5th Grade Classes					*2*
Total Enrollment	**96**	**144**	**192**	**240**	**288**
Estimated Free and Reduced Lunch (60%)	58	86	115	144	172
Estimated Multilingual Learners (18%)	17	26	35	43	52
Estimated Students of Color (38%)	36	55	73	91	109
Estimated Students with Disabilities (15%)	14	22	29	36	43
Average Class Size	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**
Annual Growth	n/a	+48	+48	+48	+48

B. Vision and Mission Statements

The mission and vision statements started from a MESA key belief. MESA believes everyone deserves a seat at the table At MESA, every scholar has a seat at the table. They're never just students – they're stakeholders.

This belief drives everything from who the school serves to how classrooms operate. When kids see themselves reflected in their teachers, their curriculum, and their community, they don't just show up – they lead. MESA doesn't sort kids into those who get enrichment and those who don't. Instead, MESA creates a table where all scholars (multilingual learners, kids with IEPs, gifted students, and everyone in between) have access to challenging, joyful learning experiences that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to have.

The mission and vision statements started with that key belief and then evolved through multiple rounds of reiteration and refinement from community voice and stakeholder input. The founder took notes at each and every meeting, park visit, email, etc. to find common trends and themes that emerged. From over 150 individuals, three common themes continued to come up. Those include:

1.) a whole-child and equity focus,
2.) the community needs more school choice, and
3.) a demand for an Expeditionary Learning model.

Those themes have been quantified and are available to view in "Section B: Vision and Mission Statements" of the appendix. The mission and vision statements below are the product of authoring something observable and achievable and ensuring stakeholder input in the foundation of the school. The table below shows how stakeholder input was included in the finalized versions and how those elements will be observable and achievable when the school operationalizes.

Stakeholder input	Phrasing in mission and/or vision	In action
whole-child and equity focus	"scholars from all backgrounds"	Intentional selection of location in a diverse section of the school district
More choice for community	"excellent educational experience"	Accountability to the plan to achieve performance rating on SPF and offer an excellent option for families in an area that lacks some choice
Expeditionary Learning model	"through Expeditionary Learning"	Not only use of EL curriculum but additional programming elements to enhance (i.e. field trips, exhibitions)

This led to the following MESA mission and vision statements:

Mission: *MESA provides an excellent educational experience through Expeditionary Learning and enrichment for all scholars.*

Vision: *MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders and lead tables where real world problems are solved.*

Goals and outcome measures are addressed within Section C: Goals and Objectives.

C. Goals, Objectives, and Pupil Performance Standards

At MESA, student achievement and growth will be measured by annual and interim performance metrics. For all students, core curriculum assessments, as well as district and state metrics, will be used to ensure that our students are equipped with skills and confidence to grow to be community leaders. The goal of MESA is to be the first K-8 Expeditionary Learning school in Jeffco which will help the school achieve a performance rating on the State Performance Framework and add to the overall performance rating for the District.

MESA Goals to Achieve Performance State Performance Rating

Academic Area/Subject	Measurement Tool	Frequency (per school year)	Goal
READ Act (K-3rd grade foundational literacy skills)	DIBELs	4+ times per year depending on performance level	Growth: 80% or more of students make their individual growth goal on DIBELs during the school year. Status: 75% of students score at grade level in foundational skills, and in turn, 25% or less of students are assigned a READ Plan.
ELA (3rd-8th grade)	Interim Assessments and MAP	3-4 times	Growth: 75% or more of students make their individual growth goal on MAP during the school year. This can be used as one predictor of Median Growth Percentile scores on SPF.
ELA (3rd-8th grade)	CMAS	1 time (spring)	Status: 60% or more of students have a scaled score at or above the 50th percentile rank (3rd-5th grade 734.5, 6th-8th grade 731.2). This aligns with a “meets” rating on the SPF.
Math (K-8th grade)	Interim Assessments and MAP	3-4 times	Growth: 75% or more of students make their individual growth goal on MAP during the school

			year. This can be used as one predictor of Median Growth Percentile scores on SPF.
Math (3rd-8th grade)	CMAS	1 time (spring)	Status: 60% or more of students have a scaled score at or above the 50th percentile rank (3rd-5th grade 739.5, 6th-8th grade 740.1). This aligns with a “meets” rating on the SPF.
Assessment Participation Rates	CMAS, ACCESS, READ Act state and district assessments	Throughout year	95% or more of MESA students will participate in required assessments. This aligns with a “meets” rating on the SPF.
MLL - On track for English proficiency	ACCESS on track on CDE School Performance Framework	1 time (spring); 4+ times per year for ongoing in-house progress monitoring body of student evidence (containing all domains of language: reading, writing, listening, and speaking)	55% or higher of continuously enrolled MESA MLL students will score “on track” for English proficiency. This aligns with a “meets” rating on the SPF.
Non-Academic Area	Measurement Tool	Frequency (per school year)	Goal
Attendance	Average daily attendance in Infinite Campus	Daily (bi-weekly data analysis by student support team members)	The overall average daily attendance for students is 93% or above for the school year.
Family Satisfaction	Survey (paper and online options)	2 times	90% of families are satisfied overall (75% or above overall favorable rating) with the MESA experience.
Family and Community Events *(“FACEtime”)*	Sign in sheets and/or exit surveys	~6 times per year (bi-monthly)	80% of MESA students will have a parent or guardian attend at least 1 FACEtime event per year, including conferences
Student experience	Exposure to real-life connection to curriculum	4 times for each cohort of students	100% of MESA students will have 4 real-life

	unit (i.e. expert speaker, assembly, field trip)		exposure connections to class learning
Student recruitment, enrollment and retention	1. Recruitment - *individual household outreaches* 2. Enrollment - *waitlist* 3. Retention- *in-house data*	1. 3 times/year (January, March and June) through marketing events and campaigns 2. Ongoing through the main office and school leadership data 3. Ongoing - pull 3 times/year (January, March and June) through the main office and school leadership data	MESA will reach its intended diversity indexes of: ● 40%+ FRL ● 18%+ MLL and ● 38% + Minority students MESA will have a 105% enrollment on Day 1 of school. MESA will continuously enroll 80% or more of its students year over year fall-to-fall October count.
Staff retention	1. Hiring 2. Self-evaluation 3. Performance incentives	1. Ongoing: Values-driven hiring processes with multiple stakeholders as decisions makers (students, staff, Board) 2. 2 times (mid and end of year) 3. End of year evaluations	MESA will retain 80% or more of staff with meeting or exceeding performance reviews each year and add to the district pipeline of effective school staff
Staff Professional Development on Talent Development	Professional Learning with self-reflections and evaluations	Professional learning: 4+ times; performance evaluations: 2 times	80% or more of MESA teaching staff will show evidence implementation of talent development practices as assessed by their self and supervisor evaluations by the end of the year
Financial Responsibility	Budget reviews and quarterly reviews with the Executive Director and the Board	12 times per year for budget reviews, 1 external audit each year	MESA is in good standing financially, making payments on time, spending in alignment with the mission and vision and has 30 days cash in reserves

In alignment with the State Performance Framework (SPF), which places strong emphasis on student growth than on achievement at the elementary and middle school levels, CMAS and READ Act goals were deliberately developed to focus on demonstrated growth and students' progress toward individualized performance targets. This also aligns with Colorado Senate Bill S.B. 10-191[19] and the emphasis of student academic growth measures as part of the yearly teacher (50%) and principal evaluation system. MESA will use SPF performance rating targets in its goal setting in the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) major improvement strategies.

D. Evidence of Support

Collectively, stakeholder feedback demonstrates broad and deep support for MESA grounded in trust in the founder's proven leadership, strong demand for Expeditionary and experiential learning, and a clear need for high-quality, neighborhood-based options in Lakewood and Jefferson County. Families, educators, and community leaders consistently highlight MESA's commitment to equity, bilingual access, arts integration, and whole-child development, alongside a disciplined focus on systems, safety, and sustainable growth. In addition to letters of support, stakeholders have offered governance expertise, startup guidance, enrichment programming, wraparound services, and community partnerships—evidence that MESA is not only desired, but already surrounded by the relationships and operational capacity necessary to launch successfully and serve as a lasting community asset.

MESA isn't an outside solution for the community. It's being built BY, FOR, and OF the community. The founding approach has been relentlessly local: dozens of individual conversations with families, showing up at toddler story time at local libraries, attending city council meetings, and meeting families where they are through direct, door-to-door conversations. This is a school built by a founder who's spent her career in West Denver, knows families, understands the barriers they face, and builds something that stands with them.

The chart below shows received letters of support from a variety of stakeholders.

Letters of Support for MESA*

^ indicates Jeffco resident and/or parent

Education Sector		
Name	Title or Position	Organization
Zachary McComsey and Valerie McCormick	CEO/Founder and Fellowship Director	The Legacy Institute
Korey Askew	Climate and Culture Coordinator	Aurora Public Schools

[19] Senate Bill 10-191 Policy and Rules | CDE. (n.d.). Www.cde.state.co.us. https://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/sb-policy

Debbie Mercer	Dean of the College of Education	Kansas State University
Julia Pool	Founder, 2013 DC Teacher of the Year	Burn-in Mindset
Erin Anderson	Associate Professor	University of Denver
Guy Pasquino	Principal, Director (retired)	Denver Public Schools, City Year
Austin Hall	Dean of Students	Aurora Public Schools
Dayana Juski	ECE Lead Teacher and Team Specialist	Denver Public Schools
Belén Iniesta	Bilingual ECE Teacher	Denver Public Schools
Brian Hyosaka ^	Founder	Switchback Consulting
Victoria Laureska	Teacher	Easton Elementary School
Trevon Brandhorst	Family and Community Engagement Expert	Denver Public Schools
Cynden Porter^	Owner; Chief of Staff	Exponential Ops, Inc.; Charter School Growth Fund
Derek Pike ^	Assistant Principal	(Denver) West High School
Dr. Barth Quenzer ^	Visual Arts Educator and DPS Art Curriculum Creator	Denver Public Schools
Dr. Kristina Hesbol	Retired Professor	University of Denver
Monica Mueller ^	Program Supervisor: Discovery Link	Denver Public Schools
Business and Non-Profit Sector		
Name	Title or Position	Organization
Alanna Reynard ^	Franchise Owner	Little Rembrandts
Theo Shaw ^	Founder and CEO	Shaw Consulting
Veronica Maes	Director, Communications and City Relations	City of Trinidad
Alex Gross ^	Principal	Gross Investments
John Norris	Founder and Principal	Norris Design
Trinity Bruno ^	CEO	A Music Plus Entertainment
Father Joe McLagan ^	Pastor	St. Bernadette Catholic Parish

Amira Watters ^	Executive Director; Board Member	Spay Today; West Metro Fire District
Community Members		
Name	Position	City/Neighborhood
Jillian Tahiri ^	Prospective Parent (5 year old)	Lakewood
Elizabeth Roos	Prospective Parent (5 year old)	Denver
Susan Debus ^	Jeffco Resident	Lakewood
Jessica Howard ^	Jeffco Resident	Lakewood
Cheryl Kirksey ^	Jeffco Resident	Jeffco
Carl Mayfield ^	Jeffco Resident	Lakewood
Katherine Simms ^	Jeffco Resident	Jeffco
Andrea Cohen ^	Jeffco Resident	Jeffco
JoAnn Roos	Jeffco Resident	Jeffco
Patricia Kipp ^	Jeffco Resident	Lakewood
Jon Mayfield	n/a	n/a

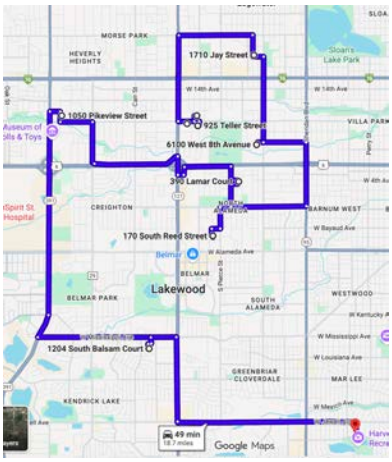
**Actual letters available in appendix*

As additional evidence for support, the table below summarizes Letters of Intent to Enroll (LOI) received. To date, MESA has over forty Letters of Intent to Enroll from PreK-12 students. The founder will bring updated Letters of Intent to Enroll (LOI) to the applicant capacity interview the week of March 15, 2026. Below the table shows LOIs for opening grades enrollment. In addition, there are sixteen LOIs from parents with children born between 2024-2025 who would be the second generation Kindergarten class.

Grade	Grade(s) Offered During Year 1 (2027) and Number of Classrooms and Grade Level	LOI Received to Date (as of February 9, 2026)
Kindergarten (students born 2022-23)	2 classrooms, 24 students per classroom, 48 spots	15
1st grade (students born 2020-2021)	2 classrooms, 24 students per classroom, 48 spots	20

From parent provided information, LOIs have been received from students in the current educational boundaries and settings. Boundaries were listed here, as the vast majority of our

first generation of MESA enrolled scholars are currently 3-5 years old and not yet in elementary school. The bold map dots show some early LOI family locations.



- Explore and Discover Early Education Co-op
- Lasley Elementary boundary
- Patterson Elementary boundary
- Eiber Elementary boundary
- Rose Stein Elementary boundary
- Lumberg Elementary boundary (including the Two Creeks/ Molholm area around the proposed school building site)
- Edgewater Elementary boundary
- South Lakewood Elementary boundary
- Force Elementary boundary (DPS)
- Cowell Elementary boundary (DPS)
- KIPP Sunshine Peak Elementary (DPS charter)
- Peak Expeditionary (Jeffco K-5 EL charter, want to continue EL in Middle School)

E. Educational Program:

MESA is committed to ensuring a rich and robust education aligned with the vision of the school, and also to ensuring that every student receives an education aligned to the rigor and alignment of the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS). The table below shows the alignment of materials to CAS as well as an overview of how each will be implemented. Referenced materials are available for viewing in the Appendix "Section E: Educational Program."

MESA's Plan for CAS Implementation

Area	Curriculum or Materials	School Implementation
Math	Illustrative Math from Imagine Learning	Classwork, Daily Tier 1 instruction (Tier 2, 3 as needed)
Reading, Writing and Communicating (ELA)	Expeditionary Learning (aka Dragonfly) from Imagine Learning; UFLI (Foundational Skills)	Classwork, Daily Tier 1 instruction (Tier 2, 3 as needed)
Arts	Jeffco Arts Curriculum[20] scope and sequence guide developed from CAS, Production class model from Mountain Middle School	Dance units in PE, Enrichment offerings from community partners, Specials of visual and performing arts, daily production studio class
Physical Education	Jeffco PE Proficiency Scales[21]	PE as a special, additional gross motor experiences at recess and on exhibitions

[20] Visual Arts - Jeffco Public Schools. (2025). Jeffcopublicschools.org. https://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/services/activities/visual-arts
[21] Physical Education - Jeffco Public Schools. (2016). Jeffcopublicschools.org. https://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/learning/curriculum/physical-education

Financial Literacy	Young Ameritowne (grades 4-6)[22], and/or Junior Achievement (grades K-8)[23]	Classwork, Curriculum modules, field trips, field expert visits, parent nights, exhibitions of learning
World Languages	Elementary Spanish curriculum (i.e. Sonrisa Spanish PreK-8[24])	Enrichment class: Spanish, Rich Texts, Classwork, Curriculum modules, field trips, exhibitions of learning, interpretation and translation services, bilingual staff
Science	Resources from CSU Spur Extension office[25], Imagine Learning Curriculum: Twig Science[26](grades K-8)	Classwork, Curriculum modules, field trips, exhibitions of learning
Comprehensive Health	Jeffco Health Education guidelines[27], Conscious Discipline, Curriculum modules, additional resources based on need and parent input	Classwork, Curriculum modules, Crew meetings, field trips, parent book study groups
Social Studies	Embedded EL ELA modules, Imagine Learning Curriculum: Traverse[28] (grades 6-8), Jeffco Social Studies Scope and Sequence and Essential Questions[29]	Classwork, Curriculum modules, field trips, exhibitions of learning
Computer Science	SAMR Model[30] for safe technology use and integration	Classwork, Curriculum modules, field trips, exhibitions of learning, Responsible technology use agreements and presentations, Enrichments i.e. coding, robotics, graphic design

Rationale

The Education Program at MESA will be uniquely designed to meet the vision of the school and needs of students, while maintaining the core foundations with the Jeffco district

[22] Young AmeriTowne - Young Americans Center. (2013, September 10). https://yacenter.org/young-ameritowne/
[23] Education, J. (2026). JA Education Resource Site. Google.com. https://sites.google.com/ja.org/ja-ed-resources/home
[24] About Us | The Sonrisas Spanish Curriculum. (2024, April 12). Sonrisas | Sonrisas Spanish School Is a Complete Resource for Spanish Curriculum. https://sonrisasspanishschool.com/about-us/?_gl=1

[25] https://www.facebook.com/CSUSpur. (2025). School programs | CSU Spur. CSU Spur. https://csuspur.org/school-programs/
[26] Twig Science. (2024, December 18). Imagine Learning. https://www.imaginelearning.com/products/science/twig-science/
[27] Health Education - Jeffco Public Schools. (2026). Jeffcopublicschools.org. https://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/learning/special-programs/health-education
[28] Traverse. (2024, November 13). Imagine Learning. https://www.imaginelearning.com/products/traverse/
[29] Social Studies - Jeffco Public Schools. (2026). Jeffcopublicschools.org. https://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/learning/curriculum/social-studies
[30] PowerSchool. (2021, April 13). SAMR Model: A Practical Guide for K-12 Classroom Technology Integration. PowerSchool. https://www.powerschool.com/blog/samr-model-a-practical-guide-for-k-12-classroom-technology-integration/

schools. MESA's approach for program model, curriculum, and instructional practices are all research based and results proven among high performing schools. Above all, MESA will live our core values of accountability and engagement with a commitment to grade level text and tasks in front of every scholar every day. As our mission states: *MESA provides an excellent educational experience through Expeditionary Learning and enrichment for all scholars*, there will be an emphasis on problem-based learning which requires deep thinking, presentation skills, and expansive real-world experiences in our community.

The program model at MESA is Expeditionary Learning through instruction driven by problem-based learning. The selected anchor curricula are Expeditionary Learning (K-8 literacy) and Illustrative Math (K-8 math) through Imagine Learning. Both of these curricula are problem based, have strong interdisciplinary connections and real life examples, and promote higher level thinking skills and many opportunities to communicate and collaborate with project and standards driven goals.

When someone says, "Please bring an elementary school back to our community," or "I'm so glad our community isn't being forgotten," MESA listens. Parents in this area have limited options: schools that aren't meeting their kids' needs, have a waitlist, or are expensive private schools. MESA offers something in the middle: high-quality, rigorous, joyful learning that's free, public, and designed specifically for the kids it serves.

Because MESA is grounded in strong relationships and shared responsibility for student success, the school has intentionally cultivated broad community support to ensure both a high-quality launch and long-term sustainability. In visiting with community members, there was a theme in conversations of desire for global and community context and children having opportunities to engage with learning within and outside of their own lived experiences. Families, educators, and community leaders consistently express confidence in the vision for the school and in the leadership capacity required to execute that vision with fidelity. Many stakeholders who have worked directly with the founder describe a proven track record of building strong systems, developing teams, and improving outcomes for students, which gives the community confidence that MESA will open with both heart and operational strength.

An example of this support can be found in the number of experienced practitioners who have already committed their time and expertise to the school's development. Former principals, district leaders, and charter founders have offered guidance on startup systems such as safety planning, attendance structures, governance design, MTSS frameworks, and bilingual programming. Community partners have committed to providing before- and after-school care, enrichment opportunities in the arts and outdoor education, mentoring, apprenticeships, and wraparound services for families. Several individuals have pledged letters of support, board service, and ongoing coaching to ensure the school's success.

In addition to leadership capacity, stakeholders consistently identify MESA's Expeditionary Learning model as a needed and distinctive option within Jefferson County. Families describe a desire for hands-on, real-world learning experiences that emphasize critical

thinking, collaboration, and meaningful application of knowledge rather than rote memorization. Fieldwork, daily production classes, and public exhibitions of learning are seen as structures that build both academic mastery and a strong sense of belonging. For many families, these features represent not simply enrichment, but the type of learning environment in which their children will thrive.

To ensure that these values translate into daily practice, MESA's design intentionally integrates both community connection and operational readiness. The school will prioritize inclusive supports for multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and advanced learners; cultivate partnerships that extend learning beyond the classroom; and establish clear systems for safety, communication, and continuous improvement. By pairing a rigorous, experiential academic model with strong systems and deep community partnerships, MESA is positioned to serve as both an excellent school and a neighborhood anchor.

Through this collective effort, MESA is not opening as a standalone institution, but as a school built with and for the community—one that reflects shared values of equity, service, and opportunity, and one that will prepare students to contribute meaningfully to the world around them.

Both chosen Math and ELA curricula meet these criteria and are rated green (or meeting expectations) on EdReports and are available in English and Spanish to support the typical Two Creeks neighborhood student and their home languages. Furthermore, Illustrative Math is currently being used in Jeffco schools as a district approved curriculum. This shows MESA's commitment to alignment with district schools and expectations on high quality instructional materials.

Expeditionary Learning has been proven to raise student achievement in Jeffco Schools. In a 2018-19 case study, six Jeffco elementary schools that implemented Expeditionary Learning saw their Median Growth Percentiles (MGP) in both ELA and Math CMAS increase and outperform the district average MGP. Teachers in the case study reported higher rates of student engagement, persistence, and perseverance in problem solving, and an instructional coach said *"EL Education has given our students the confidence and the tools to drive their own learning and contribute, not only to their classroom, but the world."*[31] This is just one example of how the EL curriculum is supportive to not only state and district performance targets but also the mission and vision of MESA as an educational organization.

To further the commitment to enrichment for all, students will participate in four complementary learning opportunities and expeditions to culminate Expeditionary Learning literacy modules and connect to experts and service for the community. Complementary experiences for each grade age level are laid out below which include experts, field trips, and community service projects. This is not specific to the EL curriculum, but rather, was developed by the founder as a means to enhance the curriculum and bring in direct connection to real-world problem solving and leadership development in MESA's mission and vision. This

[31] EL Education. (2025). Eleducation.org. https://www.eleducation.org/our-results/case-studies/jefferson-county-colorado-a-case-study/

adds value to the educational experience of all MESA scholars and is aligned to the Jeffco Generations aims by promoting civic and global engagement, communication and collaboration, critical and creative thinking, and leading by influence.

Grade	ELA Module 1 Theme and Connections for Enrichment & Service Opportunities	ELA Module 2 Theme and Connections for Enrichment & Service Opportunities	ELA Module 3 Theme and Connections for Enrichment & Service Opportunities	ELA Unit 4 Theme and Connections for Enrichment & Service Opportunities
Kindergarten	*Toys and Play* Expert(s): Hobbyist, Toy Maker Field Trip(s): Children's Museum of Denver Service: Create a new toy or center for the classroom	*Weather Wonders** Expert(s): Meteorologist Field Trip(s): NOAA, News Station, Weather station Service: Create an inside recess game or activity to do in inclement weather	*Trees are Alive* Expert(s): Arborist, Botanist Field Trip(s): Plant nursery, tree farm, Botanic Gardens Service: Plant a tree, tree clean up	*Enjoying and Appreciating Trees* Expert(s): Arborist, Botanist Field Trip(s): Hike in the forest, Botanic Gardens Service: Plant a tree, tree clean up, art piece with fallen tree parts
1st grade	*Tools and Work* Expert(s): Contractor, construction worker, mechanic Field Trip(s): Children's Museum of Denver Service: Create a in invention to help organize the classroom	*The Sun, Moon, and Stars* Expert(s): Astronomer, Professor, Planetary Scientist Field Trip(s): Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum, DMNS Service: Create a constellation or planet guidebook for the school *challenger learning center	*Birds' Amazing Bodies* Expert(s): Ornithologist, Aviary veterinarian Field Trip(s): Audubon Society, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, birding tour Service: Create a bird watching map of birds seen around the school for others to spot	*Caring for Birds* Expert(s): Ornithologist, Bird Conservationist, Aviary veterinarian Field Trip(s): Audubon Society, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, birding tour Service: Design a bird house or feeder
2nd grade	*Schools and Community* Expert(s): Principal, head of school, teachers, city council member Field Trip(s): CSU Spur, History Colorado Service: Students generate a	*Fossils Tell of the Earth's Changes* Expert(s): Paleontologist, Museum curator Field Trip(s): Dinosaur Ridge, DMNS Service: Create a game or activity to have fun while learning about	*The Secret World of Pollination* Expert(s): Beekeeper, ornithologist, agricultural specialist, ecologist Field Trip(s): Butterfly Pavilion, Botanic Gardens Service: Create a plant and flower	*Providing for Pollinators* Expert(s): Beekeeper, ornithologist, agricultural specialist, ecologist Field Trip(s): Butterfly Pavilion, Botanic Gardens Service: Create resources about

	collaborative idea and complete together for their school community	dinosaurs, create a dinosaur exhibit	resource book describing the plant's benefits to pollinators	pesticide free alternatives to gardening
3rd grade	*Overcoming Learning Challenges Near and Far** Expert(s): Librarian Field Trip(s): Local public library, CSU Spur, History Colorado Service: Create a lending library, write books for younger students	*Adaptations and the Wide World of Frogs* Expert(s): Wildlife Biologist Field Trip(s): Bluff Lake Nature Center, Hudson Gardens "Frog Quest" Service: Remove invasive species from local pond	*Exploring Literary Classics* Expert(s): Author, Writer, Editor, College Professor of Literature Field Trip(s): Arvada Center for the Performing Arts, Denver Center for the Performing Arts Service: Perform a play	*Water Around the World* Expert(s): Civil engineer,Water attorney, Waste water engineer, City Manager Field Trip(s): CSU Spur, Denver Water, Water treatment plant Service: Design and trial water filters to be used in Colorado wilderness
4th grade	*Poetry, Poets and Becoming Writers* Expert(s): Author, Writer, Editor, College Professor of Literature Field Trip(s): Arvada Center for the Performing Arts, Denver Center for the Performing Arts Service: Create and present an original writing night, host local poets	*Animal Defense Mechanisms* Expert(s): Zoologist, Wildlife Biologist, Animal Control Field Trip(s): Wild Animal Sanctuary, DMNS Service: Volunteer at an animal shelter, clean up an animal home/habitat	*The American Revolution* Expert(s): Historian, Researcher, Re-enactor Field Trip(s): State Capitol, History Colorado Service: Welcome home troops event or place flags/flowers at a veteran memorial site	*Responding to Inequality and Ratifying the 19th Amendment* Expert(s): Local politician (city council, representative, etc) Field Trip(s): Center for Colorado Women's History, History Colorado Service: Collaborate with Get Out the Vote, write to rising high school seniors about why they should register to vote
5th grade	*Stories of Human Rights* Expert(s): NAACP, ACLU, Human Rights Attorney, Local Advocate Field Trip(s): History Colorado Service: Students generate a collaborative idea and complete together	*Biodiversity in the Rainforest* Expert(s): Zoologist, Wildlife Biologist, Botanist Field Trip(s): Downtown Aquarium, Botanic Gardens Service: Create a shopper's guide to rainforest friendly products	*Athlete Leaders of Social Change* Expert(s): Local athlete, Sports Agent, Coach or scout Field Trip(s): Colorado Sports Hall of Fame, Olympic & Paralympic Museum Service: Collaborate with Special Olympics to host an event or	*The Impact of Natural Disasters* Expert(s): Emergency Management Director (Red Cross), Firefighter, Public Safety Director Field Trip(s): Colorado Geological Society Service: Create preparedness plans for the school for

			practice session	different disaster events
6th grade	*Greek Mythology* Expert(s): Field Trip(s): Denver Art Museum, Cheeseman Park (Architecture) Service: Write and perform short plays for younger students to teach them about Greek mythology	*Critical Problems and Design Solutions (Scientific Inquiry)* Expert(s): Engineer, Physicist, Contractor Field Trip(s): Forney Transportation Museum, CSU Spur Service: Design and build a device to make a school task more efficient and easier	*American Indian Boarding Schools* Expert(s): Field Trip(s): Ute Indian Museum Service: Amplify Native voices by hosting a speaker and culture night, write a collaborative land acknowledgement	*Remarkable Accomplishments in Space Science* Expert(s): NASA or Space Force Field Trip(s): Petersen Space Force Base Service: Create/code an ISS tracker and journal its journey
7th grade	*The Lost Children of Sudan* Expert(s): Arok Garang (local 'Lost Boy') Field Trip(s): Hike Service: Host a film screening, donation drive for local refugees	*Epidemics* Expert(s): Physician, Nurse, Researcher Field Trip(s): Hospital or health laboratory (CU or Childrens) Service: hygiene kit drive, host a workshop or organize a vaccine clinic	*The Harlem Renaissance* Expert(s): National Humanities Center, Five Points Artist or Musician Field Trip(s): Omar Blair Museum Service: Organize an arts/poetry slam night	*Plastic Pollution* Expert(s): Environmental or Materials scientist, Sustainability consultant Field Trip(s): SPREE (Greenway Foundation) Service: Conduct a plastic waste review and host a recycling campaign at school, public clean up
8th grade	*Folklore of Latin America* Expert(s): Professor, Museum curator, Community member Field Trip(s): Museo de las Américas Service: Host a storytelling night and create digital bilingual stories for the community	*Food Choices* Expert(s): Nutritionist, Dietician, Physician, Nurse Field Trip(s): DMNS Service: Create a local guidebook to healthy food, produce, with recipes to share	*Voices of the Holocaust* Expert(s): Survivor or descendant of a Holocaust survivor, Professor, Curator Field Trip(s): Mizel Museum Service: Organize a tolerance workshop, create resources to analyze propaganda and misinformation	*Lessons of Japanese American Internment* Expert(s): Survivor or descendant, Professor, Curator Field Trip(s): Amache National Park Service: Create a map and guide to historical internment sites across the country

**Examples of these student exhibition criteria for success available in appendix.*

MESA cares deeply about developing future community leaders, therefore, there is an intentional service project tied to each of the ELA learning modules. An example of this service project can be found in the Kindergarten weather unit. One of the essential questions is: how

does weather impact us? Kindergarteners will explore weather, and in service to other students in the school community, the students work in collaborative groups to design and create inside recess games or activities to play during inclement weather. These activities will then be taught to others and be available for play for inside recess.

In providing opportunities for students to give back to the community, MESA is helping them become informed and caring members of society. This is a direct connection to our core value of service. As net positive, many of these service projects connect to work force readiness and career skills like planning, designing, and constructing a pollinator habitat, classroom invention, or lending library. These hands-on projects mirror real careers and workforce skills.

To pair with the experiences detailed above and ensure enrichment for all MESA scholars, there will be four distinct elements in the educational programming which further promote enrichment, and in turn, acceleration opportunities: 1) student reflection portfolios, 2) cluster grouping, 3) curriculum modification, and 4) public exhibitions of learning. Curriculum compacting is explained in greater detail in the following instructional strategies section, and public exhibitions of learning are adopted from research and a visit to Mountain Middle School in Durango, CO. Three of these elements are directly tied to the research of the Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development at the University of Connecticut. Joseph S. Renzulli explains the schoolwide enrichment model as:

> *"Flexible enough to allow each school to form its own program based on local resources, student populations, school leadership dynamics, faculty strengths, and creativity, this research-supported model is based on highly successful practices that had their origins in special programs for gifted and talented students. Its major goal is to promote challenging and enjoyable high-end learning across the full range of school types, levels, and demographic differences."*[32]

MESA will implement the Schoolwide Enrichment Model–Reading (SEM-R), developed by Renzulli at the University of Connecticut, as a core literacy framework to ensure equitable access to rigorous, engaging, and student-centered reading instruction. SEM-R is an evidence-based enrichment model designed to improve reading achievement, motivation, and independence for all learners, with demonstrated effectiveness in schools serving diverse and historically marginalized student populations.

Unlike traditional, whole-class literacy models that rely on fixed texts and pacing, SEM-R centers on student choice, appropriately challenging texts, and individualized teacher conferencing. Students engage in sustained independent reading aligned to their interests and instructional reading levels while teachers provide targeted feedback focused on comprehension, fluency, and higher-order thinking. This structure allows instruction to be both

[32] Renzulli, J. S. (1994). Schools for Talent Development. Prufrock Press.

rigorous and responsive, particularly for students who are often disengaged or under-served by one-size-fits-all approaches.

Research conducted by UConn researchers across multiple elementary settings—including urban and high-poverty schools—demonstrates that students participating in SEM-R show statistically significant gains in reading fluency and comprehension when compared to peers receiving traditional reading instruction. These gains have been documented across low-, middle-, and high-achieving readers, indicating that the model effectively differentiates without tracking or remediation. Studies also report that SEM-R students develop the ability to sustain independent reading for extended periods (approximately 40–45 minutes), reflecting increased reading stamina, self-regulation, and academic independence.

In addition to academic outcomes, SEM-R has been shown to produce measurable improvements in students' attitudes toward reading, including increased motivation, engagement, and enjoyment. These outcomes are particularly important for marginalized students—such as students from low-income backgrounds, multilingual learners, and students historically under-identified for advanced learning—who are more likely to disengage from literacy instruction that does not reflect their interests, strengths, or cultural experiences. In studies conducted in schools with over 90% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, SEM-R students achieved significantly greater gains in reading fluency and comprehension than control groups receiving typical instruction, suggesting that the model is effective for students from marginalized socioeconomic backgrounds.

By applying enrichment pedagogy traditionally reserved for gifted programming to all students, SEM-R directly addresses equity gaps in access to challenging, high-interest literacy experiences. This aligns with Jeffco's emphasis on student-centered instruction, differentiation, and academic growth for every learner. Through SEM-R, MESA ensures that all students—regardless of background—experience reading as both intellectually rigorous and joyful, while achieving strong, research-supported gains in literacy achievement.

The chart below details the core programmatic features with a description and rationale behind each:

Enrichment for All (SEM-R) Elements of the Educational Programming

What is this program feature?	*Who drives this element?*	*When/ Frequency?*	*Why is this important?*
Student reflection portfolios Students maintain ongoing reflection portfolios to document academic growth, set goals, and demonstrate mastery of standards over time	Students	At least quarterly post exhibitions	Reflection is a strong practice in evaluating self performance against a success criteria. Students will set, monitor, and reflect on progress towards goals and keep this through their entire MESA experience as a talent portfolio. This portfolio will also be the anchor for student-led conferences with

			families.
Cluster grouping in self-selected enrichment groups Students are strategically clustered in interest-based enrichment groups that promote collaboration, challenge, and engagement while supporting differentiated instruction	Instructional staff and community/parent volunteers	Weekly	Students and community come together to dive into a high interest area each week. This is driven by adults' expertise (i.e. gardening, cooking, building, etc) and promotes community and agency when students from multiple ages come together to solve a problem of practice and grow deep knowledge in an area.
Curriculum modification through curriculum compacting Students who demonstrate early mastery of grade-level standards engage in curriculum compacting, allowing instructional time to be reallocated to deeper learning and enrichment	Instructional staff, mainly teacher leaders	Daily in response to assessments data	Instructional staff can use the curriculum as a tool to differentiate modules of learning in order to meet the unique needs of each learner. If a group of students shows mastery of an element of a unit of learning at the pre-assessment, the teacher can accelerate lessons to not waste time instructing in standards students have mastered.
Public exhibitions of learning Student present and defend their learning to authentic audiences, reinforcing rigor, communication skills, and accountability	Students	Quarterly to culminate each of the four EL Literacy modules	Students will create and present service learning projects to the community which supports language development, presentation skills, and requires deeper transfer and application of skills than traditional summative assessments.

Educational Program: Alignment

The chosen math curriculum for MESA is Illustrative Math, and the chosen literacy core curriculum is Expeditionary Learning. Importantly, these chosen materials strongly support MESA's enrichment for all foundational beliefs and practices. Both of these curricula are rated Green, or meeting expectations, on EdReports. Curriculum selection was carefully and thoughtfully done in alignment with recommendations from the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Academic Standards for curriculum adoption and implementation.[33]

[33] Curriculum Adoption and Implementation Guidance - Colorado Department of Education. (2020). State.co.us. https://ed.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/curriculum-adoption-and-implementation

In speaking with current experts in the field (curriculum writers, college professors and Colorado Department of Education staff), both of these curricula are preferred and supported as they promote critical thinking, real life connections, and allow more time for students to grapple with solving rigorous and exciting problems.

Mathematics Curriculum

In alignment with the core district math curriculum of Jeffco Schools, MESA will utilize Imagine Learning Illustrative Mathematics (IM), a rigorous, problem-based K–12 curriculum that emphasizes real-world connections to build a deep understanding of mathematical concepts. Imagine Learning IM is intentionally designed to develop students' conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, strategic thinking, and adaptive reasoning—while cultivating a positive, productive disposition of seeing themselves as mathematicians.

Each unit, lesson, and activity is thoughtfully structured to mirror real-life problem-solving scenarios, engaging students in meaningful applications of mathematics that are relevant to their everyday lives and future endeavors. Lessons begin with accessible entry points that encourage all learners to participate, followed by rich mathematical investigations and collaborative discussions. Scholars apply what they've learned to authentic contexts, helping them see the value of mathematics beyond the classroom.

Imagine Learning IM is available in both print and digital formats, allowing MESA to customize instruction and integrate technology in ways that further support real-world learning and accessibility. Through this curriculum, students will not only master mathematical content but also gain the skills and confidence to solve complex, real-world problems. To support multi-lingual learners, the curriculum can be translated into hundreds of languages.

Many districts and school networks across the country, like Jeffco Public School, have adopted IM as their math curriculum including: UnCommon Schools, Denver Public Schools, New York City Public Schools, Greeley-Evans School District 6, Philadelphia Public Schools, and Washington DC Public Schools. Imagine Learning IM is also supported by research and results-based success stories. For example, the impact on implementation of IM in fifteen schools in Elk Grove, Illinois in 2021 resulted in an average of 10% more of students outperforming the rest of the state in math assessments. This includes grades 3-8, as well as, students with IEPs, students who qualify for free and reduced lunch and multilingual learners.[34] In Colorado's own Greeley-Evans, a case study affirms that teachers say that IM helps students see how math is used in daily life and helps students solve real world problems. Staff also notes that students are getting more excited to tackle math and enjoy the collaborative nature of the lesson structure.[35] The table below shows vertical and horizontal alignment of math standards strands across Kindergarten-8th grades in Illustrative Math.

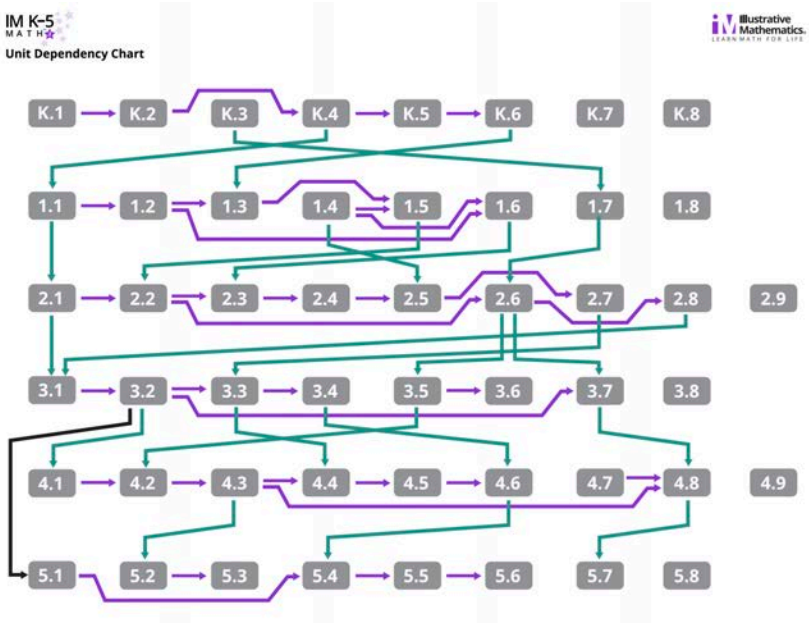
[34] Imagine Learning. (2023, June 14). Imagine Learning. https://www.imaginelearning.com/pdf-viewer/?file=https://www.imaginelearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/1074206548_IM_MATH_CCSD_59_Research_Success-Story_DIGITAL.pdf#zoom=auto&pagemode=none

[35] Greeley-Evans School District 6 I M K -5 M A T H TM. (n.d.). Retrieved August 26, 2025, from https://illustrativemathematics.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/IMx-Case-Study-Greeley-English.pdf

Major Mathematical Concepts (CCSS Strand) by Grade Level in Illustrative Math [36]

Grade	Counting & Cardinality (CC Strand)	Geometry (G Strand)	Measurement & Data (MD Strand)	Number & Operations Base Ten (NBT Strand)	Operations & Algebraic Thinking (OA Strand)	Number & Operations Fractions (NF Strand)	Statistics & Probability (SP Strand)	The Number System (NS Strand)	Expressions & Equations (EE Strand)	Ratios & Proportional Relationships (RP Strand)	Functions (F Strand)
K	X	X	X	X	X						
1		X	X	X	X						
2		X	X	X	X						
3		X	X	X	X	X					
4		X	X	X	X	X					
5		X	X	X	X	X					
6		X					X	X	X	X	
7		X					X	X	X	X	
8		X					X	X	X		X

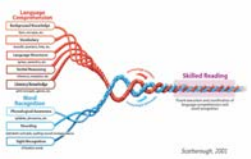
Illustrative Math Unit Dependency Chart: Grades K-5th



[36] *Illustrative Mathematics*. (n.d.). Illustrative Mathematics. https://tasks.illustrativemathematics.org/content-standards

ELA Curriculum

As backed by decades of evidence and research, the Science of Reading is required to be studied and taught in elementary school classrooms in Colorado. MESA is also in agreement, regardless of requirement, that the Science of Reading is essential to growing lifelong readers and student success. Imagine Learning EL Education has explicit instruction to support the Science of Reading through many practices like preparing students with advanced supports. [37] In the Teach Like a Champion Guide to the Science of Reading, Lemov, Driggs, and Woolway note the following Science of Reading aligned practices from their research.[38] The table shows how the EL curriculum has these strategies embedded throughout the lessons. The strand name column also expresses how this strategy supports Multilingual Learners (MLLs). This is explicitly called out to show MESA's intention in serving scholars from all backgrounds and being prepared with WIDA aligned instruction that promotes language development.

Scarborough's Reading Rope Strand[39] 		 Teach Like a Champion Guide to the Science of Reading Research-Backed Strategy	Example of Alignment with Expeditionary Learning (Imagine Learning Dragonfly)
Language Comprehension	**Background Knowledge** For MLLs: Building background knowledge supports language development by providing Multilingual Learners with shared concepts and experiences that make academic language comprehensible, purposeful, and transferable across contexts. Aligned with WIDA, MESA's knowledge-rich curriculum and experiential	Founding belief: *"Background knowledge is the most important driver of understanding and comprehension."* (p. 10)	The EL curriculum exposes students to expansive themes which over time, paired with MESA's commitment to field experiments and field trips, will widen the aperture of background knowledge that our students already bring with them

[37] EL Education Self Regulation. (n.d.). Retrieved August 26, 2025, from https://www.imaginelearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Addressing-the-Science-of-Reading-with-EL-Education.pdf#pdfjs.action=download

[38] Lemov, D., Driggs, C., & Woolway, E. (2025). The Teach Like a Champion Guide to the Science of Reading (pp. 49–366) [Review of The Teach Like a Champion Guide to the Science of Reading]. Jossey-Bass. (Original work published 2025)

[39] Lexia. (2019). What is Scarborough's Reading Rope? Lexia. https://www.lexialearning.com/blog/what-is-scarboroughs-reading-rope

	learning intentionally develop students' ability to interpret, express, and negotiate meaning through repeated exposure to content-specific vocabulary, oral discourse, and complex texts.		
	Vocabulary For MLLs: This approach is effective for Multilingual Learners because shared background knowledge reduces linguistic barriers and allows students to access grade-level content while developing academic language. Aligned with WIDA, it supports MLLs in interpreting, expressing, and negotiating meaning through sustained, scaffolded opportunities to use content-based vocabulary and discourse across listening, speaking, reading, and writing.	Give definition, ask application questions (p. 192) rather than prompt for context clues; accurate student friendly definitions (p. 200)	Not only do the curriculum texts have rich vocabulary, EL also has Tier 2 vocabulary which is central to mastery of the essential questions and included in daily discussion and written responses to lead to the end of module assessment
	Language Structures For MLLs: Teacher read-alouds support Multilingual Learners by providing consistent exposure to fluent, grade-level models of WIDA Language Structures, including syntax, semantics, and discourse patterns. Through intentional teacher modeling and discussion, MLLs develop an understanding of how English works, strengthening comprehension and their ability to produce increasingly complex oral and written language.	Teacher Read Aloud (p.64, 100)	The teacher read aloud portions, particularly heavier in early grades, provides fluent language modeling of language structures like semantics and syntax
	Verbal Reasoning For MLLs: Annotation tasks support Multilingual Learners	Annotation Tasks (p.73)	Annotation prepares students for collaborative discussion protocols of the anchor text

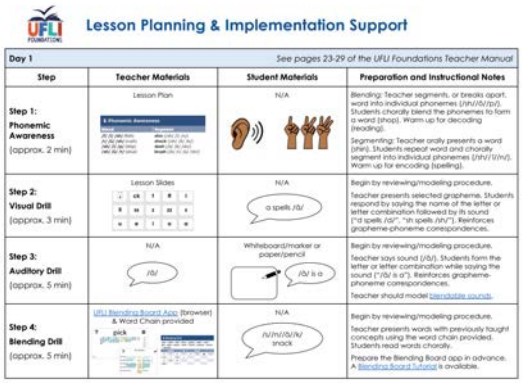
	by strengthening WIDA Verbal Reasoning as students analyze text, make inferences, and justify ideas using evidence in a structured, low-risk format. These tasks scaffold MLLs' ability to prepare for collaborative discussions by giving them time and tools to process language, organize thinking, and rehearse academic reasoning before speaking.		
	Literacy Knowledge For MLLs:	Knowledge Organizer (p. 169, 171)	Not only do students read multiple genres, Knowledge Organizers can become useful one page references to help students store high-priority knowledge like characters, story terms, discussion terms, etc.
Word Recognition	**Phonological Awareness** For MLLs:	Short, developmental writing prompts (p. 241) to practice transcription of units of sound and syllables	Because of problem-based end of module exhibitions, students have daily writing prompts to transcribe grade level phonics skills
	Decoding For MLLs:	Orthographic Mapping (p. 93) aka sight-sound matching prompts	During FASE (Fluent, Accountable, Social, Expressive) reading, teacher prompts students by having the student repeat, giving a quick definition, and imprinting a new word by probing with a higher level thinking question
	Sight Recognition For MLLs:	Synergetic Reading Cycles (p. 68)	By reading high quality text aloud, students practice their automaticity of familiar words and build their bank of familiar words, as the texts in EL are rich

EL, The Teach Like a Champion to the Science of Reading and MESA Founders all support the belief in high text, low tech and scholars having books in hand as much as possible to annotate and engage and focus attention. MESA will also support students in the Science of Reading with differentiated foundational literacy skill instruction, specifically for needs in phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency, in Kindergarten through fourth grade with the system from the University of Florida's Literacy Institute, or UFLI. UFLI is rated green on EdReports[40] and provides a systematic, prescribed approach to foundational reading skills through many opportunities, repetitions, and quick-paced lessons. Much research shows that students who get UFLI lessons have higher DIBELs scores[41] which will positively impact READ Act goals for MESA students. MESA will also utilize the fluency checks for students, as well as, intervention placement guides and fidelity checklists to ensure teachers have data backed bodies of evidence and are correctly implementing UFLI.

UFLI 2-Day Lesson Structure and Example

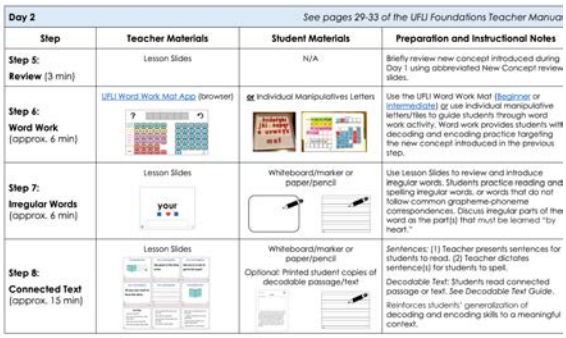
Day 1

Day 1	
Step 1: Phonemic Awareness	2 minutes
Step 2: Visual Drill	3 minutes
Step 3: Auditory Drill	5 minutes
Step 4: Blending Drill	5 minutes
Step 5: New Concept	15 minutes



Day 2

Day 2	
Step 5: New Concept (review)	3 minutes
Step 6: Word Work	6 minutes
Step 7: Irregular Words	6 minutes
Step 8: Connected Text	15 minutes



[40] Explore Reports. (2025). EdReports. https://www.edreports.org/reports/overview/ufli-ela-k-2-2025
[41] Schwartz, S. (2025, January 17). Researchers Created a Phonics Program With "Dramatic" Results. How It Works. Education Week. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/researchers-created-a-phonics-program-with-dramatic-results-how-it-works/2025/01

Further examples and materials for Illustrative Math, Expeditionary Learning (Dragonfly by Imagine Learning), and UFLI, such as scope and sequence and lesson plan examples, are available in the appendix.

Enrichment for All

In support of an enrichment-for-all school model, teachers and school leaders will be trained to implement curriculum compacting. McKinney and Ulrik[42] describe this process in *Accelerate Learning for All* and identify the following steps as essential to curriculum compacting:

1. Identify the targeted standard(s) and criteria for success, or what students must know, understand, and do.
2. Pre-assess students using an existing or teacher created assessment aligned to the criteria mentioned above.
3. From the pre-assessment data, determine which students have full, some, or little grasp on the criteria of success of the standard.
4. Use that data to compact curriculum, create small groups for targeted instruction, and determine who needs a faster pace, more repetition, or more direct instruction.

Curriculum compacting is determined as a Tier 3 intervention strategy and allows the teacher to provide above grade-level standards for students who show mastery of the pre-assessment. This strategy is shown to result in an effect size of 0.68 which means higher than typical growth rates for students. McKinney and Ulrik claim the benefits of curriculum compacting include: maximizing resources of people, time and money; increasing engagement which simultaneously decreases behavior disruptions; supporting teaching staff in meeting diverse needs of scholars; prioritizing instructional time; and building confidence and autonomy for students.

Educational Program: Instructional Strategies

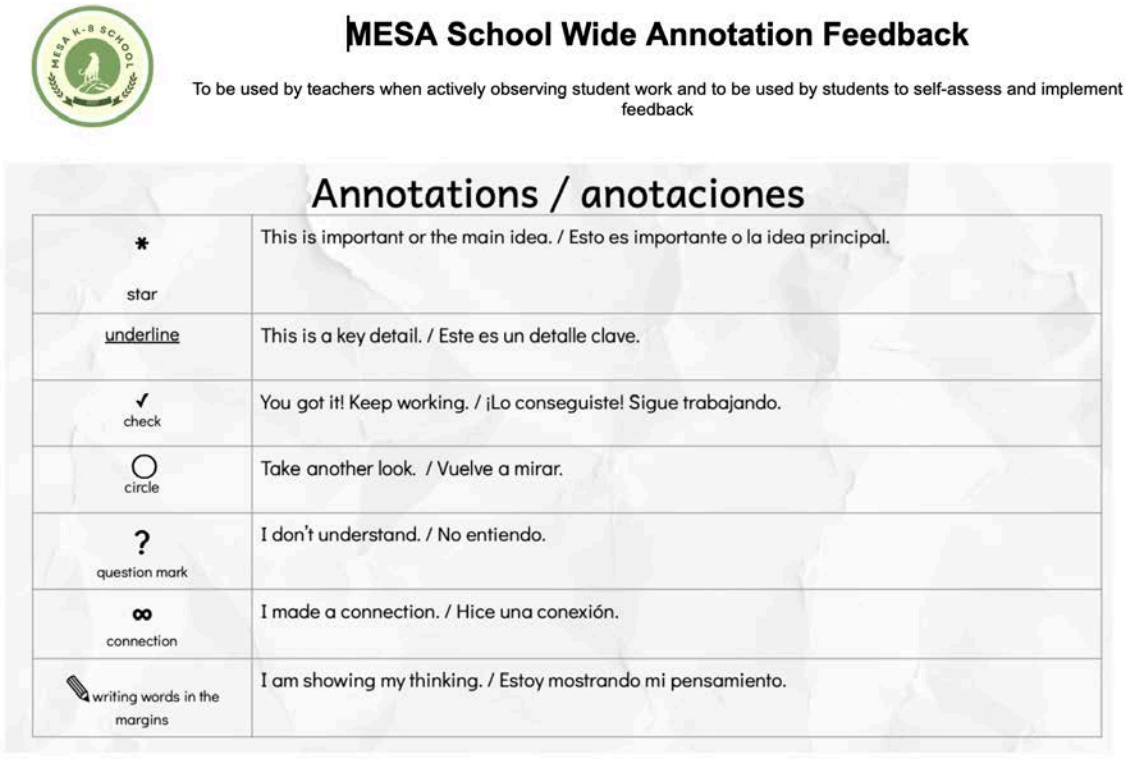
As with any educational organization, instructional excellence is key to success, and MESA's instructional strategies will be consistent with current data-backed research which promote rigor and high expectations. These practices are also proven to differentiate and individualize tailored to student strengths and needs. These instructional practices will be consistent throughout the school in each grade level and content area: Weekly Data Team meetings, responsive small group instruction, strong teacher questioning, and active observation.

Active Observation

Foundational to differentiated instruction is robust progress monitoring and ongoing, real-time checks for understanding as students engage in discussion and work. In daily instruction, the check for understanding strategies are those based on the Teach Like a Champion work of Doug Lemov. Teachers will have a pen-in-hand and use a schoolwide

[42] McKinney, R., & Urlik, C. (2023). Accelerating Learning for All, PreK-8. Corwin Press.

annotation protocol to quickly gauge engagement and understanding of student work. This active observation and marking up of student work allows the teacher to see misunderstandings at the point of error. From there, the teacher can stop and regroup the class with a model or guided discourse or pull a small group for the same reason. Similarly to WDMs, Active Observation immediately guides movement to Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions based on real time data from student work. If the teacher notices students are showing mastery (80% or more of students "have it"), then the teacher can continue to push the rigor towards the learning target of the lesson.



MESA School Wide Annotation Feedback

To be used by teachers when actively observing student work and to be used by students to self-assess and implement feedback

Annotations / anotaciones

* star	This is important or the main idea. / Esto es importante o la idea principal.
underline	This is a key detail. / Este es un detalle clave.
✓ check	You got it! Keep working. / ¡Lo conseguiste! Sigue trabajando.
○ circle	Take another look. / Vuelve a mirar.
? question mark	I don't understand. / No entiendo.
∞ connection	I made a connection. / Hice una conexión.
writing words in the margins	I am showing my thinking. / Estoy mostrando mi pensamiento.

Strong Teacher Questioning

Rigor for all students will also be upheld through purposeful teacher questioning, prepared by internalizing lesson plans and scripting prompts and exemplars. This technique is named as "Stretch It" in Teach Like a Champion 2.0.[43] As stated in the text, "the reward for right answers is harder questions." The "Stretch It" technique can be used across grades and content areas and promotes a student habit of being ready for follow-up questions, opportunities to answer a myriad of question types, and a culture of lifelong learning - the learning is never done. The teacher will prepare scripted extension questions and answers which ensures a high bar and avoids almost-there answers. To further push thinking, teachers will be ready with back-pocket phrases like "tell me more," "what in the text makes you think that," "why is that important," and "you said __ before, what made you revise your thinking?" "Stretch It" promotes

[43] Lemov, D. (2015). Teach like a champion 2.0: 62 techniques that put students on the path to college (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

higher order thinking as mentioned in the Webb's Depth of Knowledge and reinforces conceptual, procedural, and application based mastery of Common Core State Standards.[44]

Weekly Data Teams (WDM)

On a weekly basis, teachers will engage in data team meetings around student work based on a major standard of the grade and assessed through the current unit of study in the curriculum. They will use the RELAY Graduate School of Education Weekly Data Meeting (WDM) protocol which includes components like sorting student work based on performance against a grade level exemplar to form responsive small groups, breaking down a grade level standard into conceptual and procedural criteria for success, and identifying gaps in understanding and student misconceptions. This process allows for teachers to see the standard and deeply build their knowledge of it, name what is the ideal state of student work, and then create timely instructional next steps for students according to their deep knowledge of the rigor associated with mastery of the standard.[45]

When data indicates that some students require additional support beyond Tier 1, WDM outcomes guide movement to Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. These decisions are grounded in documented instructional attempts, reassessment data, and clearly identified misconceptions. Teams plan targeted supports, monitor implementation, and reassess progress on a defined timeline. Instructional leaders observe classrooms and review follow-up data to ensure fidelity and effectiveness. These next step instructional lessons from Weekly Data Meetings will then be observed by academic leaders for feedback and accountability for the teacher. The WDM Protocol can be seen linked here to the appendix section of the application.

Because MESA intends to serve a large number of multilingual students which is typical of Two Creeks area demographics, sheltered instruction strategies will be used to support language development. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Cognates: words that have a similar spelling, meaning, and pronunciation across two or more languages
- Visuals: photographs, illustrations, icons, and real life items that can make abstract ideas concrete and support academic vocabulary
- Tier 2 vocabulary frontload: pre-teaching strategies like visual aids and real-world examples, and focus on words that are high-frequency, cross-curricular, and useful for academic success
- Word walls: a posted area (i.e. bulletin board) organized alphabetically to increase vocabulary use across language domains
- Increased opportunities for speaking and writing

These research backed strategies are noted by the Center for Applied Linguistics.[46]

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[44] Hess, K. (2013). A Guide for Using Common Core State Standards. https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/English-Language-Art/Resources-for-English-Language-Arts/Instructional-Strategies-for-English-Language-Arts/WYC_DOK_Webbs_Flip_Chart.pdf.aspx

[45] Shimada, J. (n.d.). LibGuides: Relay Data Protocol: Relay Data Protocol. Relay.libguides.com. https://relay.libguides.com/data-protocol

[46] Using Sheltered Instructions to Support English Learners - Center for Applied Linguistics. (2022, May 28). Center for Applied Linguistics -. https://www.cal.org/publications/using-sheltered-instructions-to-support-english-learners/

Speaking and listening skills will be strengthened through a schoolwide use of Habits of Discussion. These are nonverbal cues and hand motions which hold students accountable for listening comprehension, strong audience member engagement, and signal their input to a discussion be it to agree or disagree, build onto/off of a peers answer, stretch out thinking, etc. Another reason why Habits of Discussion are supportive of language development is because from the youngest students, there is a shared expectation to track the speaker (which supports seeing places and manners of articulation in speech) and to speak loudly and proudly in complete sentences.[47] This pushes accountability and expectations beyond a traditional turn and talk. As both the Expeditionary Learning and Illustrative Math curricula are heavy on student discourse protocols, this will be yet another way to strengthen language development for all MESA scholars. For an additional school system to support language development, staff will engage with multiple professional development sessions throughout the year about implementing these best practices.

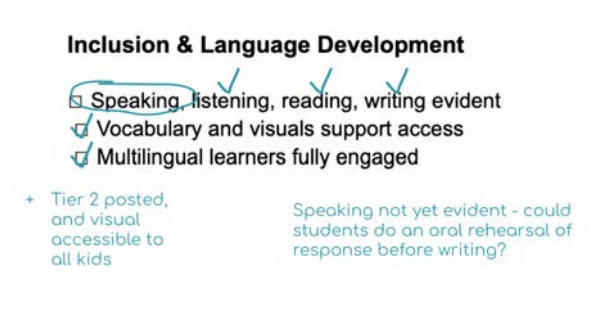
Lastly, as a rigor and language development strategy, each lesson plan will be required to have a reading, writing, listening, and speaking component included regardless of grade level or content area (see "MESA Lesson Plan Template" in the appendix for example). This ensures that all domains of language are addressed multiple times throughout the day. It also promotes high expectations with literacy when everybody writes. Whether it is a reflection, short response or essay, writing not only promotes the transfer of phonics and language skills to paper but, according to Scientific American, also increases memory of the content and the brain energy required to complete the task as opposed to a typed or verbal exercise.[48]

The instructional leadership team of MESA will monitor implementation and pacing of the scope and sequence and exit standards of the curriculum through the schoolwide systems of Lesson and Unit Internalization, Weekly Data Team Meetings and Observation Feedback and Coaching. There will also be a public schoolwide assessment and pacing calendar in both printed and electronic formats visible at any moment. Instructional leaders will monitor pacing and progress during the systematic meetings and cross-check that to be in alignment with the schoolwide assessment and pacing calendar. If there is misalignment, the instructional leader will come alongside the teacher during coaching to correct the course in a timely manner without watering down rigor and joy of the curriculum.

The instructional leadership team will also ensure educational practices are aligned with walkthroughs with organization specific look-for tools (see "MESA Instructional Walkthrough Tool" in the appendix) which reflect the values, mission, and goals of MESA as an organization. These walkthrough observation tools will not only be shared with the staff observed for praise and feedback, they will also be used by the leadership team to monitor and adjust areas of need

[47] Leslie, D. (2022, December 14). Using Habits Of Discussion To Enhance Oracy. HWRK Magazine. https://hwrkmagazine.co.uk/the-power-of-habits-of-discussion/
[48] Hu, C. (2024, February 21). Why Writing by Hand Is Better for Memory and Learning. Scientific American. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-writing-by-hand-is-better-for-memory-and-learning/

and focus based on trends and outcomes of the walkthrough observations. This tool will also be flexible enough to be revised to gain laser-like focus on a specific strategy or practice while maintaining the named behaviors associated that exhibit school values and goals.



An example of this annotated walkthrough tool is found to the left. This shows a broad checklist of one focus domain - Inclusion and Language Development. If the observer notices that listening, reading, and writing are evident in the lesson, but not speaking, the observer will notate that in this section and use that as a possible action step at the teacher's next coaching meeting.

MESA will intentionally be a low technology use school and not dependent on technology for our curriculum or model. There will be more of an emphasis on hands-on, handwriting, and face-to-face learning opportunities rather than time on a device. In his book, The Anxious Generation, Jonathan Haidt details how excessive screen time increases childhood anxiety tremendously. Doug Lemov, et. al. further investigation shows that the mere presence of a device (i.e. phone, chromebook, iPad), lessens attention and productivity even when the device is not being used. The increase in screen time in schools is also associated with increased impulsivity and a weaker ability to positively respond to delayed gratification.[49]

To ensure students are informed and prepared for success, technology will be used intentionally as a tool to enhance learning. Technology may be utilized for assessment practice, including CMAS and ACCESS, but will primarily support the design and creation of digital products aligned with student exhibitions. Additionally, technology-based programs may be used as supplemental interventions (e.g., Lexia) only when small-group instruction and MTSS strategies are not producing sustained, repeatable success. MESA believes that a strong teacher in front of students coupled with targeted instruction is best practice.

A proposed bell schedule is available as a link here to the appendix of this application. The value add for scholars of this proposed calendar includes the following intentional components to maximize instructional time, provide expanded field work and enrichment opportunities, and match the working family schedule:

1. Before and after school care - ensuring supervised school hours from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m
2. A comparatively longer school day (7.5 hours student contact time) which is 2.5 hours more of instructional time per week than most schools
3. Four field trips and four public exhibitions of learning each year for all students
4. Two 20-minute crew meetings to bookend the day and provide social skills and character development

[49] Lemov, D., Driggs, C., & Woolway, E. (2025). The Teach Like a Champion Guide to the Science of Reading (pp. 47-49) [Review of The Teach Like a Champion Guide to the Science of Reading]. Jossey-Bass. (Original work published 2025)

5. In addition to essentials (specials) programming, a 40-minute enrichment or workshop daily to provide time outside of core instruction for students to plan, design, create, and refine products for their problem-based learning modules and learning exhibitions

Through the programming, model, and systems at MESA, alignment to our mission and vision will be ensured through checks and balances of people and stakeholders' input in surveys and through conversations and collaboration with each other. This includes annual review of tools, such as the walkthrough forms, school schedule, and academic outcome data. The systems that ensure accountability of alignment include but are not limited to:

- Weekly leadership meetings
- Monthly Board meetings
- Weekly Data Meetings with teaching teams
- Beginning, Mid- and End-of-Year staff conversations
- Summer Data Reviews (including UIP revisions)

Educational Program: Supplemental Programming

A cornerstone of MESA's enhanced programmatic features are expanded opportunities for real-life connections to learning through four field trips and guest speakers yearly. As detailed in the Educational Program section, these field trips and speakers will culminate deep learning done in ELA modules of the Expeditionary Learning curriculum. To provide time outside of core content for strong exhibition products and presentations, MESA will also offer "production classes" for students in STEAM or Visual Arts to act as a workshop style class. In production class, students will have materials, guidance, and time to design, create, and refine their service learning projects for quarterly exhibitions. Students in first grade, for example, may collaboratively design, build, paint, install, and plant a garden box in the neighborhood that has pollinator friendly plants to pair with their literacy module.

As MESA will offer a unique and special educational program, supplemental and additional programming will be a core part of the student experience. MESA will match the family work day as close as possible by offering before and after school care and summer school options for families. A qualified and licensed outside provider will lead and run the before and after school programming each school day and offer full-day care on non-student contact days (including but not limited to school breaks and holidays). Structures will be established to make before-school, after-school, and summer care as affordable as possible for families, thereby increasing access.This includes applying for grant and foundation funding, adopting sliding scale tuition, having MESA school staff contracted for longer hours, and partnering with local agencies (i.e. City of Lakewood).

As social emotional learning is a keystone to a safe and welcoming environment, MESA will champion the School Family practices of Conscious Discipline by Dr. Becky Bailey. Dr. Bailey's research and practices depend on adult understanding of brain development, self-regulation, and building intrinsic motivation through being an integral part of the

community.[50] The School Family practices have shown success across grades, ages, and schools across the nation for many years. Better Health says that the School Family practices of Conscious Discipline show "positive connections [that] attributed to the lowering of anxiety and depression, and the raising of self-esteem in both children and adults."[51] Some of these cornerstones practices include, but are not limited to:

- Many posted pictures of students, staff, families and community members prominently and proudly displayed around the building
- Greetings - each child greeted by name and high-5 or handshake in the morning and at each classroom transition
- Each space in the school having a "Safe Place" to encourage and support calming strategies
- Morning Circle (Crew) time in homeroom to start the day with a social skills lesson, role playing, and discussion time
- Classroom jobs - each student has a daily chore or service to complete as being a contributing member of the school family
- Conflict resolution using a "Time Machine" protocol
- Shared common language across the school students and staff
- Traditions and rites of passage including a school family chant

School leaders will regularly collect and review quarterly data on staff, student, and parent experiences, including social and emotional indicators, through surveys and empathy interviews. These will be done in person, on paper, and/or digitally in preferred languages. This feedback will be synthesized and shared with the MESA Board, staff, and families. From those trends, feedback will then be used to continue or adapt the social emotional learning programming at MESA. For instance, if feedback shows that students feel a sense of belonging because they see family photos on the walls, that practice will be continued. If parents feel like a certain topic - like cyberbullying - needs to be more heavily addressed during Crew meetings, then resources will be gathered to implement that parent input in the classroom. Because MESA is a school who is being made by, of, and for the community, centering voice from feedback is essential to providing an excellent and authentic experience.

MESA is committed to providing a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), a coherent, schoolwide framework that ensures every scholar receives the timely and right level of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support to thrive. At MESA, MTSS is not a stand-alone initiative, but an integrated system embedded within daily instruction and aligned to Jeffco's expectations for systematic, data-driven decision making, equitable access, and tiered interventions. Rather than waiting for students to fall behind, MESA proactively identifies strengths and needs early through universal screening (such as MAP and READ Act assessments), frequent progress monitoring (through daily checks for understanding), and

[50] Rebecca Anne Bailey. (2014). Conscious discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms. Loving Guidance.
[51] Shannon, J. (2023, October 27). Conscious Discipline Success in Texas: Benefits of the School Family at Any Age. Conscious Discipline.
https://consciousdiscipline.com/blog/benefits-of-the-school-family-at-any-age-educator-workshop-and-interview-with-diane-phelan/

collaborative problem solving (through group work). This preventative approach reflects our core belief in the brilliance of every child and our responsibility to remove barriers to achievement.

At the foundation of our MTSS model is strong Tier 1 core instruction, which Jeffco identifies as the most critical lever for student success. All scholars engage in high-quality, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction grounded in Expeditionary Learning, Illustrative Math, and enrichment practices that emphasize inquiry, critical thinking, and real-world application. Teachers use universal screeners, common formative assessments, and classroom data cycles to differentiate instruction through flexible grouping, targeted small-group supports, and scaffolded learning experiences. Because differentiation is built into daily practice, Tier 1 is designed to effectively meet the needs of at least 80% of students, demonstrating MESA's commitment to prevention and access before intervention.

When data indicate additional need, MESA provides Tier 2 targeted supports that are timely, evidence-based, and delivered in small groups during protected intervention blocks. These supports address specific skill gaps without removing scholars from core instruction. Student progress is monitored frequently, and instructional adjustments are made based on measurable outcomes. For scholars requiring more intensive assistance, Tier 3 individualized interventions provide personalized plans, increased instructional time, and coordinated collaboration with specialists, service providers, and families. Movement between tiers is fluid and responsive, ensuring supports are matched precisely to student growth and need.

Consistent with Jeffco's emphasis for whole-child systems and positive learning environments, MESA integrates behavioral and social-emotional supports alongside academics in the MTSS process. Clear expectations, restorative practices, and explicit instruction in self-regulation, collaboration, and perseverance foster safe, inclusive classrooms where scholars feel known and valued. This alignment of academic, behavioral, and social emotional support ensures that barriers to learning are addressed comprehensively rather than in isolation.

To uphold effective implementation, MESA establishes formal data cycles and collaborative structures that meet Jeffco's expectations for systematic progress monitoring and continuous improvement. Grade-level teams meet regularly to review scholar data, identify trends, design interventions, and evaluate impact using a structured problem-solving process. Leadership monitors fidelity of implementation, provides coaching, and allocates resources strategically to ensure consistency across classrooms. Families are active partners through ongoing communication, shared goal setting, and transparent reporting of progress.

Through this layered, coherent, and accountable approach, MTSS is embedded into the daily life of the school rather than treating it as a separate program, MESA ensures that no scholar falls through the cracks and every child is challenged, supported, and empowered to succeed. This comprehensive system operationalizes our mission and vision and positions MESA to meet — and exceed — district expectations for student growth, achievement, and whole-child development.

For remediation and intervention, MESA proactively plans for this with our educational model which is built on curriculum adjustment, cluster grouping with targeted small group instruction, and daily checks for understanding of the standards. For instance, curriculum compacting for acceleration is a proven Tier 3 intervention. Weekly Data Meetings will also ensure that instructional staff has no surprises of student performance and knows where students are performing in real time. However, if there is an additional need for remediation or intervention, the following options would be available:

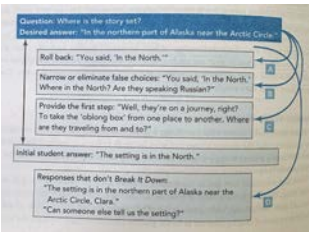
- Use of the Illustrative Math intervention component in small group lessons
- Additional UFLI small groups for foundational skills needs
- Clear checkpoints and criteria set forth in Weekly Data Team meetings which spur on the MTSS process for a student and create an individualized intervention plan

Research backed remediation and intervention strategies (from Teach Like a Champion) to be used in conjunction with curriculum and small group lessons include: Break It Down, Do It Again, and Show Call.

Teach Like a Champion 3.0 Strategies[52]

Teach Like a Champion Strategy Name	**Break It Down (link)** Goal: correcting a misconception at the point of error while the student is still doing as much of the thinking as possible	**Do It Again (link)** Goal: building a habit of doing and giving our best for what scholars already know how to do	**Show Call (link)** Goal: responding to an error in the moment by studying the error, itself, against a criteria for success
Teachers will…	Provide an example, provide a rule, provide next steps that are the smallest variable hint	Prompt "let's try that again" when something is routine/known and not done to the highest standard	Publicly show a student's work that's "almost there" for mastery of the lesson objective
Students wil…	Implement thinking from teacher probes to notice and correct mistake	Quickly recall and reflect and complete in the highest standard	Add discourse and discussion to an error analysis of their peer's work and implement the consensus next step to take the work to meeting expectations

[52] Lemov, D. (2021). Teach like a champion 3.0: 63 techniques that put students on the path to college. (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Example from a classroom		Students are reading a passage aloud with little energy. The teacher says, "Okay. You read it correctly, but in this classroom, we're going for world class. Let's try that again with some expression at those exclamation marks."	Teacher projects student's work: 36 + 27 = 513 Teacher asks: where does it drift from the criteria? Peer says: She should put the 3 in the ones place and carry the 1 to the tens. Teacher asks: So what's our next step (students correct error) Student says: Oh, that makes sense, I forgot to carry to the tens place. *A more expansive version of a show-call conversation can be found in Appendix "Section E"
Why it works	Not only does this correct a student misconception in a timely manner, it also creates a rigorous conversation for the student to think through and self-correct	It shortens the feedback loop and reinforces accountability for excellence.	It makes mistakes and risktaking okay by creating a culture of error as completely normal. Students find mistakes, study them versus a criteria for success without defensiveness and learn from a powerful error analysis.

As an additional enrichment offering for MESA scholars, summer school programs will be offered directly by MESA staff members and include core academic content in math and literacy, as well as, problem-based learning opportunities and further field trips and enrichment opportunities. MESA staff will teach core content from the major standards of each grade level in math and literacy and integrate Common Core speaking and listening skills into the projects during the summer to further grow students' public speaking, writing, and presentation skills and couple with the exhibitions of the traditional school year. All MESA staff will obtain license to drive passenger vans and parent permission to allow for consistent access to field work and experiential learning.

Impacting the direct student experience are staff programming and funding needs. MESA will build in paid time off once a year for all staff to attend a conference, go on a trip, or have the time to experience something they are passionate about and can bring back to enhance the student experience at MESA. This could be a docent class at a museum, a conference on early literacy, or a trip organized by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. We will ensure that our adults get to expand their skills and passion like our students do. This is accounted for in the draft budget as a line item on row 19 and called "Paid day off for professional learning day of choice…"

F. Plan for Evaluating Pupil Performance

MESA's student achievement and growth will be measured by annual and interim performance metrics. For all students, core curriculum assessments, as well as, district and state metrics will be used to ensure that our students are equipped with skills to succeed on grade level tasks and assessments. The academic goal of MESA is to provide the first Expeditionary Learning K-8 school in Jeffco and a strong instructional core dependent on high quality instructional materials and students' daily use of grade level texts and tasks. This supports students in meeting demands of Common Core State Standards. The assessments listed below are proven to be reliable and valid measures of student performance in relation to Common Core State Standards and state expectations.

MESA Pupil Assessment Goals to Achieve Performance State Performance Rating

Academic Area/Subject	Measurement Tool	Frequency (per school year)	Goal
ELA (K-8th grade)	Pre-Assessments with independent writing sample	Once before and and the mid-point each Expeditionary Learning Module (~8 times per year)	This data will be used to group students by grasp on objectives towards mastery of the unit's standards, so teachers can adjust daily instruction and small group instruction for each student with an end of year goal of 80% of students meeting the end of year writing benchmark
READ Act (K-3rd grade foundational literacy skills)	DIBELs	4+ times per year depending on performance level	Growth: 80% or more of students make their individual growth goal on DIBELs during the school year. Status: 75% of students score at grade level in foundational skills, and in turn, 25% or less of students are assigned a READ Plan.
ELA (3rd-8th grade)	Interim Assessments and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)	3-4 times	Growth: 75% or more of students make their individual growth goal on MAP during the school year. This can be used as one predictor of Median

			Growth Percentile scores on SPF.
ELA (K-8th grade) along with cross curricular connections	Exhibition of Service Learning Projects paired with Student Talent Portfolio Reflections	4 times	Students will culminate their ELA module goals and problems of practice with a service learning project to publicly present. Students will reflect on self-selected goals about how they met the criteria for success of the module. The goal is for 95% of students to have 4 reflections of service learning in their portfolio at the end of the year.
ELA (3rd-8th grade)	CMAS	1 time (spring)	Status: 60% or more of students have a scaled score at or above the 50th percentile rank (3rd-5th grade 734.5, 6th-8th grade 731.2). This aligns with a “meets” rating on the SPF.
Math (K-8th grade)	Pre-Assessments	Once before each Illustrative Math instructional unit (~12 times per year)	This data will be used to group students by grasp on objectives towards mastery of the unit’s standards, so teachers can adjust daily instruction and small group instruction for each student. The goal is that 95% or more of students complete all pre-assessments.
Math (K-8th grade)	Interim Assessments and MAP	3-4 times	Growth: 75% or more of students make their individual growth goal on MAP during the school year. This can be used as one predictor of Median Growth Percentile scores on SPF.
Math (3rd-8th grade)	CMAS	1 time (spring)	Status: 60% or more of students have a scaled

			score at or above the 50th percentile rank (3rd-5th grade 739.5, 6th-8th grade 740.1). This aligns with a “meets” rating on the SPF.
Science (3rd-8th grade as assigned by the State)	CMAS	1 time (spring)	Status: 60% or more of students have a scaled score at or above the 50th percentile rank 5th grade: 601.7, 8th grade: 591.4). This aligns with a “meets” rating on the SPF.
MLL - On track for English proficiency	ACCESS on track on CDE School Performance Framework	1 time (spring); 4+ times per year for ongoing in-house progress monitoring body of student evidence (containing all domains of language: reading, writing, listening, and speaking)	55% or higher of continuously enrolled MESA MLL students will score “on track” for English proficiency. This aligns with a “meets” rating on the SPF.

In addition to this assessment calendar, daily checks for understanding through exit tickets and independent work will be used to guide students towards standards mastery.

Frequent parent–teacher conferences are essential because they strengthen communication, align support between home and school, and allow educators and families to respond quickly and collaboratively to each student’s academic and social-emotional needs. MESA will host four annual conferences; this is double the number of conferences that most traditional schools offer. The quarterly schedule also aligns with the number of public exhibitions students present which are a vehicle to communicate student learning. Content teachers and students will co-lead their individual portfolio reflections and present current data and student work to show progress towards goals and mastery of standards. This looks like a student sharing their goals, reflections, and an exemplar piece of independent work with their family to lead off the conference.

For regular parent involvement and communication sharing, MESA will use the Class Dojo app. Class Dojo’s student digital student portfolio tool will support the core value of engagement, as students will record their exhibition presentations and get teacher and peer feedback to use to refine for public exhibition nights. Staff will use Class Dojo to meet unique needs of all students in tracking core values, behavior, attendance, etc in a way that keeps student data private and updates parents in real time in their home language. With the use of ClassDojo as a parent communication tool, parents and guardians will see real-time progress (in their home language) at least weekly through posts on the class story. For example, a teacher might post that 89% of students scored mastery on a math quiz or 92% of students in the class

met their DIBELs goals. This data can be used as part of a body of evidence in the MTSS process if needed.

As a schoolwide community, goals will be reported on publicly, in person, at the quarterly public exhibitions of learning, as well as, through written communication weekly from the school leadership team. Below is an example of what that may look like on a regular basis.

MESA's Current Goals (Example)		
Early Literacy (DIBELs)	Elementary Math (Unit Assessments)	Middle School ELA (Interim Assessments)
Goal: By the end of the year, 70% of students are meeting current grade level expectations in foundational literacy skills Current state: –% meeting Action step: Teachers will…Students will…	Goal: By the end of the year, 70% of students are meeting current grade level expectations in math Current state: –% meeting Action step: Teachers will…Students will…	Goal: By January, more than 50% of 6-8 students show on-track performance for CMAS Math Current state: –% meeting Action step: Teachers will…Students will…

MESA will provide professional development (see section I "Employees" for more details) to staff in the area of assessment in the following ways:

- Data Driven Instruction (from RELAY Graduate School of Education)
- Calibration of scoring and co-scoring based on vetted rubrics
- Backwards and Universal Design from an assessment
- Ensuring accommodations and differentiation are in place
- Daily checks for understanding through independent work and exit tickets

These areas of development when put in practice will support in planning and refining curriculum, detecting needed intervention early, and informing daily practice married with meeting goals. To further support coaching in these areas, academic leaders will be trained through the RELAY Graduate School of Education in the protocols for: Weekly Data Meetings, Data Driven Instruction, and Unit and Lesson Internalization. This leader development ensures common language, look fors, and expectations amongst instructional staff and consistency in coaching and outcomes for teachers.

G. Budget and Finance: Establishing Business Operations

MESA is committed to building a strong foundation of fiscal responsibility and operational excellence to support its educational mission. From inception, MESA will establish transparent, functional, and accountable business operations aligned with state, district, and federal requirements. Our financial strategy emphasizes sustainability, oversight, and stewardship of public and private funds.

MESA's business office will be led by a Director Operations, who will report to the Executive Director and liaise directly with the Board of Directors. This role will provide leadership over budgeting, procurement, compliance, and financial reporting. This role will begin in Year 3 of operation with the Executive Director fulfilling these responsibilities until then. Additional essential roles include:

- Business Manager (on-site employee in main office, reports to Director of Operations) – Oversees daily financial transactions, accounts payable/receivable, and purchasing. Further delineation or roles and responsibilities addressed below.
- HR/Payroll Coordinator (contracted, then on-site as growth is scaled up after Year 5) – Manages payroll processing, benefits, and employee records.
  External Bookkeeper (contracted) – Supports monthly reconciliations and quarterly reports.

This structure allows for robust financial operations with the flexibility to scale as the school grows.

MESA will implement an industry-standard, cloud-based accounting system such as QuickBooks Nonprofit or FundEZ, allowing real-time access to financial data and compliance with GAAP.

Financial operations will include:

- Cash Management – Overseen by the Business Manager with monthly reconciliation by a third-party bookkeeper (as listed in roles above).
- Purchasing – Governed by a purchasing policy requiring quotes and multi-tiered approvals. Purchases over $1,000 require Director of Finance and Executive Director approval; over $5,000 require board approval.
- Accounts Payable/Receivable – Managed by-weekly in-house with documented review with Office Manager, Director of Finance and Operations and Executive Director and approval processes.
- Payroll – Processed monthly through a contracted payroll provider; HR ensures timekeeping compliance.
- Fixed Assets – Tracked and inventoried annually; assets over $500 are logged in a fixed asset management system.

MESA's annual budget will be developed by the Executive Director and Director of Finance and approved by the Board Finance Committee. The process will begin in February each year, with final approval by May. Budgets will reflect strategic priorities, enrollment projections, and long-term sustainability goals. The Director of Finance will provide monthly budget-to-actual reports and quarterly forecasts. These are reviewed by the Finance Committee and shared at full board meetings, with budget amendments requiring board approval.

MESA will implement robust checks and balances, including:

- Dual Signatures – All disbursements over $2,500 require two authorized signers.
  Spending Limits – Tiered authority ensures no single individual can authorize high-value transactions alone.
- Division of Duties – Clear separation of responsibility among staff for approval, execution, and reconciliation.
- Board Oversight – Finance Committee will conduct regular reviews and spot reviews.

MESA will contract with a licensed, independent CPA firm to conduct an annual audit in compliance with state and federal guidelines. The audit will be submitted to Jeffco Public Schools and CDE, and any findings will be addressed through board-approved corrective action plans.

MESA plans to contract out several core financial and operational services:

- Bookkeeping and Reporting
- Payroll and Benefits Administration
  HR Compliance Support (as needed during early growth years)

MESA's five-year financial model outlines a balanced budget based on conservative enrollment projections and realistic cost assumptions. In the start-up years, revenues will come from:

- Per-pupil funding through Jeffco Public Schools
- Start-up grants from the Colorado Charter School Program (anticipated)
- Private contributions from foundations and community partners
- In-kind donations of services, equipment, and professional expertise

Start-up costs will include curriculum development, technology acquisition, initial staffing, and facilities preparation. MESA will prioritize operational costs that directly impact student learning while maintaining reserves and contingency planning.

MESA is in the process of securing private revenue streams, including:

- Foundation grants: As of January 2026, MESA is a finalist for Charter School Growth Fund Seed Funding, semi-finalist for NewSchools Funding, and applying for Charter School CSP funding. The total awards of these three grants is over $2 million.
- Individual donations through a founding capital campaign
- Corporate sponsorships and community partnerships for enrichment programs

Private funds will support non-core expenses such as after-school programming, arts integration, and experiential learning.

MESA will fully comply with District and CDE financial reporting requirements, Federal Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) and EDGAR rules, as well as Colorado's Financial Transparency Act, including public posting of financial documents. All financial staff will receive training in state and federal compliance protocols.

The MESA Board of Directors is deeply committed to fiscal transparency and oversight. The Board's Finance Committee, led by a member with a CPA or financial background, will meet monthly to review financial reports, monitor budget health, and ensure accountability. All financial decisions will be aligned with MESA's strategic plan and core values, with regular reporting to the full board to support informed governance.

Salaries at MESA will be competitive and mission-aligned. Compensation will include:

- Comprehensive benefits, including health, dental, vision, and retirement contributions
- Additional yearly 1.0-1.5% performance bonus for meeting or exceeding end of year evaluation rating
- Honoring up to ten years of previous experience to set initial salary step

We project that no less than 50% of annual expenditures will be dedicated to salaries and benefits, underscoring our commitment to investing in people as our most valuable asset. In the first three years of operation, this salary dedication is 60-80% of annual expenditures. The draft budget assumes that founding teachers have around eight-to-ten years of experience per the MESA compensation plan in Appendix "Section G: Budget and Finance." This supports hiring qualified and experienced candidates for a strong start for MESA scholars and families.

Version 2.0	**Year 1 (2027-28)**	**Year 2 (2028-29)**	**Year 3 (2029-30)**	**Year 4 (2030-31)**	**Year 5 (2031-32)**
Grades Served	**K**	**K-2**	**K-3**	**K-4**	**K-5**
Kindergarten Class Size	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**
Kindergarten Classes	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*
1st Grade Class Size	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**
1st Grade Classes	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*
2nd Grade Class Size		**24**	**24**	**24**	**24**
2nd Grade Classes		*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*
3rd Grade Class Size			**24**	**24**	**24**
3rd Grade Classes			*2*	*2*	*2*
4th Grade Class Size				**24**	**24**
4th Grade Classes				*2*	*2*
5th Grade Class Size					**24**
5th Grade Classes					*2*
6th Grade Class Size					
6th Grade Classes					
7th Grade Class Size					
7th Grade Classes					
8th Grade Class Size					

8th Grade Classes					
Total Enrollment	**96**	**144**	**192**	**240**	**288**
Average Class Size	24	24	24	24	24
Annual Growth		48	48	48	48
General Assumptions					
Jeffco Per Pupil Revenue	$11,038	$11,038	$11,038	$11,038	$11,038
MLO	$1,893	$1,893	$1,893	$1,893	$1,893
PPR + MLO	$12,931	$12,931	$12,931	$12,931	$12,931
Enrollment only revenue	$1,241,375	$1,862,063	$2,482,750	$3,103,438	$3,724,125
Other Revenues					
State Special Education Funds Per Pupil (ECEA) (~15% of students at $1750 pp)	$25,200	$37,800	$50,400	$63,000	$75,600
State Revenue Per Pupil (State Facilities Assistance, Capital Construction: ~$396 pp)	$38,016	$57,024	$76,032	$95,040	$114,048
Colorado READ Act	$51,552	$77,328	$103,104	$128,880	$154,656
Federal Revenue	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Local Revenue					
Grants (CSF, CSP, CSGF Seed, New Schools)	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000		
Donations					
Summary of Revenues					
MLO & PPR Revenues	$1,241,375	$1,862,063	$2,482,750	$3,103,438	$3,724,125
Non-PPR/MLO Revenues	$364,768	$422,152	$479,536	$286,920	$344,304
Total Revenue	**$1,606,143**	**$2,284,215**	**$2,962,286**	**$3,390,358**	**$4,068,429**

MESA Draft Spending for First Five Years

Year	Year 1 (2027-28)	Year 2 (2028-29)	Year 3 (2029-30)	Year 4 (2030-31)	Year 5 (2031-32)
REVENUE					
Carry-Forward/Unused Reserves	$0	$109,744	$217,979	$711,246	$1,127,685
Enrollment Revenue	$1,606,143	$2,284,215	$3,571,864	$4,887,766	$6,328,668
Revenue Subtotal	**$1,606,143**	**$2,393,959**	**$3,789,842**	**$5,599,012**	**$7,456,352**
EXPENSES					
Building Lease	**$102,000**	**$393,000**	**$478,860**	**$507,588**	**$554,184**
Instructional Staffing (Rows 11- 17 include salary + paid comprehensive benefits)					
Teaching Staff	$492,500	$689,500	$939,375	$1,801,000	$2,087,500
Lead Teachers	$98,500	$98,500	$197,000	$197,000	$295,500
Front Office/ Exec Leadership	$366,000	$377,000	$545,000	$721,000	$829,000
Mental Health/ Behavior	$34,791	$83,500	$197,000	$197,000	$208,750
Special Education/ MTSS	$52,187	$93,937	$104,375	$208,750	$208,750
MLL / Language Development	$20,875	$52,187	$88,500	$104,375	$104,375
Other (paraprofessionals, apprentice teachers)	$0	$0	$52,000	$104,000	$156,000
Professional Development	$1,000	$1,500	$3,000	$5,000	$7,000
Paid day off for professional learning day of choice	$2,420	$3,740	$5,280	$6,600	$7,040
Staffing Subtotal	**$1,068,273**	**$1,399,864**	**$2,131,530**	**$3,344,725**	**$3,903,915**
Operations					
Nursing/ Health Tech	$52,800	$52,800	$52,800	$52,800	$52,800
Janitorial	$55,000	$55,000	$55,000	$55,000	$55,000
Campus Safety Officer	$52,800	$52,800	$52,800	$52,800	$105,600
Raptor Security ID System and Camera Maintenance	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000
Trash	$14,400	$14,400	$14,400	$14,400	$14,400
WiFi	$1,728	$2,592	$3,456	$4,320	$5,184
Food and Nutrition	$76,800	$115,200	$153,600	$192,000	$230,400

Payroll & Bookkeeping	$2,688	$3,984	$5,280	$6,144	$7,152
HR Consultation	$41,600	$41,600	$41,600	$41,600	$41,600
Transportation (Vans, Maintenance, Gas, and Training)	$24,000	$24,000	$36,000	$36,000	$48,000
Annual Audit	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000
Operations Subtotal	**$289,016**	**$329,576**	**$382,136**	**$422,264**	**$527,336**
Supplies and Materials					
Curriculum (Imagine Learning bundle is ~$50/student)	$4,800	$7,200	$9,600	$12,000	$14,400
Consumable Materials and Copying including machines	$14,400	$21,600	$28,800	$36,000	$43,200
Furniture	$0	$1,500	$10,000	$15,000	$30,000
Books	$960	$1,440	$1,920	$2,400	$2,880
Devices (staff laptops, student computer cart)	$15,700	$19,700	$23,700	$27,700	$31,700
Exhibitions and Family Events	$500	$750	$1,500	$3,000	$3,500
Photos and awards	$250	$350	$550	$650	$750
Playground/ Outdoor learning equipment	$500	$1,000	$10,000	$100,000	$200,000
Supplies and Materials Subtotal	**$37,110**	**$53,540**	**$86,070**	**$196,750**	**$326,430**
Reserve	**$109,744**	**$217,979**	**$711,246**	**$1,127,685**	**$2,144,487**
Year	**Year 1 (2027-28)**	**Year 2 (2028-29)**	**Year 3 (2029-30)**	**Year 4 (2030-31)**	**Year 5 (2031-32)**
Ending Balance	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

MESA plans to open with 48 Kindergarteners and 48 First graders, 96 total scholars in Year 1. MESA needs 88 Kindergarten and First Grade scholars in Year 1 to be financially sound. Contingency plans for budget balance include (specific to Year 1):

- Plan A: Use of $109,744 in reserves (covers about 8 students' PPR)
- Plan B: Reduce the Lead Teacher role ($98,500) and have the Principal assume coaching duties (covers about 7 students' PPR)

H. Governance

MESA's founding board was assembled through an intentional, mission-centered recruitment process. Because MESA exists to increase access, opportunity, and voice in Lakewood and Two Creeks neighborhood, the founder sought individuals who share a deep commitment to whole-child learning, equitable access to rigorous instruction, and the belief that diverse perspectives strengthen school governance. Potential members were identified through education networks, local organizations, parent recommendations, and partnerships from the founder's leadership experience in West Denver.

Each individual was screened for mission alignment and for the expertise needed to launch a high-quality Expeditionary Learning school. Areas prioritized included: instructional leadership, EL Education, finance and nonprofit accounting, law and governance, community engagement, facilities management, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Candidates met with founding members to discuss the expectations of charter governance, long-term responsibilities, and the operational demands of opening a new school.

The governing board as a whole is responsible for ensuring that MESA remains mission-aligned, academically excellent, fiscally sound, compliant with all federal and state regulations, and accountable to the families and community it serves.

Founding MESA Board Members

Name	Organization/Role
Patty Kipp, M.A.	Board Chair, University of Denver: Design Improvement Coach
Annie Carlon, BBA Finance	Treasurer, Partner at ACRU Solutions
Dino Reyes, Jr.	Vice Chair, Dean of Culture at Lake Middle School
Jill Duncan, M.Ed	Secretary, Director of Client Service at Vivvi

Resumes for all founding board members are included in the application Appendix "Section H: Governance."

Process to Appoint or Elect the Founding Board

Because a formal board election cannot occur until the charter is authorized as a Colorado nonprofit public school, founding board members were appointed through the following structured process:

1. Nomination: Candidates were nominated by the founder and/or a founding board chair.
2. Vetting: The Governance Committee conducted interviews and evaluated candidates using a skills-based board matrix.

3. Review: Qualifications, commitment to MESA's mission, and alignment with Expeditionary Learning principles and belief in enrichment for all were reviewed collaboratively
4. Appointment: The founding steering committee voted to confirm each new member by majority vote.
5. Orientation: Appointed members completed initial governance training and received the draft bylaws, articles of incorporation, and conflict of interest policies.

Transition of the Founding Board to an Operational Board

MESA's founding board will serve through the planning year and first year of school operations to ensure continuity and stability. The transition process includes the following timeline:

- Planning Year (Year 0): Founding board finalizes bylaws, oversees facility preparation, monitors budget development, and hires the Executive Director.
- Year 1: Founding board monitors academic start-up, student enrollment, financial health, and legal compliance, completing a formal board self-assessment.
- End of Year 1: Founding terms begin to transition into staggered terms. Members with remaining time in their 3–5 year founding terms continue; others rotate out.
- Year 2 (planned year of opening): The board transitions to full operational status with staggered terms, the required parent seat, and additional community representation.
- Ongoing: The Governance Committee leads annual board recruitment aligned to mission, skills needs, and representation of Two Creeks neighborhoods.

Parent and Community Involvement in the Board

MESA intentionally includes both parent and community voices in its governance structure. At least **one board seat is reserved for a parent or guardian** of an enrolled MESA student. The board will also recruit community members who reflect the demographics and lived experiences of the Two Creeks community, including multilingual, multicultural, and historically underserved populations. This ensures that decision-making remains grounded in authentic stakeholder representation.

Board Member Agreement and Conflict of Interest Statement

Draft Board Member Agreement and Conflict of Interest Policy documents are included in the application appendix.

Board Procedures

1. Nonprofit Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

MESA's nonprofit articles of incorporation and draft bylaws are attached in the application appendix. The initial registered agent is Eric Hall, 24 South Weber Street, Suite 40, Colorado Springs, CO 80903.

2. Board Terms, Structure, Officers, Meetings, and Governance Responsibilities, Board Composition, Terms, and Term Limits

- The MESA governing board will consist of five voting members during its founding years and may expand to seven members as the school grows.
- The board will always seek to maintain an odd number of members to ensure clear majority voting.
- Founding terms: 3–5 years to ensure stability through early school development.
- Operational terms: Two-year terms, staggered, with a maximum of two consecutive terms.

Board Officers and Their Roles

MESA's founding board officers will include:

- **Board Chair – Patty Kipp, School Design Improvement Coach and Professor, University of Denver** Board Chair Key Responsibilities: Leads governance operations, facilitates meetings, and serves as the primary liaison to the Executive Director. The Board Chair provides strategic leadership to the governing board and ensures that MESA remains mission-driven, legally compliant, and academically focused.

    - Lead the governing board in fulfilling its fiduciary, strategic, and oversight responsibilities in accordance with the Colorado Charter Schools Act and nonprofit law.
    - Facilitate all board meetings, ensuring agendas are aligned to strategic priorities, student outcomes, and charter obligations.
    - Serve as the primary liaison between the governing board and the Executive Director, maintaining clear boundaries between governance and day-to-day operations.
    - Guide the board through the founding and start-up phase, including charter implementation, policy adoption, and organizational development.
    - Oversee the development, hiring, support, and evaluation of the Executive Director in alignment with board-adopted goals and performance metrics.
    - Ensure the board engages in annual self-assessment, goal setting, and ongoing governance training.
    - Represent the board in communications with Jeffco Public Schools, authorizers, and key external stakeholders as appropriate.
    - Uphold and model the school's core values of collaboration, equity, service, and community voice.

- **Vice Chair, Dino Reyes, Jr., Dean of Culture at Lake Middle School** – The Vice Chair supports the Board Chair and ensures continuity of leadership and governance effectiveness. Key responsibilities areas follows:
    - Support the Board Chair in planning agendas, facilitating meetings, and advancing board priorities.
    - Assume the responsibilities of the Board Chair when the Chair is unavailable or recused.
    - Lead special initiatives or committees as assigned (e.g., governance, strategic planning, or board development).
    - Support board recruitment efforts, including identifying prospective members aligned to MESA's mission and community.
    - Assist in monitoring progress toward board goals and charter commitments.
    - Serve as a thought partner to the Chair and Executive Director, particularly during the founding and transition phases.

- **Secretary, Jill Duncan, Director of Client Service at Vivvi** – The Secretary ensures transparency, documentation, and compliance with statutory and charter requirements. Key responsibilities of this role include:
    - Maintain accurate and complete records of board meetings, including agendas, minutes, votes, and official actions.
    - Ensure compliance with Colorado Open Meetings Law, Open Records requirements, and board documentation expectations.
      Maintain governance records, including bylaws, articles of incorporation, board policies, board rosters, and term information.
    - Oversee the timely posting and archiving of required public documents.
    - Support onboarding of new board members by ensuring access to governance materials and orientation resources.
      Coordinate with the Chair and Executive Director to ensure board actions are properly documented and implemented.

- **Treasurer, Annie Carlon, Principal at ACRU Solutions Accounting** – The Treasurer provides financial oversight to ensure the fiscal health and sustainability of the school. Key responsibilities are:
    - Oversee the financial affairs of the organization in partnership with the Executive Director and financial service providers.
      Review and present financial reports, budgets, and forecasts to the board on a regular basis.
    - Ensure appropriate financial controls, internal procedures, and fiscal policies are in place and followed.

- Lead the board's oversight of the annual budget, audit, and financial compliance requirements.
- Monitor cash flow, reserves, and long-term financial sustainability, particularly during start-up years.
- Support the board in understanding financial statements and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Serve as chair or active member of the Finance Committee when established.

Collectively, all founding board officers are responsible for modeling MESA's core values of collaboration, equity, service, and community voice. Officers are expected to prepare for and actively participate in meetings, comply with Conflict of Interest requirements, engage in ongoing governance training, and hold themselves and one another accountable to high standards of ethical leadership. As MESA grows, the officers will guide the board through a planned transition from a founding governance structure to a stable, operational board that continues to reflect the needs of the school and the community it serves. After the terms of these founding board members at MESA, these roles will continue with the transition to an operational board. In addition, there will be two more seats added as the school grows to increase and ensure Two Creeks and Lakewood community representation.

Meeting Frequency

The MESA board will meet monthly during the planning year and at least ten times per year thereafter. Additional meetings may be held as needed in accordance with Colorado's Open Meetings Law.

Election of New Members

All new members will be elected by a majority vote of the sitting board after completing the established recruitment and vetting process led by the Governance Committee.

Parent, Community, and Appointed Seats

- At least one parent/guardian of an enrolled MESA student will serve as a voting board member.
- At least one community member from Lakewood/Two Creeks Neighborhood will serve as a voting member.
- Initial founding seats will be appointed; ongoing seats may be filled through either parent election or board appointment, depending on final bylaws.

Duties of Individual Board Members and the Governing Board

Each board member is responsible for:

- Upholding MESA's mission, vision, and values.
- Maintaining fiduciary and legal oversight.
- Reviewing and approving school policies required by state and district law.

- Ensuring financial sustainability, including budgeting and audits.
- Addressing parent and staff complaints in accordance with established policy.
- Participating in ongoing governance training.
- Hiring, evaluating, and supporting the Executive Director.
- Ensuring the School Accountability Committee meets statutory requirements.
- Complying with Open Meetings Law, Open Records Law, FERPA, and conflict of interest policies.
- Attending and preparing for all scheduled meetings.
- Demonstrating understanding of corporate documents, bylaws, financial statements, and charter requirements.
- Ensuring MESA is on track to meet its academic benchmark goals with supporting data

The governing board as a whole is responsible for ensuring that MESA remains mission-aligned, academically excellent, fiscally sound, compliant with all federal and state regulations, and accountable to the families and community it serves. Draft Board Member policies, as well as, Board Member resumes are available in Appendix "Section H: Governance."

I. Employees

MESA values its employees as partners and teammates who live out our mission and vision for our community. The employment relationship between staff and the charter school is that staff are hired as at-will employees. To support their success, there are systems in place to honor, develop, and guide them as professionals. One guiding document is a draft staff handbook that is available in Appendix "Section E: Employees" of the application. This handbook states professional expectations for MESA staff. MESA's robust professional development plan, driven by learning cycles, shows the professional development plan, observation and feedback cycles, and frequency of formal evaluations. Each of the core values of the school has its own dedicated weekslong learning cycle connection. The core values thread through what content and focus areas are at the forefront. The mission and vision and core values of the school are also operationalized through our school Operations Guidelines available in the appendix. The draft of the school operations guidelines that outline staff, student, and visitor expectations in daily school operations for transparency and alignment.

MESA Professional Development Learning Cycles

Learning Cycle	1 Summer PD	2 (Weeks 1-6)	3 (Weeks 7-14)	4 (Weeks 15-22)	5 (Weeks 23-30)	6 End of Year Celebrations (Weeks 31-34)
Focus	Strong Start	Learning Environment & School Culture	Rigor	Joy	Leadership	Reflection

School Culture and Core Values	all 4 core values	Motivation	Accountability	Engagement	Service	Reflection; all 4 core values
Mental Health/ SEL		-Greetings -Safe Place & Breathing -Classroom Jobs	-Seven Skills of Discipline[53]: -Choices -Consequences -Conflict Resolution	-Seven Skills of Discipline: -Positive Intent -Assertiveness	-Seven Skills of Discipline: -Empathy -Encouragement -Composure	-Seven Skills of Discipline Review
Weekly Data Meeting	Week 00: State of the School and yearly academic targets	-Intro Week 1 -Start collection Week 2 -Weekly based on a focus standard	-Weekly based on a focus standard	-Weekly based on a focus standard	-Weekly based on a focus standard	EOY State of the School Planning for upcoming UIP and yearly academic targets
Observation/ Feedback and Instructional Coaching	-Intro process Week 0	-Weeks 2, 4, 6	-Weeks 8, 10, 12, 14	-Weeks 16, 18, 20, 22	-Weeks 24, 26, 28, 30	Reflection of process and effectiveness
MTSS Referrals and Meetings	n/a	-Intro team and process Week 4 -Launch Week 6	-Week 12 -Week 15	-Week 18 -Week 21	-Week 24 -Week 30	Reflection of process and effectiveness; transition meetings
Grade/ Department level planning	-Week 0	-Week 3	-Week 9	-Week 15 -Week 21	-Week 27 -Week 30	Reflection of process and effectiveness
Vertical Unit Internalization	-Week 0: Module 1; ICLD lesson planning with 4 domains	-Week 6: Module 2	-Week 12: Module 3	-Week 18: Module 4	-Week 24: Final Exhibitions	Reflection of process and effectiveness
Special Education Professional Learning	-Week 0 review IEPs/504s with Sped Team	-Week 5: FAPE, IDEA, mindful parent communication	-Week 13: data collection and progress monitoring	-Week 21: accommodations, proactive approaches	-Week 29: student plan reviews	Reflection of process and effectiveness; transition meetings
MultiLingual Learners Professional Learning	-Week 0: language development needs	-Week 1: Visuals	-Week 7: Habits of Discussion	-Week 15: Everybody writes	-Week 23: ACCESS/WIDA data and goal setting	Reflection of process and effectiveness; transition meetings
Gifted and Talented Professional Learning	-Week 0: traits of a gifted student	-Week 4: Student Reflection portfolios	-Week 12: Curriculum Compacting	-Week 20: Cluster grouping	-Week 28: Presentation skills	Reflection of process and effectiveness; transition

[53] Seven Skills. (n.d.). Conscious Discipline. https://consciousdiscipline.com/methodology/seven-skills/

						meetings
Safety and Preparedness Professional Learning	-Week 00 safety protocols practice	-Week 2	-Week 8 Ongoing monthly drills	-Review Ops guide after winter break; ongoing monthly drills	Ongoing monthly drills	Reflection of process and effectiveness
Formal Evaluation	-Week 00: review tool and system	-Week 6	-Week 13	-Week 21	-Week 29	-EOY Convos Week 31

Continuous Improvement through the Professional Development Calendar

MESA's annual learning cycle is intentionally designed as a coherent, data-driven system that builds a strong school culture, ensures rigorous and engaging instruction, and supports continuous improvement for scholars and staff. The year is organized into six phases—Summer Preparation, Strong Start, Rigor, Joy, Leadership, and Reflection—each with explicit priorities, professional learning, and measurable outcomes aligned to the Jeffco rubric indicators for high-quality instruction, safe and inclusive environments, and systematic performance monitoring.

Summer Preparation and Strong Start

The school year begins with summer professional development and Week 0 launch activities that establish systems, expectations, and shared purpose. Staff analyze the State of the School, set annual academic targets, internalize curriculum, review IEPs/504s and language development needs, and receive training in safety protocols, evaluation systems, and inclusive practices. During the first six weeks, teachers intentionally establish learning environments rooted in MESA's four core values—motivation, accountability, engagement, and service—through daily greetings, safe-place routines, breathing strategies, and classroom jobs that foster belonging and responsibility. Foundational social-emotional and behavior systems, including the Seven Skills of Discipline, are explicitly taught to ensure a predictable, supportive climate where all students can learn.

Instructional Rigor and Data-Driven Practice

From Weeks 1–30, MESA implements a consistent cycle of weekly data meetings focused on priority standards. Teachers analyze formative and benchmark data, identify trends, and adjust instruction and interventions in real time. This ongoing progress monitoring ensures alignment to Jeffco's expectations for evidence-based decision-making and equitable outcomes. Vertical unit internalization occurs approximately every six weeks, allowing teams to unpack standards, plan aligned lessons using four instructional domains, and calibrate rigor and expectations across grade levels.

Coaching, Observation, and Professional Growth

Instructional quality is strengthened through a structured observation, feedback, and coaching cadence. Leaders introduce the process at the start of the year and conduct regular coaching cycles every two to four weeks. Feedback is actionable, standards-aligned, and directly connected to student outcomes. Formal evaluations occur at multiple points throughout the year, culminating in end-of-year conferences that synthesize growth, effectiveness, and next steps. This system ensures ongoing professional learning and accountability, consistent with Jeffco's expectations for instructional excellence.

MTSS and Student Support Systems

MESA operates a clearly defined Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to ensure every scholar receives the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports needed to thrive. Following team onboarding early in the year, referral and review meetings occur regularly to monitor interventions, adjust plans, and collaborate with families. Grade-level and department teams meet at scheduled intervals to analyze student needs and coordinate supports. Transition and reflection meetings at year's end ensure continuity of services and proactive planning. A detailed intervention menu is available in Appendix "Section I: Employees."

Targeted Professional Learning for Diverse Learners

Professional learning is differentiated to ensure staff can effectively serve all learners:

- Special Education: training on FAPE/IDEA, compliance, progress monitoring, accommodations, and proactive communication with families.
- Multilingual Learners: strategies aligned to WIDA, including visuals, structured discussion habits, writing scaffolds, and ACCESS/WIDA data analysis and goal setting.
- Gifted and Talented: identification practices, curriculum compacting, cluster grouping, reflection portfolios, and presentation skills.

These cycles build staff capacity to implement inclusive, culturally responsive practices and ensure equitable access to grade-level rigor.

Culture, Joy, and Leadership

Throughout the year, MESA intentionally cultivates engagement and joy through service opportunities, student leadership, collaborative exhibitions, and celebrations of learning. Students practice empathy, encouragement, composure, and conflict resolution, strengthening both academic perseverance and character development. Final exhibitions and community events highlight authentic learning and reinforce strong family partnerships.

Safety and Operational Readiness

Student and staff safety remain a continuous priority. Staff participate in protocol training at the start of the year and engage in regular drills and operational reviews to ensure preparedness and a secure learning environment. A safe school environment is foundational to

student learning, well-being, and academic success, and is essential for fostering trust among families and staff. As our founder attended Board of Education forums and listened to community questions and input, safety remains a top priority for families. MESA understands the great responsibility it holds to keep scholars and staff safe, so additional planned elements for MESA's Safety and Operational Readiness are available in the Appendix "Section T: Additional Information."

Reflection and Continuous Improvement

The final phase of the year centers on reflection and strategic planning. Teams analyze academic results, intervention effectiveness, professional learning outcomes, and operational systems to inform the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) and the next year's targets. End-of-year State of the School reviews and staff reflections ensure that successes are scaled and challenges are addressed through actionable next steps.

The learning cycles professional development plan will be supported by the daily schedule. While students are in production class, grade level teams will have an extra forty-five minutes daily to collaborate in planning and internalizing lessons. This is made possible by MESA's longer school day, which provides additional time for collaboration and support.

The staffing plan also includes budget planning for a Lead Teacher role for every four-to-six classroom teachers. This Lead Teacher role will facilitate Weekly Data Meetings, be an instructional coach for Observation and Feedback, and a leader for lesson and unit planning and internalization. This Lead Teacher role is intended to provide teachers with consistent non-evaluative feedback and support. The Lead Teacher will ensure expectations and goals are met through bite sized action steps and coaching conversations.

The professional development plan also specifically addresses student needs for differentiation such as Special Education, Gifted and Talented Education, and Multilingual Education (fka English Language Learners). Because MESA believes firmly in the mantra "all our kids are ALL our kids," the learning cycles include adult education for all staff members in these areas. It is important that all staff have foundations, strategies and research based best practices in all these areas, as MESA exists to serve scholars of all backgrounds. Lead Teachers or Instructional Leaders in those areas will build teacher capacity in the Special Education, Gifted and Talented Education, and Multilingual Education areas.

Special education professional development will include but is not limited to:

- Review of 504s, IEPs and student goals and accommodations
- Best practices for integrating students accommodations across content areas and specialized classes (i.e. PE, art)
- Best practices for data collection and parent communication
- Proactive preparation for special needs vs. reactive approaches
- An understanding of FAPE, IDEA, and the MTSS process

Gifted and Talented professional development will include but is not limited to:

- Student Reflection Portfolios
- Cluster Grouping
- Curriculum Compacting
- Public Exhibitions of Learning
- An understanding of traits of the Gifted student and the MTSS process

Multilingual Education professional development will include but is not limited to:

- Integrated Content Language Development lesson planning
- Sheltered Instruction strategies
- Habits of Discussion
- An understanding of WIDA standards and the MTSS process
- The difference between second language development vs. speech delays

Cycles 2–5, the four longest learning cycles in the professional development plan, include multiple measures for analyzing student learning data and formally incorporating those findings into teacher performance evaluations. This supports alignment with Colorado Senate Bill S.B. 10-191[54] and the emphasis of student academic growth measures as part of the yearly teacher evaluation system. Teacher performance evaluations at MESA will be weighted with 50% of the total representing student growth data from the students in their direct instruction. To set teaching staff up for success, Lead Teachers will facilitate Weekly Data Meetings with each grade level team and determine next steps for cluster grouping, acceleration, or remediation for students based on mastery of a grade level standard. Instructional Coaches and Evaluators (School Leadership Team) will also use student work samples as part of their coaching conversations and evaluation body of evidence. Furthermore, teachers will keep a yearlong body of evidence for each student to bring to coaching meetings and performance reviews to show evidence of student growth. There should never be a surprise to staff as to how our scholars are performing, as data will be examined at least weekly.

The learning cycle professional development plan includes vertical and horizontal alignments through intentional collaboration with grade/department level teammates. Extended time for grade/department level teams' collaboration is mapped out every three weeks. Vertical backwards planning and unit internalization (based on a core content area) is mapped out for extended periods of time every six weeks. At MESA, this means teachers will read the text, do the math, and take the assessments that students would to drive their understanding of essential questions and standards prior to teaching to students.

Each learning cycle has its own focus, so the coaching, observation, and evaluation will follow that focus area. Teachers will receive informative feedback aligned to the focus area to drive those specific teaching practices. For example, a teacher will be observed implementing strong visuals on anchor charts to increase access for Multilingual Learners after a professional

[54] Senate Bill 10-191 Policy and Rules | CDE. (n.d.). Www.cde.state.co.us. https://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/sb-policy

development session. The Lead Teacher then gives feedback on the effectiveness of the implementation and degree of student access and use of the visuals. This helps teachers master an area over multiple weeks and receive non-evaluative feedback before a scored evaluation.

As MESA grows and matures, the professional learning cycles will align and adapt to best meet the current state and needs of the school based on data and reflection. However, the core values and structures of Weekly Data Meetings, Observation and Feedback, and Collaborative Planning will remain. Over time, teachers will naturally grow into Lead Teacher and Instructional Leader roles and take over the ownership and facilitation of those structures. We will also grow to offer differentiated tracks to professional development such as new to MESA and returning staff, and departmental sessions.

The quality and effectiveness of professional learning and development will be evaluated through reflections and feedback from staff during weeks 31-33 of the learning cycle year. This provides time for each system and structure, as well as content area, to have input from staff.

Teacher Evaluation System

The MESA teacher evaluation system will meet the intent of CO SB-191, as student growth and achievement account for 50% of the total overall evaluation. A draft of this system can be found in Appendix “Section I: Employees.” The primary evaluators will be the Executive Director and Principal(s). While there will be input from the Lead Teacher who serves as a department coach, the Lead Teacher will not evaluate their teammates. This belief is backed by Elena Aguilar, a nationally recognized K-12 education coach and author.[55] In conversations with educators during the founding process, the desire of educators was clear in asking to keep coaching and evaluating as separate roles. This evaluation system will also ensure that the school leaders are in tune with the current state of teaching and learning. Formal teacher evaluations will take place four times a year coupled with beginning, mid year and end of year conversations. This system will accompany the learning cycles professional development cadence and be shared in person at summer professional development. Staff will also have the opportunity to self-reflect on observable teacher and student behaviors, as well as professionalism agreements. Because the evaluation system aligns with the professional development calendar, the teacher evaluation system will be used to hold staff accountable to meeting expectations for student learning. Areas of strength for teachers will be fostered and used as anchor points to grow further instructional skills. Because the MESA evaluation process is 50% student achievement and growth, the system of Weekly Data Meetings which inform responsive instruction are inherently linked to the evaluation system and effectiveness of instruction. The MESA Professional Evaluation System document can be located in the appendix.

[55] Aguilar, E. (2013, May 20). Should Coaches Participate in Teacher Evaluation? (Opinion). Education Week. https://www.edweek.org/education/opinion-should-coaches-participate-in-teacher-evaluation/2013/05

J. Insurance

The School will obtain and maintain all insurance coverage required by federal and Colorado law and by Jeffco Public Schools. All required insurance will be in effect prior to the School's opening and will be reviewed annually to ensure continued compliance. The School will contract with Minga Education Group[56] to support the procurement and ongoing management of the School's insurance coverage.

The School will carry Workers' Compensation insurance as required by Colorado law for all employees. The School will also maintain general liability insurance, including coverage for bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage, with limits that meet or exceed those required by the District. Additional liability coverage will include, as appropriate, educators' legal liability, directors and officers liability, and automobile liability.

The School will maintain property insurance covering buildings and facilities, whether owned or leased, and contents including furniture, fixtures, equipment, instructional materials, and technology. Coverage will be sufficient to protect the School against loss from fire, theft, vandalism, and other customary risks. The School will coordinate with the District's Risk Management Department as necessary and will name Jefferson County Public Schools as an additional insured where required.

K. Parent and Community Involvement

MESA's community partnerships demonstrate strong alignment to clear evidence of community demand, operational preparedness, and a coherent educational program that supports student success. Through partnerships that include before- and after-school care, transportation, and summer programming, MESA strengthens its student support systems and ensures equitable access for families in alignment with Jeffco's expectations for comprehensive student services.Interest from founding families in the initial kindergarten cohort further demonstrates authentic community demand and readiness to enroll students upon opening.

Facility and site partners support operational viability and community engagement by providing a safe, appropriate learning environment and a setting to host enrollment, recruitment, and community events. These partnerships reinforce MESA's capacity to meet facility requirements while serving as a community hub, aligning with Jeffco's operational and governance criteria.

Programmatic and instructional partners support educational quality and continuous improvement. Design implementation support and executive coaching for the school leadership team align with Jeffco's expectations for strong organizational capacity, leadership development, and systems planning. Design implementation is also a user-centered approach and was created to keep the user (community) at the forefront of decision making and action planning. Professional learning partnerships offering *Radical Self-Care* and *Warm Demander Teachers*

[56] Now, C. (2025). Minga Education Group. Minga Education Group. https://www.mingaeducationgroup.org/services

sessions directly support instructional excellence by strengthening educator practice, relational culture, and high expectations for student learning.

Finally, enrichment partners—including after- and during-school visual arts and dance providers and organizations such as Meow Wolf, D3 Arts Collective, and 40 West Arts—enhance the educational program through experiential, interdisciplinary learning opportunities. These collaborations expand access to arts education, exhibitions, and production-based classes, aligning with Jeffco's rubric criteria related to a well-rounded program, student engagement, and meaningful community connections.

MESA's Community Partnerships

Entity	Nature of Partnership/ Description of Resources	Status: Planned or In Place
Colorado Children's Academy (Rich Silvas, CEO)	Before/After school care with transportation, summer care options for K-5 students	Planned
Explore and Discover Infant and Toddler Care (Cyden Porter, Past Board President)	Interest in being founding families for initial Kindergarten class	Planned
Archdiocese of Denver (St. Bernadette Parish property, Very Rev. Joe McLagan, VF)	Landlord for school building lease	In Place per Lease Agreement
Red Bus Coffee Company (Alice, manager)	Setting to host events for enrollment and recruitment	Planned
University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education (Dr. Erin Anderson, Professor)	Design Implementation work and coaching	Planned, support indicated on signature form
Little Rembrandts (Alanna Reynard, Franchise Owner)	After/during school art class enrichment	Planned, support indicated on signature form
Burn-In Mindset (Julia Pool, Founder and Owner)	Executive coaching for school leadership team	Planned
Art Educators (Dr. Barth Quenzer, Heather Ashley)	Connections to and collaborations with organizations such as Meow Wolf, D3 Arts Collective, 40 West Arts for enrichment, exhibitions, and production classes	Planned, support indicated on signature form
Radical Self Care (Dr. Franita	Professional learning grounded	Planned to start with founding

Ware)	Radical Self-Care and Warm Demander Teachers sessions designed to support educators and school leaders in strengthening practice and impact.	team July 2026
X-Treme Dance Force (Rachelle Nemec, Owner and Director)	Enrichment and/or specials dance classes	Planned

* There is more information about these partners available in section K of the appendix.

L. Enrollment Policy

Our vision states that "MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds…" and extensive time and resources were invested in demographics and enrollment data. This includes a thorough analysis of the intended location of the school by Brian Eschbacher of Eschbacher Consulting, the premier charter school demographer in the country. This analysis confirms that the student population typical of Two Creeks neighborhood is more diverse than most district schools, with around 71% students qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) and 56% Hispanic students in this corridor. Furthermore, the percentage of Multilingual Learners in the Two Creeks area ranges from 30% to 80%. This study also shows that anywhere from 41-59% of families are choosing school options outside of their home boundary school.

MESA isn't an outside solution for the community. It's being built BY, FOR, and OF the community. The founding approach has been relentlessly local: dozens of individual conversations with families, showing up at toddler story time at local libraries, attending city council meetings, and going door-to-door talking to anyone who will listen. This isn't someone swooping in to "save" a struggling neighborhood. This is a school built by someone who's spent her career in West Denver, knows these families, understands the barriers they face, and is creating something that walks alongside them.

The founder's outreach to this part of the community (July 2025-January 2026) has included:

- Listen and Learn
  - Over 95 individual coffee chats and Google Meets
- Community Engagement
  - Six park play dates were hosted at surrounding public parks (Morse Park, O'Kane Park, Belmar Park, etc) to engage and inform families and share activities.
  - Three visits to Lakewood and Belmar libraries during toddler story time to engage and inform families and share free activities for winter break

    - Hundreds of door hangers placed in the surrounding area to promote the school and give people information
    - Collaboration with new, local small business (i.e. Red Bus Coffee Co) to have a meeting space for the founder's meetings and information sessions
    - Curation of sensory materials and school information for parents of young children at local early learning centers (i.e. Explore and Discover and Edgewater Early Learning Center)
    - PIT count day volunteer for Jefferson County
    - Attendance at Alameda Connects, West Colfax Community Association, and other neighborhood and metro district meetings
- Digital Engagement
    - Three virtual parent meetings to share about the school mission, vision, and programming and host a question and answer session for prospective parents
    - Instagram and LinkedIn posts and updates
    - Establishment of a website
    - Bi-weekly emails to MESA supporters to keep them updated on timelines and goals

The founder also created activities and curated materials to give to prospective families. Materials and problem-based project examples were developed by the founder in alignment with Common Core Standards and essential questions from Expeditionary Learning. This is titled "Meteorologist Memo" and can be found in the Appendix "Section L: Enrollment Policy." The founder will continue these outreach initiatives after the application due date.

The founder is also a Spanish bilingual educator and served in Title I schools in West Denver neighborhood schools for over a decade. This geographic area drives her passion, and her experience in schools gives her a unique and historical perspective of the intended MESA community.

Starting in February 2026, the Founding K-3 Principal and Founding Director of Enrollment and Engagement will spend at least twelve hours per week in the community for the purposes of recruitment and enrollment. Both of them will be hosting events, canvassing Two Creeks and the surrounding neighborhoods, visiting with families, and collecting signatures.

MESA will uphold the core value of accountability with a non-discriminatory enrollment policy. Put simply, when a space is available at MESA, the student is welcomed and enrolled. Our founder believes deeply in being of service to others and meeting a need whenever possible. For these reasons, MESA will aim to fill enrollment capacity in each grade level and maintain a waitlist. When a seat opens, the next child on the waitlist will be enrolled as soon as possible regardless of time of year. Upon authorization, MESA will engage in the Jeffco school choice windows and procedures consistent with those of traditional schools.

While visiting schools with similar demographics nationwide, a shared sentiment to the beliefs of MESA's founders arose - to lessen barriers for families to have access to an enriching educational program. Therefore, MESA will have a blind lottery that is aligned with Jeffco policies and C.R.S. 22-30.5-104(3) and C.R.S. 22-30.5-507(3). Siblings of current MESA students and children of MESA staff members and board members will be given priority enrollment.

MESA K–8 School is committed to an enrollment process that is equitable, transparent, and fully compliant with the Colorado Charter Schools Act, C.R.S. § 22-30.5-101 et seq., and Jefferson County Public Schools (Jeffco) policies. Admission is open to all students residing in Colorado, and no student will be denied admission based on race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, language proficiency, gender, religion, income level, academic ability, or any other protected status.

Consistent with C.R.S. § 22-30.5-104(3), MESA will not limit admission based on academic performance or selectively screen applicants. When the number of applicants exceeds the number of available seats at any grade level, admission will be determined through a random, public lottery process.

If the number of completed Intent to Enroll forms received by the published deadline exceeds available capacity, MESA will conduct a public lottery on the date identified in the Enrollment Timeline. The lottery will be open to families and community observers to ensure transparency and accountability. All eligible students who submit a timely Intent to Enroll will be included and assigned a randomly generated number. A random number generator will be used to select students for available seats to ensure fairness and equal opportunity.

Current students who submit an Intent to Re-enroll form by the stated deadline will be automatically re-enrolled and will not participate in the lottery. In accordance with C.R.S. § 22-30.5-104(3)(a), MESA may apply the following enrollment preferences prior to conducting the general lottery:

- Sibling Preference: Siblings of currently enrolled students will receive priority placement to support family continuity and stability.
- Founding/Staff Children Preference: Children of full-time MESA employees and founding staff may receive enrollment preference to support recruitment and retention of high-quality educators and ensure operational stability.
- Other Statutorily Permissible Preferences: Any additional preferences allowed by statute or Jeffco policy may be applied, if adopted by the school and publicly disclosed in advance.

If the number of applicants within any preference category exceeds the available seats allocated for that category, a random lottery will be conducted within that group. Remaining applicants will then be included in the general lottery.

Students not selected through the lottery will be placed on a waitlist in the order determined by their randomly assigned lottery number. As seats become available, students will be offered admission from the top of the waitlist in sequential order, consistent with any applicable statutory preferences. MESA will begin offering seats within five business days of the lottery and will continue filling openings until classes reach capacity.

When a seat becomes available, MESA will notify families using the contact information provided on the Intent to Enroll form. Families will have five business days to accept or decline the offer. If the school is unable to reach the family after reasonable attempts during that period, or if the offer is declined, the seat will be offered to the next student on the waitlist, and the student may be placed at the bottom of the list.

All lottery procedures, timelines, preferences, and results will be documented and implemented consistently to ensure compliance with law and to provide all applicants an equal opportunity to enroll. Through this structured and publicly documented process, MESA upholds fairness, access, and transparency for all families.

Upon enrollment and acceptance of enrollment offer, students with existing Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and/or Advanced Learning Plans (ALP) will have an individualized intake meeting with a specialized service provider to review, amend and/or adopt the student's plan and operationalize how that can best be served at MESA.

M. Transportation and Food Services

Transportation

Offering transportation is one of the most important access points MESA will offer scholars to increase access to the school and its rich programming. MESA intends to lease twelve-passenger vans (starting with two vans) for before/after school and field trip transportation. Each MESA staff member will complete the P (passenger) Endorsement to add to their driver's license. This is the requirement of the state of Colorado to drive up to sixteen passengers. The P endorsement includes both a written and driving skills portion and will be included in the onboarding process for MESA staff. This not only allows us to serve all students with field trip transportation, but also allows for up to twenty-four students per day to have a reliable ride to and from school. MESA will be compliant with C.R.S., Sections 22-51-108 and 42- 4-1904.

Food

In alignment with other Jeffco Public Schools charters, MESA will purchase Food & Nutrition services through the district. Access to nutritious, balanced meals is essential to student health, focus, and academic success, and ensures all scholars are supported throughout the school day. MESA plans to offer breakfast, a snack, and lunch to all students free of cost. This has been accounted for in the draft budget at $800/student per year. This number accounts for the national average of around $498 per elementary student per year for lunch and around $302 per

elementary student per year for breakfast.[57] This general funds budget item will not only cover food but also services to transport and serve food to students. Upon authorization, MESA would qualify for meal reimbursement from the state, as part of the district, for the Healthy School Meals for All state initiative.[58] The school facility is equipped with a kitchen, allowing meals for MESA scholars to be warmed and/or prepared on site daily.

N. Facilities Needs Assessment

MESA has secured a lease agreement for the school building, gymnasium, field, and parking area at 1100 Upham Street, Lakewood, CO 80214. The lease begins on January 1, 2026 and is a ten-year agreement. A floorplan and property brochure is in the appendix of the application. This building is a turnkey Pre-K-8th grade school zone M-R-U with E occupancy. The lease agreement is for 38,782 square feet of indoor space. This will serve our scholars at 100+ square feet/student for the first four years. Features of the property include:

- 18 classrooms
- 2 ECE licensed classrooms
- Office spaces
- A large library with a stage
- A large gymnasium with with a stage
- A cafeteria with serving kitchen
- Storm shelter areas
- A large outdoor play area with several basketball hoops and playground
- A separate baseball field
- Plentiful parking for staff and community
- A brand new city park (Two Creeks Park) less than a block away
- Close proximity to Light Rail and 6th Avenue



Below is a chart that shows the lease cost for the next seven years. Included in the lease cost is: snow removal, landscape, irrigation, maintenance (including HVAC and electrical), and structural repairs (i.e. roof, main water supply, underground sewer line).

Year	Year 1 (2027-28)	Year 2 (2028-29)	Year 3 (2029-30)	Year 4 (2030-31)	Year 5 (2031-32)	Year 6 (2032-33)	Year 7 (2033-34)
Building Lease annual cost for 1100 Upham	$102,000	$393,000	$478,860	$507,588	$554,184	$570,732	$587,928

[57] Hanson, M. (2024, November 23). School Lunch Debt. Education Data Initiative. https://educationdata.org/school-lunch-debt
[58] Support Healthy School Meals for All | Hunger Free Colorado. (2022). Hungerfreecolorado.org. https://hungerfreecolorado.org/support-hsma/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=946041339&gbraid=0AAAADwxlodxkbSUizu8BHskR2tQpuL5X&gclid=Cj0KCQiAxonKBhC1ARIsAIHq_lujV63RVpEo1M3WgiJD4e3vKAgZDiMvcDyxnlzFuYAoVomkqo6pMyEaAhpWEALw_wcB

To ensure student safety, the building has a storm shelter, secure entrances and exits, and clear city signage and cross-walk from the surface lot to the main entrance. Additionally, MESA has budgeted for one to two full-time school resource officers, internet (cyber-security), a Raptor identification system, daily janitorial services, and weekly trash pick up. The school founder is actively applying for a $5,000 Business Safety and Security program grant through the City of Lakewood[59] to cover the purchase cost of additional exterior cameras. These elements and anticipated costs can be seen in the budget section and appendix. In addition to school wide systems, the school leadership team will also be on walkie-talkies and actively facilitating arrival and dismissal of students safely each day. MESA will also register school cameras (free of charge) through the Connect Lakewood program through the Lakewood Police Department[60] to provide further and faster assistance needed during an incident.

O. Waivers

MESA will utilize the automatic charter school waivers approved and granted by the Colorado Department of Education.[61] Additionally, MESA will seek non-automatic waivers in accordance with alignment to our core values, goals, and educational programming model. The table below shows the policies of which MESA intends to seek waivers. A replacement plan for each of these waivers is listed in the table here.

MESA Intended Non-Automatic Waivers

Statue/ Area	Rationale	Replacement Plan	Expected Outcome	Financial Impact
C.R.S. § 22-32-109(1)(b) Local Board Duties Concerning Competitive Bidding C.R.S. § 22-32-110(1)(y) Accepting Gifts, Donations, and Grants	To effectively manage its own budget and finances, MESA requires autonomy to develop and implement financial policies that align with its mission, timeline, and operational needs as a public charter school.	MESA will follow GAAP-compliant accounting policies and strong internal controls. Procurement decisions will be made by the MESA Governing Board and school leadership in the best interest of students, considering price, quality, availability, reputation, and service history. Competitive bidding procedures will be established as	Increased fiscal efficiency, timely purchasing, responsible stewardship of funds, and improved ability to allocate resources directly to students and programming	No anticipated financial impact to Jeffco or MESA

[59] Business Safety and Security Program. (2026). Lakewoodco.gov. https://www.lakewoodco.gov/City-Hall/Departments/Economic-Development/Business-Safety-and-Security-Program
[60] Home - Connect Lakewood. (2026). Connect Lakewood. https://connectlakewood.org/
[61] Waivers & Policy Guidance - Colorado Department of Education. (2017). State.co.us. https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/waivers

		required by law. All purchasing will be transparent, documented, and ethical. Gifts and donations will be accepted only when compliant with law, the charter contract, and conflict-of-interest policies.		
C.R.S. §§ 22-63-202–206 Teacher Employment, Contracts, Renewal/Non-Renewal, Portability, Exchanges, Transfers	MESA's expeditionary, problem-based instructional model requires flexibility to hire and retain educators who are specifically aligned with the school's mission, culture, and instructional design. Autonomy ensures best-fit staffing and continuity of programming.	All employees will be employed on an at-will basis with clear written employment agreements outlining terms, expectations, and renewal processes. Hiring will be based on qualifications, mission alignment, and student needs. MESA will recruit staff with specialized skills that support expeditionary learning and integrated programming. All employment practices will follow federal and state nondiscrimination laws.	Ability to build a cohesive, mission-aligned team; increased staff effectiveness; improved student outcomes and program implementation	No anticipated financial impact to Jeffco or MESA
C.R.S. § 22-9-106 Local Board Duties Concerning Performance Evaluations **C.R.S. § 22-2-112(1)(q)(I)** Commissioner Duties – Reporting Performance Evaluation Ratings	MESA requires the flexibility to implement an evaluation system aligned to its instructional model, leadership structure, and professional learning priorities while maintaining high	MESA will implement a research-based, standards-aligned evaluation system that meets the intent of state law. Staff will receive annual training. Evaluations will include clear performance standards, multiple measures of effectiveness, and student growth	Increased instructional quality, targeted professional growth, and improved student achievement through a system tailored to MESA's program model	Increased instructional quality, targeted professional growth, and improved student achievement through a system tailored to MESA's

	accountability for educator effectiveness.	indicators. Results will inform coaching, professional development, and hiring decisions. Required non-waivable reporting will continue in accordance with law.		program model

MESA does **not** request waivers from:

- State or federal accountability systems
- Participation in district, state, or required interim assessments
- Civil rights protections
- IDEA, Section 504, READ Act, or multilingual learner requirements
- Open Meetings Law, Open Records Law, FERPA, or financial transparency requirements

P. Student Discipline, Suspension, or Expulsion

At MESA, there is a foundational belief that strong relationships are essential to a thriving school community. To support this belief, the school intentionally schedules 20-minute Crew meetings at the beginning and end of each day to build relationships, foster a strong sense of belonging, and provide ongoing practice in social and interpersonal skills. Another proactive action for student discipline is the use of Conscious Discipline School Family[62] professional development and schoolwide practices, as well as, budgeting for a full-time School Resource Officer. The MESA founder is also connecting with school preparedness consultants, local law enforcement, and first responders to have their input and lens on school safety as part of the design of the school.

MESA's core value of accountability will drive the student experience - including the high expectations for ourselves and others. Because of Jeffco Public Schools' emphasis on student safety, MESA will adopt the District's discipline policy from the Family Handbook, Discipline Matrix, and Board policies.[63] MESA believes in Restorative Practices, too, which elevate the relationship of the people involved and repair the harm done.[64] With the adoption of the district policies, this makes certain that MESA will be in alignment with federal civil rights law, special education law, and state statutes.

[62] Bailey, B. (n.d.). Conscious Discipline ® : BUILDING RESILIENT SCHOOLS AND HOMES A 10-Session Course for Educators and Parents PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK. https://consciousdiscipline.s3.amazonaws.com/E-Learning/Building-Resilient-Schools-and-Homes/eCD-Participant-Guide-Complete.pdf

[63] Student & Family Handbook - Jeffco Public Schools. (2024). Jeffcopublicschools.org. https://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/about/student-family-handbook

[64] Restorative Practices - Jeffco Public Schools. (2025). Jeffcopublicschools.org. https://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/learning/multi-tiered-system-of-supports/restorative-practices

MESA will handle student discipline, suspension and expulsion in accordance with the Jeffco Public Schools' discipline policy from the Family Handbook, Discipline Matrix[65], and Board policies. If a situation arises where an expelled student needs an alternative education setting, MESA School Leadership will work with the family and student to find a solution together. The outcome will be to best serve the student's academic and social needs. Such a decision will be made in collaboration with a school team, the family, and district guidance.

Q. Serving Students with Special Needs

MESA was created to serve scholars from all backgrounds, and this includes ensuring that students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students identified as gifted and talented, students experiencing homelessness, and all learners requiring additional support can meaningfully access our Expeditionary Learning model. Consistent with our belief that all students bring unique strengths to the table, MESA will implement a schoolwide tiered system of support so that every scholar receives the instruction, intervention, and enrichment they need to thrive. Beyond the approach to supporting all students, MESA is committed to meeting its legal obligation to every student under applicable laws for special education, gifted and talented, multilingual education, section 504 and students experiencing homelessness.

Programming: Accommodating the needs of all students

MESA will have a process for students enrolling with an identified need or plan. It is also expected that needs will surface through the school year and the MTSS process is designed to quickly identify and support those students and their needs. During the enrollment process, students who have existing IEPs, 504 Plans, ALPs, or READ Plans will have parents/guardians participate in an intake process with school staff to ensure continuity of services. For those students, parents/guardians and the school team will collaborate to adopt the current plan as-is, amend, or exit. For students whose needs surface after enrollment, MESA implements a clear and systematic MTSS process aligned with Jeffco guidelines, including documented intervention cycles, progress monitoring, and fidelity checks. This process ensures that students needing additional support receive them quickly, and that students whose needs indicate a potential disability or gifted identification are referred for appropriate evaluation.

MESA's core programming is built on the understanding that students learn best in inclusive environments with access to joyful, rigorous, problem-solving experiences. Identification of student needs occurs through multiple measures including universal screeners, MAP assessments, pre- and post- assessments in EL Education and Illustrative Math, DIBELS, ACCESS, teacher observation, and ongoing family communication. Weekly data team meetings, as shown in the professional development plan, ensure that teachers and leaders review trends frequently and adjust instruction, grouping, and interventions in a timely and consistent way based on real-time data. Built into the Weekly Data Team system will also be a progress

[65] English. (2025). English 2025-2026 Public Discipline Matrix. Google Docs. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1dHHfxVtsW50DX5njnsUI8lfqhhBnpk_RLXk2hSuwiL8/edit?gid=102527327#gid=102527327

monitoring system that starts an MTSS referral when a student continues to show academic needs after multiple rounds of targeted accommodations such as small group instruction, instructional scaffolding, extended time, etc.

Instruction is designed using universal design for learning, small-group instruction, language-rich routines, structured discussion protocols, vocabulary development, and targeted supports aligned to individual plans. These practices ensure that students at all levels—including students with disabilities, MLLs, and gifted students—have equitable access to core content. Because daily Crew structures and enrichment blocks are built into the school schedule, students can receive additional help or extended learning in a natural, integrated way.

Progress monitoring is ongoing and tied to both the curricula and assessment systems in place. For MLLs, ACCESS and internal language development data guide goal setting and redesignation decisions. For students with IEPs and 504 Plans, annual reviews, quarterly checkpoints, and consistent teacher communication ensure compliance and alignment to student goals. Students who meet criteria for exiting services do so following state and district requirements.

Programming: Specific Student Groups

Student programming at MESA is grounded in the belief that diversity strengthens learning communities and enriches problem solving. Guided by Jeffco Thrives and the Generations Vision, MESA is designed to provide extraordinary student experiences that recognize individual strengths, reduce barriers to access, and support every scholar to succeed academically and as a developing community leader. The school's enrichment-for-all model ensures that rigorous, engaging instruction is not reserved for a select group of students, but is embedded in the daily experience of every learner.

MESA's approach to serving students with diverse needs is intentionally inclusive, proactive, and responsive. Academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports are delivered through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports that emphasizes early identification, targeted intervention, and ongoing progress monitoring, while keeping students meaningfully engaged with their grade-level peers whenever possible. Programming is designed to cultivate the Generation Skills of communication, collaboration, critical and creative thinking, and civic engagement, ensuring that students not only meet academic expectations but are prepared to lead and contribute beyond the classroom.

Oversight of student programming is embedded in the school's instructional systems and leadership structures. Weekly data meetings, coaching cycles, and collaborative planning time allow educators to monitor student progress, adjust instruction, and ensure fidelity to individualized plans and support services. Family partnership is central to this work, and MESA prioritizes clear communication, shared problem solving, and the removal of logistical barriers that may limit enrollment, access, or long-term engagement. Together, these systems ensure that student programming at MESA remains aligned to its mission, responsive to community

needs, and accountable to Jeffco and state expectations. To ensure programming aligned to the needs of specific student groups, the strategic plans are outlined below.

- Educationally Disadvantaged and At-Risk Students: MESA provides increased access through enrichment-for-all programming, targeted academic supports, SEL through Conscious Discipline, and family-centered supports. Students benefit from universal Tier 1 practices as well as targeted interventions in reading, writing, mathematics, and behavior. Leadership oversight occurs through weekly data meetings and ongoing coaching. MESA also seeks to reduce barriers for student enrollment, access, and retention by planning for before and after school care, summer programming, an extended school day, and transportation options.
- Students with IEPs: MESA exists to serve students from all backgrounds, so inclusion is paramount to our mission and vision. Students with disabilities will receive services aligned to their individualized goals in their IEPs in the least restrictive environment. As much as possible, students will participate with their grade level peers in the general education classroom. MESA will utilize a combination of push-in, co-teaching, and small-group instruction, depending on student needs and individualized plans. A designated SPED Lead will ensure procedural compliance, consistent implementation of accommodations and modifications, and timely communication with families. Annual reviews, reevaluations, and ongoing monitoring follow Jeffco and state expectations.
- Students with Section 504 Plans: General education and essentials teachers will implement 504 accommodations across all learning environments. The school maintains a clear system for plan review, annual updates, and ensuring that instructional staff have immediate access to accommodation lists. Oversight occurs through the school's 504 coordinator, who ensures compliance and collaborates with families and teachers as needs emerge.
- Multilingual Learners: MLLs are served through integrated, sheltered instruction aligned to WIDA standards and supported by visuals, structured discourse, vocabulary routines, and explicit language objectives. Teachers analyze ACCESS data to inform instruction and redesignation decisions. Because MESA's mission emphasizes access and problem solving for all students, ML learners participate fully in enrichment and experiential learning. The MESA Lesson Plan template specifically calls out all four domains of language (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) to be included in each lesson, and teacher PD addresses the needs of MLLs throughout the year.
- Gifted and Talented Students: Aligned with Jeffco's Generations Vision and MESA's enrichment-for-all approach, GT students receive curriculum compacting, cluster grouping, extension tasks embedded in EL Education and Illustrative Math, and reflection portfolios aligned to the Generation Skills. Teachers receive training on identifying GT characteristics—including those of gifted multilingual learners—to ensure equitable identification. ALPs are reviewed annually with families. Because MESA's model includes pillars of talent development, the programming would be a strong fit for an identified GT student.
- Students Experiencing Homelessness: In accordance with McKinney-Vento, students experiencing homelessness enroll immediately and receive full access to instruction,

meals, transportation assistance, school supplies, uniforms, and all school activities. The school's McKinney-Vento liaison, initially a responsibility of the founding Director of Enrollment and Engagement, will partner with community organizations to remove barriers to participation. MESA will continually work to build strong partnerships and collaborative relationships with families through a welcoming environment.

Plan for Implementation

Important to the success of system implementation to benefit diverse learners, MESA's professional development plan addresses needs of identified student groups specifically throughout the school year. As discussed in Section I "Employees," the plan builds research based skills and understanding, paired with observation and feedback, to ensure accountability and fidelity to best serve unique student needs. By emphasizing training for supporting each of these specific sub groups in a rotating manner, MESA will build internal capacity for supporting all students.

Programming

Instruction at MESA is intentionally structured to support inclusive practices and maintain students in the least restrictive environment whenever appropriate, consistent with Jeffco expectations. Teachers and specialized service providers collaborate through co-teaching and push-in service models that embed support within the general education classroom. Targeted small-group instruction and inclusive enrichment blocks are used to address identified academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs while also providing opportunities for acceleration and extension. Learning environments are designed to remove barriers to access and include classroom Safe Places, flexible seating, production labs, and designated small-group spaces that support both instructional and sensory needs. To ensure fidelity of implementation and continuous improvement, the master schedule includes a protected 45-minute daily co-planning period during which grade-level teams analyze multiple sources of data, monitor student progress, and adjust instruction and interventions in alignment with the school's MTSS framework.

GT Identification and Support

In alignment with Jeffco Public Schools, MESA students will take the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) during the fall of their second and fifth grade years.[66] This is a universal screener for all students who have not yet been identified formally as Gifted and Talented. The CogAT score will be part of a body of evidence that determines if a student should be recommended for Gifted and Talented identification and support. All teachers and parents will receive communication of these scores and an explanation of performance for each of their tested students. Additional measures in this body of evidence will include but are not limited to:

- READ Act performance data (95th percentile or higher)

[66] Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) - Jeffco Public Schools. (2025). Jeffcopublicschools.org. https://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/learning/assessments/cogat

- MAP performance data (95th percentile or higher)
- CMAS performance data (95th percentile or higher)
- Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS) survey completion by at least one parent/guardian and one staff member who know the student well
- Observation by school psychologist or other professionally trained school/district partner
- Interest Interview with the student by school psychologist
- Referrals from parents and/or staff members
- Student portfolio work

This body of evidence will be collected by the Lead Teacher. Then, the Lead Teacher and Principal will communicate with the classroom teacher and parents to have a meeting to discuss next steps for the student. If it is recommended that the student needs a formal advanced learning plan (ALP), then the parent and school team, along with the school psychologist, will convene for another meeting to finalize the plan. From the school psychologist's observations and student interview, the student's preferences, goals, and ideas will be discussed and considered for implementation in the ALP. Students will consult with the school psychologist monthly to reflect on their progress towards their ALP goals. Annual reviews will be conducted with parents, the student, and the school team after that. District and state reporting and record keeping for ALPs will be the responsibility of the school psychologist.

MESA is committed to ensuring equitable identification and access to Gifted and Talented programming, with particular attention to students from historically underrepresented groups, including multilingual learners, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and students from diverse backgrounds. MESA believes in strong student engagement and enrichment opportunities for all students. Teachers receive training on traits of giftedness (SIGS)—including historically under-identified populations. All MESA scholars participate in enrichment projects, compacted lessons, and four public exhibitions per year that align with EL Education's model. Specific professional development for staff around GT identification and support happen in each of the six learning cycles. For students performing about grade level, there will be opportunities for self-selected enrichments and extension opportunities through production classes and quarterly problem-based learning service projects.

Oversight and Compliance

MESA maintains a clearly defined governance and operational chain of responsibility to ensure consistent oversight, legal compliance, and timely intervention for all student support services. Lines of accountability flow from Teacher → Lead Teacher → Director of Student Services → Executive Director, with each level responsible for documented monitoring and corrective action.

The Director of Student Services serves as the school's compliance lead and is responsible for ensuring adherence to all federal, state, and district requirements related to IDEA, Section 504, ESSA, Child Find, and MTSS implementation. This role oversees special education, intervention services, and student support systems and reports directly to the

Executive Director to ensure organizational accountability. To operationalize compliance, MESA implements the following internal controls:

IEP and Special Education Compliance Monitoring

- Routine IEP file audits and compliance checks
- Verification of service minutes and placement implementation
- Progress monitoring and quarterly progress reports to families
- Tracking of timelines for evaluations, eligibility, and annual reviews
- Documentation of accommodations and modifications listed and signed off in shared documents including the assessment calendar
- Immediate corrective action protocols when discrepancies are identified

MTSS Oversight and Data Governance

- Weekly Data Meetings serve as the formal MTSS oversight structure
- Review of academic, behavior, attendance, and SEL data
- Tier movement decisions based on documented progress monitoring
- Fidelity checks to ensure interventions are delivered as designed
- Documentation of intervention plans and outcomes

Staff Accountability and Training

- Designated case managers for each student receiving targeted or intensive supports
- Ongoing staff training on compliance requirements and procedural safeguards
- MTSS and special education implementation embedded into professional development at least eight times annually
- Clear expectations for documentation and service delivery

Leadership Review and Escalation

- Monthly leadership review of compliance dashboards and caseload data
- Immediate escalation of compliance risks to the Executive Director
- Collaboration with district and external partners as needed to ensure adherence to all regulations

These structures ensure that compliance is not episodic but systematic, proactive, and continuously monitored. Through scheduled audits, documented processes, and defined accountability at every level, MESA maintains consistent implementation of required services and safeguards students' legal rights while ensuring timely support and continuous improvement.

Monitoring of All Students (MTSS)

MESA implements a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to ensure that all students receive equitable access to instruction, intervention, and support aligned to Jeffco expectations.

MTSS is used as a systematic, data-driven framework to identify students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs early and to respond through clearly defined tiers of support. High-quality Tier 1 instruction is provided to all students in the general education setting, with Tier 2 targeted small-group interventions and Tier 3 intensive individualized support implemented as needed. Student progress is monitored regularly using multiple measures, and instructional teams review data during scheduled meetings to adjust supports, document fidelity of implementation, and determine next steps. This approach ensures timely intervention, maintains students in the least restrictive environment whenever appropriate, and supports continuous improvement in student outcomes.

The goal of MTSS Progress monitoring of all students will occur weekly at Weekly Data Meetings. In addition, universal screeners each trimester, MAP assessments three to four times per year, and ongoing formative data information will drive universal, targeted, and intensive support. This is explicitly planned for in the professional development plan. Students will receive interventions with defined cycles, and Lead Teachers will monitor implementation for fidelity. Families receive updates regarding progress and next steps. Students will also use their reflection portfolios to write and review their own goals and progress quarterly. These portfolios, paired with teacher data and input will be used to drive MESA's family conferences. Because of these planned systems of Weekly Data Meetings, professional development, Lead Teacher monitoring, parent communication, and student reflection, progress monitoring for all students is intentionally built into MESA.

Before launching the MTSS system, all MESA staff will complete the Online Academy Lessons for MTSS provided by the Colorado Department of Education. The purpose of this is to grow common language and foundations as a staff. It will be part of the onboarding process for staff each year for continuity. The MTSS System at MESA will follow the research and best practices laid forth by the Council of Great City Schools.[67] This research based framework and guidance was developed specifically for diverse, urban populations of scholars which reflects MESA's intended demographics.

As MESA believes in inclusion and strong Tier 1 instruction with research based curriculum and enrichment for all students embedded, MESA does not believe that the MTSS process is an automatic referral for an Individualized Education Plan or 504. However, some students will need additional and documented accommodations to better meet their unique needs. Potential MTSS interventions can be seen below in the MESA Intervention MTSS Menu. If interventions are not working, the MESA team will collaborate to review and refine using the flowchart shown after the Intervention Menu. This decision making flow chart ensures that the team has asked reflective questions: have we implemented and documented with fidelity? What has and hasn't worked for this scholar? And who else may we need at the table?

[67] Gamm, S., Elliott, J., Halbert, J., Price-Baugh, R., Hall, R., Walston, D., Uro, G., & Casserly, M. (n.d.). Common Core State Standards and Diverse Urban Students: Using Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Council of the Great City Schools. https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/87/77--Achievement%20Task%20Force--RTI%20White%20Paper-Final.pdf

MESA MTSS Intervention Menu (Elementary)

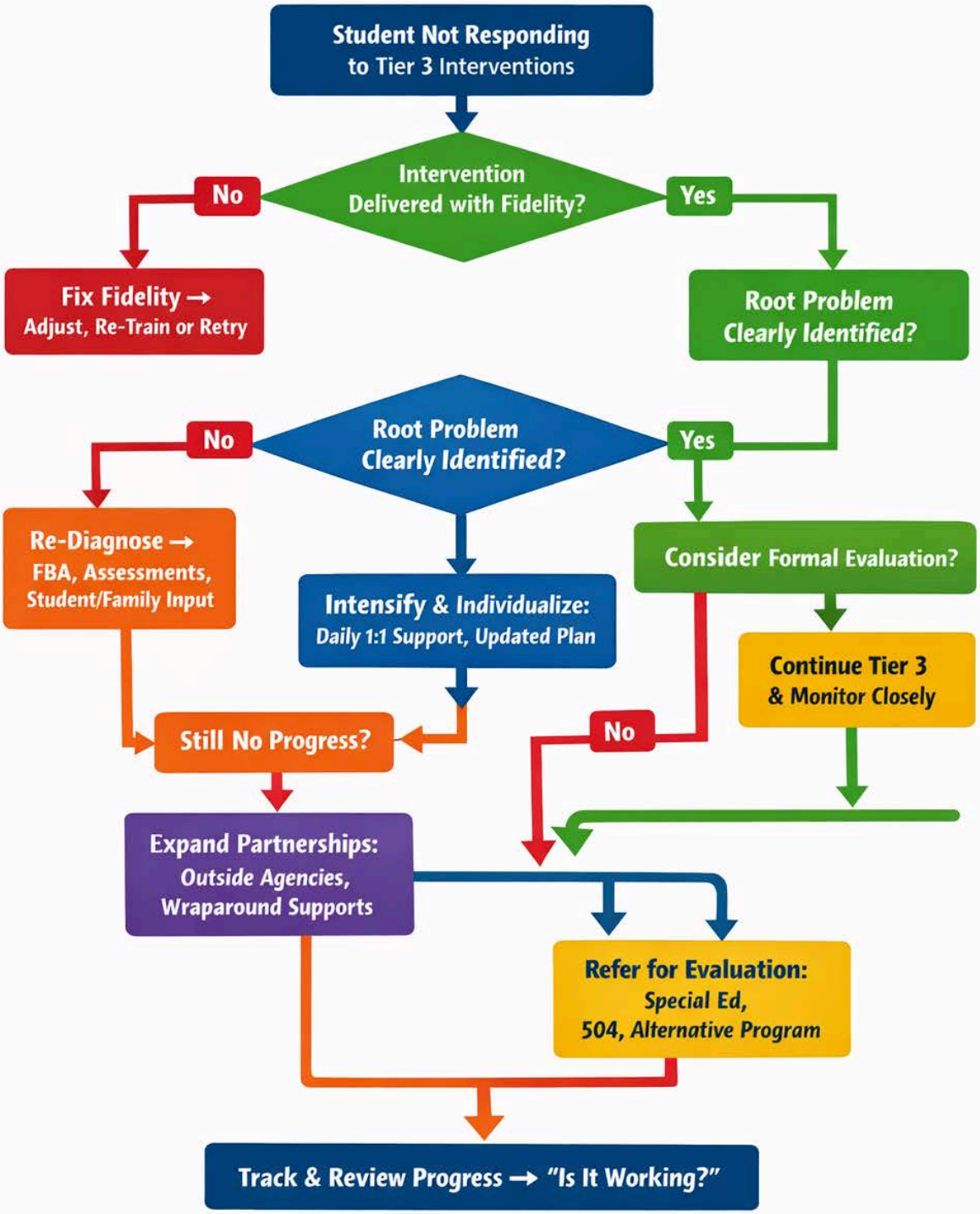
Tier 1 – Universal (All Students) Core instruction + prevention. Designed for ~80–90% of students	Tier 2 – Targeted (Some Students) Short-term, small-group interventions for ~10–15%	Tier 3 – Intensive (Few Students) Individualized, high-frequency supports for ~3–5%
Academics • Standards-aligned core curriculum with explicit instruction • Differentiated small groups within core block • Universal screeners (3x/year: DIBELS, MAP, etc.) • Daily literacy & math workshop models • Formative assessment + reteach cycles • Vocabulary-rich, language scaffolds for all learners • Family learning resources/home practice supports Behavior • Schoolwide PBIS/positive behavior expectations Clear routines, procedures, and visuals • Behavior teaching lessons (model/practice/reteach) • Positive reinforcement systems (class points, recognition) • Restorative circles/class meetings • Active supervision + precorrections Attendance • Welcoming school climate & strong relationships Family communication systems (texts, calls, newsletters) • Morning greeters/check-ins	Academics • Small-group reading/math intervention (3–5x/week) • Targeted skill groups (phonics, fluency, fact fluency, problem solving) • Progress monitoring biweekly • Intervention programs (e.g., LLI, SPIRE, Do the Math) • Tutoring or after-school support • Check-in on independent work completion Behavior • Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) • Social skills groups • Behavior contracts • Structured break plans • Targeted reinforcement plans • Increased adult mentoring • Functional Behavior Assessment (brief) Attendance • Attendance check-ins with trusted adult • Family problem-solving meetings • Attendance goals with incentives • Home visits or counselor outreach • Morning “soft landing” or breakfast clubs Social-Emotional Development	Academics • Daily 1:1 or very small group intervention • Individualized learning plans • Diagnostic assessments to target skill gaps • Specialized instruction (SPED/MTSS specialists) • Extended time/day supports • Assistive technology • Possible special education referral if warranted Behavior • Full Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) • Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) Intensive wraparound supports • Daily data tracking • Crisis/safety plans Increased adult supervision or individualized schedule • Collaboration with outside providers Attendance • Individual attendance plan • Social worker/case manager support • Barrier removal (transportation, housing, health resources) • Intensive family engagement • Community agency partnerships

• Recognition for strong/improved attendance • Clear attendance expectations shared with families Social-Emotional Development • SEL curriculum (Second Step, RULER, Responsive Classroom, etc.) • Daily morning meetings • Explicit instruction in self-regulation & conflict resolution • Calm-down spaces in classrooms • Growth mindset language • Universal trauma-informed practices	• Small-group counseling (friendship, anxiety, grief, self-regulation) • Mentoring programs (lunch bunch, buddy systems) Coping skills instruction groups • Structured play groups • Short-term behavior coaching	• Truancy prevention processes (as required) Social-Emotional Development • Individual counseling/therapy • Wraparound or multi-agency supports • Safety planning • Mental health referrals Trauma-informed individualized supports • Functional coping plans embedded in schedule

When MTSSS Interventions Aren't Working:

Decision Flowchart

When Tier 1–3 supports aren't working, follow this decision tree:



More detailed steps to this decision tree and additional information can be found in Appendix "Section Q: Serving Students with Special Needs."

Staffing: Hiring and retaining licensed staff

In alignment with other Jeffco charters, MESA will use the services of Jeffco special service providers for special education. For further development, alignment, and oversight, a . A strong coaching model, competitive compensation, and a collaborative culture support retention. The Special Education portions of the professional development calendar includes:

- Week 0: Review of all IEPs/504s and service delivery structures
- Ongoing: Data collection, accommodations, FAPE, and MTSS alignment
- Week 15: Procedural safeguards, evaluation timelines, and LRE fidelity
- Weekly coaching and participation in data team meetings

Professional development for general educators and service providers

Professional development at MESA is designed to ensure that all general education teachers and related service providers are equipped to meet the needs of a diverse student population within an inclusive, rigorous learning environment. Throughout the year, staff engage in ongoing training focused on inclusive instructional practices and universal design for learning, ensuring that lessons are accessible to all students. Teachers also receive targeted professional development in sheltered instruction strategies to support multilingual learners, as well as training on identifying Gifted and Talented characteristics and implementing curriculum compacting and extension opportunities. Instructional decision-making is grounded in data, with professional learning aligned to EL Education and Illustrative Math and focused on the use of formative and summative assessments to inform instruction. In addition, staff participate in training on Conscious Discipline to support students' social-emotional development and create safe, supportive classroom environments. MTSS implementation is reinforced through the use of shared checklists, protocols, and progress monitoring tools informed by resources from the Council of Great City Schools. This professional development structure is embedded within MESA's yearlong instructional cycles and reflects Jeffco's emphasis on extraordinary student experiences, with all general education staff receiving ongoing coaching, feedback, and support to continuously strengthen their practice.

This PD aligns with MESA's yearlong instructional cycles and Jeffco's focus on extraordinary student experiences. This includes all general education staff receiving professional development and feedback in: inclusive practices through universal design, sheltered instruction for MLLs, best practices for Special Education and Gifted and Talented Education, as well as, engaging in weekly data meetings and regular instructional coaching.

Additionally, teachers and staff will have release time during professional learning sessions to complete online free professional development options from the Colorado

Department of Education[68]. These modules help teachers earn licensure renewal credits, as well as, develop teacher skill sets for exceptional student needs like behavior, trauma-informed care, dyslexia and more.

Ratios

MESA follows Jeffco's staffing ratio requirements for students with disabilities and special service providers. Enrollment projections include approximately 15% of students with IEPs, informing staffing allocations for Special Education teachers and service providers. The table below shows the ratios for students:providers based on the initial five-year budget and enrollment plan.

Year Total students enrolled →	Year 1 96 total students	Year 2 144 total students	Year 3 192 total students	Year 4 240 total students	Year 5 288 total students
Anticipated students receiving Special Education Services (15%)	14 students	22 students	29 students	36 students	44 students
Ratio of Service Providers to Students needing services FTE of Service Providers in Budget	**1:11** -0.75 Special Education Teacher -0.5 Mental Health **Total FTE: 1.25**	**1:11** -1.0 Special Education Teacher -1.0 Mental Health **Total FTE: 2.0**	**1:9** -1.0 Director of Special Services -1.0 Mental Health -1.5 Special Education Teachers **Total FTE: 3.5**	**1:9** -1.0 Director of Special Services -1.0 Mental Health -2.0 Special Education Teachers **Total FTE: 4.0**	**1:9** -1.0 Director of Special Services -2.0 Mental Health -2.0 Special Education Teachers **Total FTE: 5.0**

Adjustments to programs and resources

Instructional plans may be modified based on student need or accommodation, including grouping changes, intervention frequency, schedule adjustments, and use of specialized materials. Additional resources include sensory tools, translation support, technology for assessments, and intervention programs aligned to MTSS. MESA K–8 School will collaborate with the district to determine appropriate supports and, when needed, potential placements for students with significant needs, ensuring alignment with district processes and a commitment to student success.

[68] (n.d.). https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/online-free-pd-options [Review of https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/online-free-pd-options]. Colorado Department of Education. https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/online-free-pd-options

R. Dispute Resolution Process

MESA is committed to maintaining a collaborative, transparent, and professional relationship with Jeffco Public Schools. In the event that a dispute arises between the charter school and the District, MESA will follow a dispute resolution process that is fully aligned with the requirements set forth in CRS 22-30.5-107.5 and with the intent of resolving issues at the lowest possible level.

Consistent with statute, MESA will first attempt to resolve any dispute informally through direct communication between school leadership and designated District staff. This initial step is intended to clarify concerns, share relevant information, and seek a mutually agreeable resolution without the need for formal proceedings. The school believes that early, good-faith dialogue supports strong partnerships and minimizes disruption to students and families.

If informal resolution is unsuccessful, MESA will engage in the formal dispute resolution process outlined in its charter contract, which will mirror statutory requirements. This includes providing written notice of the dispute, a clear description of the issue, and proposed remedies. Both parties will be afforded the opportunity to present relevant documentation and perspectives within established timelines.

Should the dispute remain unresolved after these steps, MESA will participate in mediation or other dispute resolution mechanisms as required by CRS 22-30.5-107.5, prior to pursuing any further legal remedies. Throughout the process, MESA will continue to operate in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and contractual obligations and will prioritize continuity of services to students.

The governing board will oversee adherence to the dispute resolution process, ensuring that actions taken by the school are aligned with statutory requirements, board policy, and the terms of the charter contract. By following this structured, statute-aligned approach, MESA demonstrates its commitment to accountability, collaboration, and responsible governance in partnership with Jeffco Public Schools.

S. School Management Contracts

This section of the application does not apply, as MESA is not planning to contract with an education management provider.

MESA Charter Application: Appendix

Use linked bookmark to jump to digital appendix section

Letter of Intent

A. Executive Summary

B. Vision and Mission Statements

C. Goals, Objectives, and Pupil Performance Standards

D. Evidence of Support

E. Educational Program

F. Plan for Evaluating Pupil Performance

G. Budget and Finance

H. Governance

I. Employees

J. Insurance Coverage

K. Parent and Community Involvement

L. Enrollment Policy

M. Transportation and Food Service

N. Facilities

O. Waivers

P. Student Discipline, Suspension, or Expulsion

Q. Serving Students with Special Needs

T. Additional Information: School Safety and Preparedness

Letter of Intent

MESA K–8 School
An Expeditionary Learning School in the Two Creeks Neighborhood
1100 Upham Street | Lakewood, CO 80214

February 1, 2026

Jefferson County Board of Education and District Accountability Committee
Jefferson County Public Schools
1829 Denver West Drive
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

On behalf of our founding team, I am pleased to submit this Letter of Intent to apply for authorization of MESA K-8 School, a public charter school designed to serve students and families in the Two Creeks neighborhood through an Expeditionary Learning and enrichment-for-all model.

MESA K-8 School will be founded and led by Jennifer Norris, Executive Director, in partnership with a dedicated steering committee: Trevon Brandhorst, Annie Carlon, Jill Duncan, Patty Kipp, Dino Reyes Jr., and Darby West.

The proposed school location is a vacant school at 1100 Upham Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80214. This site lies along the eastern boundary of Jefferson County Public Schools and was intentionally selected to serve the Two Creeks neighborhood and surrounding communities where families have expressed a strong need for additional high-quality public school options.

MESA proposes to open in the 2027–2028 school year, initially serving 48 Kindergarten students and 48 1st Grade students in Year 1. The school will add one grade level each year and will grow to serve Kindergarten through 8th grade at full build-out by the 2033–2034 school year.

The rationale for MESA is grounded in demonstrated community demand and equity of access. The proposed service area reflects higher-than-district averages of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch and multilingual learners, alongside limited access to innovative or enrichment-focused programming. Approximately 15,000 K–8 students live within a ten-minute radius of the site, and nearby schools show minimal program diversity and low neighborhood capture rates. Families and community members have consistently voiced the need for more school choice and specifically requested an Expeditionary Learning model that provides rigorous academics, real-world problem solving, and meaningful enrichment opportunities for all students. Community support is evidenced through numerous letters of support and strong family enrollment interest.

MESA will be the first K-8 Expeditionary Learning school in Jeffco. Through daily rigorous instruction, problem-based learning, field experiences, exhibitions of learning, and strong social-emotional supports, MESA will ensure that scholars from all backgrounds have access to joyful, challenging, and meaningful educational experiences that prepare them to become confident community leaders.

MESA affirms that it is not applying for authorization with any other school district.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to partnering with Jefferson County Public Schools to expand high-quality educational opportunities for students and families in the Two Creeks community.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Norris
Founder and Executive Director, MESA K-8 School

Appendix Section A: Executive Summary

Footnote 1: Jeffco Thrives Initiatives



Footnote 2: EL Education from Imagine Learning (Brochure linked here, further instructional materials in educational programming section)



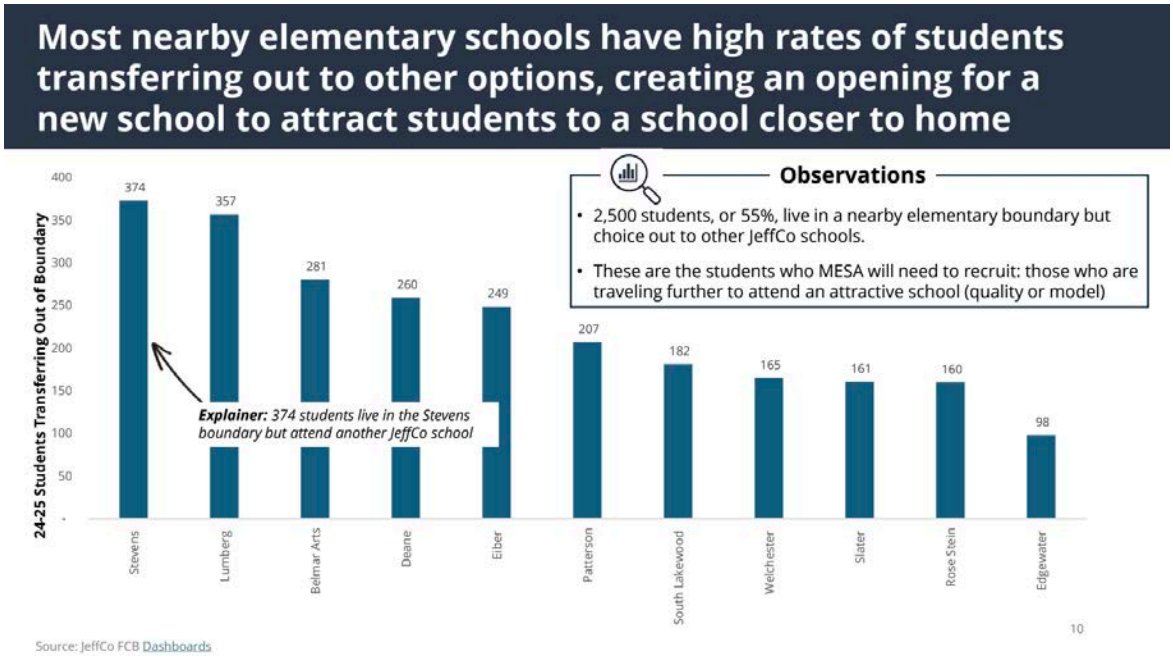


Data from Demographer that Supports Enrollment Viability
(from Eschbacher Consulting, LLC and Jeffco Dashboards)

Capture rates from nearby schools

"Capture" is the percentage of students who live in that school's boundary and enroll in that boundary school.

Stevens Students Live in Boundary 644 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 272 Capture Rate 42%	Lumberg Students Live in Boundary 744 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 386 Capture Rate 52%	Belmar Arts Students Live in Boundary 374 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 94 Capture Rate 25%	Deane Students Live in Boundary 440 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 181 Capture Rate 41%	Eiber Students Live in Boundary 429 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 182 Capture Rate 42%
Patterson Students Live in Boundary 357 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 150 Capture Rate 42%	South Lakewood Students Live in Boundary 363 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 180 Capture Rate 50%	Welchester Students Live in Boundary 337 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 171 Capture Rate 51%	Slater Students Live in Boundary 277 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 117 Capture Rate 42%	Rose Stein Students Live in Boundary 314 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 153 Capture Rate 49%
Alameda MS/HS Students Live in Boundary 1,931 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 821 Capture Rate 43%	Jefferson Students Live in Boundary 719 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 418 Capture Rate 58%	Lakewood HS Students Live in Boundary 1,113 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 671 Capture Rate 60%	Edgewater Students Live in Boundary 239 Students Live in Boundary and Attend 142 Capture Rate 59%	5 of these 14 schools have 50% or more their boundary students attending their school



School Name (sorted by distance)4	FRL %	GreatSchools Rating	Niche Rating
JeffCo Open Elementary	41%	6	B
Lumberg Elementary	83%	2	C
Rose Stein Intl. Elementary	81%	4	C
South Lakewood Elementary	64%	5	B-
Slater Elementary	75%	6	C+
Eiber Elementary	80%	4	C+
Edgewater Elementary	64%	4	C
Dennison Elementary	13%	9	A
Deane Elementary	80%	4	C
Stevens Elementary	66%	5	C+

Mixed ratings at many schools

Average grac

This graph shows that more than half of the students at nearby schools are not going to their boundary school. This is not a matter of declining enrollment but rather low capture and high choice out rates. MESA is a chance for 2,500 students to come back to their neighborhood and only needs 3% of the students in this area to be fully viable. The highest (over-enrolled) school in this area in 2024-25 was Kipp Sunshine Peak Elementary, a DPS charter school. The leader of this school is our MESA Founding Principal and will bring families from DPS to Jeffco.

The table to the left shows nearby schools to MESA's location and community perception from GreatSchools and Niche rating systems. This shows that there are many mixed ratings at schools and that schools with a higher FRL population (which MESA intends to serve) have lower ratings from the community. This shows an opportunity to attract local families back with a new model option.

Footnote 3: Referenced article for reasoning to offer enrichment for all students

Should "Gifted and Talented" Programs Be Open to All Students?

Gifted programs are structured to cultivate and maximize the strengths of an individual. Through enriching instruction and engaging curriculum, students in gifted education are put on a path to achieve their full potential. But shouldn't these ideals be applied to all students?

In New York City, a panel appointed by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio thinks so. It has proposed eliminating the city's gifted and talented programs, which largely enroll White and Asian American students, in favor of an approach that reduces inequality and segregation that is often perpetuated by gifted programs.

"Simply put, there are better ways to educate advanced learners than most of the current 'Screened' and Gifted and Talented programs, which segregate students by race and socioeconomic status," the panel wrote in a report to de Blasio. "Today they have become proxies for separating students who can and should have opportunities to learn together."

In a new episode of our *Critical Window* podcast, Dr. Yvette Jackson, adjunct professor at Teacher's College at Columbia University and a senior scholar at the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education, shares her knowledge about gifted and talented programs, what they tell us about how we structure our education system, and what we can learn from these programs.

We learn quickly that Dr. Jackson, who previously was the director of Gifted Programs for the New York City Board of Education, doesn't like the term "gifted" or other terms frequently used to label students. We asked her about this term and others that have been used to categorize students in the United States and what these words convey about students.

Dr. Jackson: *One [term], like you said, is gifted. The other term would be low-achieving, the other term would be subgroup, the other term would be minority, disabled, we can go on and on...I think those are enough, though, because immediately you get an image of you're either talking about those who have intellectual capacity when you label them as gifted, or those who, when you say low achieving, the expectation is there is nothing about them that could be termed in a high achievement world because they're low achieving.*

Dr. Jackson then compared terms used for muscle development to child achievement to emphasize how terms change the way we go about addressing underachieving students.

Dr. Jackson: *If you say that you have weak muscles, that's very different than saying you have underdeveloped muscles. Underdeveloped means if you just worked out with the right program, right strategies, and that's what I'm saying also for these terms. That children are not low achievers, they could be underachieving. They could be in situations where there are cognitive misfirings because of what they're in but they're not low achieving because that then puts the onus on the child. The issue is the onus is on us as the pedagogues to bring forward what the child innately has to offer.*

But before you think Dr. Jackson is talking badly about the effectiveness of gifted programs, she's not. In fact, she's saying that there are a lot of things that we can learn from gifted programs that we should apply to the education of all students, such as:

1. Believe that all students have the potential to achieve at high levels.

This is a key foundation of gifted programs, explains Dr. Jackson. Students are brought into gifted programs because they are believed to have the potential to get to the next level. While in these programs, they often have access to a more expansive curriculum reflective of what is going on in the world, says Dr. Jackson. But these opportunities should be available to all students to develop their strengths and help them grow academically.

2. Pair teachers from gifted programs with those not in gifted programs.

Schools can create professional development opportunities that involve teachers from gifted programs learning from teachers who are not in the gifted program. What types of strategies are the gifted teachers using to elicit high performance and higher-level thinking from their students?

3. Adopt opportunities and experiences offered in gifted programs.

At the district level, explore the experiences and opportunities that are being offered to students in gifted programs, advises Dr. Jackson. How can we expand these chances to engage in field trips to ensure more kids are excited for school? What local resources, including businesses, museums, and after-school opportunities are available to give more students exposure and connect their learning to the real world?

Listen to more from Dr. Jackson in the episode below. And if you'd like to hear even more from Dr. Jackson, check out another podcast episode with her on the pedagogy of confidence, or teaching with the transformative belief that all students have the potential to achieve at high levels.

[powerpress url="http://media.blubrry.com/criticalwindow/content.blubrry.com/criticalwindow/CW_08_Yvette_Jackson_01.mp3"]

Critical Window is a podcast from the Alliance for Excellent Education that explores the rapid changes happening in the body and the brain during adolescence and what these changes mean for educators, policymakers, and parents. Subscribe to Critical Window on Apple Music, Stitcher or wherever you find podcasts.

Letters of Support (in order as listed in Evidence of Support Table of Application)

LEGACY
INSTITUTE

February 1, 2026

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

As the leadership team for the Legacy Institute, we are writing to express our unwavering support for the authorization of MESA K-8 School in Jeffco Public Schools. At the Legacy Institute, we are committed to expanding access to high-quality, equitable, and innovative education for all students. Our board members include educational leaders, nonprofit executives, and social entrepreneurs who bring decades of experience in creating transformative learning environments that uplift communities and drive systemic change. We strongly believe that MESA is not just a new school – it is a necessary transformation in how education serves students and families in the Lakewood Two Creeks neighborhood.

Through its innovative Expeditionary Learning (EL) model, MESA K–8 School addresses these challenges while advancing Jeffco's mission to deliver a world-class education that prepares students for success locally and globally, and strategically complements the district's existing portfolio of schools. MESA will:

- Offer Jeffco families the first K-8 EL school in the district
- Engage students in real-world experiences by integrating local businesses, nonprofits, and community leaders, ensuring that students not only learn about the world but actively shape it with a model that is unique to Jefferson County, offering genuine educational choice that balances joy and rigor with durable skill development
- Attract and retain out-of district families with a proven model and strong community support

MESA K-8 School is led by Jennifer Norris, a Legacy Fellow, one of a select group of community leaders chosen to design, launch, and lead high-performing, community-based charter schools in historically underserved areas. The Legacy Institute, under the leadership of Founder and CEO Zachary McComsey and Fellowship Director Valerie McCormick, has a proven track record of launching and supporting high-quality schools in Colorado, ensuring that new school leaders are prepared to drive lasting change.

The Legacy Fellowship is a rigorous, 24-month program that provides over 600 hours of training from the nation's top educational professionals to ensure the long-term sustainability of new schools. As a Legacy Fellow, Jennifer has conducted over 100 hours of site visits to top-performing charter schools

and networks across the nation, including Valor Collegiate Academies, Bedford Stuyvesant New Beginnings Charter Schools, Central Queens Academy, DC Bilingual, and Mountain Middle School, studying best practices in school leadership, governance, enrollment, and community engagement.

Legacy Fellows are committed to long-term impact, with the expectation that they lead their schools for at least a decade to create sustained change in their communities. Jennifer's deep-rooted commitment, rigorous training, and national exposure to effective school models uniquely position MESA K-8 School for success.

Our leadership team is committed to supporting MESA K-8 School School beyond authorization. We believe that schools thrive through deep partnerships, and we stand ready to:

1. Provide mentorship, strategic guidance, and community connections that help MESA grow into a model of excellence.
2. Partner on initiatives that integrate entrepreneurship, leadership development, and workforce readiness into the curriculum.
3. Advocate for MESA as a critical part of the Jeffco ecosystem, ensuring that families have access to a truly innovative and excellent school option.

We are inspired by MESA's vision to break down barriers between school and community, empowering students with real-world skills, and fostering a sense of ownership and excellence in learning. We know from our work that education must be relevant, engaging, and deeply connected to both place and purpose. MESA embodies this philosophy.

The Legacy Institute fully supports the authorization of MESA K-8 School. We encourage the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education to recognize this extraordinary opportunity to bring a transformational, research-backed educational model to the students and families of Lakewood and the Jeffco Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Zachary McComsey
Founder and CEO

Valerie McCormick
Fellowship Director

Korey Askew
Climate and Culture Coordinator
Aurora Public Schools
August 23, 2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and
Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Jennifer Norris and the charter application to establish **MESA K-8 School** in Jefferson County. Having had the privilege of working under Jennifer's leadership at Traylor Academy, I have witnessed firsthand her exceptional qualifications, leadership skills, and unwavering dedication to creating student-centered learning environments. I am confident she is the right leader to establish and guide MESA K-8 to success.

With nearly two decades of experience in education, Jennifer has consistently demonstrated the ability to connect with students, families, and staff. Her leadership is grounded in empathy and high expectations, enabling her to coach teachers effectively, build collaborative teams, and cultivate cultures of excellence. She inspires those around her to pursue growth, ensuring that every member of her team is both supported and challenged.

Instructionally, Jennifer leads with precision and purpose. Her data-driven, text-first planning approach ensures targeted, rigorous learning for students. Equally important is her commitment to culturally responsive curriculum development, which empowers students to see themselves in their learning and engage with diverse perspectives. At the heart of her work is a student-first mentality that prioritizes safe, welcoming, and joyful learning spaces where all students can thrive.

Jennifer also excels in implementing and sustaining **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**. She understands that for students to succeed academically, they must feel a strong sense of belonging and safety. Through PBIS and her relational leadership, she creates school environments where students are intrinsically motivated, engaged, and proud of their learning.

In my current role as Climate and Culture Coordinator in Aurora Public Schools, I recognize how essential it is to balance academic rigor with social-emotional well-being. Jennifer modeled this balance for me—leading schools that are both academically challenging and deeply nurturing.

I have no doubt that MESA K-8 will thrive under Jennifer's vision and leadership. I strongly encourage the Board and Review Committee to approve this charter application, as it represents an opportunity to bring an innovative, inclusive, and high-quality educational option to the families of Jefferson County.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to advancing public education in our community.

Sincerely,



Korey Askew
Climate and Culture Coordinator
Aurora Public Schools

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | College of Education
Office of the Dean

October 1, 2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As a higher education leader at Kansas State University engaged in the work of preparing future teachers, I believe this proposed school presents an innovative and thoughtfully designed educational option for families in Jefferson County.

Through a shared campus approach, MESA aims to serve Kindergarten-8th grade students. The school's mission—MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders—reflects both innovation and a deep commitment to academic excellence and values that align with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals. The tie to community will make MESA unique in its approach to learning.

I had the opportunity to visit with Jennifer Norris. Our conversation was positive and future focused. Jennifer has a passion for the powerful impact of education on students' lives. I can attest to her qualifications, integrity, and dedication to students. Her preparation as an educator came from Kansas State University, a noted leader in teacher preparation. Her background experiences and her passion for meaningful, community-driven education give me confidence in her ability to lead a successful and sustainable school.

I believe MESA will provide an educational model that complements existing district schools while meeting the unique needs of a diverse student population. As an east Jeffco K-8 Expeditionary Learning center, this school is positioned to enhance learning opportunities and empower families with choice as it creates best practices from which others can learn.

I respectfully urge the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee to approve this application. The approval of MESA represents a forward-thinking step toward a stronger and more inclusive public education system in Jeffco and beyond.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Sincerely,

DMercer

Debbie Mercer, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education
Kansas State University

127 Bluemont Hall, 1114 Mid-Campus Drive N, Manhattan, KS 66506-5301 | (785) 532-5526 | Fax: (785) 532-7304 | www.k-state.edu

Julia Pool

242 W 53rd St 50A
NY, NY 10019
julia@burninmindset.com
804-241-6109
September 30, 2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As a business owner focused on teacher retention, I believe this proposed school presents a much-needed and thoughtfully designed educational option for families in Jefferson County.

MESA aims to serve Kindergarten-8th grade students in a shared campus. The school's mission—MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders—reflects both innovation and a deep commitment to academic excellence and values that align with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals.

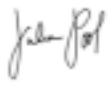
Having heard/followed the vision and leadership of Jennifer Norris, I can attest to her qualifications, integrity, and dedication to students. Her background and passion for meaningful, community-driven education give me confidence in their ability to lead a successful and sustainable school.

I believe MESA will provide an educational model that complements existing district schools while meeting the unique needs of our diverse student population. As an east Jeffco K-8 Expeditionary Learning center, this school is positioned to enhance learning opportunities and empower families with choice.

I respectfully urge the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee to approve this application. The approval of MESA represents a forward-thinking step toward a stronger and more inclusive public education system in Jeffco.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Sincerely,



Julia Pool
CEO, Burn-in Mindset
2013 DC Teacher of the Year

Morgridge College
of Education
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Dr. Erin Anderson
1999 E. Evans Ave
Denver, CO 80210
Erin.Anderson249@du.edu
718-664-3307

October 1, 2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to offer my enthusiastic support for the charter application of MESA K-8 School**,** founded by Jennifer Norris**.** As a university faculty member and educational researcher, I believe this proposed school offers a thoughtfully designed and much-needed educational option for families in Jefferson County.

MESA's mission—to serve scholars from all backgrounds and cultivate exceptional community leaders—demonstrates a clear commitment to academic excellence, equity, and community engagement. The vision aligns well with the broader goals of Jeffco Public Schools and promises to enrich the district's educational landscape.

Having collaborated with Jennifer Norris during her tenure as principal of Traylor Academy, I can speak confidently to her leadership, integrity, and dedication to student-centered learning. In my role leading a partner organization that supports schools through continuous improvement processes, I witnessed firsthand her capacity to think critically about complex educational challenges and implement transformative change. Her deep commitment to serving students and communities will be invaluable in launching and sustaining a successful school.

MESA is uniquely positioned to complement existing district schools by offering an East Jeffco K–8 Expeditionary Learning model that addresses the diverse needs of local students. Its shared-campus approach and innovative instructional vision will provide families with a high-quality, mission-driven school choice.

I respectfully urge the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee to approve the MESA K–8 School application. Doing so represents a forward-looking investment in educational equity, innovation, and excellence across Jefferson County.

Thank you for your leadership and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Erin Anderson
Associate Professor
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Guy Pasquino
408 N Franklin St
Denver CO 80218
gpasquino@mac.com
720-256-0708
10/15/2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

It is with unreserved enthusiasm that I recommend the charter school application for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As an educator, school leader, and educational non-profit executive director, I am confident this proposed school presents a much-needed and thoughtfully designed educational option for families in Jefferson County.

MESA aims to serve Kindergarten-8th grade students in a shared campus. The school's mission—MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders—reflects both innovation and a deep commitment to academic excellence and values that align with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals.

Having worked alongside Jennifer Norris and witnessed her vision and leadership firsthand, I can unequivocally attest to her proven qualifications, unwavering integrity, and profound dedication to students. Her 15+ years of experience in teaching, coaching, and school leadership, combined with a demonstrated capacity for translating passion into operational reality, give me absolute confidence in her ability to found and sustain a successful school.

I believe MESA will provide an educational model that powerfully complements existing district schools while meeting the unique needs of our diverse student population. As an East Jeffco K-8 Expeditionary Learning Center, MESA is uniquely positioned to deepen student engagement through project-based curricula, thereby enhancing learning opportunities and empowering families with greater choice.

I respectfully urge the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee to approve this application. The approval of MESA represents a forward-thinking step toward a stronger and more inclusive public education system in Jeffco.

I am confident that MESA K-8 School will be a valuable and successful addition to Jeffco Public Schools. I urge you to approve this application.

Sincerely,
Guy Pasquino M.Ed

Austin Hall
Dean of Students
Aurora West College Preparatory Academy
19700 E Idaho ave
Aurora, CO 80017
ahall3@aurorak12.org
720-291-3766

10/27/2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to offer my enthusiastic support for Jennifer Norris and the charter school application to establish MESA K-8 School in Jefferson County. As someone who has had the privilege of working with/for Jennifer Norris in the field of education, I can confidently speak to their qualifications, character, and readiness to found and lead a high-quality public charter school.

Jennifer Norris brings 15 years of experience in education, with a proven track record of instructional leadership, community engagement. Her ability to connect with students and families will serve her well as the founder of a new public charter school in Jeffco.

I have personally witnessed Jenn demonstrate the kind of visionary leadership and operational acumen that founding a school requires. Whether through advocating for underserved students, or developing culturally responsive curriculum her work has consistently prioritized student success and community impact.

What sets Jenn apart is her unwavering commitment to educational equity, innovative learning, and whole-child development. Her vision for MESA K-8 is not only compelling—it is actionable, rooted in research, and reflective of the needs of families across Jefferson County.

Jeffco Public Schools would benefit from the addition of a school led by such a dedicated, capable, and student-focused leader. I urge the Board and Review Committee to approve the charter application for MESA K-8 School, knowing that its success will be shaped by the strength, integrity, and educational excellence that Jennifer Norris brings.
Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to expanding high-quality public education in our community.

Sincerely,
Austin Hall

Dean of Students

Aurora West College Preparatory Academy

Dayana Juski
Early Childhood Education (ECE) Lead teacher and Team Specialist
Colfax Elementary School
1526 Tennyson st
Denver CO 80204
dayana_juski@dpsk12.net
(720) 557 9908

November, 2, 2025

J**effco Public Schools**
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to offer my enthusiastic support for Jennifer Norris in her application to found and lead MESA K–8 School within Jeffco Public Schools. I had the privilege of working closely with Jennifer during her time as Assistant Principal at Colfax Elementary, where I witnessed firsthand her exceptional leadership, deep commitment to students, and unwavering dedication to collaborative, student-centered education.

Jennifer consistently demonstrated the ability to build strong, cohesive teams through trust, transparency, and genuine listening. She valued teacher voice and fostered a culture where staff felt empowered to innovate, take risks, and continuously improve their practice—all with students' best interests at heart. Her openness to feedback and her ability to adapt in response to student needs set her apart as a leader who prioritizes student growth above all else. At the time, we were using a curriculum that I had a really hard time with, and went to Jenn a number of times for advice on how to make things more tailored to our title 1 school students. Not only did she listen to my concerns, but she also offered suggestions and guided me to make changes that were still meeting the curriculum standards but with a more culturally appropriate approach. And I was a happier teacher.

The vision for MESA K–8 reflects Jennifer's educational philosophy and her passion for equity and enrichment. A school that emphasizes enrichment for all students—not just those identified as gifted and talented—alongside service learning, problem-based learning, and field experiences tied to Expeditionary Learning literacy units, embodies her belief that every child deserves meaningful, hands-on learning opportunities that connect academics to the real world. This was a big part of the problem we needed to solve at Colfax with the curriculum we were using, that was written for middle-class families, and Jenn had the sensibility to help the ECE team to find alternatives to make it more meaningful for our students. We went from changing play themes, to incorporating activities that were very responsive to what our families were bringing, which promoted more family involvement that year. We even had her child as one of our students, and as a family member, she could see how the changes benefited the students and families. She is a problem solver, and she listens with heart.

I am confident that under Jennifer's leadership, MESA will become a thriving, inclusive learning community that nurtures curiosity, compassion, and a love of learning in every student. She has the vision, organizational skill, and heart to make this a reality.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like additional insight into Jennifer's leadership and professional impact. I offer my full support for the approval of the MESA K–8 charter application.

Sincerely,
Dayana Juski
Early Childhood Lead Teacher and Team Specialist

Belén Iniesta-Plaza
E.C.E Teacher
Denver Public Schools
90 N Corona ST
Denver, CO
iniesta_plaza@hotmail.com
720-441-9876
10/28/2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to offer my enthusiastic support for Jennifer Norris and the charter school application to establish MESA K-8 School in Jefferson County. As someone who has had the privilege of working for Jennifer Norris in the field of education, I can confidently speak to their qualifications, character, and readiness to found and lead a high-quality public charter school.

Jennifer Norris brings 15 years of experience in education, with a proven track record of fostering a school-wide culture where all educators—from Early Childhood through upper grades—students, and families feel included, respected, and empowered; promoting collaborative decision-making, equity-centered practices, and innovative approaches to teaching and learning; and ensuring that all members of the school community are supported to achieve their full potential. Her ability to create a cohesive, student- and family-centered learning environment that values diverse perspectives and nurtures both professional and personal growth among educators will serve her well as the founder of a new public charter school in Jeffco.

I have personally witnessed Jenn demonstrate the kind of visionary leadership and operational acumen that founding a school requires. Whether through advocating for inclusive teaching practices, ensuring that every student has equitable opportunities to succeed, and cultivating strong partnerships with families to support student growth, her work has consistently prioritized student success and community impact.

What sets Jenn apart is her unwavering commitment to educational equity, inclusion, and whole-child development. She believes that every student and every teacher deserves to feel welcome, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential, and she lives that belief through her daily leadership. Her vision for MESA K-8 is not only compelling—it is actionable, rooted in research, and reflective of the needs of families across Jefferson County.

Jeffco Public Schools would benefit from the addition of a school led by such a dedicated, capable, and student-focused leader. I urge the Board and Review Committee to approve the charter application for MESA K-8 School, knowing that its success will be shaped by the strength, integrity, and educational excellence that Jennifer Norris brings.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to expanding high-quality public education in our community.

Sincerely,
Belén Iniesta-Plaza

Early Childhood teacher in Denver Public Schools

Brian Hyosaka
2131 S. Allison Ct
Lakewood, CO 80227
Brian.hyosaka@gmail.com
630.463.2290
11/24/25

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K–8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. I write as a Lakewood resident, a career educator, and a parent of children in Jeffco Public Schools who deeply believes in strong, community-rooted public education.

Over the years, I have seen firsthand both the strengths of our district and the real need for more innovative, responsive learning environments that meet the needs of today's students. The vision for MESA feels like a thoughtful and timely response to that need. The school's mission to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders resonates strongly with my own beliefs about what schools should make possible for young people.

I have followed Jennifer Norris's leadership and vision with admiration for many years now. Her background in education and her commitment to creating meaningful, student-centered learning environments give me strong confidence in her ability to lead a school that is both academically rigorous and deeply grounded in the needs of families. She brings both credibility and heart to this work, qualities I know are essential for a successful school.

As a parent and educator in Jefferson County, I believe MESA offers a model that will complement existing district schools while expanding high-quality options for families. The proposed K–8 expeditionary learning focus is especially compelling, as it emphasizes real-world learning, strong relationships, and student voice, all elements I believe are critical.

I respectfully urge you to approve the MESA K–8 charter application. I see this school as a powerful opportunity to strengthen the public education landscape in Jeffco and to better serve the diverse learners and families who call our community home.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Brian Hyosaka

Victoria Laureska
Easton Elementary School
307 Glenwood Ave.
Easton, MD 21601

December 2, 2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to offer my enthusiastic support for Jennifer Norris and the charter school application to establish MESA K-8 School in Jefferson County. As someone who has had the privilege of knowing and working with Jennifer Norris in the field of education, I can confidently speak to their qualifications, character, and readiness to found and lead a high-quality public charter school.

Jennifer Norris brings 15 years of experience in education, with a proven track record of heart-centered leadership and innovation. Her ability to instruct and guide with confidence, intention, and grace consistently even while facing challenges and turmoil, will serve her well as the founder of a new public charter school in Jeffco.

I have personally witnessed Jenn demonstrate the kind of visionary leadership and operational acumen that founding a school requires. Whether through advocating for students, implementing data driven instruction, or working tirelessly to engage families in her school community, her work has consistently prioritized student success and community impact.

What sets Jenn apart is her unwavering commitment to equality and to seeing every child succeed academically and as a whole child. Her vision for MESA K-8 is not only compelling—it is actionable, rooted in research, and reflective of the needs of families across Jefferson County.

Jeffco Public Schools would benefit from the addition of a school led by such a dedicated, capable, and student-focused leader. I urge the Board and Review Committee to approve the charter application for MESA K-8 School, knowing that its success will be shaped by the strength, integrity, and educational excellence that Jennifer Norris brings.
Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to expanding high-quality public education in our community.

Sincerely,
Victoria Laureska
Easton Elementary School

Trevon Brandhorst
1834 S Quitman St
Denver, CO 80219
Trevon.Brandhorst@gmail.com
319-541-8154
12/10/2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As a Family and Community Engagement Expert and Large Urban School District Administrator, I believe this proposed school presents a much-needed and thoughtfully designed educational option for families in Jefferson County.

MESA aims to serve Kindergarten-8th grade students in a shared campus. The school's mission—MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders—reflects both innovation and a deep commitment to academic excellence and values that align with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals.

Having heard the vision and leadership of Jennifer Norris and previously collaborated, I can attest to her qualifications, integrity, and dedication to students. Her background in leading schools to impact and her passion for meaningful, community-driven education give me confidence in her ability to lead a successful and sustainable school.

I believe MESA will provide an educational model that complements existing district schools while meeting the unique needs of our diverse student population. Simply put this is a huge opportunity for Jeffco and the families and students! As an east Jeffco K-8 Expeditionary Learning center, this school is positioned to enhance learning opportunities and empower families with choice.

I respectfully hope the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee will consider approving this application. The approval of MESA represents a forward-thinking step toward a stronger and more inclusive public education system in Jeffco.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration!

Sincerely,
Trevon Brandhorst

Cynden Porter
1204 S Balsam Ct
Lakewood, CO 80232
cynden@exponentialops.com
720-878-6388

December 18, 2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic and unwavering support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As a strategic operations consultant who works extensively with educational and nonprofit organizations, I believe this proposed school represents exactly the kind of innovative, community-responsive educational option that families in east Jefferson County desperately need.

Though Jennifer and I first connected just over a month ago, I have been genuinely inspired by the depth of her passion, the clarity of her vision, and her remarkable ability to translate complex educational challenges into actionable solutions. In my years of working with educational leaders across various contexts, I can confidently say that Jennifer stands out as an exceptional leader with both the track record and the heart necessary to build something transformative.

What strikes me most about Jennifer is her unwavering commitment to improving student outcomes—not as an abstract concept, but as a daily practice grounded in real relationships with students and families. She approaches education with a rare combination of data-driven rigor and deep empathy, constantly seeking innovative ways to better support the whole child and engage families as true partners in the educational journey. Her leadership style embodies both high expectations and high support, creating environments where students don't just succeed academically but develop into confident, capable community leaders.

Jennifer's decision to establish MESA K-8 School in east Jefferson County speaks volumes about her character and commitment. She identified a critical gap in educational options for families in this area and, rather than simply noting the challenge, she stepped forward to meet the moment. This is not someone who shies away from difficulty; this is a leader who sees challenges as opportunities to serve and who has the proven ability to build sustainable, high-performing educational institutions.

The MESA model—an Expeditionary Learning approach serving K-8 students from all backgrounds—represents thoughtful innovation grounded in proven pedagogical practices. This isn't change for change's sake; it's a carefully designed response to the specific needs and assets of the east Jeffco community. The school's mission to develop exceptional community leaders from all backgrounds aligns

perfectly with both district goals and the broader imperative to ensure every child has access to excellent public education options.

From an operational perspective, Jennifer brings the systems thinking and strategic planning capabilities essential for launching and sustaining a successful charter school. She understands that great schools require more than great teaching—they need robust operational foundations, strong community partnerships, and sustainable financial models. Her comprehensive approach to school design, combining educational excellence with operational sustainability, gives me tremendous confidence in MESA's long-term viability and impact.

I urge the Board and Review Committee to recognize what an extraordinary opportunity Jennifer Norris and MESA K-8 School represent for Jefferson County. Approving this application means investing in a proven educational leader, expanding quality options for families who need them most, and demonstrating Jeffco's commitment to innovative, equity-focused public education.

The students and families of east Jefferson County deserve access to excellent schools that see and serve their full potential. Jennifer Norris has both the vision and the capability to deliver exactly that through MESA K-8 School. I respectfully but urgently encourage you to approve this application.

Thank you for your time, your service to our community, and your consideration of this important application.

Sincerely,

Cynden Porter
Owner, Exponential Ops, Inc.

Derek Pike
2099 S Raleigh St
Denver, CO 80219
mrderekpike7@gmail.com
303-908-4130
January 7th 2026

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As a parent and school leader who has deep knowledge and interest in the success of JeffCo and Denver Metro area schools, I believe this proposed school presents a much-needed and thoughtfully designed educational option for families in Jefferson County and beyond. Jennifer Norris has consistently designed and led schools that outperform their counterparts in Colorado. As such, her proposal and commitment to exceptional schools should be considered as a priority for any community she serves.

MESA aims to serve Kindergarten-8th grade students from all backgrounds in a shared campus. The school's mission—MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders—reflects both innovation and a deep commitment to academic excellence and values that align with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals.

Having firsthand experience with the vision and leadership of Jennifer Norris, I can attest to her qualifications, integrity, and dedication to students. Her background at the University of Denver Educational Leadership Program, in Denver Public Schools, and with Springs Legacy has prepared Jennifer for the MESA mission. Her passion for meaningful, community-driven educational opportunities is unmatched.

I believe MESA will provide an educational model that complements existing district schools while meeting the unique needs of our diverse student population. As an east Jeffco K-8 Expeditionary Learning center, this school is positioned to enhance learning opportunities and empower families with choice.

I respectfully urge the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee to approve this application. The approval of MESA represents a forward-thinking step toward a stronger and more inclusive public education system in Jeffco.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Derek Pike
Denver Public Schools Administrator and Prospective JeffCo Public Schools Parent

Barth Quenzer
4445 Cody St.
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033
barthquenzer@gmail.com
505-923-0953
1/5/2026

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I lend my unwavering support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As a Jeffco resident and parent of two Jeffco students, and as a teacher who worked with Jenn for three years when she was a principal in Denver Public Schools, I can say with full confidence that her school proposal is thoughtfully designed, inspiring, and addresses the need for school options for families in Jefferson County.

As Jenn has expressed to her supportive community, the vision of MESA is to serve Kindergarten-8th grade students from all backgrounds in a shared campus with a focus on Expeditionary Learning. The school's mission reflects both innovation and a deep commitment to academic excellence and values that align with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals.

After listening to the vision of Jennifer Norris, and having the privilege of working directly with her, I can attest to her visionary abilities, courage, resilience, qualifications, integrity, and dedication to students and families. Her background as a teacher, principal, and now founder of her own school as a Legacy Fellow demonstrates her commitment and passion for meaningful, community-driven education. I have no doubt that her school will thrive under her leadership.

As a parent of Jeffco students, I know how important and valuable it is to provide families with quality choices. I would not hesitate to send my own kids to MESA, as the school's vision and mission align with my family's values and educational needs.

I respectfully urge the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee to approve this application. The approval of MESA represents a forward-thinking step toward a stronger and more inclusive public education system in Jeffco.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barth Quenzer, PhD
Visual Arts Educator, Denver Public School

Kristina A. Hesbol, PhD

10506 Meadow Run
Parker, Colorado 80134
Kristina.hesbol@du.edu
January 18, 2026

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As a lifelong educator and recently retired professor at the University of Denver, I believe this proposed school presents a much needed and thoughtfully designed educational option for families in Jefferson County.

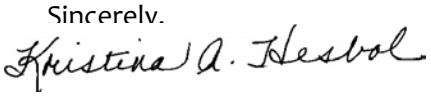
MESA aims to serve Kindergarten-8th grade students from all backgrounds in a shared campus. The school's mission—MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders—reflects both innovation and a deep commitment to academic excellence and values that align with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals.

Having heard/followed the vision and leadership of Jennifer Norris, I can attest to her qualifications, integrity, and dedication to students. Her background as an educational leader and school founder, supported by her inclusive vision to develop students as leaders and environmental stewards, as well as her passion for meaningful, community-driven education give me confidence in her ability to lead a successful and sustainable school. I believe MESA will provide an educational model that complements existing district schools while meeting the unique needs of our diverse student population. As an east Jeffco K-8 Expeditionary Learning center, this school is positioned to enhance learning opportunities and empower families with choice.

I respectfully urge the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee to approve this application. The approval of MESA represents a forward-thinking step toward a stronger and more inclusive public education system in Jeffco.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Sincerely,



Kristina A. Hesbol, PhD
Morgridge College of Education Associate Professor (retired)

Monica Mueller
2555 S Irving St
Denver, CO, 80219
monica.raudalez@gmail.com
720-354-1178
1/16/2026

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As an educator and parent, I believe this proposed school presents a much-needed and thoughtfully designed educational option for families in Jefferson County.

MESA aims to serve Kindergarten-8th grade students from all backgrounds in a shared campus. The school's mission—MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders—reflects both innovation and a deep commitment to academic excellence and values that align with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals.

Having heard/followed the vision and leadership of Jennifer Norris, I can attest to her qualifications, integrity, and dedication to students. Her background in education and their passion for meaningful, community-driven education give me confidence in their ability to lead a successful and sustainable school.

I believe MESA will provide an educational model that complements existing district schools while meeting the unique needs of our diverse student population. As an east Jeffco K-8 Expeditionary Learning center, this school is positioned to enhance learning opportunities and empower families with choice.

I respectfully urge the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee to approve this application. The approval of MESA represents a forward-thinking step toward a stronger and more inclusive public education system in Jeffco.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Monica Mueller
Program Supervisor DPS

Alanna Reynard
5 Green Spruce
Littleton, CO 80127
alanna.reynard@gmail.com
415-513-2033
10/1/2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the charter school application for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As a community member, parent, and local business owner, I believe this school offers a much-needed and thoughtfully designed option for families in Jefferson County.

MESA's mission—to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders—reflects both innovation and a deep commitment to academic excellence, aligning closely with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals.

Through my work with a variety of schools and school districts across the Front Range, I have seen the value of high-quality, mission-driven educational programs. Having also worked with Jennifer Norris as a fellow parent in the school setting, I can personally attest to her integrity, leadership, and dedication to students. Seeing her vision in action and the way she engages with families gives me great confidence in her ability to establish and sustain a successful school.

Having heard Jennifer Norris's vision for MESA, I believe the school will both complement existing district schools and meet the unique needs of a diverse student population.

I respectfully urge you to approve this application. Supporting MESA represents a forward-thinking step toward a stronger, more inclusive public education system in Jeffco.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alanna Reynard
Parent and Owner of Young Rembrandts Northern Colorado

Theo Shaw
822 Willow Oak Street
Brighton, CO 80601
theotshaw33@gmail.com
October 3, 2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board and Review Committee,

I'm writing in strong support of MESA K–8, founded by Jennifer Norris.

What moved me most in our conversation was not just a school design—it was a posture: build longer tables, not higher fences. MESA's vision centers students and families who have too often been asked to fit into systems that weren't built with them. This proposal flips that script. It elevates student voice, treats diversity as a strength, and invites families and community partners to co-create learning—not as guests, but as co-guides.

Here is what MESA will bring to Jeffco—and why it matters: A community-anchored K–8 with dual language and an enrichment-first model. MESA is deliberately designed to welcome West Metro families—targeting approximately 70% FRL and 40% MLL—while resisting deficit thinking. Instead of reteach/remediate, MESA prioritizes enrichment and acceleration so scholars experience challenge, success, and pride from day one.

- Authentic, hands-on learning every week. Drawing on EL Education (expeditionary learning) and Illustrative Mathematics as core anchors, students will engage in quarterly problem-based service projects with public exhibitions and oral presentations.

- Space for joy, curiosity, and purpose**.** Regular, student-driven enrichment time lets teachers bring their talents to the table while students explore interests deeply—sparking creativity and connection across grades.

- Alignment with district priorities. MESA's design threads directly to Jeffco's strategic aims: durable skills, authentic assessment, family partnership, and community-connected learning. This is a "with, not to" model—built alongside local partners and responsive to a community that has weathered consolidations and deserves a school that reflects its voice.

I've been a Montessori educator, a school leader, a district leader, and now a coach to districts across the country on outcomes and implementation. In that arc, I've rarely seen a founding plan as coherent and values-driven as MESA's. Jennifer brings 14 years of district experience, deep credibility with families, and the courage to ask hard questions in service of kids. Just as importantly, she's building the coalition—engaging local organizations and leaders—so approval isn't the finish line; it's the launch of a school that belongs to the community.

Approving MESA would not siphon energy from Jeffco; it would add to it. It would offer a high-quality, public, community-rooted option in an area with few "green" choices, and it would do so by elevating student voice, expanding opportunity, and proving what's possible when we lengthen the table.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to approve the MESA charter application.

With appreciation for your leadership and service to Jeffco's students,

Theo Shaw

Veronica Maes
210 W. Main Street
Trinidad, CO
veronica.maes@trinidad.co.gov
303-913-1388
October 7, 2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As an educator and former community member, I believe this proposed school presents a much-needed and thoughtfully designed educational option for families in Jefferson County.

MESA aims to serve Kindergarten-8th-grade students in a shared campus. The school's mission—MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders—reflects both innovation and a deep commitment to academic excellence and values that align with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals.

Having heard and discussed the vision and leadership of Jennifer Norris, I can attest to her qualifications, integrity, and dedication to students. Her background in inclusive education, education, and community building gives me confidence in her ability to lead a successful and sustainable school.

I believe MESA will provide an educational model that complements existing district schools while meeting the unique needs of our diverse student population. As an East Jeffco K-8 Expeditionary Learning Center, this school is positioned to enhance learning opportunities and empower families with choice.

I respectfully urge the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee to approve this application. The approval of MESA represents a forward-thinking step toward a stronger and more inclusive public education system in Jeffco.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Veronica Maes
Director, Communications and Community Relations

Alex Gross

6184 W. Gould Dr
Littleton, CO 80123
aggross24@gmail.com
(520) 245-2350
11/24/2025

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As a parent, I believe this proposed school presents a much-needed and thoughtfully designed educational option for families in Jefferson County.

To provide some context, MESA aims to serve Kindergarten-8th grade students in a shared campus. The school's mission—MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders—reflects both innovation and a deep commitment to academic excellence and values that align with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals. As a parent of a 2nd grader and Kindergartener in the Jeffco school system, I am not aware of any school that exists like the one proposed in this letter. There is a clear need for this, and no one is better qualified and dedicated to lead a school of this caliber than Jennifer.

I thought it would be helpful to share what a wonderful experience my family and I have had with Jennifer. This past Spring, Jennifer and her husband served as my son's T-ball coaches. From the beginning it was clear that she was truly the kindest, most patient, and most supportive coach we could have hoped for. She consistently encouraged the boys to cheer for one another and created an environment where every child felt seen, understood, and valued.

A few months ago, I approached Jen with some concerns about my son's behavior. She sat down with me and was incredibly knowledgeable, compassionate, and supportive. Jennifer went above and beyond—offering helpful resources, sharing both her personal insights and her educational experience, and making sure I felt understood and supported as a parent. It was clear from the moment I met Jennifer, that teaching and creating a world where every child is seen and supported is her passion.

I believe MESA will provide an educational model that complements existing district schools while meeting the unique needs of our diverse student population. As an east Jeffco K-8 Expeditionary Learning center, this school is positioned to enhance learning opportunities and empower families with choice.

I respectfully urge the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee to approve this application. The approval of MESA represents a forward-thinking step toward a stronger and more inclusive public education system in Jeffco.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alex Gross

NORRIS DESIGN
PEOPLE + PLACEMAKING

1101 Bannock Street
Denver, Colorado 80204
303.892.1166

January 5, 2026

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for Jennifer Norris and the charter application to establish MESA K-8 School in Jefferson County. I have had the pleasure of getting to know Jennifer and witnessing her dedication and leadership skills over the past 10 years. She is most definitely the right leader to establish and guide MESA K-8.

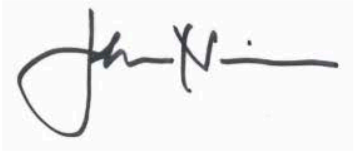
While I'm not involved in the educational curriculum every day, I grew up with a father who was a principal for a middle school in Kansas City for 20 years. I also had 3 children who went through school in Jefferson County. Two of them graduated from D'Evelyn High School and one from Chatfield High School. In that regard I did get to see and experience the importance of having a quality education. Jennifer is married to my oldest son Joe. I have gotten to witness her passion for education virtually every time that we come into contact with each other, which seems to be about every 2-3 weeks over the past 15 years.

Jennifer's nearly 2 decades of experience in education has given her the perspective needed to enable her to coach leaders effectively, build collaborative teams, and cultivate a culture at MESA K-8 that can endure. At the heart of her work is a student-first mentality that prioritizes safe, welcoming, and joyful learning experiences where any and all students can thrive.

I have full confidence in the success of MESA K-8 under Jennifer's leadership. I would strongly encourage the Board and Review Committee to approve this charter application as it represents an opportunity to bring an innovative, inclusive, and high-quality educational option to the families of Jefferson County.

Thanks for your time and commitment to public education in our community.

Sincerely,



John Norris FASLA

Norris Design Inc.

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the business and neighborhood community to express strong support for the authorization of MESA K–8 School as part of its charter school application to Jeffco Public Schools. As a leader invested in the vitality of the Two Creeks/Lakewood area, I believe MESA represents an important opportunity to strengthen our community by expanding high-quality school options and re-engaging families within the district.

Strong neighborhood schools are foundational to thriving local communities and a stable workforce. When families are unable to find schools that meet their academic, logistical, and developmental needs, they often leave the district or the neighborhood altogether. MESA's proposed K–8 model has the potential to reverse this trend by offering a rigorous, engaging, and accessible school option that encourages families to remain in—or return to—Jeffco Public Schools.

MESA's Expeditionary Learning approach emphasizes problem solving, collaboration, and real-world application of learning. These skills are directly aligned with the needs of local businesses and community organizations, which increasingly seek individuals who can think critically, communicate effectively, and work productively with others. The school's commitment to regular fieldwork and public Exhibitions of Learning creates natural opportunities for partnerships between students, educators, businesses, and neighborhood organizations, strengthening connections between education and the local community.

The school's plans for an extended school day and year, along with before- and after-school programming, demonstrate a clear understanding of the needs of working families. These structures increase access to high-quality education while supporting consistent student participation and long-term enrollment stability—both of which benefit the broader Jeffco community.

MESA's focus on inclusion, enrichment for all students, and strong family partnership reflects values shared by business and neighborhood leaders who want to see communities that are welcoming, stable, and future-focused. By preparing students not only for academic success but also for civic engagement and leadership, MESA contributes to the long-term social and economic health of the area.

For these reasons, I fully support the authorization of MESA K–8 School and respectfully encourage the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education to approve this charter application. I believe MESA will be a valuable addition to the district and a strong partner in building a vibrant, connected, and thriving community.

Sincerely,

Name: Trinity Bruno
Title: CEO
Business / Organization / Association: A Music Plus Entertainment
Community / Neighborhood: Jeffco
Signature: [signature]
Date: 01/15/25

SAINT BERNADETTE

Catholic Parish

7240 West 12th Avenue / Lakewood, Colorado 80214
Phone: 303.233.1523 / Fax: 303.233.7285 /
connect@Stbernadettelakewood.org

3 February 2026

Jeffco Public Schools
Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Members of the Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the charter school application submitted for MESA K-8 School, founded by Jennifer Norris. As a Catholic priest, serving as a Pastor, I believe this proposed school presents a much needed and thoughtfully designed educational option for families in Jefferson County.

MESA aims to serve Kindergarten-8th grade students from all backgrounds in a shared campus. The school's mission: *MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders,* reflects creativity, desire, and a deep commitment to academic excellence with values that align with Jeffco Public Schools' broader goals.

Having met with and desired to partner with the vision and leadership of Jennifer Norris, I can attest to her desire, integrity, and dedication to students. Having heard her in conversation, in regard to her history of working in education, and her passion for meaningful, community-driven education gives me confidence in her ability to lead a successful and sustainable school.

It is my estimation that MESA will provide an educational model that complements existing district schools while meeting the unique needs of our diverse student population. As an east Jeffco K-8 Expeditionary Learning center, this school is positioned to enhance learning opportunities and empower families with choice.

I respectfully ask the Board of Education and the Charter School Application Review Committee to approve this application. The approval of MESA represents a needed step toward a stronger and more inclusive public education system in Jeffco.

I appreciate your consideration.
Respectfully,

Fr Joseph McLagan, V.F
Pastor

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

Dear Members of the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing as a community member to express my strong support for the authorization of MESA K–8 School as part of its charter school application to Jeffco Public Schools. As someone who cares deeply about the Two Creeks neighborhood and the families who live here, I believe MESA represents an important opportunity to expand high-quality school options and strengthen our local community.

Many families in the Two Creeks area are actively seeking schools that offer rigorous academics, meaningful learning experiences, and schedules that reflect the realities of working families. In the absence of options that meet these needs, some families have chosen to leave the district in search of schools elsewhere. MESA has the potential to bring families back to Jeffco by offering a K–8 model that is both academically strong and intentionally designed around access, engagement, and belonging.

MESA's Expeditionary Learning approach and focus on problem-based learning provide students with opportunities to think critically, collaborate, and apply their learning to real-world challenges. The school's commitment to regular fieldwork and public Exhibitions of Learning strengthens the connection between students, schools, and the surrounding community, making learning visible and meaningful for families and neighbors alike.

I am particularly encouraged by MESA's plans to offer an extended school day and year, along with before- and after-school programming. These structures address common barriers for families in our neighborhood and make it more feasible for students to remain engaged in a high-quality school within Jeffco. By responding directly to community needs, MESA supports both enrollment stability and long-term family investment in district schools.

MESA's emphasis on inclusion, enrichment for all students, and strong family partnership reflects the values of the Two Creeks community. The school's design prioritizes equity, access, and leadership development, ensuring that students from all backgrounds are welcomed and supported to succeed.

For these reasons, I fully support the authorization of MESA K–8 School and respectfully encourage the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education to approve this charter application. I believe MESA will be a valuable addition to the Two Creeks neighborhood and will help strengthen Jeffco by expanding choice, retaining families, and bringing students back into the district.

Sincerely,

Name: Laura Walters
Community Affiliation / Role (if applicable): Stay Today
Neighborhood: Two Creeks / Lakewood
Signature: Laura Walters
Date: 2-4-2026

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

Dear Members of the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing as a parent to express my strong support for the authorization of MESA K–8 School as part of its charter school application to Jeffco Public Schools. As a family, we are seeking a school that offers both high academic expectations and a learning environment where children feel known, challenged, and supported. MESA represents the kind of school we hope to see available to families in Jeffco.

MESA's mission to serve scholars from all backgrounds and develop future community leaders resonates deeply with what we want for our children. The school's use of Expeditionary Learning and problem-based instruction reflects a thoughtful approach to learning—one that goes beyond test preparation and helps students think critically, collaborate with others, and apply what they learn to real-world situations. The planned fieldwork experiences and public Exhibitions of Learning give families opportunities to see and celebrate student growth in meaningful ways.

As a parent, I am especially encouraged by MESA's commitment to accessibility for working families. The planned extended school day and year, along with before- and after-school programming, would make it possible for families like ours to remain engaged in a school community without having to choose between academic quality and practical needs. These structures demonstrate that MESA understands the realities families face and is intentionally designing a school that works for the whole family.

MESA's emphasis on inclusion, enrichment for all students, and strong family partnership also stands out. The school's commitment to equity and belonging gives me confidence that students from diverse backgrounds will be welcomed, supported, and challenged to reach their full potential. I value a school where families are viewed as partners and where communication and collaboration are prioritized.

For these reasons, I fully support the authorization of MESA K–8 School and respectfully encourage the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education to approve this charter application. I believe MESA will be a valuable addition to Jeffco and an important option for families seeking a rigorous, joyful, and community-centered educational experience.

Sincerely,

Parent Name: Jillian Tahiri
Student(s) Age(s) or Grade(s) (optional): 5 yrs old / Kinder
City / Community: Lakewood, Jeffco
Signature: Jillian Tahiri
Date: 1/15/26

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

Dear Members of the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing as a parent to express my strong support for the authorization of MESA K–8 School as part of its charter school application to Jeffco Public Schools. As a family, we are seeking a school that offers both high academic expectations and a learning environment where children feel known, challenged, and supported. MESA represents the kind of school we hope to see available to families in Jeffco.

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For these reasons, I fully support the authorization of MESA K–8 School and respectfully encourage the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education to approve this charter application. I believe MESA will be a valuable addition to Jeffco and an important option for families seeking a rigorous, joyful, and community-centered educational experience.

Sincerely,

Parent Name: Elizabeth Roos
Student(s) Age(s) or Grade(s) (optional): 5/preschool
City / Community: Denver
Signature: Elizabeth Roos
Date: 1/12/26

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

Dear Members of the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing as a community member to express my strong support for the authorization of MESA K–8 School as part of its charter school application to Jeffco Public Schools. As someone who cares deeply about the Two Creeks neighborhood and the families who live here, I believe MESA represents an important opportunity to expand high-quality school options and strengthen our local community.

Many families in the Two Creeks area are actively seeking schools that offer rigorous academics, meaningful learning experiences, and schedules that reflect the realities of working families. In the absence of options that meet these needs, some families have chosen to leave the district in search of schools elsewhere. MESA has the potential to bring families back to Jeffco by offering a K–8 model that is both academically strong and intentionally designed around access, engagement, and belonging.

MESA's Expeditionary Learning approach and focus on problem-based learning provide students with opportunities to think critically, collaborate, and apply their learning to real-world challenges. The school's commitment to regular fieldwork and public Exhibitions of Learning strengthens the connection between students, schools, and the surrounding community, making learning visible and meaningful for families and neighbors alike.

I am particularly encouraged by MESA's plans to offer an extended school day and year, along with before- and after-school programming. These structures address common barriers for families in our neighborhood and make it more feasible for students to remain engaged in a high-quality school within Jeffco. By responding directly to community needs, MESA supports both enrollment stability and long-term family investment in district schools.

MESA's emphasis on inclusion, enrichment for all students, and strong family partnership reflects the values of the Two Creeks community. The school's design prioritizes equity, access, and leadership development, ensuring that students from all backgrounds are welcomed and supported to succeed.

For these reasons, I fully support the authorization of MESA K–8 School and respectfully encourage the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education to approve this charter application. I believe MESA will be a valuable addition to the Two Creeks neighborhood and will help strengthen Jeffco by expanding choice, retaining families, and bringing students back into the district.

Sincerely,

Name: SUSAN DEBUS
Community Affiliation / Role (if applicable): JEFFCO RESIDENT
Neighborhood: Two Creeks / Lakewood
Signature: Susan E Debus
Date: 15 JAN 2026

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

Dear Members of the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

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Sincerely,

Name: JESSICA HOWARD
Community Affiliation / Role (if applicable): JEFFCO RESIDENT
Neighborhood: Two Creeks / Lakewood
Signature: [signature]
Date: 15 MAY 2026

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

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Sincerely,

Name: Cheryl W Kirksey
Community Affiliation / Role (if applicable): Jeffco Resident
Neighborhood: Two Creeks / Lakewood
Signature: Cheryl W Kirksey
Date: 4/15/2026

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

Dear Members of the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

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Sincerely,

Name: Carl E. Mayfield
Community Affiliation / Role (if applicable): Jeffco Resident
Neighborhood: Two Creeks / Lakewood
Signature: Carl E. Mayfield
Date: 1-21-2026

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

Dear Members of the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

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Sincerely,

Name: Katherine Simms
Community Affiliation / Role (if applicable): resident
Neighborhood: Two Creeks / Lakewood
Signature: KaSi
Date: Jan. 15, 2026

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

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Sincerely,

Name: Andrea Cohen
Community Affiliation / Role (if applicable): Jeffco resident
Neighborhood: Two Creeks / Lakewood
Signature: Andrea Cohen
Date: 1/15/26

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

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Many families in the Two Creeks area are actively seeking schools that offer rigorous academics, meaningful learning experiences, and schedules that reflect the realities of working families. In the absence of options that meet these needs, some families have chosen to leave the district in search of schools elsewhere. MESA has the potential to bring families back to Jeffco by offering a K–8 model that is both academically strong and intentionally designed around access, engagement, and belonging.

MESA's Expeditionary Learning approach and focus on problem-based learning provide students with opportunities to think critically, collaborate, and apply their learning to real-world challenges. The school's commitment to regular fieldwork and public Exhibitions of Learning strengthens the connection between students, schools, and the surrounding community, making learning visible and meaningful for families and neighbors alike.

I am particularly encouraged by MESA's plans to offer an extended school day and year, along with before- and after-school programming. These structures address common barriers for families in our neighborhood and make it more feasible for students to remain engaged in a high-quality school within Jeffco. By responding directly to community needs, MESA supports both enrollment stability and long-term family investment in district schools.

MESA's emphasis on inclusion, enrichment for all students, and strong family partnership reflects the values of the Two Creeks community. The school's design prioritizes equity, access, and leadership development, ensuring that students from all backgrounds are welcomed and supported to succeed.

For these reasons, I fully support the authorization of MESA K–8 School and respectfully encourage the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education to approve this charter application. I believe MESA will be a valuable addition to the Two Creeks neighborhood and will help strengthen Jeffco by expanding choice, retaining families, and bringing students back into the district.

Sincerely,

Name: JoAnn Roos
Community Affiliation / Role (if applicable): Jeffco resident
Neighborhood: Two Creeks / Lakewood
Signature: JoAnn Roos
Date: Jan 14, 2026

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

Dear Members of the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

I am writing as a community member to express my strong support for the authorization of MESA K–8 School as part of its charter school application to Jeffco Public Schools. As someone who cares deeply about the Two Creeks neighborhood and the families who live here, I believe MESA represents an important opportunity to expand high-quality school options and strengthen our local community.

Many families in the Two Creeks area are actively seeking schools that offer rigorous academics, meaningful learning experiences, and schedules that reflect the realities of working families. In the absence of options that meet these needs, some families have chosen to leave the district in search of schools elsewhere. MESA has the potential to bring families back to Jeffco by offering a K–8 model that is both academically strong and intentionally designed around access, engagement, and belonging.

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Sincerely,

Name: Patricia Kipp
Community Affiliation / Role (if applicable): Jeffco Resident
Neighborhood: Two Creeks / Lakewood
Signature: Patricia Kipp
Date: 1-26-26

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee
1829 Denver West Drive, Bldg. #27
Golden, CO 80401

Letter of Support for MESA K–8 School Charter Application

Dear Members of the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education and Charter School Application Review Committee,

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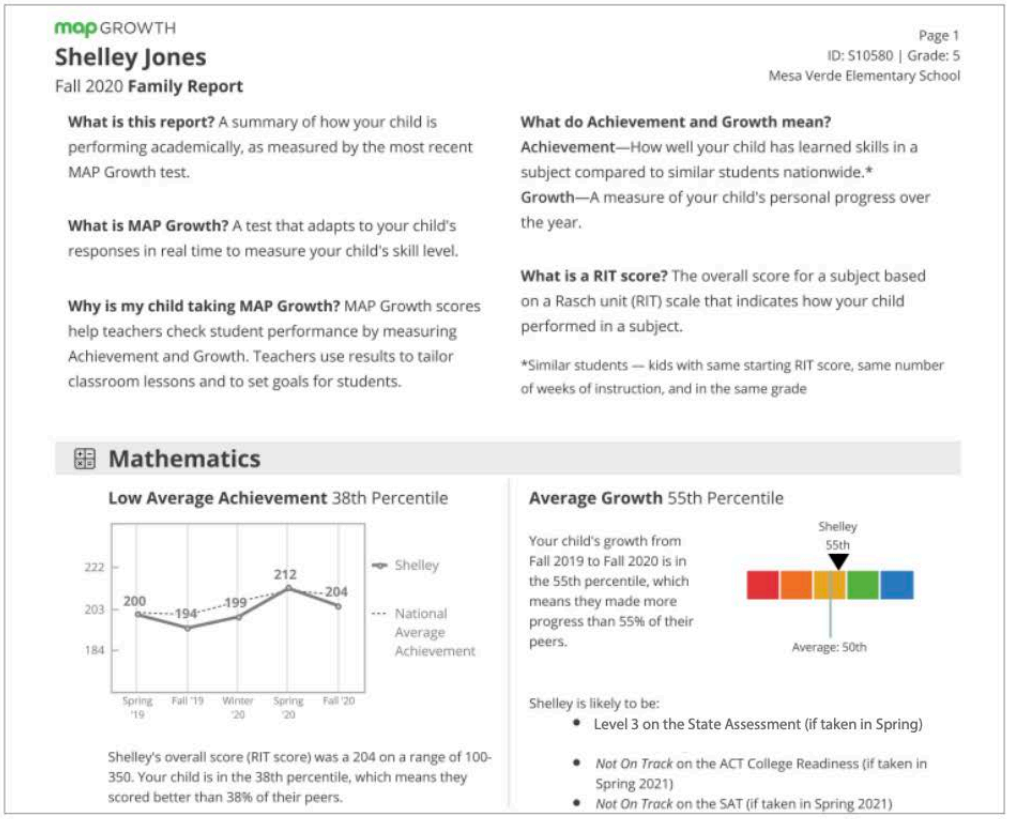
Sincerely,

Name: JON MAYFIELD
Community Affiliation / Role (if applicable): _____
Neighborhood: Two Creeks / Lakewood
Signature: _____
Date: 1/17/26

Footnote 4: NWEA (MAP) testing

The image below shows an example of a family report from MAP testing to serve as a progress report for families.

Family report



map GROWTH

Shelley Jones

Fall 2020 **Family Report**

Page 1
ID: S10580 | Grade: 5
Mesa Verde Elementary School

What is this report? A summary of how your child is performing academically, as measured by the most recent MAP Growth test.

What is MAP Growth? A test that adapts to your child's responses in real time to measure your child's skill level.

Why is my child taking MAP Growth? MAP Growth scores help teachers check student performance by measuring Achievement and Growth. Teachers use results to tailor classroom lessons and to set goals for students.

What do Achievement and Growth mean?
Achievement—How well your child has learned skills in a subject compared to similar students nationwide.*
Growth—A measure of your child's personal progress over the year.

What is a RIT score? The overall score for a subject based on a Rasch unit (RIT) scale that indicates how your child performed in a subject.

*Similar students — kids with same starting RIT score, same number of weeks of instruction, and in the same grade

Mathematics

Low Average Achievement 38th Percentile

Shelley's overall score (RIT score) was a 204 on a range of 100-350. Your child is in the 38th percentile, which means they scored better than 38% of their peers.

Average Growth 55th Percentile

Your child's growth from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 is in the 55th percentile, which means they made more progress than 55% of their peers.

Shelley is likely to be:

- Level 3 on the State Assessment (if taken in Spring)
- *Not On Track* on the ACT College Readiness (if taken in Spring 2021)
- *Not On Track* on the SAT (if taken in Spring 2021)

Resume of School Founder and Executive Director



JENN NORRIS

Legacy Fellow and School Founder

My personal mission is to be of service to others to help them reach their full potential and highest dreams.

303-819-1378 | 8 Yellow Flax, Littleton, CO | linkedin.com/in/jennnorris | jenn@mesak8school.net

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Fellow, The Legacy Fellowship, Colorado Springs, CO (July 2025-present)

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

- Principal, Traylor Academy, Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO (June 2020- June 2025)
- Assistant Principal, Colfax Elementary, Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO (June 2018- June 2020)
- Ritchie Intern / Senior Team Lead, DCIS @ Ford Elementary, Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO— (June 2014- June 2018)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Kindergarten, 1st Grade, 3rd grade and Reading Interventionist, DCIS @ Ford Elementary, Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO (June 2014- June 2018)
- Kindergarten Teacher, Trevista at Horace Mann ECE-8, Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO (June 2012- June 2014)
- First Grade Teacher, Farrell B. Howell ECE-8, Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO (June 2011-June 2012)
- Reading Aide, Bluemont Elementary, Manhattan, KS (December 2010-May 2011)
- 3rd Grade Teacher, Escuela Miguel Magone, Guatemala City, Guatemala (June-August 2010)

VOLUNTEERING

- Point-In-Time Count, Jefferson County (2026)
- T-Ball Coach, Ken Caryl Little League, Littleton, CO (April 2025-present)
- PTA Member and Classroom Liaison, Bradford Primary, Littleton, CO (August 2020-present)
- Cheer and Poms Coach, Traylor Academy, Denver, CO (March 2022-March 2025)
- Parent Volunteer, X-Treme Dance Force, Littleton, CO (June 2023-present)

EDUCATION

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
BS, Elementary Education and English as a Second Language, 2011

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
MEd, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, 2020

YALE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
Certificate, Women in Leadership, 2021

CERTIFICATIONS

- Colorado K-12 Professional Principal's License
- Colorado Professional Teacher's License
- Colorado READ Act Teacher and Principal Credentialed
- QPR Gatekeeper
- Orton-Gillingham Phonics

LANGUAGES

- English
- Spanish (intermediate)

HONORS & AWARDS

- Marquis Who's Who, 2025
- CASE Conference Speaker, 2025
- Colorado Department of Education
  - Promising Practices and Partnerships, 2023
  - Connect for Success Grant, 2024
  - 21st Century Grant, 2022
  - Highest MLL growth in state, 2016
  - Centers of Excellence, 2017
  - Out of turnaround status: Trevista and DCIS at Ford
- Denver Public Schools
  - Distinguished Teacher, 2017-18
  - Women's Herstory Award, 2023
- Panelist UCEA Conference, University Partnership for Principal Preparation, 2017

DARBY H. WEST

Denver, Colorado · darbyhwest@gmail.com · 319.270.3293

Strategic leader with 20 years of experience driving organizational growth, team development, and operational excellence. Proven expertise in talent management, data-driven decision-making, and change leadership with complex, mission-driven environments. Passionate about enhancing equity, optimizing performance, and delivering measurable impact across the education sector.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Denver Public Schools, Literacy Curriculum Consultant Denver, CO

Contractor *March-June 2026*

- Designs districtwide elementary literacy content development for CKLA/Caminos (K-5), with a primary focus on clarifying and strengthening the arc of writing across units.
- Conducts comprehensive audit and revision of existing CKLA/Caminos curriculum maps to improve coherence, rigor, and usability.

KIPP Colorado Schools Denver, CO

Founding Principal *June 2018-December 2025*

- Navigated both technical and adaptive challenges, including staffing model shifts, changes to our language model, school-based impacts of the ONE KIPP Nationwide Initiative and restructuring our KIPP Colorado Home Office Team resulting in: *consistent 85%+ staff retention, over 85% Agree/Strongly Agree on TNTP and Q12 Staff Engagement Surveys, and achieving the highest scores across all KIPP Colorado Schools on our internal Climate and Culture Survey.*
- Operationalized our KIPP Colorado strategic plan at the school level by building systems for Culture of Belonging, Academic Excellence, Thriving Talent, and Operational Excellence (through our Operations Team), resulting in: *4% increase in ADA; over 10% decrease in chronic absenteeism; 20% increase in enrollment, above 80% on the 'Welcome and Belonging,' Cultural and Linguistic Pride,' and 'Engaged' sections of the student-report Tu Voz Survey; and an increase of 14% in 'Normal Risk' and a decrease of 14% in 'Elevated/Extremely Elevated Risk' on BESS Student Report Survey, 98% family participation in student-led report card conference; and only one student suspension in eight years.*
- Built and monitored school-wide student culture systems grounded in the Conscious Discipline Framework, resulting in *100% of staff who Agree/Strongly Agree that "My school's approach to discipline prioritizes restorative practices over punitive practices."*
- Coached and developed all instructional and leadership team members through weekly one-on-ones, on-the-ground real time coaching, and collaborative team meeting structures to build a data-driven school culture that has resulted in: *11% decrease in students required a READ plan from BOY to EOY; 10% increase in students achieving Tier 1 in DIBELS, 13% decrease in students in Tier 3 from BOY to EOY; 56% increase in students achieving Tier 1 and a 26% decrease in students achieving Tier 3 in iReady Math from BOY to EOY.*
- Led the school through the COVID-19 Pandemic by using that '3 Week Spring Break' to build an online schooling infrastructure and student support team.
- Founded KIPP Colorado's second elementary school, and its first Dual Language Program, serving 150 ECE-3 through 4th grade students.

KIPP Colorado, KIPP Northeast Elementary Denver, CO

Director of Elementary Literacy *June 2017-May 2018*

- Developed and implemented enabling structures to support small group literacy instruction, including creating teacher resources, planning documents, coaching plans, and progress monitoring systems.
- Collected, analyzed, and determined the highest-leverage ways to respond to school- and grade-wide literacy data in partnership with the school's leadership team.

KIPP NYC, KIPP AMP Elementary School Brooklyn, NY

Founding Dean of Teaching and Learning *July 2012-June 2017*

- Co-managed the third grade team 'Performance Training' that resulted in AMP 3rd graders earning the second-highest passing percentages in ELA and in math across KIPP NYC elementary schools and outperforming 3rd graders across the state, city, and NYC charter school cohorts.
- Coached between 6-12 classroom teachers to work toward reaching differentiated professional development and school-wide student achievement goals through modeling, real time coaching, observation, and one-on-one coaching sessions.
- Facilitated grade-level content team meetings to drive instruction in collaboration with the *KIPP Framework for Excellent Teaching* and the *High Impact Instructional Practices Rubric*.
- Led professional development sessions and workshops, including Conferring in the Writing Workshop session at KIPP

School Summit (July 2014) that yielded 97% of participants rating the session as Good or Excellent.

- Managed grade levels to design and execute macro school culture structures, including STRIVE Circle, and facilitated micro moment learning by examining language and discourse in the classroom.

Harlem Village Academies Leadership Elementary School New York, NY

Founding Kindergarten Teacher *July 2012-June 2013*

- Collaborated with the kindergarten team to customize the now out-of-date *Daily Five* literacy structure and *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project* writer's workshop under cross-curricular thematic-based units of study (then later had to come to terms with spending my time using teaching pedagogy not aligned to the Science of Reading. Ouch.).

Teach For America New York City Institute New York, NY
Curriculum Specialist *June-July 2012*

- Prepared, delivered, and revised over 30 sessions on planning and execution, diversity, community, and achievement, data, investment, and classroom management, resulting in 91% of incoming corps members "agreeing or strongly agreeing the Curriculum Specialist was helpful in their development as a teacher," compared with the Institute – wide average of 59 percent.

KIPP LEAD Charter School Gary, IN
6th Grade Writing Teacher *July 2010-June 2011*

- Created and implemented the sixth grade writing program using Indiana state standards and Six +1 Traits of Writing.
- Planned and led sixth grade guided reading groups utilizing student assessment data, informal running records, and ongoing observations.

Rowe Elementary School Chicago, IL
Founding Second Grade Lead Teacher *July 2009-June 2010*

- Co-developed a vertically aligned second grade math curriculum, resulting in 39% growth on grade-level standards and a vertically aligned literacy curriculum, resulting in 30% growth on grade-level standards and an average of 1.6 years of reading level growth.
- Coached co-teacher to use backward design approach to plan and execute science and social studies units and to use interim assessment data to inform literacy and math instruction.
- Assisted the principal in the hiring of new teachers for the 2010-2011 school year.

Leadership Preparatory Charter School Brooklyn, NY
Founding First and Second Grade Teacher, Founding Third Grade Lead Teacher *August 2006-June 2009*

- Authored and implemented math, reading, fitness, and writing curricula for each grade team.
- Analyzed interim assessment data in literacy, writing, and math to inform curricular and instructional modifications.

Grade Team Chairperson August 2008-June 2009

- Advised and supported third grade teachers in all aspects of instruction, including creation of lesson plans, analysis of data, and reflection on teaching practice, resulting in 89% and 100% of scholars passing the state exam in ELA and math, respectively.
- Led workshops for the grade team focusing on implementing strategies from the Taxonomy of Effective Teaching.
- Served as the school's Inquiry Group Facilitator by conducting inquiry- based conversations around student achievement using protocols that lead the teacher presenter toward a solution.

Leadership Preparatory Charter School Summer Academy Brooklyn, NY
Summer Academy Director *August 2006-June 2009*

- Created tailored math, reading, and writing curricula based on individual student data and teacher observations.
- Recruited, trained, and supported six new teachers as they implemented summer math, reading, and writing curricula.

Resume of Founding Director of Enrollment and Engagement

TREVON BRANDHORST

Denver, CO

319-541-8154

trevon.brandhorst@gmail.com

Compassionate and strategic family & community engagement K-12 leader with a proven ability to elevate programs and empower communities. Exceptional at navigating change and complex roles while driving visionary efforts that champion service, equity, inclusivity, and authentic relationship building.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS – FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Denver, CO

Director, Community Engagement & Outreach 05/2022 – 09/2025

- Spearheaded the strategic direction, coaching, and support of multidisciplinary teams of 16+ managers and engagement experts to lead district-wide Family and Community Engagement (FACE) initiatives and ensure alignment with strategies that support family, school, and community partnerships.
- Managed a comprehensive, blended source budget exceeding $2 million while ensuring compliance and effective resource allocation. Additional key operational management responsibilities include oversight of payroll services for 3,000+ educators, support for 13,000+ volunteers, and leading a high performing team that successfully supported completion of over 9,000 Parent Teacher Home Visits this last school year.
- Fostered collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, including local and state educational boards, Colorado Department of Education, and Denver Public Schools (DPS) Executive Cabinet. Adapt seamlessly to the dynamic needs of the largest school district in Colorado, serving 90,000 students annually and accommodating diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Implemented cutting-edge programs and communication strategies tailored to meet the needs of DPS families.

Senior Manager, Family Empowerment & Academic Partnerships 08/2021-05/2022

- Managed and coached a high performing team of managers and content experts leading district-wide, high impact FACE services and initiatives
- Managed day-to-day operations of $910,000+ blended source budget to support high quality district-wide initiatives and program services. Ensured compliance to Family and Community Engagement policy set by Board of Education, state, and federal policymakers.

Lead Program Specialist, Youth Self-Sufficiency 07/2019 – 08/2021

- Led implementation and managed operations of the Denver Youth Employment Program – enrolling 200+ youth annually with grant budget of $750,000

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Specialist 08/2018 – 07/2019

- Managed relationships and provided high quality partnership support to ensure contractual and grant obligations were met & upheld for out-of-school youth programming.

Regional Training Coordinator, Literacy Initiatives & Projects 10/2016 – 08/2018

- Developed new initiatives and managed a diverse set of existing student literacy-focused programs
- Designed and facilitated a literacy mentorship program to match high school students increasing motivation around literacy through shared cultural experiences and language, and positive peer mentorship.
- Implemented monthly academies to support student, parent, and community member needs in becoming paraeducators in DPS

Community Engagement Specialist, Literacy Initiatives & Projects 08/2015 – 10/2016

- Managed school-site day-to-day relationships and logistics for the Power Lunch Reading Program in partnership with Mile High United Way
- 2,225 hours of volunteer student literacy support across 9 school sites.
- Implemented systems for at-home literacy programs

AmeriCorps Member, Power Lunch Reading Program Assistant 09/2013 – 08/2015

- Facilitated weekly sessions of the Power Lunch Reading Program across 11 Title 1 elementary schools.
- Completed 3,400+ hours of AmeriCorps service over the course of two years.

FACILITATION & PUBLIC SPEAKING EXPERIENCE

- Certified Trainer of Trainers of National Parent Teacher Home Visits Program, Parenting Partners, and University of Colorado's Parent to Para Program
- National AmeriCorps Service Swearing-In Ceremony, Opening Speaker

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in History, Minor in French, Coaching Certificate

University of Iowa

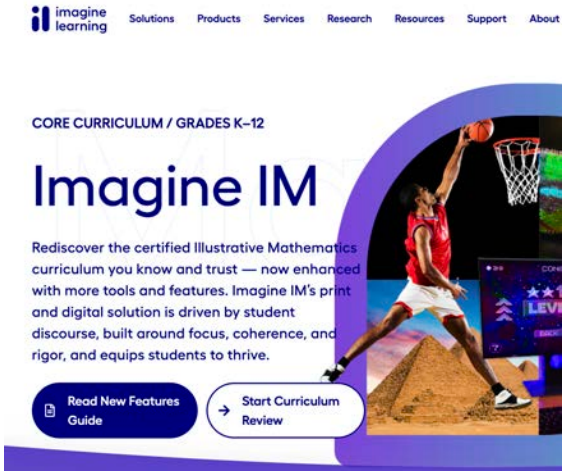
Graduated May 2013

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Harvard Division of Continuing Education: Leading More Effective Teams
- Harvard Division of Continuing Education: Leadership Coaching Strategies
- The Art of Coaching Teams with Elena Aguilar

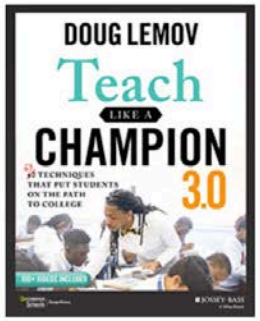
- High Conflict Training
- Denver Public Schools Leadership Training Series: DPS Management, DPS Teams, DPS Leadership

Footnote 6: Core Curriculum Offerings from Imagine Learning and Research and Evaluation





Footnote 7: Teach Like a Champion 3.0 by Doug Lemov book summary



BUY NOW

Teach Like a Champion 3.0

Doug Lemov

The international bestseller that transforms educators into teaching champions!

Teach Like a Champion 3.0 is the revised, expanded, and up-to-date revision of Doug Lemov's study of the craft of teaching. Upon studying videos of high-performing teachers, Lemov distills their methods into concrete tangible actions for others to use and adapt. Many of the techniques he describes are now part of the *lingua franca* of teaching, but here Lemov adds the results of his last five years of study, including new depth and detail to existing techniques and the addition of more than ten new techniques.

Through the techniques, Lemov explains how to Check for Understanding, raise academic expectations, increase the ratio of the cognitive work students do, motivate and engage students, make classrooms more writing-intensive, improve discussions, and anticipate when it is necessary to redirect student behavior so it is positive and productive.

In this edition, Lemov adds extensive discussions of research connecting the techniques more explicitly to cognitive and social sciences. He also updates his discussion based on extensive reflections on issues in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. These additions will help teachers to be clear on the why and the how behind their teaching decisions.

Footnote 8: 7 Skills from Conscious Discipline

CONSCIOUS SKILL (emerges from powers)	LIFE / COMMUNICATION SKILLS	VALUE
Composure	Anger management, delay of gratification	Integrity
Encouragement	Pro-social skills: kindness, caring, helpfulness	Interdependence, optimism, gratitude
Assertiveness	Bully Prevention, healthy boundaries	Respect for self and others
Choices	Impulse control, goal achievement	Persistence
Empathy	Emotional regulation, perspective-taking	Honoring diversity, honesty
Positive Intent	Cooperation, problem-solving	Compassion, generosity
Consequences	Learning from your mistakes	Responsibility

By implementing the powers and skills together, we learn to stay in control of ourselves and in charge of children in a manner that models the same skills we seek to teach. This, combined with the willingness generated by the School Family, empowers children to successfully learn and internalize lifelong skills.

Conscious Discipline's original application is in the classroom, but these methods apply seamlessly to all human interactions. Conscious Discipline has the power to affect every relationship. It now includes a program designed specifically for parents.

Footnote 9: About RELAY Graduate School of Education, mission, and some notable partners

Relay Graduate School of Education's mission is to ensure that all children are taught by outstanding educators.

We provide comprehensive professional development designed to equip educators with the knowledge and skills needed to lead all children to outstanding experiences and outcomes in school. Through our transformative, practice-based programs, we partner with educators at every stage of their career—from aspiring teacher to school leader—offering evidence-based strategies, practical tools, and the confidence to lead effectively.

RELAY GSE

National Partners

AMERICORPS

CITY YEAR

DEANS FOR IMPACT

Public School Districts

Alief Independent School District

Colonial School District

District of Columbia Public Schools

Denver Public Schools

Hartford Public Schools

New Haven School Change

NYC Department of Education

SAISD

School District of Philadelphia

Think Big Shelby County Public Schools

Footnote 10: About the National Equity Project's Liberatory Design and accompanying card deck for design reference

Introduction to Liberatory Design

Why Liberatory Design?

We are all living in challenging times that our past experience and training has not sufficiently prepared us for. Too often, well intentioned equity efforts do not succeed—and even produce unintended consequences. This can lead to frustration, hopelessness and cynicism.

It's important to consider why so many equity efforts stall or fail to achieve intended outcomes:

- They do not employ a deep enough equity lens—for example, a diversity and inclusion focus as opposed to interrogating deeper causes produced by systemic oppression.
- They take the form of traditional linear, hierarchical plans that focus on strategies, goals, timelines, metrics and accountability. These efforts don't recognize the messiness and complexity of the challenge, so they often are ineffective and, sometimes, even backfire.
- They are created in the context of dominant white culture, in traditional structures (e.g. committees, task forces), or in teams that don't have an effective approach to the work. Common problems include:
  - group members unable to engage in authentic critical dialogue;
  - lack of trust, especially across role/power and identity difference, that undermines team efficacy;
  - the process doesn't bring forward sufficiently creative thinking;
  - urgency leads to hasty, misguided decisions;
  - creative and potentially powerful solutions are not accepted by leadership.

What is Liberatory Design?

Liberatory Design is an approach to addressing equity challenges and change efforts in complex systems. It is grounded in an integrated part of NEP's Leading for Equity Framework, which meshes human-centered design (aka design thinking) with complex systems theory, and deep equity practice. It is a process and practice to:

- Create designs that help interrupt inequity and increase opportunity for those most impacted by oppression
- Transform power by shifting the relationships between those who hold power to design and those impacted by these designs
- Generate critical learning and increased agency for those involved in the design work

Sample cards from the Liberatory Design deck that were used in the application for MESA



Seek Liberatory Collaboration

Recognize differences in power and identity to design "with" instead of "for." Design for belonging.

Seek Liberatory Collaboration

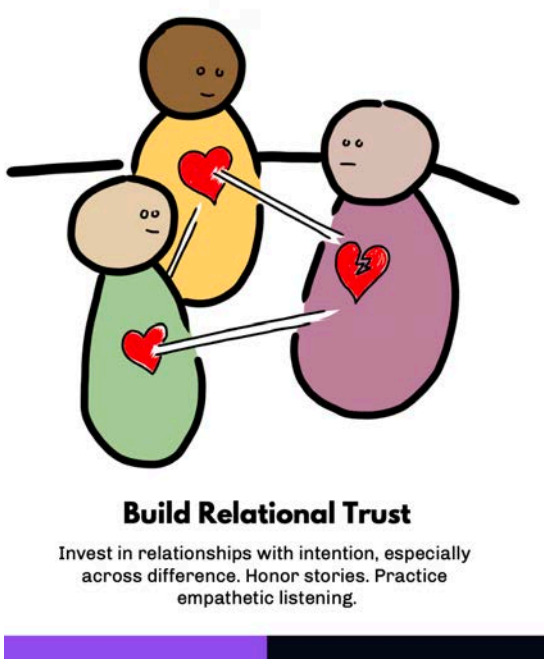
Why?

Design work can be fraught with power and identity dynamics that can result in unintended consequences.

To fully realize the potential of Liberatory Design, it is critical to reframe the relationship between designers and the communities in which they are working to one of partnership and equity, not patronizing expertise.

How:

- Actively seek diverse identities, roles and skill sets in building our design team.
- Acknowledge and build from the strengths, stories, and skills of team members.
- Define specific conditions for collective learning, risk-taking, and action.
- When framing the question, "How Might We...?" ensure that the "We" is diverse and inclusive.



Build Relational Trust

Why?

Relational trust is the glue in Liberatory Design work. When working across difference on difficult challenges, teams must invest in each other to develop trust, share openly, and collaborate authentically.

If we are courageous in identifying and processing emotions with our team, we create opportunities for healing and prevent distortion of our work.

How:

- Facilitate personal connection by inviting people to share what matters to them.
- Dedicate time and space for people to bring forward their full selves and identities.
- Demonstrate the importance of nonjudgmental listening.
- Create space for community to reflect, express, and process thoughts and emotions.
- Cultivate a culture that invites dialogue and collective sense-making.

Footnote 11: Example of a [student exhibition from Mountain Middle School] in Durango, CO

Engaging in Civil Discourse: A 7th Grade Humanities Exhibition at Mountain Middle School

Join Mountain Middle School students and families for a night of civil discourse as students lead Socratic seminars on current event topics ranging from climate change and domestic affairs to foreign policy and federal spending. The Socratic seminars are the culmination of a project entitled, "Organizing Societies: Examining Governments, Laws, and Economies Across Time." In this project, students have examined how societies organize and define themselves through the systems of power they utilize. Students have looked at historical evidence as well as current events in order to answer big questions about how societies are structured. Their Socratic seminars will focus on topics of their choosing and the importance of civil discourse.

We hope to see you for a night of thought-provoking dialogue among these budding future leaders! For more information, please contact Nancy Wickham at nancy.wickham@mountainmiddleschool.org

Mountain Middle School

04:30 PM - 05:45 PM on Wed, 26 Feb 2025

Event Supported By
Mountain Middle School
4045939051
matt.smith@mountainmiddleschool.org

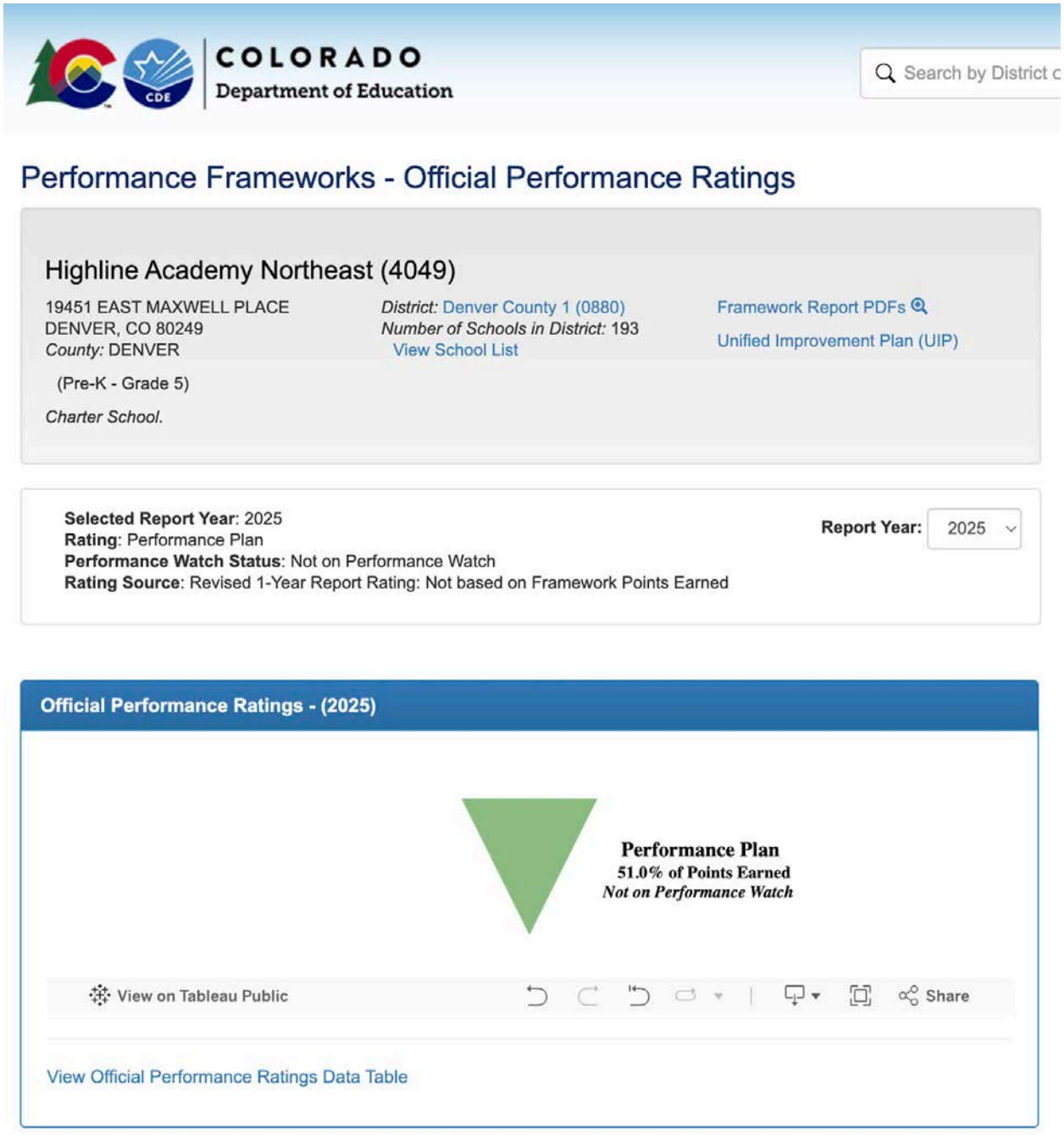
Another example of an exhibition



Shaun Stanley/Durango Herald file

Mountain Middle School sixth-graders in Josh Dalley's science class will exhibit "Dive Deep," a submarine-density project that shows the relationship between mass, volume and density, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, at the school, 108 W. 31st St.

Footnote 12: About Highline Academy NE and the school's most recent SPF rating



Footnote 13: About Central Queens Academy and most recent NYC DOE report card

Central Queens Academy Charter School (84Q083)

Print

School Description | Instruction and Performance | Safety and School Climate | Relationships with Families

Overall School Ratings

Instruction and Performance	■■■■
Safety and School Climate	■■■□
Relationships with Families	■■■■

Key: ■■■■ Excellent ■■■□ Good ■■□□ Fair ■□□□ Needs Improvement

Overview

School website: www.schools.nyc.gov/schools/Q083
Principal: Ashish Kapadia/Glenn Liebeck
Grades served: 0K,01,02,03,04,05,06,07,08
Enrollment: 937
Kindergarten admissions methods: N/A
Middle school admissions methods: N/A
State accountability status: Local Support and Improvement

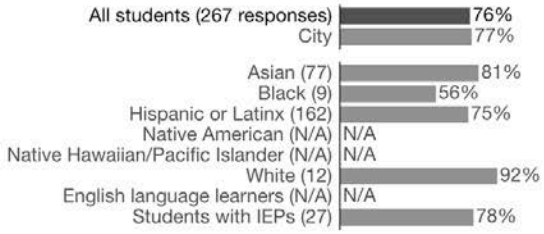
Location



88-14 Justice Avenue
Queens, NY 11373
Phone: 718-271-6200

Programs

Selected Questions from the NYC School Survey
What percentage of students say that this school offers a wide enough variety of programs, classes, and activities to keep them interested in school?



Extracurricular Activities
N/A

CHAMPS Sports
Boys: N/A
Girls: N/A
Co-Ed: N/A

NYCPS Programs
N/A

Staff/Faculty

Overall Rating for Instruction and Performance

Excellent ■■■■

The **Instruction and Performance** rating looks at this school's State test results, including student growth and performance; how students performed in core courses; how well students are prepared for high school; and survey questions about instruction from the NYC School Survey.

An entire list of metrics contributing to the rating can be found in the School Quality Reports: Scoring Guide (PDF).

Key:
■■■■ Excellent
■■■□ Good
■■□□ Fair
■□□□ Needs Improvement

Next-Level Readiness

98% of this school's former eighth graders earned enough high school credit in ninth grade to be on track for graduation
Comparison Group*: 95%
District 24: 96%
City: 91%

English

Performance on State Tests

80% of students at this school met State standards on the State English test; the average score was 3.6 out of 4.5
Comparison Group*: 70%
District 24: 47%
City: 56%

Footnote 14: About the Council for Great City Schools



FACT SHEET

Council of the Great City Schools
THE NATION'S VOICE FOR URBAN EDUCATION
1331 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 1100N, Washington, D.C. 20004
www.cgcs.org

The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 81 large city school districts, its mission is to promote the cause of urban schools and to advocate for inner-city students through legislation, research, and media relations. The organization also provides a network for school districts sharing common problems to exchange information, and to collectively address new challenges as they emerge in order to deliver the best possible education for urban youth.

Total number of students served by Council member district schools: **7.1 million**

Student Enrollment Characteristics:

45% - Hispanic	1% - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
25% - African American	5% - Two or More Races
17% - White	17% - English Language Learners
7% - Asian/Pacific Islander	73% - Eligible for free/reduced price lunch
1% - Alaskan/Native American	17% - Students with Individualized Education Programs

Member Districts:

Albuquerque	Des Moines	Little Rock	Pinellas County
Anchorage	Detroit	Long Beach	Pittsburgh
Arlington (Texas)	Durham	Los Angeles	Portland
Atlanta	Duval County (Jacksonville)	Madison (WI)	Providence
Aurora	East Baton Rouge	Memphis-Shelby County	Puerto Rico
Austin	El Paso	Miami-Dade County	Richmond
Baltimore	Fayette County (Lexington)	Milwaukee	Rochester
Birmingham	Fort Worth	Minneapolis	Sacramento
Boston	Fresno	Nashville	San Antonio
Bridgeport	Guilford County (Greensboro, N.C.)	New Orleans	San Diego
Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale)	Hawaii	New York City	San Francisco
Buffalo	Hillsborough County (Tampa)	Newark	Santa Ana
Charleston	Houston	Norfolk	Seattle
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	Indianapolis	Oakland	St. Louis
Chicago	Jackson	Oklahoma City	St. Paul
Cincinnati	Jefferson County (Louisville)	Omaha	Toledo
Clark County (Las Vegas)	Jersey City	Orange County (Orlando)	Tulsa
Cleveland	Kansas City	Palm Beach County	Washington, D.C.
Columbus		Philadelphia	Washoe County (Reno)
Dallas		Phoenix Union High School District	Wichita
Dayton			Winston-Salem/ Forsyth County
Denver			

School districts eligible for membership must be located in cities with populations of 250,000 or more and student enrollments of 25,000 or more. School districts located in the largest city of many states are also eligible for membership, regardless of size.

Footnote 15: About the [Renzulli Center For Creativity]

UCONN | UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development

What is the SEM-R?

Students' first experiences with reading should be joyful, and as students grow, they should continue to enjoy and look forward to times spent reading and listening to books in the company of classmates. The more pleasurable these experiences, the more likely it is that students will want to read independently and develop the self-regulation necessary to remain lifelong readers.

The **Schoolwide Enrichment Model Reading Framework (SEM-R)** is an enrichment-based reading program designed to:

- Stimulate **interest in and enjoyment of reading**
- Promote and develop higher **reading achievement**
- Improve **self-regulation and automaticity** in reading
- Encourage students to select **high-interest books** that are **slightly to moderately above their current reading levels**
- Create **independent, lifelong readers**

Research on the SEM-R has been supported through two federally funded Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act grants awarded by the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Abstract

This experimental study examined the effect of a differentiated, enriched reading program on students' oral reading fluency and comprehension using the schoolwide enrichment model–reading (SEM-R). Treatment and control conditions were randomly assigned to 63 teachers and 1,192 second through fifth grade students across five elementary schools. Using multilevel modeling, significant differences favoring the SEM-R were found in reading fluency in two schools (Cohen's *d* effect sizes of .33 and .10) and in reading comprehension in the high-poverty urban school (Cohen's *d* = .27), with no achievement differences in the remaining schools. These results demonstrate that an enrichment reading approach, with differentiated instruction and less whole group instruction, was as effective as or more effective than a traditional whole group basal approach.

Footnote 16: Published work about the schoolwide enrichment for all model for school improvement

Renzulli, J. S. (1996). Schools for talent development: A practical plan for total school improvement. *The School Administrator, 53*(1), 20–22.

A Bird's Eye View of *Schools for Talent Development: A Practical Plan for Total School Improvement**

Joseph S. Renzulli
Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development
University of Connecticut

If we always do what we've always done,
We'll always get what we've always got!
Adam Urbanski, Rochester Public Schools

No more prizes for predicting rain,
prizes only for building arks.
David Kearns, Xerox Corporation

*This "bird's eye view" is condensed from a book entitled ***The Schoolwide Enrichment Model: A How-To Guide for Educational Excellence.*** This book can be obtained from Creative Learning Press, Box 320, Mansfield Center, CT 06250. This article may be reproduced and distributed without permission.

If there is one thing upon which most educational reform leaders agree, it is that remedial models for school improvement have not been highly successful. Attempts to push up achievement test scores from "the bottom" through highly prescriptive mastery learning models have frustrated low achieving students and dragged down the performance of average and high achieving youngsters. An alternative to what one student called the drill-and-kill approach is an enrichment-based model that uses "high-end learning" strategies and accelerated content to improve the performance of all students.

The Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) is a detailed blueprint for total school improvement that is flexible enough to allow each school to develop its own unique program based on local resources, student populations, school leadership dynamics, and faculty strengths and creativity. Although this research-supported model is based on highly successful practices that had their origins in special programs for gifted and talented students, its major goal is to promote both challenging and enjoyable "high-end learning" across the full range of school types, levels, and demographic differences. The model is not intended to replace or minimize existing services to high achieving students. Rather, its purpose is to integrate these services into "a-rising-tide-lifts-all-ships" approach to school improvement, and to expand the role of enrichment specialists by having these persons infuse specific practices for high-end learning into the total school program. The Schoolwide Enrichment Model provides educators with the means to:

- develop the talent potentials of young people by systematically assessing their strengths; providing enrichment opportunities, resources, and services to develop the strengths; and using a flexible approach to curricular differentiation and the use of school time.
- improve the academic performance of all students in all areas of the regular curriculum and to blend standard curriculum activities with meaningful enrichment learning.
- promote continuous, reflective, growth-oriented professionalism of school personnel to such an extent that many faculty members emerge as leaders in curriculum and staff development, program planning, etc.
- create a learning community that honors ethnic, gender, and cultural diversity, and promotes mutual respect, democratic principles, and the preservation of the Earth's resources.
- implement a collaborative school culture that includes appropriate decision-making opportunities for students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

The Schoolwide Enrichment Model consists of three interacting dimensions (see Figure 1). Two dimensions, called the *organizational components* and the *service delivery components,* are brought to bear on a third dimension, which represents various *school structures* such as the regular curriculum, a variety of enrichment situations, and a continuum of services that ranges from enrichment in the regular classroom to special projects, internship opportunities, and various grouping arrangements. The organizational components are resources used to support program development such as staff training materials, an enrichment materials data base, procedures for staff teaming and interaction, and vehicles for promoting parent and community

involvement. These components are cross referenced with the following three service delivery components, which are direct services to students and form the centerpiece of the model.

The Total Talent Portfolio (TTP)

This component is a vehicle for systematically gathering, recording, and using information about student strengths in three categories — abilities, interests, and learning style preferences. Best-case samples of students' work as well as information resulting from interest and learning styles assessment scales are reviewed and analyzed cooperatively by students and teachers in order to make meaningful decisions about necessary curricular modifications and enrichment opportunities that capitalize on students' strengths and interests. A part of the process involves helping students develop skills for evaluating portfolio items according to their own set of internal criteria and developing procedures for examining portfolio items on the basis of external criteria with teachers and other students. Students should achieve autonomy and ownership of the Total Talent Portfolio by assuming major responsibility in the selection of items to be included, maintaining and regularly updating the portfolio, and setting personal goals by making decisions about items that they would like to include in the portfolio at some future point in time. Although the teacher should serve as a guide in the portfolio review process (especially with younger students), the ultimate goal is to create autonomy in students by turning control for the management of the portfolio over to them.

Curriculum Modification Techniques

The second service delivery component of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model consists of a series of techniques that are designed to: (1) assess each student's mastery level of regular curricular material, (2) adjust the pace and level of required material to accommodate variations in learning, and (3) provide enrichment and acceleration alternatives for students who have, or can, easily master regular material at a more rapid pace. The first curriculum modification procedure is carried out for individuals, and for small groups of students working at approximately the same level, through a systematic process called Curriculum Compacting. This three-step process consists of defining the goals and outcomes of a particular unit of study; determining and documenting which students have already mastered most or all of a specified set of learning outcomes (or which students are capable of mastery at an accelerated pace); and providing replacement activities that are pursued during the time gained by compacting the regular curriculum. These options include content acceleration, self-selected individual or group research projects, peer teaching, and a variety of out-of-class or non-school activities. Research on Curriculum Compacting has shown that this process can easily be learned and implemented by teachers at all levels and that students using this process benefit academically.

A second procedure for making adjustments in regular curriculum on a more widespread basis is the examination of textbooks and workbooks in order to determine which parts can be economized upon through the "surgical" removal of excessive practice material. Based on the belief that "less is better" when it comes to promoting greater depth in learning, this process also includes replacement activities in the form of direct teaching of thinking skills and curriculum development options for high-end learning based on the Multiple Menu Model. This model for curriculum differentiation focuses on using representative concepts, themes, patterns, organizing structures, and investigative methodologies to capture the essence of a topic both within traditional domains of knowledge and in interdisciplinary studies. In-depth learning also requires

increasingly complex information that moves up the hierarchy of knowledge: from facts to principles, generalizations, and theories. These skills, plus the use of advanced-level knowledge, form the cognitive structures and problem-solving strategies that endure long after students have forgotten the factual material that is the focus of so much traditional learning. The surgical removal of repetitive practice material provides the time for experiences built around problem-based learning, the use of thematic and interdisciplinary units, and a host of other authentic learning experiences.

Enrichment Learning and Teaching

Enrichment learning and teaching is a systematic set of strategies that is designed to promote active engagement in learning on the parts of both teachers and students. In a certain sense, the approach strives to do everything the opposite from traditional, didactic teaching. Four principles define this concept:

- Each learner is unique. Therefore, all learning experiences must take into account the abilities, interests, and learning styles of the individual.
- Learning is more effective when students enjoy what they're doing. Therefore, learning experiences should be designed and assessed with as much concern for enjoyment as for other goals.
- Learning is more meaningful and enjoyable when content and process are learned within the context of a real problem, when students use authentic methods to address the problem, and when they want to have an impact on a real audience.
- Enrichment learning and teaching focuses on enhancing knowledge and acquiring thinking skills. *Applications* of knowledge and skills must supplement formal instruction.

Although enrichment learning and teaching can be used in all school structures (e.g., regular curriculum, special groupings, internships), we have found that creating a special "place" in the schedule is the best way to guarantee that every student will have an opportunity to participate in this different approach to learning. The special place is called enrichment clusters. Our experience has shown that implementing these clusters provides immediate visibility to the improvement process and a remarkable amount of enthusiasm on the parts of students, teachers, and parents.

Enrichment clusters are **non-graded** groups of students who share common interests, and who come together to pursue these interests during specially designated time blocks usually consisting of one-half day per week. There is one "golden rule" for enrichment clusters: *Everything students do in the cluster is directed toward producing a product or delivering a service for a real-world audience.* This rule forces the issue of learning only relevant content and using only authentic processes within the context of student-selected product or service development activities. All teachers (including music, art, physical education, etc.) are involved in facilitating the clusters, and numerous schools using this vehicle have also involved parents and other community resource persons. Adult involvement in any particular cluster should be based on the same type of interest assessment that is used for students in selecting clusters of choice.

Like extracurricular activities and programs such as 4-H and Junior Achievement, the clusters meet at designated times and operate on the assumption that students and teachers (or community resource people) want to be there. The clusters place a premium on the development of higher-order thinking skills and the creative and productive application of these skills to real-world situations. Common goals make *real* cooperativeness a necessity, and "divisions of labor" within the clusters allow for differentiated levels of expertise and involvement, varying levels of challenge, and opportunities for different types of leadership to emerge on the parts of students. This type of learning environment is highly supportive of individual differences and, therefore, promotes the development of self-concept, self-efficacy, and positive feelings that result from being a member of a goal oriented team. To put it another way: *Every child is special if we create conditions in which that child can be a specialist within a specialized group.*

Enrichment clusters revolve around major disciplines, interdisciplinary themes, or cross-disciplinary topics. A theatrical/television production group, for example, might include actors, writers, technical specialists, and costume designers. Clearly, the clusters deal with how-to knowledge, thinking skills, and interpersonal relations that apply in the real world. Student work is directed toward producing a product or service. Instead of lesson plans or unit plans, three key questions guide learning:

- What do people with an interest in this area—for example, filmmaking—do?
- What knowledge, materials, and other resources do we need to authentically complete activities in this area?
- In what ways can we use the product or service to affect the intended audience?

Clusters are offered for an extended time block—usually one-half day per week, and they sometimes continue over several semesters (or even years) if interest remains high and there is a continuous escalation of student engagement and product quality. Students enter a cluster based on interests and other information gleaned from the Total Talent Portfolio. Students who develop a high degree of expertise in a particular area are sometimes asked to serve as an assistant or a facilitator of their own cluster (usually with younger students).

Numerous research studies and field tests in schools with widely varying demographics have yielded both research support and practical suggestions for schools wishing to implement the SEM. Persons interested in implementing this model should contact the author and/or examine some of the material mentioned in the following footnote.

A new addition to our work is an internet-based tool that provides teachers with the resources to easily identify student strengths and to personalize learning by matching these resources to individual student profiles. Teachers can use the system to infuse into any and all curricular topics highly challenging and engaging enrichment activities and unit supplements that are standards based and categorized according to student interests, learning styles, and preferred modes of expression.

What is Renzulli Learning?

www.renzullilearning.com

Renzulli Learning is an interactive online teaching and learning tool that helps teachers customize the World Wide Web for their students, and easily differentiate their teaching. The system uses an individualized student profile, and a safe, age-appropriate database of over 35,000 on-line and off-line resources to engage and enrich students.

Renzulli Learning is comprised of four key components:

- **Renzulli Profiler:** After they register, each student completes a Profile. This gives teachers a comprehensive learning assessment of each student's motivational makeup in about 45 minutes. The Profile focuses on interests, learning styles and expression styles of the student.
- **Renzulli Differentiation Search Engine:** The differentiation search engine matches online and offline resources to each student's profile results - so right away students have websites matched to them. Students and teachers are free to explore the entire safe database of over 35,000 handpicked, age-appropriate websites and resources.
- **Lesson Planning and Differentiation Tool:** This section of the system allows teachers and students to work collaboratively on topics, assignments, and projects. Teachers can differentiate and disseminate a lesson in less than 15 minutes. Users can create their own work – or the system offers ready-made assignments and projects with linked-in resources. It helps students understand 'the why' of using the internet by helping them make the best use of web resources and helps focus their interests as they pursue advanced level work. Also, it helps students define a project and create the steps needed to achieve and complete their goal.
- **Total Talent Portfolio:** The talent portfolio stores all of a student's work. It is accessible anytime, anywhere, and can transport student information from grade-to-grade or school-to-school. The portfolio captures sites visited, student assessment of resources, and favorite sites, as well as any projects and assignments. This ongoing record can be reviewed anytime by teachers and parents.

How Does It Work?

Once schools subscribe to Renzulli Learning Systems (RLS), teachers and students immediately have access to it anywhere they have a computer and internet service, including home and public libraries. Teachers and students sign on to the system with a user ID and password.

How Does RLS Utilize Technology?

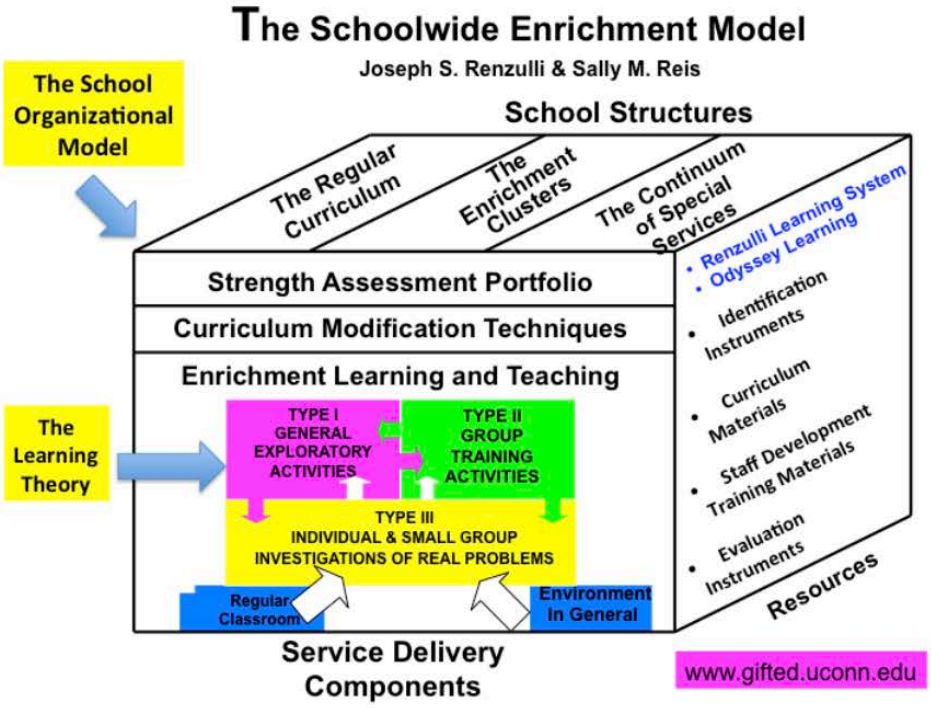
Renzulli Learning is web-based. It requires no software downloads or maintenance fees. It is easily integrated into curriculum, requires only basic staff development, and can be implemented using current technology infrastructures. Renzulli is available anywhere that users can connect to the internet.

Why Should Schools Focus on Talent Development?

Many people view America's public education system as a failed public monopoly. Policy makers, parents, educational leaders, and the corporate and business community are expressing the lowest level of confidence in public education in our nation's history. Parents of economically disadvantaged youth have all but given up on expectations that schools can improve their children's future, and they have grown weary and suspicious of endless rhetoric and flavor-of-the-month reform initiatives that devour more and more of our limited dollars without producing any noticeable results. It doesn't take a rocket scientist, or even a person who knows little more than elementary arithmetic, to realize that the billions of federal and state dollars spent on remedial and compensatory education models have not produced achievement gains of any significance.

Lack of confidence in public education is also being expressed by middle class parents who have watched the slow but steady decline of SAT scores at the top-end of the achievement continuum. In an article entitled "The Other Crisis in Our Schools," Daniel Singal documented the effects of what happens when our brightest students get a "dumbed-down" education. "For the first time in the history of our country, the educational skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach those of their parents. This failure will bring a lower sense of professional fulfillment for our youngsters as they pursue their careers, and will hamper their ability to stay competitive with European and Asian countries." The middle class has become so disenchanted with the quality of public education, that for the first time in history, they are asking for *public* funds to pursue private educational alternatives.

Dr. Leon Lederman, the Nobel Prize winning physicist, recently said, "Once upon a time, America sheltered an Einstein, went to the Moon, and gave the world the laser, electronic computer, nylons, television, and the cure for polio. Today we are in the process, albeit unwittingly, of abandoning this leadership role." Every school and classroom in this country has in it young people who are capable of continuing this remarkable tradition. But the tradition will not survive without a national resolve to invest in developing the talent potentials of *all* of our young people. Every school has within it students who possess the highest potential for advanced level learning, creative problem solving, and the motivation to pursue rigorous and rewarding work. As the United Negro College Fund aptly puts it, a mind is a terrible thing to waste. It's time to recognize that we have been wasting far too many minds.



Here's what leading scholars are saying about ***Schools for Talent Development: A Practical Plan for Total School Improvement*** by Joseph S. Renzulli.

"Practical! A how-to manual for curriculum planners and principals. Renzulli's book is a must for today's administrator."
–Don Senti
Superintendent, Parkway School District, St. Louis County, Missouri

"Joseph Renzulli's book breaks new ground by tackling school-wide improvement. He makes a critical contribution to those working on talent development and makes it all the more powerful by linking his ideas to strategies for school improvement."
–Michael Fullan
Dean of Education, University of Toronto

"A thoughtful and comprehensive approach to school reform. Renzulli illuminates the kinds of organizational structures that can help each individual develop his or her interests and talents to the fullest."
–Howard Gardner
Director, Harvard Project Zero

*"*Schools Are Places for Talent Development *is a plan that promotes high-end learning opportunities for all students. The concepts outlined in this book have provided valuable guidance during Rhode Island's state policy development regarding equity and excellence."*
–Peter McWalters
Commissioner of Education, Rhode Island

"In the plethora of books on education, this book stands out as being the next generation forerunner. It gives us more than a general challenge; it provides practical guidance on how to move ahead meaningfully."
–A. Harry Passow
Professor Emeritus, Teachers College, Columbia University

"For over 30 years, Professor Joseph Renzulli has been giving education innovation after innovation. In this book, Renzulli has offered a synthesis of these innovations along with others."
–E. Paul Torrance
Distinguished Professor Emeritus, The University of Georgia

"This book brings together in one place the many and multifaceted ideas of a leading thinker in American education. It is a book that will be of interest to researchers and practitioners alike, and will be indispensable for all who wish to discover where the future of education should be going."
–Robert J. Sternberg
IBM Professor of Psychology and Education, Yale University

Footnote 17: Research from Colorado schools and the University of Denver to support enrichment approaches for marginalized students. Note: this paper was co-authored by a MESA supporter, Dr. Kristina Hesbol, whose letter of support is available in the appendix.



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Paper Title Disrupting Rural Systemic Inequity to Serve the Needs of Historically Marginalized Gifted Students

Author(s) Kristina Astrid Hesbol, University of Denver; Norma L. Hafenstein, University of Denver; Lindsey Reinert, University of Denver

Session Title Making Learning Accessible to Rural Students: Critical Approaches to Access and Pedagogy

Session Type Roundtable Presentation

Presentation Date 4/25/2022

Presentation Location San Diego, California

Descriptors Equity, Gifted Education, Rural Education

Methodology Mixed Method

Unit SIG-Rural Education

DOI https://doi.org/10.3102/1895286

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Disrupting *Rural Systemic I*nequity to Serve the Needs of Historically Marginalized Gifted Students

Abstract
142 of the state's 178 school districts (82%) are rural. 7.7% of K-12 students are identified as Gifted. White students are significantly overrepresented; students of color, emerging bilingual students, and economically underresourced students are significantly underrepresented. The study's research question was: What attitudes/beliefs and practices of rural school/district leaders effectively support processes that disrupt systemic inequity and improve student learning?

Despite a relentless focus on the effect of the achievement gap on urban students, limited research has been conducted on leaders of rural schools and districts and their influence on student learning. 68% of rural schools report significant achievement gaps (Barrett, Cowen, Toma, & Troske, 2015), but few rural leaders report that they know how to eliminate them.

Objectives
We studied whether/how access to professional learning resources provided by the grant Research Team, reflective feedback, and networking with rural peer educators impact the identification of underrepresented rural gifted students.

Racial, cultural, and linguistic diversification is increasing in U.S. rural contexts (Fusarelli & Militello, 2012; Pohl, 2017). Rural communities across the country are rapidly diversifying racially, culturally, and linguistically. Since 1980, 99% of rural counties in the Rocky Mountain West have seen growth in minority populations. Seeking to understand funds of knowledge and the community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2006; Moll et al., 2013; Kiyama et al., 2018) of new rural community members, rather than reproducing the power of competing narratives, supports a shared vision for systemic improvement throughout rural communities. Figure 1 shows the inverse relationship between the racial demographics of the state's students compared to the racial demographics of those students who are identified for gifted and talented programs in the state (McGagin, 2021). Rural leaders at the building and district levels are called to re-tool their leadership practices in order to provide access to appropriate learning opportunities to meet the needs of their demographically changing communities, including gifted students.

Perspectives
Small inquiry groups of site-based learning teams applied short, iterative cycles of improvement (Plan-Do-Study-Act, Deming, 1950) to their persistent and complex problem of practice. For analysis of educational practices that support the increased identification of and services to historically marginalized gifted rural students, we relied in part on the Culturally Responsive School Leadership Framework (Khalifa et al., 2018) as an analytical lens to help identify key improvement mechanisms that lead to equitable outcomes for every student. Rural educational leaders are often expected to act within accepted dominant values and norms of the community, in effect charged with "upholding the traditional power structures that can create inequity" (McHenry-Sorber & Provinzano, 2017, p. 608). Equity-focused leaders identify and challenge practices that marginalize students, and create schools that adeptly respond to the educational, social, and cultural needs of every student and their communities (Khalifa, 2018). They

interrogate barriers to equitable practice, and question narratives that justify exclusionary practices.

Method

Following the first year of bi-weekly professional learning (via Zoom), including peer analysis of common problems of practice, design thinking and improvement science tools were applied by participants (including teachers, principals, superintendents, gifted coordinators, and BOCES Executive Directors from five rural areas of Colorado) to their local data. In this Practice-Research Partnership (PRP) model, our rural educational partners were our site-based collaborators. Following professional learning including gifted identification, culturally responsive teaching and leading, design thinking and improvement science, participants designed iterative improvement cycles, using local data as evidence to inform continuous improvement. Iterative cycles designed to improve outcomes, observe effects, reflect on the data, then plan next steps (Bryk, Gomez, & Grunow, 2011) were applied regularly. Quantitative data included surveys to measure changes in the gifted identification practices of rural school principals, as well as their cultural responsiveness.

At the end of Year 1, we conducted four case study interviews with teachers and leaders, as well as with three site leaders (gifted coordinators/BOCES directors). Baseline surveys were administered to 124 teachers and 23 leaders (superintendents, gifted coordinators, principals, BOCES Directors, and Tribal Education leaders) at the beginning of the project and at the end of the year, examining attitudes and practices of rural teachers and leaders, and the impact of their networked professional learning on the identification of and service to historically marginalized gifted students. Similar data will be collected and analyzed each year of the grant.

Data sources

Rural schools from three BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) and two districts met the criteria specified in the Department of Education Selection Criteria. They had gifted students identified at percentages lower than the state average, who identified as Hispanic or Native American, are emerging bilingual students, or qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch.

collaborate effectively with practitioners to improve student learning outcomes, using the NIC model as a framework. Gifted students were identified for talent pools. Sharing new learning that emerges from the improvement science model used in this NIC offers an innovative approach that applies promising strategies in networked laboratories of practice. Learning from tribal community members, as well as from educators who have spent decades in their school's community, helped actualize a practice-research partnership, a model with few exemplars, in which the practitioners are the experts, and the researchers provide support with such tasks as data analysis.

The NIC model supports the sharing of information about the effects of such strategiesacross networks and uses this shared learning to thoughtfully scale up successful practices. While the NIC model shares some strategies with other common school reform efforts, it represents a significant departure from the way that school improvement efforts have traditionally been addressed. Networked professional learning showed signs of being an innovative rural reform strategy.

Improving gifted learning in rural sites may help to prevent the "brain drain," supporting the innovation and vitality of rural and geographically disparate communities. The project will expand an established network of rural practitioners, supported by a peer network as well as university researchers, to dismantle inequitable systems and resolve such local problems of practice as traditionally underidentified gifted students. An unintended outcome is a finding related to improved learning opportunities among university faculty partners as a result of the enhanced communication process.

Results

Analysis of the baseline survey, administered at the end of the first semester, reveals disparate findings relative to differentiating lessons to meet the needs of gifted students. 81% of the teachers believe they differentiate adequately to meet the needs of gifted students, while only 61% of the educational leaders agreed. Both groups of respondents agreed that they have not had sufficient training to understand the state's gifted and talented identification assessments. 63% of teachers reported that their primary method for identifying gifted and talented students was standardized test scores. More than 70% of each group reported being confident using data to inform instructional decisions. Teachers reported significantly higher levels of confidence (30% or more) with culturally responsive teaching, computational thinking, and higher order thinking skills. Leaders reported slightly higher levels of confidence with data-informed instruction, and the state gifted and talented identification process.

Scholarly significance

This study adds value to the field in two important ways. Practitioners (and their students) learn how to apply short PDSA cycles to improve an identified problem of practice. Researchers learn how to

collaborate effectively with practitioners to improve student learning outcomes, using the NIC model as a framework. Gifted students were identified for talent pools. Sharing new learning that emerges from the improvement science model used in this NIC offers an innovative approach that applies promising strategies in networked laboratories of practice. Learning from tribal community members, as well as from educators who have spent decades in their school's community, helped actualize a practice-research partnership, a model with few exemplars, in which the practitioners are the experts, and the researchers provide support with such tasks as data analysis.

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Improving gifted learning in rural sites may help to prevent the "brain drain," supporting the innovation and vitality of rural and geographically disparate communities. The project will expand an established network of rural practitioners, supported by a peer network as well as university researchers, to dismantle inequitable systems and resolve such local problems of practice as traditionally underidentified gifted students. An unintended outcome is a finding related to improved learning opportunities among university faculty partners as a result of the enhanced communication process.

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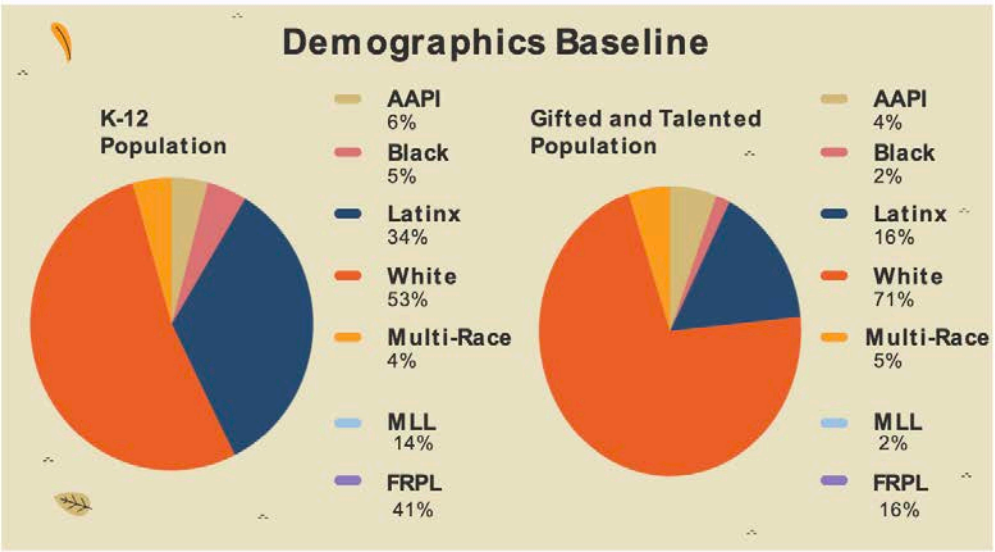


Figure 1. Colorado student demographics (McGagin, 2021)

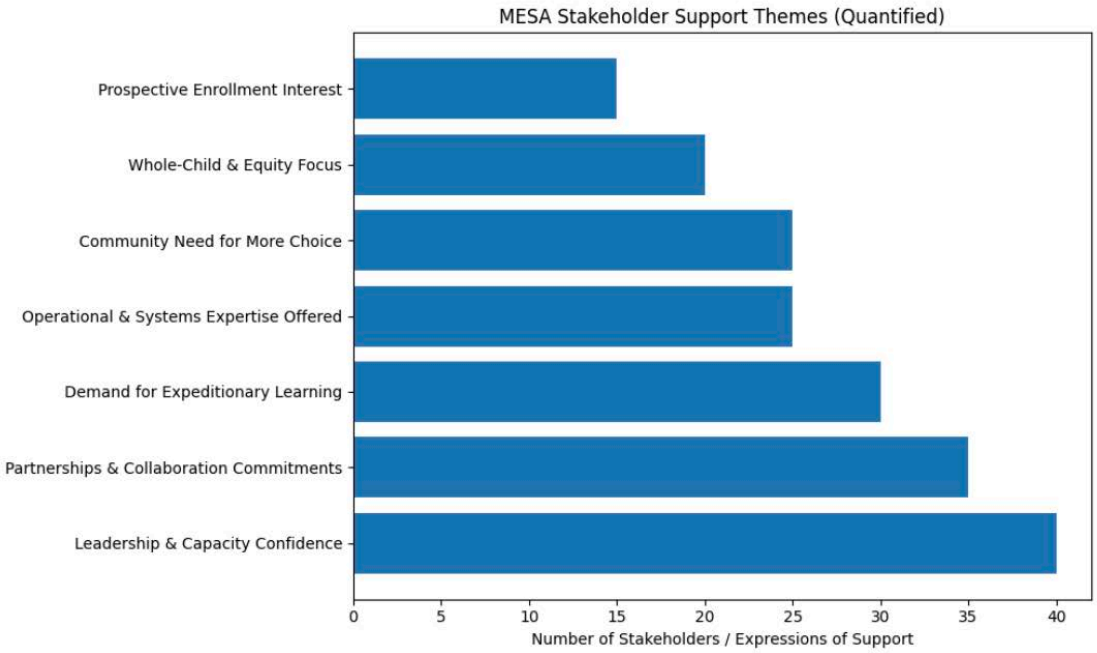
Footnote 18: Research showing effects of schoolwide enrichment model for all on reading achievement

Abstract

This experimental study examined the effect of a differentiated, enriched reading program on students' oral reading fluency and comprehension using the schoolwide enrichment model–reading (SEM-R). Treatment and control conditions were randomly assigned to 63 teachers and 1,192 second through fifth grade students across five elementary schools. Using multilevel modeling, significant differences favoring the SEM-R were found in reading fluency in two schools (Cohen's *d* effect sizes of .33 and .10) and in reading comprehension in the high-poverty urban school (Cohen's *d* = .27), with no achievement differences in the remaining schools. These results demonstrate that an enrichment reading approach, with differentiated instruction and less whole group instruction, was as effective as or more effective than a traditional whole group basal approach.

Appendix Section B: Vision and Mission Statements

The graph below shows stakeholders' input from coffee chat notes and comments accompanying signatures of support for MESA. This shows not only what the community wants but also shows their willingness to commit to partner with MESA. In addition, confidence in the founder's leadership and capacity is strong. The themes of: whole-child and equity focus, community need for more choice, and demand for Expeditionary Learning were included in the final versions of the MESA mission and vision statements.



Appendix Section C: Goals, Objectives, and Pupil Performance Standards
Footnote 19: Senate Bill 10-191 Overview

> Senate Bill 10-191 established new requirements for Colorado educator evaluation systems and required the State Board of Education to promulgate rules concerning the planning, development, implementation, and assessment of a system to evaluate the effectiveness of licensed personnel.

Appendix Section D: Evidence of Support

Evidence of Community Need and Support

MESA has generated broad and sustained support from families, educators, community members, nonprofit leaders, and current and former district and charter school administrators across Jefferson County and the Denver metro area. Feedback consistently affirms both the need for the proposed program and confidence in the founding team's capacity to implement it successfully.

Across outreach conversations, written comments, and letters of support, stakeholders describe MESA as filling a clear gap in Jeffco's current portfolio by offering an expeditionary, experiential, and arts-integrated educational model grounded in equity, bilingual access, and whole-child development. Families and educators repeatedly noted that this type of learning environment—hands-on, collaborative, and community-centered—is not widely available in Southwest Jeffco or Lakewood, and that additional high-quality neighborhood options are needed to retain and attract families to the district.

In addition to expressing interest in enrollment, stakeholders have demonstrated tangible commitment to the school's success. Community members have offered letters of support, board service, operational expertise, enrichment programming, before- and after-school care partnerships, bilingual and MLL coaching, special education consultation, and connections to local organizations and funders. Several experienced school founders, former principals, and district leaders have provided specific startup guidance related to governance, safety systems, staffing structures, multiage implementation, MTSS, and sustainable growth planning, reflecting confidence that MESA is both mission-aligned and operationally viable.

Collectively, this feedback indicates that MESA is not only a desired educational option, but a school already embedded within a strong network of families and partners prepared to actively contribute to its launch and long-term success.

Below is a chart that shows a synthesis of stakeholders' voices after learning about MESA. All written and recorded comments were run through ChatGPT to generate this information.

Theme from Stakeholders	Notes on their comments
Demand for Expeditionary Learning Model 30+ stakeholders	● Strong enthusiasm for EL, project-based, and hands-on learning ● Families seeking continuation of expeditionary pathways ● Educators affirm research-based effectiveness ● Specific praise for fieldwork, arts integration, and real-world application
Need for Additional Option and High Quality Choice in Lakewood/Jeffco 25+ stakeholders	● Limited elementary options cited ● Desire for neighborhood-based, walkable school ● Interest in keeping families in Jeffco ● Before/after care shortages noted* **This was also noted by the City of Lakewood architects who shared that the city's before and after care is always full and on a waitlist.*
Whole-child, Equity and Inclusion Focus 20+ stakeholders	● Support for equity, diversity, and belonging ● Emphasis on SEL, arts, enrichment, and cultural celebrations ● "GT for all," inclusive gifted models ● MLL access and Spanish parity in chosen curriculums
Partnerships and Collaboration Commitments 35+ stakeholders	● Letters of support ● Board member interest ● Enrichment providers (arts, outdoor ed, Scouts, apprenticeships, Junior Achievement) ● Before/after/summer care providers ● University and research partners ● Community-based organizations and nonprofits ● Family engagement networks
Leadership & Capacity Confidence 40+ stakeholders	● Express explicit trust in Jenn Norris' leadership and track record ● Cite integrity, vision, and execution strength ● Include former principals, charter founders, district leaders, and nonprofit executives

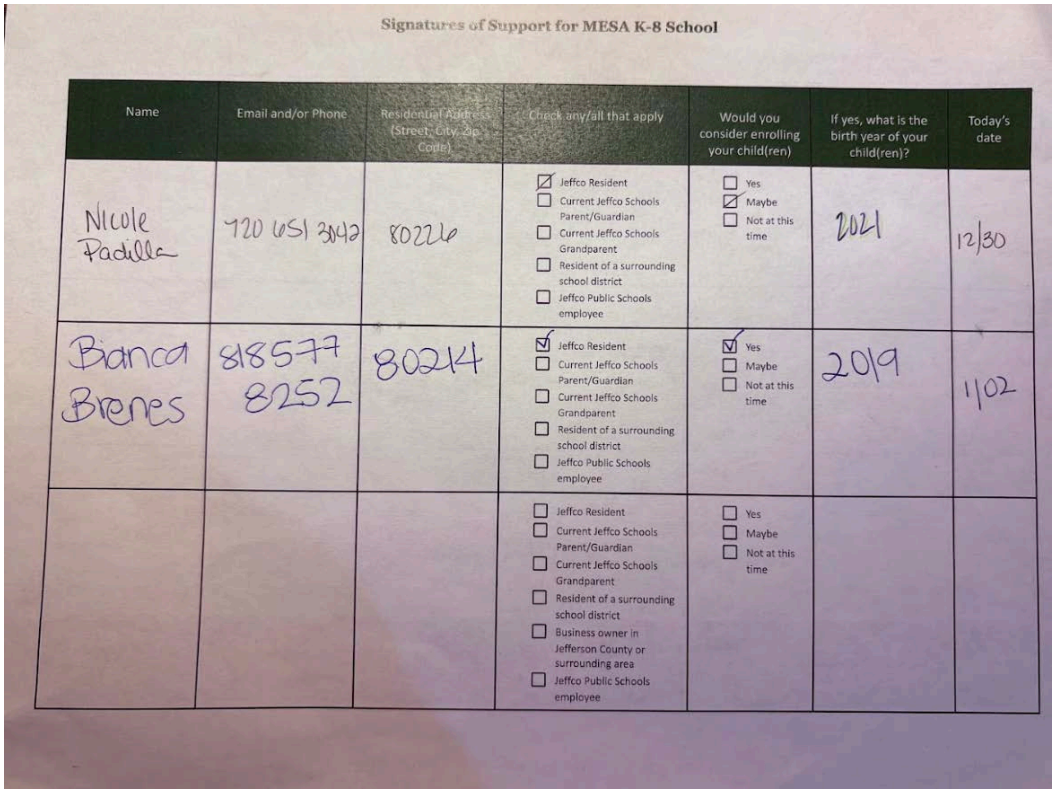
Digital signature of support pages *(larger versions can be provided if needed)*

Timestamp	Full Name	Email Address	Residential Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Select any/all that apply.	If applicable, would you consider enrolling your ch	If you answered yes/maybe on the previous quest		Please provide any comments or reasons for your	Today's Date	Electronic Signature (By typing your name below,
12/10/2025 13:45:54	RayAnne Mebane	rmebane1306@gmail.co	5883 West Maplewood Drive	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Not at this time				12/10/2025	Rayanne Mebane
12/10/2025 13:49:15	Jennifer Pool	jennypool07@gmail.com	9 sand Cherry Littleton, CO 80127	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Maybe	2015, 2017		I believe in the mission	12/10/2025	Jennifer Pool
12/10/2025 13:56:01	Charleigh Moore	charleighkmoore615@g	1614 S Chase Ct Lakewood, CO 80232	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes		2014		12/10/2025	Charleigh Moore
12/10/2025 14:01:57	Lulu	Lulurubyr@aol.com	6463 south beech circle sot.#28, Littleton co 80	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time				12/10/2025	Lulu
12/10/2025 14:06:29	Monica mueller	monica.raudalez@gmail	2555 s Irving St	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time				12/10/2025	Monica mueller
12/10/2025 14:09:05	Alanna Reynard	alanna.reynard@gmail.c	80127	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Not at this time				12/10/2025	Alanna Reynard
12/10/2025 15:14:22	Susan Norris	Slnorris19@gmail.com	830 Welch St. Golden, CO 80401	I am a Jeffco resident., I am ir	Yes, Maybe	No children at this time, but yes/maybe for any fu		Belief in the founder and values of the school!	12/10/2025	Susan Norris
12/10/2025 15:35:33	Lori Himmel	lorihimmel@gmail.com	11 Yellow Flax Littleton 80127	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Maybe	(2002, 2005) & 2011			12/10/2025	Lori Himmel
12/10/2025 15:47:02	Boitumelo Norris	Norrisboitumelo@gmail	1195 s Dahlia street, Denver, 80246	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time				12/10/2025	Boitumelo
12/10/2025 16:02:43	Heather Ashley	h.a.artseducation@gma	7269 west 13th ave lakewood co 800214	I am a Jeffco resident., I am ir	Yes		2000	I believe in the inclusion and human growth/expe	12/10/2025	Heather Ashley
12/10/2025 16:11:45	Kristin Norris	krisnorris@comcast.net	700 S. Cove Way, Denver CO 80209	I am a grandparent of a currer				Jenn Norris has a track record of successful stud	12/10/2025	Kristin Norris
12/10/2025 16:37:28	Jasmine Perez	jasmineperez0814@gm	2730 W Wesley Ave unit 1	I am a parent/guardian of a cu	Not at this time				12/10/2025	Jasmine Perez
12/10/2025 16:38:29	Aaron James Norris	ajnorris@comcast.net	1195 s dahlia st Denver co	I am a parent/guardian of a cu	Not at this time				12/10/2025	Aaron norris
12/10/2025 17:29:42	Dana Sue Williams	danasw@comcast.net	7673 S HARRISON WAY	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time				12/10/2025	Dana Williams
12/10/2025 17:31:43	Jennifer Davenport	thedavs1@yahoo.com	6217 S. Urban St. Littleton 80127	I am a Jeffco resident.					12/10/2025	Jennifer E Davenport
12/10/2025 18:09:18	Marnie Gonzalez	emgonzalez2@msn.com	10258 Telluride Ct	I am a resident of a surroundi					12/10/2025	Marnie Gonzalez
12/10/2025 18:43:58	Dan Brenner	danbrenner21@gmail.co	830 Welch st golden co 80401	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	N/a			12/10/2025	Daniel Brenner
12/10/2025 19:29:58	John Norris	jnorris@norris-design.cc	700 S Cove Way Denver. CO 80209	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time				12/10/2025	John Norris
12/10/2025 20:58:39	Candice Vigil	mama.vigil3@gmail.com	7254 S Chase Way	I am a Jeffco resident.	Not at this time			I think Jenn is exceptional!	12/10/2025	Candice Vigil
12/11/2025 6:24:47	Maureen Sue Brenner	Suesmd@comcast.net	7 Blue Fox Court, Littleton, CO 80127	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a				I have known Jenn Norris for several years and se	12/11/2025	Maureen Sue Brenner
12/11/2025 8:11:16	Sarah Gerhart-Bryan	sagerhar@gmail.com	9 Yellow Flax Littleton CO 80127	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Not at this time				12/11/2025	Sarah Gerhart-Bryan
12/11/2025 9:07:23	Lisa Fiore	lisafiore25@gmail.com	17204 red Wolf Lane, Morrison, CO 80465	I am a Jeffco resident.	Not at this time				12/11/2025	Lisa Fiore
12/11/2025 16:43:27	Whitney Guerin	Whitney.maifarth@gmai	7300 W 21st Ave, 80214	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2022, 2025			12/11/2025	Whitney Guerin
12/11/2025 19:44:54	Megan Walsh	meganmwalsh5@gmail.	3007 Stuart St. Denver, CO 80212	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time			Jenn is a visionary leader who stands for equity a	12/11/2025	Megan Walsh
12/11/2025 21:37:35	Hillary Pederson	hillarypederson@gmail.c	1 May Cherry, Littleton 80127	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Maybe	2019, 2021		More education options in Jeffco are good for kid	12/11/2025	Hillary Pederson
12/12/2025 14:45:23	Alexandra Gross	aggross24@gmail.com	6184 W Gould Dr, Littleton, CO 80123	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Not at this time				12/12/2025	Alexandra Gross
12/16/2025 11:37:33	Allison Ingalls	Ingalls.allison@gmail.cc	1 Mountain Alder Littleton CO 80127	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Not at this time				12/16/2025	Allison Ingalls
12/17/2025 8:33:46	Lauren Goughnour	laurenjo1122@gmail.co	8241 W Walker Dr Littleton, CO 80123	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Not at this time				12/17/2025	Lauren Goughnour
12/17/2025 8:48:13	Ana Lilia Nunez Reyes	anarure33@gmail.com	1540 s knox ct Denver Co 80219	I am a resident of a surroundi	Maybe	12/10/2020		Great Ideas!	12/17/2025	Ana L Nunez R
12/17/2025 9:13:58	Derek Geoffrey Pike	mrderekpike7@gmail.co	2099 S Raleigh St Denver CO 80219	I am a resident of a surroundi	Yes		2021	Southwest Denver Metro Elementary School qualit	12/17/2025	Derek Pike
12/17/2025 9:30:16	Brette Scott	Brettepond@comcast.n	4653 W Oberlin Place, Denver, 80236	I am a parent/guardian of a cu				I have worked with the founder for many years an	12/17/2025	Brette Scott
12/17/2025 9:31:12	Gretchen Clancey	gretchenclancey@gmail	10629 W Raspberry Mtn, Littleton, CO	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2017, 2018, 2022			12/17/2025	Gretchen Clancey
12/17/2025 9:35:27	Joe Lucero	Jjlucero38@gmail.com	15 S. Yarrow St.	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes			Great opportunity for children	12/17/2025	Joe Lucero
12/17/2025 10:00:57	Joseph Norris	josephnorris09@gmail.c	8 Yellow Flax, Littleton CO 80127	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2016, 2019		Belief in the unique mission and vision for the sch	12/17/2025	Joseph Norris
12/17/2025 10:15:37	Mollie Tabit		9701 E. Iliff Ave, Apt 2246, Denver, CO 80231	I am a resident of a surroundi					12/17/2025	Mollie Tabit
12/17/2025 10:24:54	Erin Anderson	erin.anderson249@du.e	Denver, CO 80223	I am interested in being a corr					12/17/2025	Erin Anderson
12/17/2025 10:51:57	Cynden Porter	cynden@gmail.com	1204 S Balsam Ct, Lakewood, CO 80232	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes		2024		12/17/2025	Cynden Porter
12/17/2025 11:34:54	Laura Jacobs	laura.williams.82lt@gm	1785 S. Zuni St. Denver, CO 80223	I am a resident of a surroundi					12/17/2025	Laura Jacobs
12/17/2025 12:22:54	Julio Alas	Julio_alas04@hotmail.c	14094 E Hampden Place	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time				12/17/2025	Julio Alas
12/17/2025 12:49:27	Maya Armstrong	maya_armstrong@yaho	5335 E. 2nd Ave. Denver CO 80220	I am interested in being a corr					12/18/2025	Maya Armstrong
12/17/2025 13:38:49	Jessica Ridgway	jessmarksridgway@gm	1588 Locust St. Denver, CO 80220	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time				12/17/2025	Jessica Ridgway
12/17/2025 14:55:48	Victoria Laureska	Laureskav@gmail.com	300 Dixon St. Unit 402 Easton, MD 21601	I am a resident of a surroundi	Yes		2023		12/17/2025	Victoria Laureska
12/17/2025 14:57:05	Thomas Beilby	beilbytom@gmail.com	1300 Glencoe St.	I am a resident of a surroundi	Yes				12/17/2025	Thomas Beilby
12/17/2025 18:55:15	Lindsey Foster	lindseyfoster07@gmail.c	5953 W 3rd Ave Lakewood, CO 80226	I am a Jeffco resident.					12/17/2025	Lindsey Foster
12/17/2025 21:53:07	David Greher	davidgreher@gmail.com	5336 E 2nd Ave, Denver 80220	I am interested in being a corr				More school options is better for all	12/17/2025	David Greher
12/17/2025 22:48:24	Dr. Kristina A. Hesbol	k.hesbol@gmail.com	10506 East Meadow Run, Parker CO 80134	I am a resident of a surroundi				MESA will provide unique learning opportunities fi	12/17/2025	Kristina Astrid Hesbol
12/18/2025 8:06:05	Juanita L Valdez	jvalde33@gmail.com	1661 S. Idalia Cir Unit N	I am interested in being a corr	Yes		2018		12/18/2025	Juanita Valdez
12/18/2025 15:18:52	Barth Quenzer	barthqenzer@gmail.com	4445 Cody St, Wheat Ridge, CO, 80033	I am a parent/guardian of a cu				I believe in the vision and mission Jenn Norris has	12/18/2025	barth quenzer
12/19/2025 9:25:09	Dakota Spence-Zurek	dcspencezurek@gmail.c	2545 Teller Court, Lakewood, Colorado 80214	I am a Jeffco resident.	Maybe				12/19/2025	Dakota C Spence- Zurek
12/19/2025 15:45:49	Charlotte Rabadi	misschr0391@gmail.co	1158 N Marion St., Denver, CO 80218	I am a resident of a surroundi	Maybe				12/19/2025	Charlotte Rabadi
12/20/2025 6:13:13	Aaron Brenner	aaronbrenner11@gmail.	9879 West Cambridge Place	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Maybe				12/20/2025	Aaron Brenner
12/20/2025 10:52:58	Anne Marie Kaspersen	amkaspersen@comcast	2840 S Eaton Way, Denver 80227	I am a resident of a surroundi					12/20/2025	Anne Marie Kaspersen
12/21/2025 9:29:39	Naomi Hamilton	naomihergotthamilton@	6835 Owens St Arvada, 80004	I am a Jeffco resident.					12/21/2025	12/21/2025
12/26/2025 10:45:39	Korey Askew	koreyaskew2@gmail.co	23718 E Florida Pl , Aurora , C) , 80018	I am interested in being a corr	Maybe		2020	Jennifer Norris has my full support in all educatio	12/26/2025	KOREY ASKEW

Timestamp	Full Name	Email Address	Residential Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Select any/all that apply.	If applicable, would you consider enrolling your ch	If you answered yes/maybe on the previous quest	Please provide any comments or reasons for your	Today's Date	Electronic Signature (By typing your name below,
12/27/2025 17:29:32	Dayana Juski	dayjuski@yahoo.com.br	1526 Tennyson st Denver CO 80204	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time	I don't have children	Expeditionary Learning provides hands-on and pri	12/28/2025	Dayana Juski
12/27/2025 17:33:24	Amber Castro	amber.castro1717@gmi	2820 S Reed St, Denver, 80227	I am a parent/guardian of a ci	Maybe	2013, 2015		12/27/2025	Amber Castro
12/27/2025 18:39:42	Evelyn Garfio	garfioalyana@gmail.com	7221 e 67th ave commerce city co 80022	I am interested in being a com	Not at this time			12/27/2025	Evelyn Garfio
12/27/2025 20:18:04	Nicole Grommack	grommacknicole@gmai	10351 West indore Dr. Littleton, CO 80127	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Not at this time			12/27/2025	Nicole Grommack
12/28/2025 11:03:15	Jessica Lenhardt	Jessica.Lenhardt@du.e	12000 West Tanforan Ave Morrison, CO 80465	I am a Jeffco resident.	Not at this time		Think this type of school would fill a need for spe	12/28/2025	Jessica Lenhardt
12/29/2025 8:56:03	Jessica Simmons	jsimmons13@gmail.com	1050 pikeview street Lakewood 80215	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2018 and 2021		12/29/2025	Jessica Simmons
12/29/2025 8:57:05	Andrew Carl young	Acjoven@gmail.com	1050 pikeview street Lakewood Colorado 80211	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2021 and 2018		12/29/2025	Andrew young
12/29/2025 8:58:00	Miles young	Milestenzingyoung@gm	420 north dril golden Colorado	I am a Jeffco resident.	Not at this time			12/29/2025	Miles young
12/29/2025 9:17:15	Rachelle Nemec	xdfdance@gmail.com	9455 W Quarles Pl Littleton, CO 80128	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a			This sounds like an amazing school	12/29/2025	Rachelle Nemec
12/29/2025 19:56:28	Sarah Bryan	sagerhar@gmail.com	9 Yellow Flax Littleton CO 80127	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2011		12/9/2025	Sarah Bryan
12/31/2025 20:08:34	Charleigh Moore	charleighkmoore615@g	80232	I am a Jeffco resident., I am ir	Yes	2014		12/31/2025	Charleigh Moore
1/4/2026 20:24:28	Susan Korach	skorach8008@gmail.co	5543 Ponderosa Dr, Parker, CO80134	I am a resident of a surroundi			Strong leadership and school design	1/4/2026	Susan Korach
1/5/2026 9:53:48	Madison Plasencia	madisondanielsphillips(	1946 Rosemary Street, Denver, CO 80220	I am a resident of a surroundi				1/5/2026	Madison Plasencia
1/5/2026 11:40:57	Eric Brodell	brodellep@gmail.com	6160 Dover Street, Arvada, 80004	I am a Jeffco resident.	Maybe	2024		1/5/2026	Eric Brodell
1/5/2026 12:42:30	Sarah Russell	taurthrussell@yahoo.com	4 Yellow Flax, Littleton CO 80127	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a		2006, 2008, 2009	This sounds like a fabulous opportunity to expand	1/5/2026	Sarah Russell
1/8/2026 13:46:06	Trevon Brandhorst	Trevon.brandhorst@gmi	1834 S Quitman st, Denver, CO 80219	I am a resident of a surroundi	Yes	2025	This is the type of experiential learning I want ava	1/8/2026	Trevon Brandhorst
1/9/2026 12:38:34	Austin Hall	Ahall3@aurorak12.org	19700 E Idaho Ave	I am interested in being a com	Not at this time	No children	Great leader. Need more schools that are focused	1/9/2026	Austin Hall
1/12/2026 15:19:10	Jordan Roberts	Theinbetweenersdance(	1710 Jay St Lakewood Colorado 80214	I am a Jeffco resident.				1/12/2026	Jordan Roberts
1/12/2026 16:02:14	Theodore Pokrywka	theodore.pokrywka@gm	925 Teller Street Lakewood, CO 80214	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2024	Proximity	1/12/2026	Theodore Pokrywka
1/12/2026 18:10:12	Case Newsom	likegiants@gmail.com	6100 W. 8th Avenue	I am a Jeffco resident.	Maybe	2020 and 2021	Very interested in expeditionary schooling, and ve	1/12/2026	Case Newsom
1/12/2026 20:22:37	Abbey Studer	aestuder@gmail.com	890 Lamar court	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	20,222,024		1/12/2026	Abbey Studer
1/13/2026 11:02:51	Nicolette Canestaro	Nikacanestaro@gmail.c	7422 w 10th ave	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2022		1/13/2026	Nicolette Canestaro
1/14/2026 23:59:53	Joseph Lucero	Jjlucero38@gmail.com	15 S. Yarrow street lakewood colorado 80226	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	Not applicable	Great opportunity	1/14/2026	Joseph Lucero
1/15/2026 14:34:38	Case Newsom	case.newsom@gmail.cc	6100 W. 8th Ave, Lakewood CO 80214	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	2020 and 2021	Please give our neighborhood an elementary schc	1/15/2026	Case Newsom
1/15/2026 16:55:32	Chelsea Halsey	Chelscat23@aol.com	170 S. Reed St. Lakewood 80226	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Maybe	1/8/21		1/15/2026	Chelsea Halsey
1/17/2026 8:43:19	Kendra Zimmer	kendra.m.zimmer@gma	11556 w 38th place, wheat ridge, 80033	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2016 and 2018	We are currently at an expeditionary school called	1/17/2026	Kendra Zimmer
1/23/2026 5:25:32	Jillian Duncan	jillduncan89@gmail.com	311 18th street	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	10/12/2022	I'm a lifelong educator and supporter of charter sc	1/23/2026	Jillian Duncan
1/23/2026 12:43:35	Luis Rios	Lfrios2014@gmail.com	1304 N. Emerson St. Denver CO 80218	I am a resident of a surroundi			This school will transform the lives of countless c	1/23/2026	Luis Rios
1/23/2026 18:11:05	Jennifer Boatner	Jennifermboatner@gma	7009 w 25th pl Lakewood co 80214	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	2024		1/23/2026	Jennifer Boatner
1/23/2026 20:33:29	Dion Waldner	Dionpt0121@msn.com	870 Hoyt St, Lakewood, 80215	I am a Jeffco resident., I am ir	Yes	Not a parent, yet	Total belief in Jenn!	1/23/2026	Dion Waldner
1/24/2026 11:13:32	Tiffany Finn	tiffanyjfinn@gmail.com	7525 Highland Dr.	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Not at this time		A new school option would be great in the neighb	1/24/2026	Tiffany Finn
1/24/2026 16:45:31	aaron ontiveroz	aaronontiveroz@gmail.c	5155 depew ct	I am a resident of a surroundi	Yes	2011		1/25/2026	aaron ontiveroz
1/24/2026 17:30:01	Matthew Brenner	matthew.brenner13@gm	4545 Ingalls St. Wheat Ridge, CO 80033	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	Future children		1/24/2026	Matthew Brenner
1/24/2026 17:30:45	Jodee Doka	jodee.doka@gmail.com	4545 Ingalls st, Wheat Ridge, CO	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	No kids yet		1/24/2026	Jodee Doka
1/24/2026 20:09:20	Laura Whitby	lrwhitby@live.com	6160 Dover St	I am a Jeffco resident.	Maybe	2025		1/24/2026	Laura Whitby
1/26/2026 14:33:57	Erika Weiss	erika.e.weiss@gmail.co	8188 Chase Drive, Arvada Colorado 80003	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	2025	We believe in experiential learning and think our d	1/26/2026	Erika Weiss
1/27/2026 19:05:57	Darby West	darbyhwest@gmail.com	4480 W Vassar Avenue	I am a resident of a surroundi	Yes	2021	Our kids deserve an education that teaches the sk	1/27/2026	Darby H West
1/28/2026 5:51:39	Jamie Bassett	jazwbassett@gmail.com	6276 N. Lisbon, Aurora, CO 80019	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time		Valuable and meaningful mission!	1/28/2026	Jamie Bassett
1/28/2026 6:18:18	Emily Swanson	eagswanson@gmail.cor	996 s field st Lakewood co 80226	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Not at this time	2020, 2022		1/28/2026	Emily Swanson
1/28/2026 11:12:42	Lindsey Foster	lindseyfoster07@gmail.c	5953 W 3rd Ave Lakewood, CO 80226	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes			1/28/2026	Lindsey Foster
1/28/2026 11:38:57	Guy Pasquino	guypasquino@gmail.cor	408 N Franklin St	I am interested in being a com	Yes	19,981,999	As a 20+ educator, I am impressed with MESA's vi	1/28/2026	Guy Pasquino
1/28/2026 11:42:50	Sara Pittman	saramarie39@gmail.cor	5540 S Miller Street, Littleton, CO 80127	I am a Jeffco resident.	Maybe	Not yet born - 2026		1/28/2026	Sara Pittman
1/28/2026 14:26:10	DeeDee Snead	ddsnead@comcast.net	9605 W 11th Ave Lakewood CO 80215	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	2025		1/28/2026	DeeDee Snead
1/28/2026 15:02:42	Jillian Duncan	jillduncan89@gmail.com	311 18th street	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	2022 and 2024	Charter and independent schools are in high dem	1/28/2026	Jillian Duncan
1/28/2026 15:45:23	Maria Zorn	mezorn23@gmail.com	1955 Hoyt street Lakewood co 80215	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2025		1/28/2026	Maria Zorn
1/28/2026 15:53:53	Daniella Lam	daniellaalinavergara@gr	1849 Cody St. Lakewood CO 80215	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	2025		1/28/2026	Daniella Lam
1/28/2026 16:12:17	Katelyn Collins	Katelynmn12@gmail.co	2341 Garrison st. Lakewood co 80215	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Maybe	2025		1/28/2026	Katelyn Collins
1/28/2026 17:14:30	Margreta Thorpe	margretathorpe@gmail.c	10671 w exposition ave. Lakewood co 80226	I am a Jeffco resident.	Yes	2024	I absolutely love expeditionary learning. I think it's	1/28/2026	Margreta Thorpe
1/29/2026 14:25:39	Stacy Stevens	stacystevens9@gmail.co	4480 W Vassar Ave	I am a resident of a surroundi	Yes	2021		1/29/2026	Stacy M. Stevens
1/30/2026 6:10:12	Ashley Yahraus	Yahrausa@gmail.com	12631 W Alameda Dr Lakewood 80228	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2021		1/30/2026	Ashley Yahraus
1/30/2026 8:26:20	Kristin Cuddeback	jenkinskm88@gmail.cor	1945 S Ward Ct, Lakewood, CO, 80228	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Maybe	2020, 2022	Very excited for a different learning approach that	1/30/2026	Kristin Cuddeback
1/30/2026 13:09:44	Bailee Cochran	baileecochran@yahoo.c	862 South Reed Ct, Lakewood, 80226	I am a Jeffco resident.				1/30/2026	Bailee Cochran
2/3/2026 7:01:09	Lisa Fiore	lisafiore25@gmail.com	17294 Red Wolf Lane, Morrison, 80465	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Not at this time			2/3/2026	Lisa Fiore

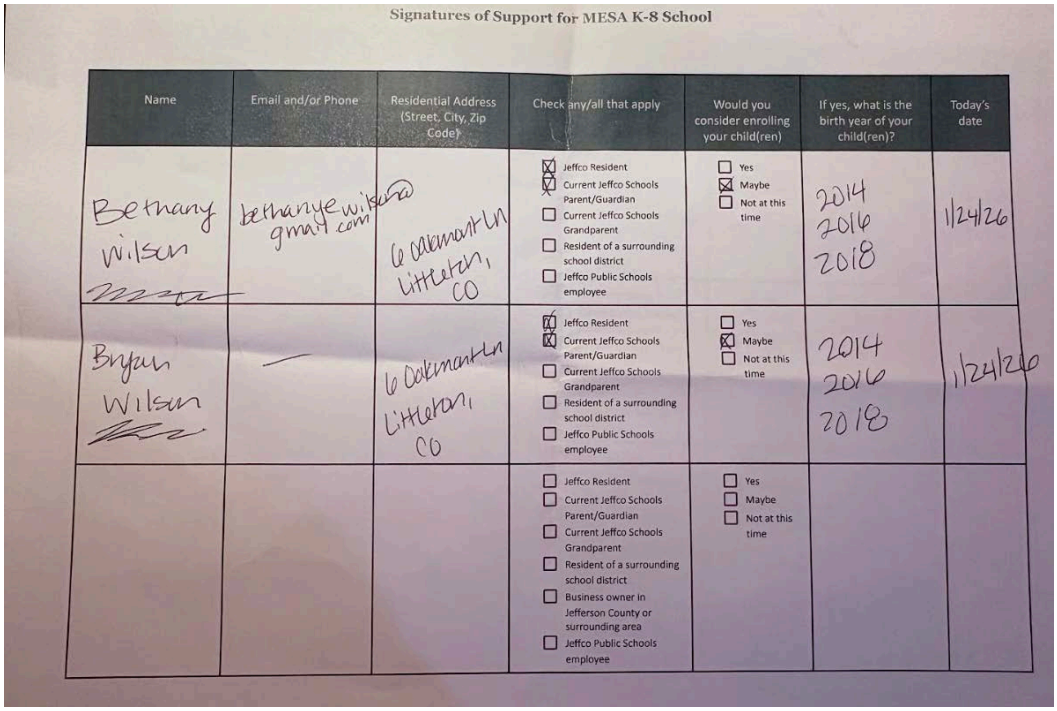
Timestamp	Full Name	Email Address	Residential Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Select any/all that apply.	If applicable, would you consider enrolling your ch	If you answered yes/maybe on the previous quest	Please provide any comments or reasons for your	Today's Date	Electronic Signature (By typing your name below,
2/3/2026 12:44:36	Kein Garcia	Keingarcia200@gmail.c	542 vance street, Lakewood, CO. 80226	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2017	I believe that this school will be an amazing oppor	2/3/2026	Kein Garcia
2/3/2026 15:32:24	Katie Fowler	kafowler98@gmail.com	328 S Lincoln St Denver, CO 8209	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time	Do not have a child.		2/3/2026	Katie Fowler
2/3/2026 18:51:14	Krista Edgar	Edgar.krista@gmail.com	705 Moore st Lakewood 80215	I am a Jeffco resident.	Maybe, Not at this time			2/3/2026	Krista Edgar
2/4/2026 10:52:43	Ana Cecilia Noriega	Joliececi@hotmail.com	2121 W 6Ift Ave Englewood CO 80110	I am a resident of a surroundi	Maybe	2013 and 2017		2/4/2026	Ana Noriega
2/5/2026 9:26:43	Brian Hyosaka	brian.hyosaka@gmail.cc	2131 South Allison Court	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Maybe	2019 and 2022	I believe strongly in the vision and for the need for	2/5/2026	Brian Hyosaka
2/5/2026 9:58:13	Kathryn Powers		17124 E Berry Ave Centennial 80015	I am a resident of a surroundi	Not at this time			2/5/2026	Kathryn Powers
2/5/2026 10:05:44	Moly Lyons	mollyons@gmail.com	1646 Magnolia St, Denver, CO 80220	I am a resident of a surroundi	Yes	2012		2/5/2026	Moly Lyons
2/5/2026 12:42:42	Abby Smith	abby.smith0822@gmail.	8 Prairie Clover Littleton CO 80127	I am a Jeffco resident.	Not at this time		Parents need choices	2/5/2026	Abby Smith
2/5/2026 12:59:56	Virginia Valencia	virginiacvalencia@gmail	9496 W Utah Ave, Lakewood, CO 80232	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2017 and 2022	There NEED to be more options in Jeffco!! We've l	2/5/2026	Virginia Valencia
2/5/2026 13:33:25	Alison Harris	harris.m.alison@gmail.c	3880 Cody St, Wheat Ridge, 80033	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2018, 2021	My son currently attends Peak Expeditionary and	2/5/2026	Alison Harris
2/5/2026 14:25:21	Jenna Knowles	jennakknowles@gmail.c	15048 W 13th Ave Golden CO 80401	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2018 and 2020	Our kids are currently enrolled in an expeditionary	2/5/2026	Jenna Knowles
2/5/2026 15:55:51	Kyle Gamba	kyle@laluzeducation.org	2255 S Columbine St	I am a resident of a surroundi			Expeditionary models rock!!!	2/5/2026	Kyle Gamba
2/5/2026 16:32:17	Katie Thorpe		13789 W Asbury Cir Lakewood, CO 80228	I am a Jeffco resident.				2/5/2026	Katie Thorpe
2/5/2026 19:35:39	Holly Hyosaka	hhyosaka@gmail.com	2131 S Allison Ct, Lakewood, CO 80227	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Maybe	2019, 2022		2/5/2026	Holly Hyosaka
2/6/2026 7:58:56	Carly Thorpe	Carlymahan@gmail.com	9135 W 4th Ave, Lakewood, CO 80226	I am a Jeffco resident.			Aunt	2/6/2026	Carly Thorpe
2/7/2026 7:17:05	James Knowles	james.knowles29@gma	15049 W 13th Ave	I am a Jeffco resident., I am a	Yes	2018		2/7/2026	James Knowles

Paper signature of support pages



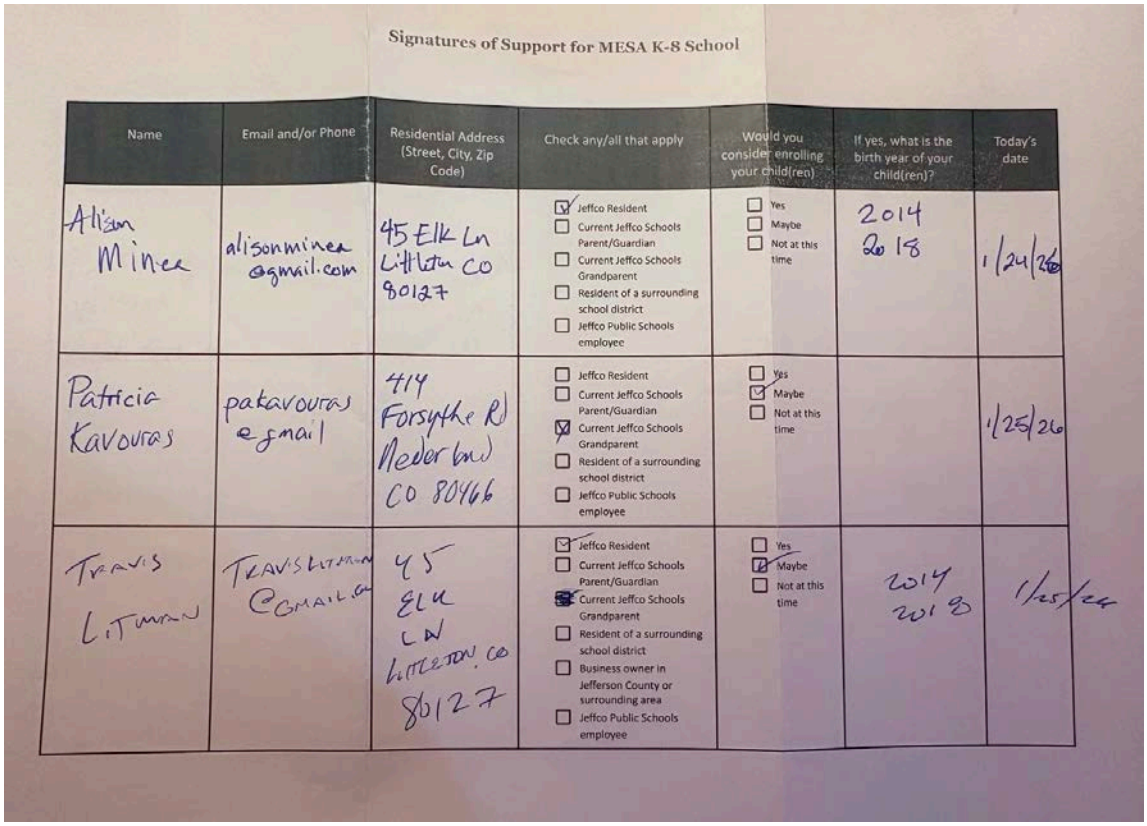
Signatures of Support for MESA K-8 School

Name	Email and/or Phone	Residential Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Check any/all that apply	Would you consider enrolling your child(ren)	If yes, what is the birth year of your child(ren)?	Today's date
Nicole Padilla	720 651 3042	80226	☒ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☒ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2021	12/30
Bianca Brenes	818577 8252	80214	☑ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☑ Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2019	1/02
			☐ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Business owner in Jefferson County or surrounding area ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ Not at this time		



Signatures of Support for MESA K-8 School

Name	Email and/or Phone	Residential Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Check any/all that apply	Would you consider enrolling your child(ren)	If yes, what is the birth year of your child(ren)?	Today's date
Bethany Wilson	bethanyewilson gmail.com	6 Oakmont Ln Littleton, CO	☒ Jeffco Resident ☒ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☒ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2014 2016 2018	1/24/26
Bryan Wilson	—	6 Oakmont Ln Littleton, CO	☒ Jeffco Resident ☒ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☒ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2014 2016 2018	1/24/26
			☐ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Business owner in Jefferson County or surrounding area ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ Not at this time		



Signatures of Support for MESA K-8 School

Name	Email and/or Phone	Residential Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Check any/all that apply	Would you consider enrolling your child(ren)	If yes, what is the birth year of your child(ren)?	Today's date
Alison Minea	alisonminea@gmail.com	45 Elk Ln Littleton CO 80127	☑ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2014 2018	1/24/26
Patricia Kavouras	pakavouras@gmail	414 Forsythe Rd Nederland CO 80466	☐ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☒ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☑ Maybe ☐ Not at this time		1/25/26
Travis Litman	TRAVISLITMAN@GMAIL.COM	45 Elk Ln Littleton, CO 80127	☑ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☒ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Business owner in Jefferson County or surrounding area ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☑ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2014 2018	1/25/26

Signatures of Support for MESA K-8 School

Name	Email and/or Phone	Residential Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Check any/all that apply	Would you consider enrolling your child(ren)	If yes, what is the birth year of your child(ren)?	Today's date
Daniel Graeve	dgraeve1e gmail.com 720-206-6138	2093 S Moss St Lakewood, CO 80228	☒ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☒ Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2021	01/30/26
Caleb Dodge	calebdodge@gmail.com 719-699-0917	6080 S Estes St, Littleton, CO 80231	☒ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☒ Yes ☐ Maybe ☒ Not at this time No kids		01/30/26
Gerald Clas	jerryclas@hotmail.com	4221 S Yarrow Ct Lakewood CO 80235	☒ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Business owner in Jefferson County or surrounding area ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☒ Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2018 2021 2024	1/30/26

Signatures of Support for MESA K-8 School

Name	Email and/or Phone	Residential Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Check any/all that apply	Would you consider enrolling your child(ren)	If yes, what is the birth year of your child(ren)?	Today's date
Austin Myers	austinrm@[illegible].com	1634 ANGS CT, Lakewood CO, 80214	☐ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☒ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☐ Maybe ☒ Not at this time No kids yet		1/30/26
Benton Ellis	bellis[illegible]	2956 W 28th Cir Golden, CO 80401	☒ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☒ Yes ☐ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2022 2025	1/31/26

Signatures of Support for MESA K-8 School

Name	Email and/or Phone	Residential Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Check any/all that apply	Would you consider enrolling your child(ren)	If yes, what is the birth year of your child(ren)?	Today's date
Jennifer Pool	Jennypool07@gmail.com 720-982-6895	9 Sand Cherry Littleton, CO 80127	☒ Jeffco Resident ☒ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☒ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2015 2017	1/27/26
Wendy Whitcomb	wendy whitcomb@gmail.com	79 N Ronen Rd Littleton CO 80127	☒ Jeffco Resident ☒ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☒ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2015 2017	1/27/26
Kim Wharton	KLW5196 yahoo.com	8 Sand Cherry	☒ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Business owner in Jefferson County or surrounding area ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☐ Maybe ☒ Not at this time		1/27/26

Signatures of Support for MESA K-8 School

Name	Email and/or Phone	Residential Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Check any/all that apply	Would you consider enrolling your child(ren)	If yes, what is the birth year of your child(ren)?	Today's date
Stephanie Forst	sgforste msn.com	18 Sand Cherry Littleton, CO 80127	☒ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☐ Maybe ☒ Not at this time	out of school age	02/01/26
Liz Bicotte	liz.bicotte@gmail.com	1 sand cherry Littleton, CO 80127	☐ Jeffco Resident ☒ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☒ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2011 2013	02/02/26
Katelyn Wiles	23 sand cherry Littleton	Kwiltese gmail.com	☐ Jeffco Resident ☒ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Business owner in Jefferson County or surrounding area ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☒ Maybe ☐ Not at this time	2013 2017	02/08/26

Signatures of Support for MESA K-8 School

Name	Email and/or Phone	Residential Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Check any/all that apply	Would you consider enrolling your child(ren)	If yes, what is the birth year of your child(ren)?	Today's date
ROB WEST	RACKWEST@MSN.COM	12 YELLOW FLAX LITTLETON CO 80127	☒ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☐ Maybe ☒ Not at this time		2/6/26
MELANIE WEST	MELANIEDWEST@GMAIL.COM	12 YELLOW FLAX LITTLETON CO 80127	☒ Jeffco Resident ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Parent/Guardian ☐ Current Jeffco Schools Grandparent ☐ Resident of a surrounding school district ☐ Jeffco Public Schools employee	☐ Yes ☐ Maybe ☒ Not at this time		2/6/26
			☐ Jeffco Resident	☐ Yes		

In addition to letters and signatures of support, many MESA supporters wrote comments on signature pages that they would like to be included in the appendix of this application. Here is a collection of their statements in support of MESA.

Please provide any comments or reasons for your support (Optional):
I believe in the mission
Belief in the founder and values of the school!
I believe in the inclusion and human growth/expression that the arts brings to all communities.
Jenn Norris has a track record of successful student learning outcomes. She gets better in each new leadership role she takes on and I have no doubt that Mesa will become one of the most highly sought after schools in Jefferson County.
I think Jenn is exceptional!
I have known Jenn Norris for several years and seen her dedication, integrity, passion, and hard work in the education world. She is improving the lives of the children to which she has devoted her life!
Jenn is a visionary leader who stands for equity and inclusivity. I know her school will provide opportunity and enrichments for all students.
More education options in Jeffco are good for kids and parents
Great Ideas!
Southwest Denver Metro Elementary School quality and choice does not have options our family are considering. Our son frequently engages in extracurriculars in JeffCo esp. Lakewood area. Looking for school with intentional programming in the same community our extracurriculars are located in.
I have worked with the founder for many years and know her as an exceptional school leader and educator. I have full confidence in her ability to create an exceptional school environment where all children thrive.
Great opportunity for children
Belief in the unique mission and vision for the school that will improve the offerings for JeffCo Schools and the broader community.
More school options is better for all.
MESA will provide unique learning opportunities for every student.
I believe in the vision and mission Jenn Norris has for MESA.

Jennifer Norris has my full support in all educational matters. I have personally witnessed the positive impact she has on students' and families' lives through her commitment to academic excellence, as well as her dedication to developing socially and emotionally well-rounded students who will carry forward a legacy of independent, critical thinking.
Expeditionary Learning provides hands-on and problem solving learning, which fits the needs of this new generation of children.
Think this type of school would fill a need for special gifted children. The location is more central to serve a large portion of Jeffco.
This sounds like an amazing school-
Strong leadership and school design
This sounds like a fabulous opportunity to expand learning opportunities for Jeffco students
This is the type of experiential learning I want available for my daughter I'm I'm a Family and Community Engagement Expert in the Denver Metro
Great leader. Need more schools that are focused on equity and diversity. Worked with Jennifer Norris and support her mission and her work ethic. I know that with her as a leader, students will get proper care and education. I know that she will also do whatever she can to continue evolving and growing this school and the students.
Proximity
Very interested in expeditionary schooling, and very close!
Great opportunity
Please give our neighborhood an elementary school again! Thank you.
We are currently at an expeditionary school called PEAK and we want to continue our expeditionary learning journey into middle school.
I'm a lifelong educator and supporter of charter schools.
This school will transform the lives of countless children and families by providing a joyful, rigorous education that will prepare students for bright futures as contributors, leaders, and people of peace.
Total belief in Jenn!
A new school option would be great in the neighborhood!

We believe in experiential learning and think our daughter would thrive.
Our kids deserve an education that teaches the skills, habits, and mindsets needed to succeed
Valuable and meaningful mission!
As a 20+ educator, I am impressed with MESA's vision and can vouch for the effectiveness of Expeditionary Learning.
Charter and independent schools are in high demand in Jefferson County and we'd be lucky to have MESA join!
I absolutely love expeditionary learning. I think it’s a very valuable way for children to get hands on learning through real life experiences. I’ve heard a lot of positive things from people that teach at or have students at centennial expeditionary school in Denver. I think the Lakewood community would highly benefit from having this school choice for children. I imagine the attendance would be high for students, because it creates a love for learning, and would have great student outcomes as far as grades go.
Very excited for a different learning approach that emphasizes real-world experience/application of knowledge over memorization.
I believe that this school will be an amazing opportunity for this neighborhood and feel that Jefferson county needs more options for schools like this.
I believe strongly in the vision and for the need for innovative options within Lakewood and Jefferson County. The team behind this school is also first class!
Parents need choices
There NEED to be more options in Jeffco!! We've been so unpleased with the offerings and lack of hands-on outdoor learning opportunities within the district. (Signed one frustrated Jeffco parent who is also an ECE Director in Jeffco)
My son currently attends Peak Expeditionary and we love it but there is no expeditionary middle school for after. We would love to continue in the EL school program
Our kids are currently enrolled in an expeditionary learning school in Jeffco, but the school only goes through fifth grade. We would love to continue an expeditionary learning experience for middle school!
Expeditionary models rock!!!

Because the MESA founder was told on December 6, 2025 that the timeline for application deadline was due much earlier than the previously posted March 15 date, additional letters of intent (LOI) to enroll will be gathered and turned in for a final count on March 15, 2026. This final count day is supported by Tayo Adeeko, Executive Director of Charter Partnerships at Jeffco Public Schools.

Appendix Section E: Educational Program

Footnote 20: Jeffco Visual Arts Education, Curriculum Links by Grade Level

- Kindergarten
- 1st grade
- 2nd grade
- 3rd grade
- 4th grade
- 5th grade
- Middle School

Footnote 21: Jeffco Physical Education, Curriculum tips listed below

Tips for supporting elementary students' health and physical fitness:

Kindergarten

- Limit students' time in front of a screen to two hours or less per day.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for moderate to vigorous activity at least 60 minutes per day.
- Foster an enjoyment of movement by emphasizing participation and effort over competition.
- Discuss the importance of being a safe and responsible "mover."

First Grade

- Provide multiple opportunities to jump rope, run, dodge, play catch and swing with or without music.
- Repetition is important in creating balance and muscle memory.
- Model healthy eating and being active.
- Involve students in creating healthy meals; ask them to identify different food groups.
- Help them develop good hygiene habits, including dental care.

Second Grade

- Provide opportunities to jump rope, run, dodge, play catch and swing. Repetition is important in creating balance and muscle memory.
- Provide healthy food choices and have them explain why they are good choices.
- Ask why they enjoy a particular activity over another.

Third Grade

- Provide opportunities to combine and change movements without stopping, such as run and jump.
- Talk with students about setting goals. Possible questions might include: "What's a reasonable goal and what's not? How do you decide what's realistic? What factors influence the ability to reach goals?"
- Discuss safety in the home, cars, bicycles and walking to school.

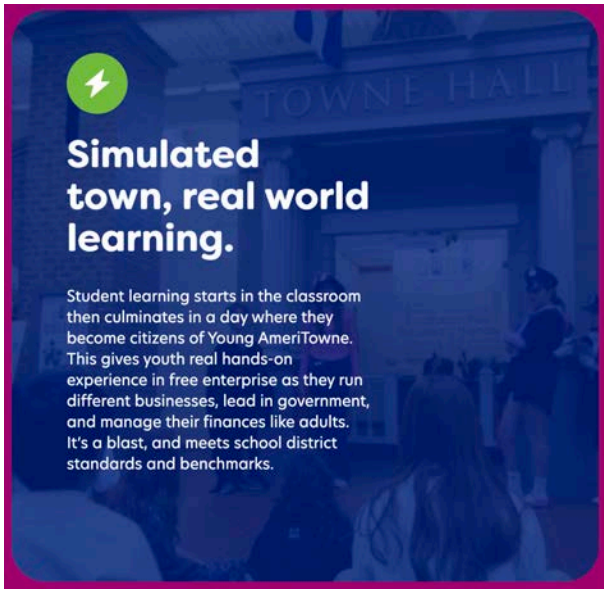
Fourth Grade

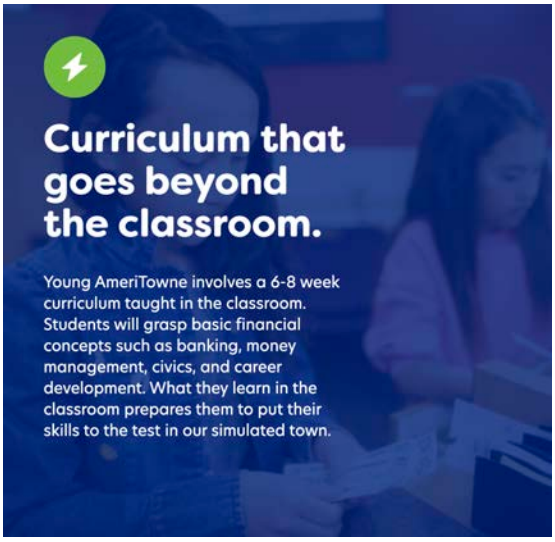
- Involve students in the planning and choosing of healthy snacks and meals.
- Encourage them to participate in a variety of individual as well as team activities every day for at least 60 minutes.
- Talk with them about respect for rules, officials, their own teammates and competitors and the examples of professional athletes.

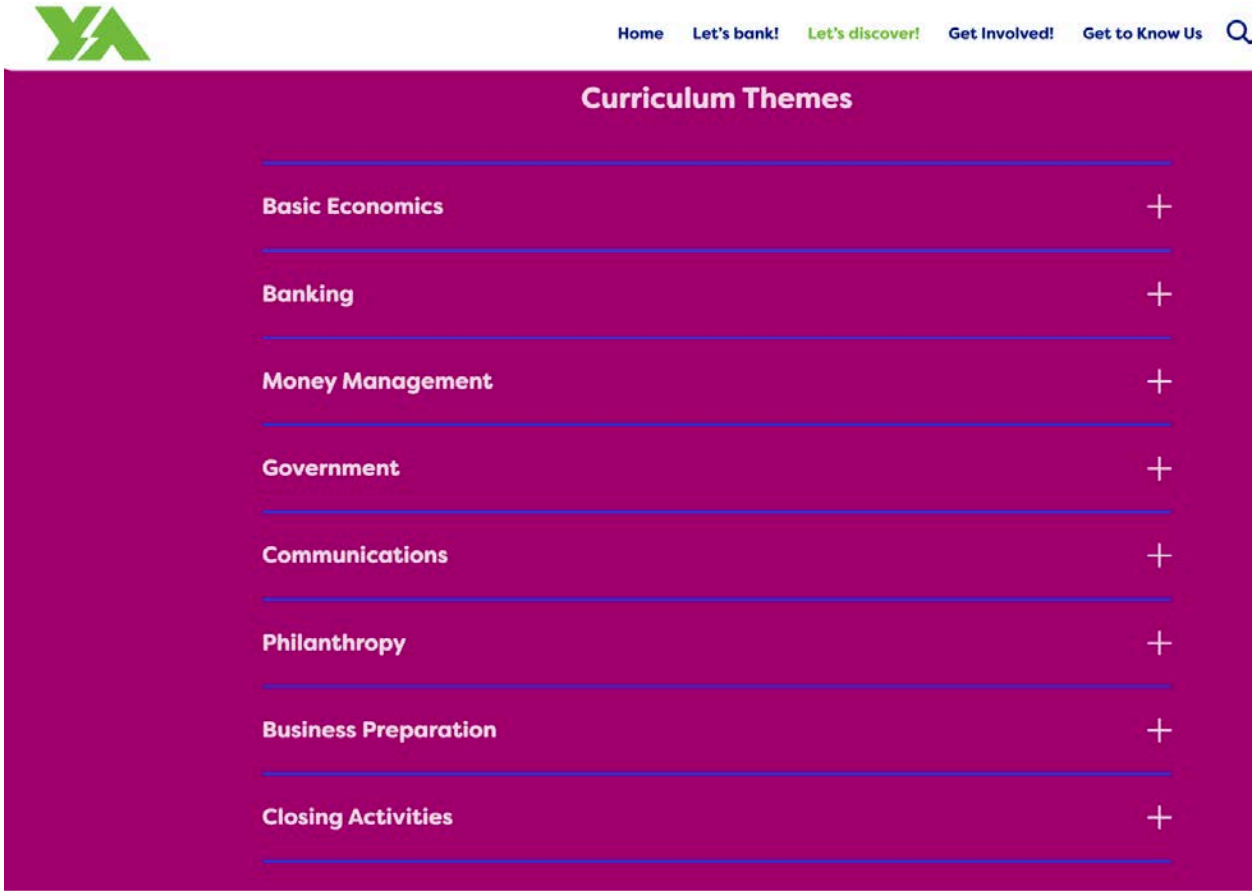
Fifth Grade

- Have students identify a health- or skill-related fitness component that would improve their success in an activity they participate in and set goals for improvement.
- Talk with them about food choices for energy.
- Talk with them about truth in advertisements and what influences choices about activities and food.

Footnote 22: Young Ameritowne Programs for Financial Literacy







Footnote 23: Junior Achievement Resources for Financial Literacy

Grades K-2

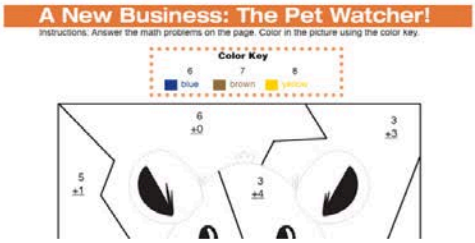
A Budding Engineer

Think like an engineer to solve a neighborhood problem. Illustrate your new design or invention.



The Pet Watcher

Here's a fun coloring activity that also helps you practice your math skills.



Grades 3-5

A Region's Market

Farmers and ranchers run small businesses too. Figure out which farmer in the region did the best job of making a profit on his produce.



Answer Key



Bank Teller Computations

Help the bank teller count out money by solving these problems.

Teller Computations



TELLER COMPUTATIONS

Help the bank tellers count these bills and coins by solving the following problems.

1. Trecia, the teller, counted
15 quarters, 10 dimes,
5 nickels, and 25 pennies.
How much was there?

2. Gabby, the teller, counted
5 $20 bills, 10 $10 bills,
10 $5 bills, and 45 $1 bills.
How much was there?

7. Dawn, the teller, counted
56 $100 bills, 5 $50 bills,
19 $20 bills, 33 $10 bills,
55 $1 bills, 13 quarters,
12 dimes, and 1 penny.
How much was there?

8. Victor, the teller, counted
3 $20 bills, 34 $10 bills,
9 $5 bills, 15 $1 bills,
16 quarters, 55 dimes, and

Answer Key

TELLER COMPUTATIONS

1. Trecia, the teller, counted
15 quarters, 10 dimes,
5 nickels, and 25 pennies.
How much was there? **$5.25**

2. Gabby, the teller, counted
5 $20 bills, 10 $10 bills,
10 $5 bills, and 45 $1 bills.
How much was there? **$295**

3. Omar, the teller, counted
4 $20 bills, 12 $10 bills,
25 $5 bills, 22 $1 bills, 3
quarters, 4 dimes, and 12 nickels.
How much was there? **$348.75**

4. Bart, the teller, counted
4 $100 bills, 3 $50 bills,
12 $20 bills, 60 $10 bills, 32 $5

8. Victor, the teller, counted
3 $20 bills, 34 $10 bills,
9 $5 bills, 15 $1 bills,
16 quarters, 55 dimes, and
44 nickels.
How much was there? **$471.70**

9. Kevin, the teller, counted
8 of all the following:
$100 bills, $50 bills, $20 bills,
$10 bills, $5 bills, $1 bills,
quarters, dimes, nickels, and
pennies.
How much was there? **$1,491.28**

10. Niraj, the teller, counted
9 $100 bills, 18 $50 bills,
13 $20 bills, 14 $10 bills, 5 $5
bills, 11 $1 bills, 13 quarters,



Compare and Contrast Payment Methods

Compare different ways people pay for things they want and need.



Innovative Ideas: US Patent Scavenger Hunt

Learn how innovative ideas can change the world by exploring the website of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.



Footnote 24: Sonrisas Spanish Curriculum and Sample Lesson below

It Provides Routine and Structure

We know that young learners thrive with structure. Essentially, structure in the learning environment helps students to feel safe which in turn puts their brains in a receptive state for learning. This is especially important in a second language class which can be intimidating. The Sonrisas lessons provide a consistent structure of Circle Time, Story Time, and Art Time. Students become accustomed to and comfortable with this structure, empowering them to take risks with the language.

It Develops Cultural Competence

Instruction in culture needs to be an integral part language learning. The Sonrisas curriculum weaves cultural content into all of the lessons, and the Sonrisas Cultural Curriculum provides in-depth learning about different Spanish cultures. This helps learners develop cultural competence with Spanish-speaking cultures. Part of this competence is that it fosters more acceptance in students and enables them to participate more constructively in a diverse society.

It Is Fully Articulated for K-8 Spanish

Sonrisas Spanish provides a fully articulated curricular plan with all of the lesson plans and materials needed to implement instruction for preschool Spanish to 8th grade. Each level of the curriculum includes a scope and sequence which helps to guide instruction. Our Acquire, Develop, Learn methodology ensures a developmentally appropriate sequence of Spanish instruction, through the grades, for elementary and middle school.

What Makes Sonrisas Spanish Effective?

It Is Research-Based

We know from second language acquisition research that language acquisition occurs when the learner is immersed in the target language and has the opportunity for communication in the target language. This is the crux of the Sonrisas Spanish lessons—they provide an immersion environment with lots of age appropriate activities which provide the opportunity for meaningful communication in Spanish. Students build comprehension and speaking skills as they acquire Spanish.

It Is Standards-Based

The Sonrisas curriculum in Spanish correlates to the national World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. Our standards alignment guide reflects the continuum of growth in communication skills, through the Novice Low and Intermediate Low proficiency levels, that learners can achieve with instruction in the Sonrisas Spanish lessons.

It Is Pedagogically Sound

The design of the Sonrisas Spanish lessons utilizes a variety of second language learning methodologies: TPR, The Natural Approach, Comprehensible Input, The Waldorf Foreign Language Approach, and the Theory of Multiple Intelligences all form the basis of instructional pedagogy for the Sonrisas lessons.

¿De qué color es?

Lesson Overview

3

Learning Target

Students identify colors and provide information about colors around them.

Performance Targets

- Students comprehend the question, *"¿De qué color es?"*
- Students answer the question and identify colors in Spanish.

Circle Time



Lesson Activity: *El juego de los colores*

Vocabulary and Phrases

¿De qué color es?	What color is it?
Es…	It is…
rojo	red
anaranjado	orange
azul	blue
amarillo	yellow
verde	green
negro	black
blanco	white
rosado	pink
morado	purple
café	brown

Songs and Poems (Track #)

Sonrisas CD

Cada vez que nos juntamos (1)
Buenos días (2)
Me llamo, me llamo (3)
Cabeza, hombros, piernas, pies (4)
Mi cuerpo (5)
Uno, dos, tres, cha cha cha (6)

Canciones Culturales CD

Tortillitas (4)
De colores (8)

Story Time



From the StoryBook Set

Salí de Paseo, by Sue Williams

Other Book Suggestions

Pinta ratones, by Ellen Stoll Walsh
Cómo nació el arco iris, by Alma Flor Ada
¿De qué color es?, by Stephanie Longfoot
Momentos hermosos en el reino animal: Los animales y sus colores, by Stephanie Maze
Papalotes, by Bettina Ling
Oso pardo, oso pardo, ¿qué ves ahí?, by Bill Martin, Jr. and Eric Carle

Art Time



¿De qué color es el oso?
Magia con playdough
Papalotes

Lesson Procedure

3 ¿De qué color es?

Summary: Through the game, the story, the art project, and the Portfolio Activity, students learn to identify the colors in Spanish and engage in conversation about the colors they are wearing.

Supplies: Several sheets of construction paper of different colors

Resource CD: Lesson 3: Art Project Model; Art Project Reproducible 1 and 2

First Session

1. Greeting and Roll Call
2. Circle Time
   - Warm up with songs, chants, and poems.
   - Review: Play the *Me llamo* game from Lesson 1 and the *Hola y adiós* role-play from Lesson 2.
   - Play *El juego de los colores:*
     1. To begin, choose three different colors of construction paper and hide the sheets behind your back.
     2. Tell students that you are going to hold up a color, and that anyone who is wearing that color on his/her clothes will stand up. (Keep your Spanish simple and use gestures to explain.)
     3. Then pick one color, hold it up, and ask, *"¿Quién lleva rojo?"*
     4. As students look for *rojo* on their clothes, point to their clothes and say, *"Tú llevas rojo aquí; Levántate."* (As you say this, make a gesture for students to stand up.)
     5. Once students are standing, ask each one, *"¿Dónde está el color rojo?"*
     6. They may respond with *"¡Aquí!"* or they may point to their clothing and say, *"¡Rojo!"* Reinforce their responses by saying, *"Muy bien"* or *"No, no llevas rojo. Siéntate."* (Gesture for them to sit.)
     7. Once everyone standing has responded, hold up the paper and say, *"¡Rojo!"* and have students repeat.
     8. Tell the standing students to "*Siéntense."* (Gesture for them to sit.)
     9. Repeat with the other colors.
3. Story Time
4. Art Time
5. Goodbye

Second Session

1. Greeting and Roll Call
2. Circle Time
   - Warm up with songs, chants, and poems.
   - Review: Play the *Me llamo* game from Lesson 1 and the *Hola y adiós* role-play from Lesson 2.
   - Repeat *El juego de los colores* from the first session.
3. Story Time
4. Art Time
5. Assign Portfolio Activity #3 (page 9) in the Student Portfolio.
6. Goodbye

Helpful Hint

El juego de los colores offers many opportunities to extend language skills. As students become more advanced speakers, you can have them respond with phrases such as *"Tengo rojo"* or *"Llevo rojo aquí."* The students who are not wearing red can say, *"No tengo/llevo rojo."*

Art Project Procedure



¿De qué color es el oso?

Summary

Students glue bits of paper on a bear and label it with the answer to the question, *"¿De qué color es el oso?"*

Materials

Precut bits of paper, all different colors
¿De qué color es el oso? photocopy, one for each student (see Resource CD or Reproducibles, page 213)
Glue

Procedure

First Session

1. Show students a model of a finished art project (see Resource CD). Point to the different colors, say the colors in Spanish, and have students repeat.
2. Model how to glue the bits of paper on the *oso.* As you model, say the names of the colors you are gluing in Spanish.
3. Have students glue the bits of paper on their *osos*.

Second Session

1. Pass out students' *osos.* Allow more time for gluing if needed.
2. Walk around to each student, point to a bit of paper on the *oso* and ask, *"¿De qué color es?"* If students can't remember the vocabulary, say it for them and have them repeat it.
3. Help students write the name of the color they say next to that bit of paper on their *oso.*
4. Repeat with several colors.

Procedure

First Session

1. Show students a model of a finished art project (see Resource CD). Point to the different colors, say the colors in Spanish, and have students repeat.
2. Model how to glue the bits of paper on the *oso.* As you model, say the names of the colors you are gluing in Spanish.
3. Have students glue the bits of paper on their *osos*.

Second Session

1. Pass out students' *osos.* Allow more time for gluing if needed.
2. Walk around to each student, point to a bit of paper on the *oso* and ask, *"¿De qué color es?"* If students can't remember the vocabulary, say it for them and have them repeat it.
3. Help students write the name of the color they say next to that bit of paper on their *oso.*
4. Repeat with several colors.





Footnote 25: CSU Spur Programs for Science

Early childhood (PreK-2)

− COMMUNITY HELPERS AT CSU SPUR: WHO IS IN MY COMMUNITY?

Age: PreK-2nd grade
Time for program: 3 hours
Max students allowed: 75

Every community has people who support its everyday function and goals, and CSU Spur is no different. In this exploratory program, young learners will explore the careers of community helpers and how they support their communities. Students will learn about the work of veterinarians, farmers, chefs, water scientists, and horse care specialists, and how these people are special to both the CSU Spur and Colorado communities.

+ PAWS-ITIVE INTERACTIONS: CARING FOR PETS

+ POLLINATOR PARTY

+ PLANT ANATOMY & THE ENVIRONMENT

+ HOOKED ON FISH

Elementary school

− CAREERS OF TODAY: CAREER PATHWAY EXPLORATORY

Age: 3rd and 4th grade
Time for program: 3.5 hours
Max students allowed: 100

Have you ever wondered what it's like to help animals, grow plants, or invent something new? In this hands-on experience, students will get a fun introduction to real jobs in science and animal care across the CSU Spur campus. With help from CSU Spur's education team, students will meet the people who take care of animals, discover where food comes from and how products are created, and learn how teamwork and curiosity help these professionals succeed.

+ CARING FOR ANIMALS

+ HORSING AROUND: THE UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HORSES AND HUMANS

+ THE SCIENCE OF FOOD

+ ADVENTURES IN AGRICULTURE

+ WATER STORIES

Middle school

− CAREERS OF TODAY: CAREER PATHWAY EXPLORATORY (5TH-6TH)

Age: 5th and 6th grade
Time for program: 3.5 hours
Max students allowed: 100

Curious about how veterinarians, scientists, or researchers do their jobs every day? Deep dive into career exploration and investigate how professionals at CSU Spur use science, technology, and creative thinking to solve real-world problems. Students will interact with experts, explore career pathways, and learn how different interests and skills can shape their own future paths.

+ CAREERS OF TODAY: CAREER PATHWAY EXPLORATORY (7TH-8TH)

+ THE SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

+ ANIMAL EXPLORERS: LESSONS IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

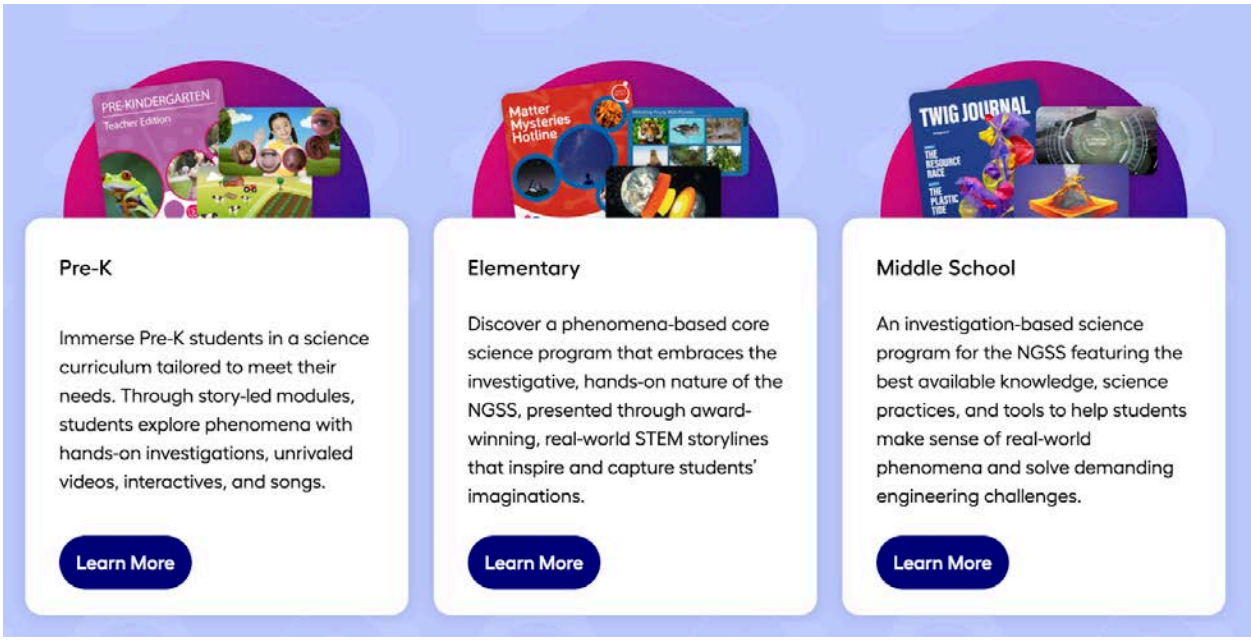
+ RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURE

+ WATER QUALITY QUEST

− DO ANY OF YOUR PROGRAMS ALIGN WITH COLORADO EDUCATION STANDARDS OR LEARNING TARGETS?

Yes. Our programs align with Next Generation Science Standards and select Colorado State standards. For details on how a specific program aligns with standards, please contact the School Programs Coordinator.

Footnote 26: Twig Science Materials



Let's Make More Aha! Moments

twig SCIENCE Elementary

Find What Truly Inspires Them

Twig Science Elementary was designed from the ground up for the NGSS/3-D science by award-winning STEM education specialists. Students investigate and make sense of phenomena through multiple modalities — from hands-on activities and digital and video investigations to collaborative projects — empowering each and every student to connect with learning tailored for them.

Stop Finding Time, Start Saving Time

Getting started with Twig Science is easy — and with Twig Science Fast Track, comprehensive yet simple assessment tools, and countless opportunities to integrate with ELA lessons, the time you have for science will be richer than you ever imagined.

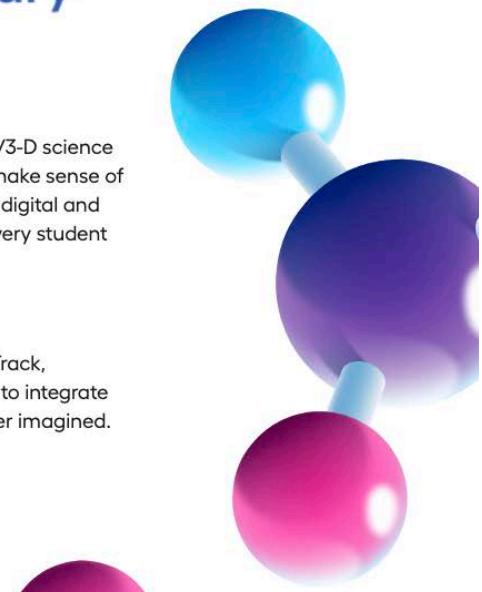
Adventures Designed Around Your Students

Alongside some of the world's leading STEM educators, we developed a program that connects everything students do to anchor phenomena and supporting investigative phenomena, providing tangible, real-world examples of science that extend far beyond the classroom.



English/Spanish

Twig Science has more Spanish resources than any other NGSS/3-D science program. All student-facing materials are available in Spanish and with read-aloud technology.



K–5/K–6

Twig Science Elementary is available as a complete K–6 program with the same lesson structure and instructional design. Alternatively, the K–5 program integrates seamlessly with Twig Science Middle School, following the adventure through 6–8.

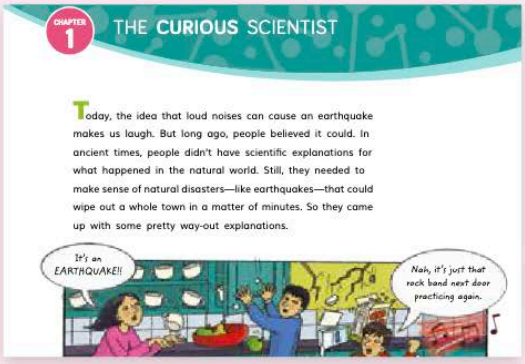
Leveled Readers

Magazine-style leveled readers let students explore ideas in depth at their own pace while meeting real-world scientists and engineers. Leveled reader lessons include reading activities and multiple writing opportunities. Readers are available in print and digital at four levels — On-, Above-, and Below-Level, and English Learner — and are ideal for use in differentiated small-group reading time.



1. Exploring Phenomena

Build curiosity about a phenomenon — students will discover what we know and how we know it.



2. STEM Career

Introduce students to real professionals working in STEM careers in fascinating interviews.



3. Real-World Connection

Showing why students should care about a phenomenon and how it affects them.



Program Components:
Student Experience

Twig Books

Colorful, all-in-one text and investigation student books in digital and print, for modeling, annotation, and sketching, with text-to-speech functionality.





Multimedia Investigations

Theater-quality video content gives students access to high-impact phenomena, while digital interactives based on authentic data let them manipulate real-world phenomena.





Exploring Phenomena

Students use their Twig Books and tools to make sense of phenomena through investigations they carry out in their STEM Roles.

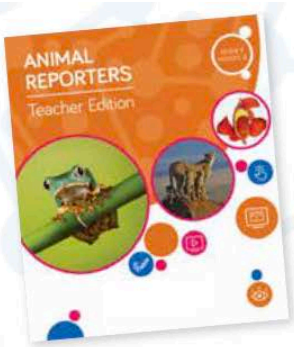


Leveled Readers

High-interest, magazine-style leveled readers give students the opportunity to explore ideas in greater depth at their own pace while meeting realworld scientists and engineers. They're available in print and digital at four levels — On-Level, Above-Level, Below-Level, and English Learner — and are ideal for use in differentiated small-group reading time.



Program Components:
Teacher Experience

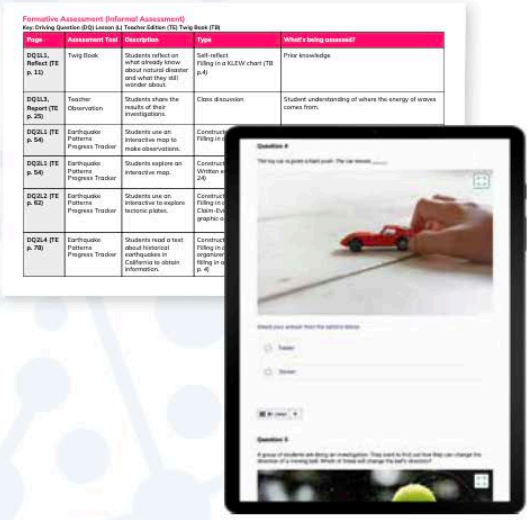






Teacher Editions

Modular Teacher Editions with flexible pacing include Fast Track and/or comprehensive lesson planning, with differentiated instruction scaffolds and language routines.

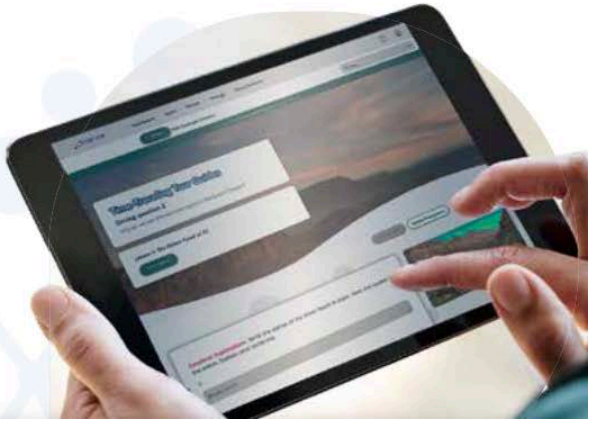


3-D Performance Assessment Suite

Formative and summative assessments measure students' abilities to meet all aspects of Performance Expectations. Rubrics provide clear guidance on how to assess students of all skill levels. Flexible options to monitor student progress are included.

Digital Platform

The innovative, easy-to-use Twig Science digital platform can be used as a stand-alone environment or with print, and it includes presenter tools, automatic rostering, single sign-on, and accessibility tools along with thousands of videos providing access to real-world phenomena for every student.



Module Lab Kits and Essentials Kits

There are two kinds of hands-on kits available for Twig Science Elementary. Module Lab Kits are clearly labeled, simply organized, and available for each module, ensuring efficient use of materials for small or larger groups during hands-on investigations. We offer module replenishment kits for consumable items. At Grades 3–5, optional Science Essentials kits provide high-value, multipurpose equipment.



Video Labs

Students can investigate phenomena anywhere, anytime, and educators can decide whether hands-on or video labs meet their needs.



Assignable Lessons

Assign lessons to students using the digital, interactive version of the Twig Books. Students can upload pictures, drawings, visual observations, and snapshots to build up a digital portfolio. Teachers can provide feedback directly in each student's digital Twig Book.



Model Lessons and Background Knowledge

Every module kicks off with a short teacher introduction film, giving an overview of the Anchor Phenomenon or Investigative Problem, the sequence of learning, and how the Performance Expectations are addressed. Our professional learning materials include teacher background information for every module, unpacking the science in bite-sized chunks, and a digital guide to the Science and Engineering Practices and Crosscutting Concepts.

In-Person and Webinar Training

Our specialist team is there to provide support in-person and/or online for technical, implementation, and science-topic training.



Why Twig Science Elementary?

Drive learning by engaging and exciting students with a series of investigations that use multimedia tools to bring science and engineering to life.

STEM-Role Investigations

Hands-on, digital, and video investigations provide captivating real-world experiences in dozens of STEM roles — from park rangers and earthquake engineers to deep-space explorers and time-traveling tour guides.



Thousands of Award-Winning, Theater-Quality Videos and Interactives

All students regardless of background are transported to gather evidence of both local and global phenomena, experiencing science and engineering careers directly through thousands of high-quality videos and interactives.



Engaging with Phenomena

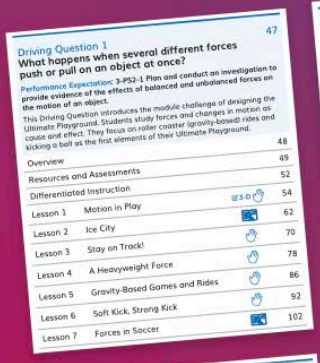
Phenomena are observable events or features in a natural or designed system. When students experience phenomena, they wonder and ask scientific questions. The process of making sense of, explaining, and predicting phenomena leads to deeper and more transferable knowledge.

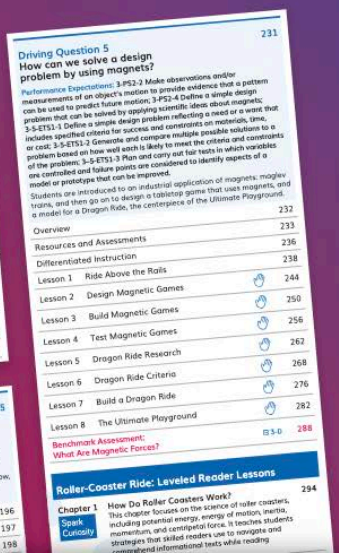


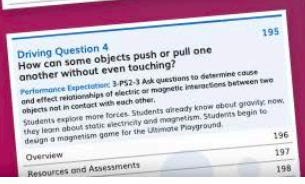
Students define, investigate, and explain real-world phenomena.



Driving Questions build in complexity, scaffolding students' acquisition of the three dimensions required to master each Module Anchor Phenomenon.









Students use their experiences of figuring out phenomena to build up science skills, knowledge, and understanding.

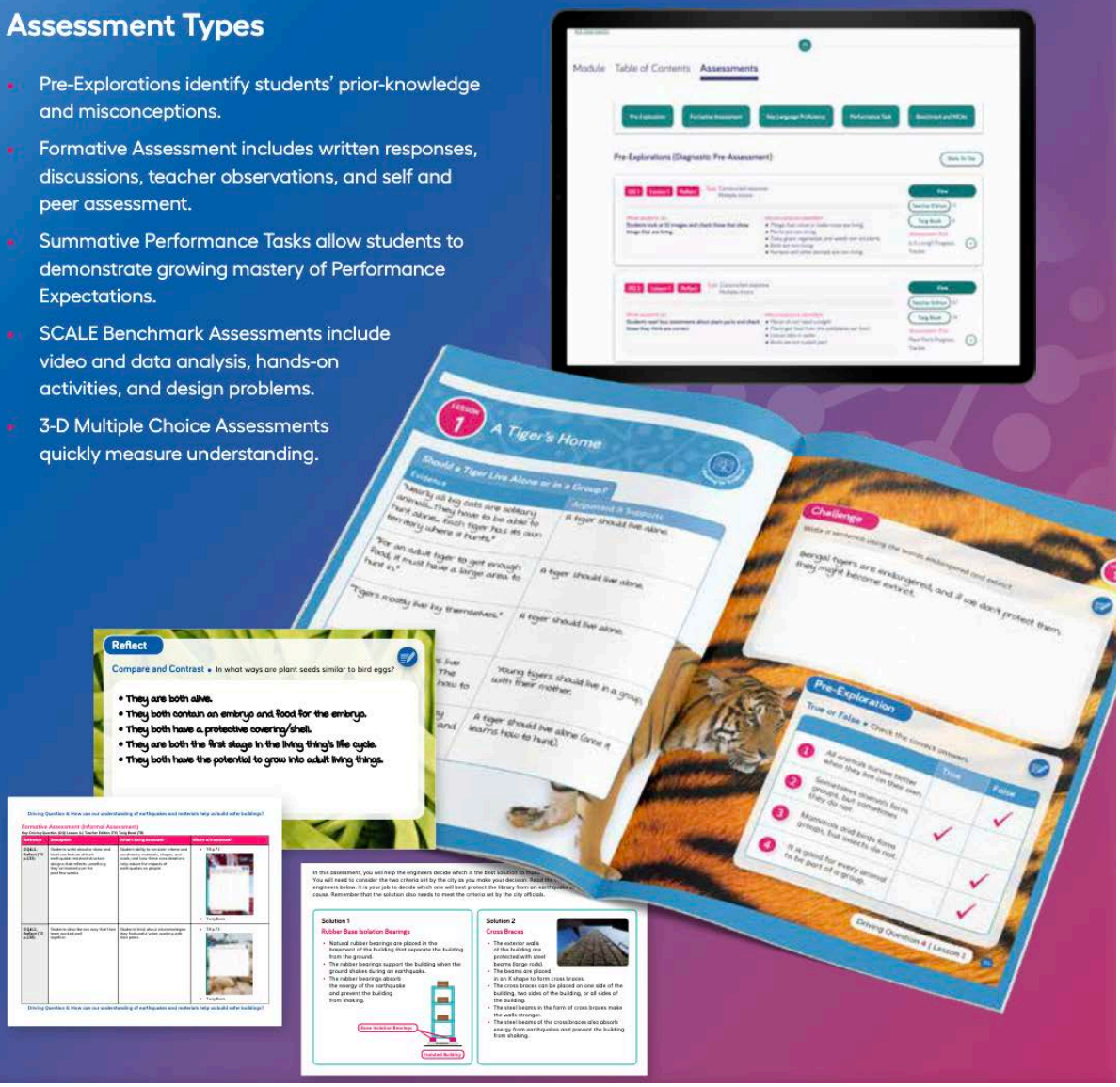
Assessment Platform

Developed in Partnership with Stanford University's SCALE Team

The Twig Science assessment platform enables students to demonstrate thinking, knowledge, and practices to unpack phenomena and solve design challenges.

Assessment Types

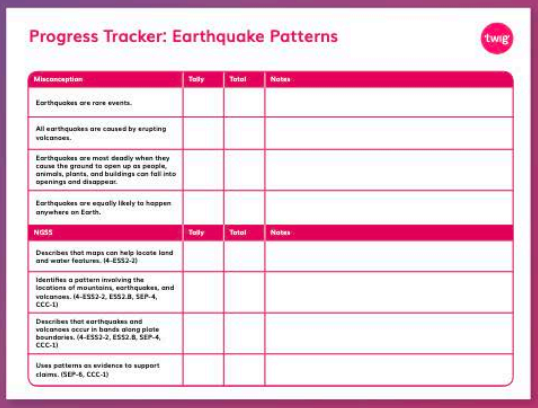
- Pre-Explorations identify students' prior-knowledge and misconceptions.
- Formative Assessment includes written responses, discussions, teacher observations, and self and peer assessment.
- Summative Performance Tasks allow students to demonstrate growing mastery of Performance Expectations.
- SCALE Benchmark Assessments include video and data analysis, hands-on activities, and design problems.
- 3-D Multiple Choice Assessments quickly measure understanding.



Progress Trackers

Progress Trackers help teachers monitor progression within a module, while data from summative assessments track the direction of travel toward required grade level proficiency for each Performance Expectation.





Progress Tracker: Earthquake Patterns

Misconception	Tally	Total	Notes
Earthquakes are rare events.			
All earthquakes are caused by erupting volcanoes.			
Earthquakes are most deadly when they cause the ground to open up as people, animals, plants, and buildings can fall into openings and disappear.			
Earthquakes are equally likely to happen anywhere on Earth.			
NGSS	**Tally**	**Total**	**Notes**
Describes that maps can help locate land and water features. (4-ESS2-2)			
Identifies a pattern involving the locations of mountains, earthquakes, and volcanoes. (4-ESS2-2, ESS2.B, SEP-4, CCC-1)			
Describes that earthquakes and volcanoes occur in bands along plate boundaries. (4-ESS2-2, ESS2.B, SEP-4, CCC-1)			
Uses patterns as evidence to support claims. (SEP-6, CCC-1)			

Assessments Center

Quickly check how many students have completed an assignment, then click on a specific assignment for more granular detail. Reports provide real-time insights into student performance.

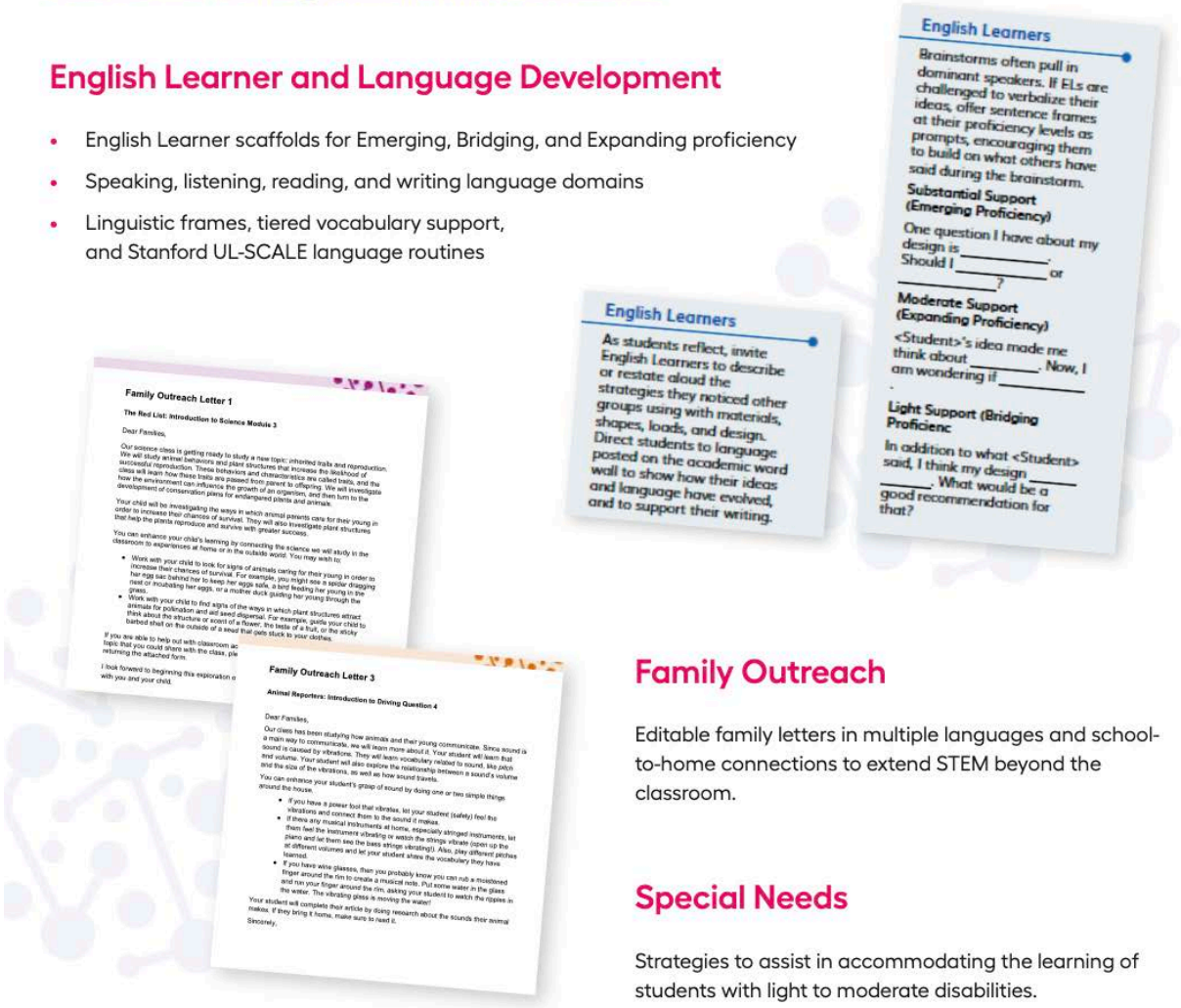


Supporting Every Learner

Twig Science Elementary promotes equitable, inclusive, and accessible learning environments for all students.

English Learner and Language Development

- English Learner scaffolds for Emerging, Bridging, and Expanding proficiency
- Speaking, listening, reading, and writing language domains
- Linguistic frames, tiered vocabulary support, and Stanford UL-SCALE language routines



Family Outreach

Editable family letters in multiple languages and school-to-home connections to extend STEM beyond the classroom.

Special Needs

Strategies to assist in accommodating the learning of students with light to moderate disabilities.

Cross-Curricular Connections

Helpful links to ELA, math, history, social science, and arts, increasing the impact and understanding of science in different contexts.

Accessibility

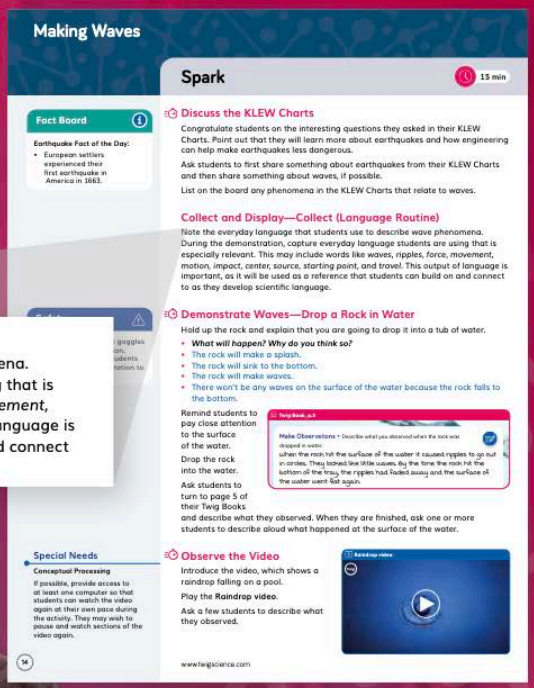
Text-to-speech functionality plus full customization of platform display, with built-in epilepsy-safe, visually impaired, cognitive disability, and ADHD-friendly profiles.

Language Routines

Science language routines, developed by Stanford University's UL-SCALE team, capture everyday language in Tiers 1 and 2 that students use as a bridge to developing Tier 3 language for scientific discourse.

Collect and Display—Collect (Language Routine)

Note the everyday language that students use to describe wave phenomena. During the demonstration, capture everyday language students are using that is especially relevant. This may include words like *waves*, *ripples*, *force*, *movement*, *motion*, *impact*, *center*, *source*, *starting point*, and *travel*. This output of language is important, as it will be used as a reference that students can build on and connect to as they develop scientific language.


Making Waves

Spark

15 min

Fact Board

Earthquake Fact of the Day:

- European settlers experienced their first earthquake in America in 1663.

Discuss the KLEW Charts

Congratulate students on the interesting questions they asked in their KLEW Charts. Point out that they will learn more about earthquakes and how engineering can help make earthquakes less dangerous.

Ask students to first share something about earthquakes from their KLEW Charts and then share something about waves, if possible.

List on the board any phenomena in the KLEW Charts that relate to waves.

Collect and Display—Collect (Language Routine)

Note the everyday language that students use to describe wave phenomena. During the demonstration, capture everyday language students are using that is especially relevant. This may include words like *waves*, *ripples*, *force*, *movement*, *motion*, *impact*, *center*, *source*, *starting point*, and travel. This output of language is important, as it will be used as a reference that students can build on and connect to as they develop scientific language.

Demonstrate Waves—Drop a Rock in Water

Hold up the rock and explain that you are going to drop it into a tub of water.

- **What will happen? Why do you think so?**
- The rock will make a splash.
- The rock will sink to the bottom.
- The rock will make waves.
- There won't be any waves on the surface of the water because the rock falls to the bottom.

Remind students to pay close attention to the surface of the water.

Drop the rock into the water.

Ask students to turn to page 5 of their Twig Books and describe what they observed. When they are finished, ask one or more students to describe aloud what happened at the surface of the water.

Special Needs

Conceptual Processing

If possible, provide access to at least one computer so that students can watch the video again at their own pace during the activity. They may wish to pause and watch sections of the video again.

Observe the Video

Introduce the video, which shows a raindrop falling on a pool.

Play the **Raindrop video**.

Ask a few students to describe what they observed.

www.twigscience.com

Footnote 27: Jeffco Health Education

Health Education

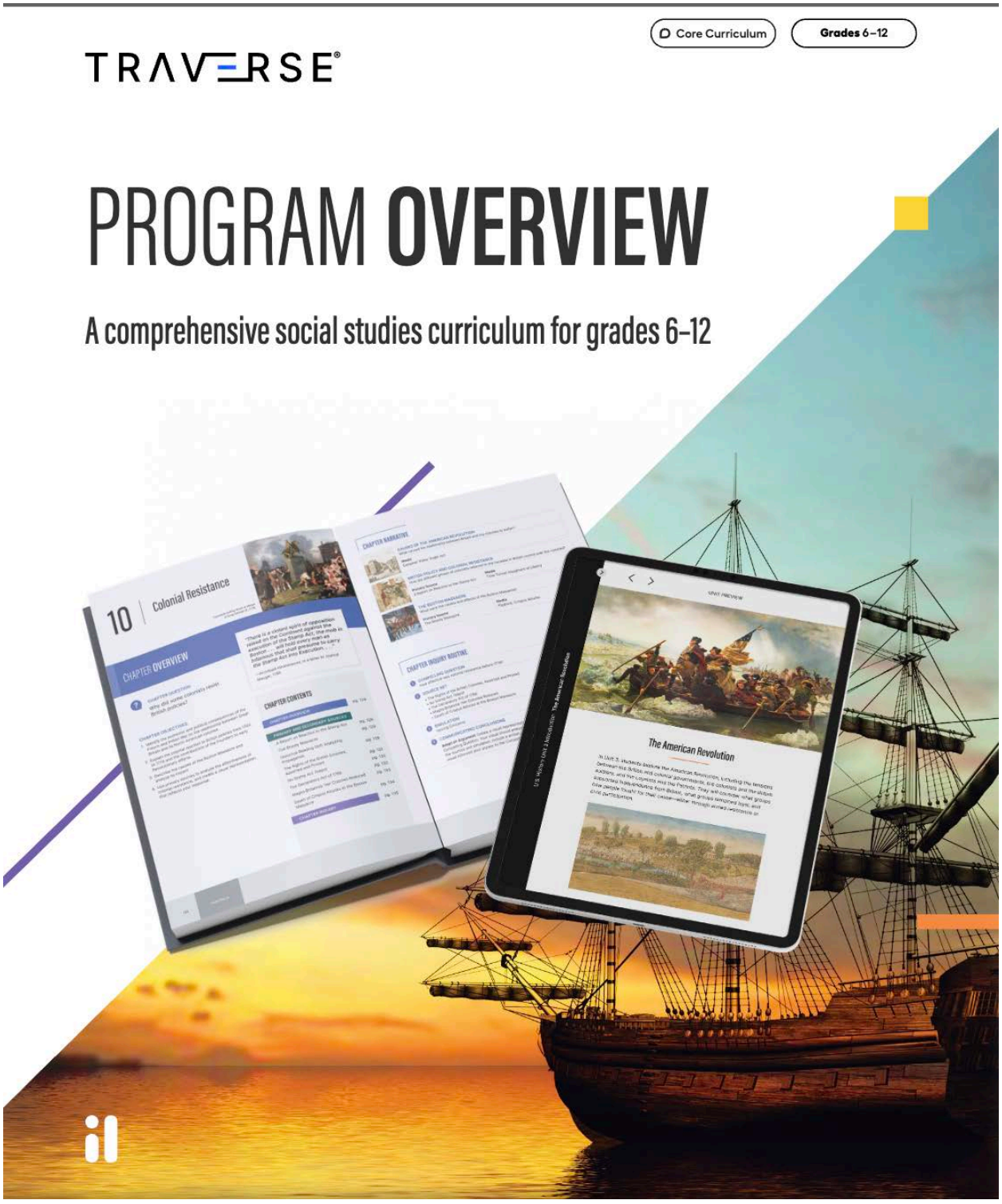
Health Education in Jeffco

Jeffco supports comprehensive health education standards through a variety of implementation strategies. These include stand-alone health education courses, curriculum integration into core content areas and supporting the work of social-emotional learning specialists (SEL).

Why Health Education?

Engagement with health education is important, as it provides students with content and skills that will support a lifelong pursuit of health and wellness.

Footnote 28: [Traverse Social Studies] Curriculum Link and Overview



GET TO KNOW **TRAVERSE**

Traverse is a comprehensive social studies curriculum for grades 6-12 that combines:

- Robust social studies content
- An inquiry-driven instructional framework
- A focus on primary and secondary source analysis
- Three types of skill development (reading, inquiry, and research)
- Interactive multimedia that brings social studies to life

This multi-pronged approach is designed to provide all the social studies content you expect within a framework that inspires students to question, be curious, stay curious, and become lifelong critical thinkers and informed citizens.

Exploring the World. **Informing the Future.**



Cultivate critical thinkers and informed citizens.

Built from scratch for the C3 Framework, Traverse balances robust social studies content with inquiry-driven instruction, source analysis, and skill development to build the knowledge and skills students need for college, career, and civic life.

Bring social studies to life.

Traverse uses technology and multimedia not just to engage but to enhance instruction and bring history, economics, geography, government, and civics to life—creating digital learners out of digital natives.

Teach with confidence.

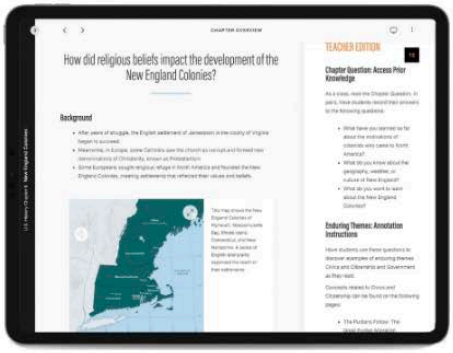
Flexible implementation models, support in both print and digital, and student-facing differentiation unlike anything you've seen before ensure that teachers feel confident every class period, every day, every school year.



TRAVERSE IS DIFFERENT, LET US INTRODUCE YOU

Traverse's intentional design leverages the flexibility and customization that only digital can offer—empowering teachers to create interactive and personalized learning experiences while also providing the print resources needed to support you and every learner in your classroom.





Digital Student Experience

The student edition content lives inside a dynamic digital platform—not in a traditional student edition:

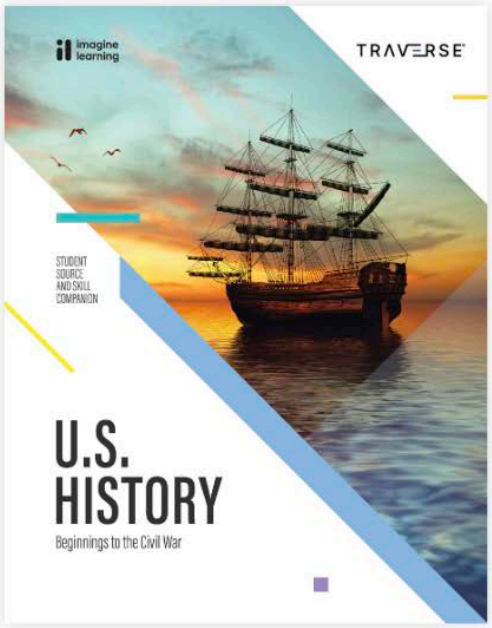
- Broken into digestible, bite-size chunks
- Student-facing scaffolds to personalize learning
- Interactive media embedded at point of use

Digital Teacher Experience

The teacher edition instruction also lives online, right alongside the student edition—not in a traditional print wraparound.

- Teacher wrap instruction at point of use
- Standards labeling
- Multimedia for whole class viewing
- Ever-growing Digital Library
- Our mobile app allows students to work offline, whenever and wherever. Completed work is automatically uploaded when the app next connects to the internet.

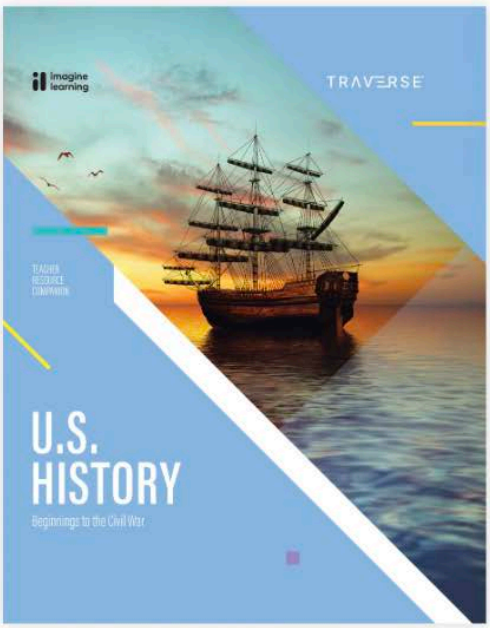
STUDENT



Print Student Source and Skill Companion

- Student edition content summaries
- Primary and secondary resources with analysis practice
- Everything needed to complete inquiry tasks
- Instruction and practice for three different types of skill development

TEACHER



Print Teacher Resource Companion

- Pacing options and inquiry facilitation guides
- Scaffolding and differentiation
- Cues for when and how Traverse multimedia enhances instruction
- Answer keys (which are helpful even when students complete work online)

GUIDED BY **EXPERTS**

Social studies isn't just about learning historical facts; it's about examining the complex relationships between people, societies, and cultures and understanding how they shape the world. This requires students to think critically—which is where inquiry-driven instruction comes into play.

Imagine Learning is proud to work with leading experts in inquiry and social studies instructional practices, so you can be confident that every lesson will drive deeper thinking, collaboration, and civil discourse in the classroom.

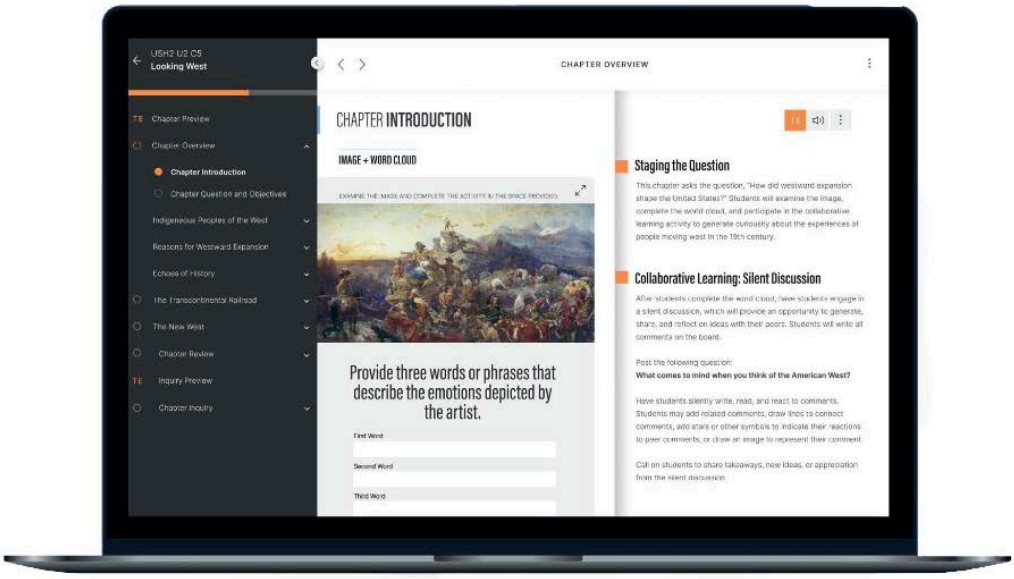


Dr. Kathy Swan, a professor at the University of Kentucky, served as the project director and lead writer of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards (2013). Traverse's pedagogical framework is built upon Dr. Swan's Inquiry Design Model, with integrated questions, sources, and tasks.

Dr. Sam Wineburg is a renowned expert on historical education and pedagogy and the founder of Digital Inquiry Group (DIG; formerly SHEG, Stanford History Education Group). His research and work with DIG have played a key role in developing the inquiry-based approach used in the Traverse U.S. History and World History courses.

BUILT FOR **C3 AND STATE STANDARDS**

The C3 Framework is the foundation of Traverse's inquiry-driven instructional approach. By using Dr. Swan's Inquiry Design Model, Traverse empowers educators to teach robust history, economics, geography, and government content while also cultivating lifelong critical thinkers and informed citizens.



In Traverse, students will:

- Investigate primary and secondary sources to build a compelling argument
- Analyze through multiple perspectives to develop an informed conclusion
- Conduct civil discourse inside—and outside—the classroom

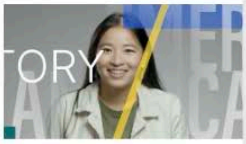
In Traverse, teachers will find:

- All courses aligned to the most recent state standards
- Standards-based pacing guides in both print and digital
- C3 Framework and state standard labeling at point of use in the digital platform

Multimedia and Interactive Tools

Videos mirror familiar social media–like platforms, and embedded instructional interactive tools—including the ability to annotate videos and images—make concepts, events, figures, artifacts, locations, and time frames relatable and engaging.

THE VIEW



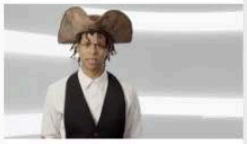
The View videos introduce each unit.

TRAVERSE 360



Presenters explore the impactful moments that make history.

QuickTalk



Quick Talks provide fast and fun insights into the content.

TimeTunnel



Time Tunnels are focused on events and key moments in history.

EXPLAINER VIDEO



These videos explain concepts, events, figures, and locations.

TheBeat



The Beat features a study group modeling inquiry and analysis skills.

3D OBJECT

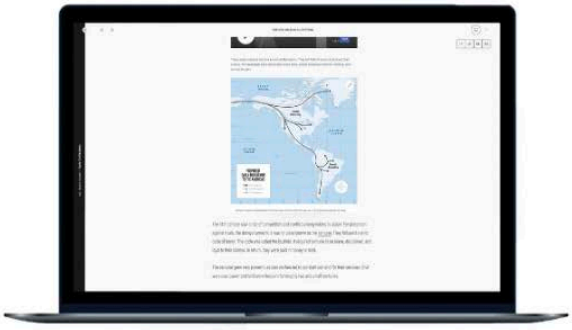


3D object animations highlight details and examine artifacts from all angles.

FLIPBOOK



Information about a person, place, or idea is presented in a storylike experience.



SEE IT IN ACTION!

Experience the Media

PRINT AND DIGITAL **WORKING TOGETHER**

While Traverse can be taught in a fully digital format, print student and teacher companions work with and enhance the student edition content that lives online. Explore how print and digital work together in four key areas:

- Full content coverage
- Primary and secondary source analysis
- Inquiry-driven learning
- Spiraled, intentional skill development



Primary and Secondary Source Analysis

Traverse provides an unparalleled selection of primary and secondary sources to enhance and deepen student edition content and provide continuous opportunities for source analysis.

Sourcing Information and Background

Set context for students with relevant source details.

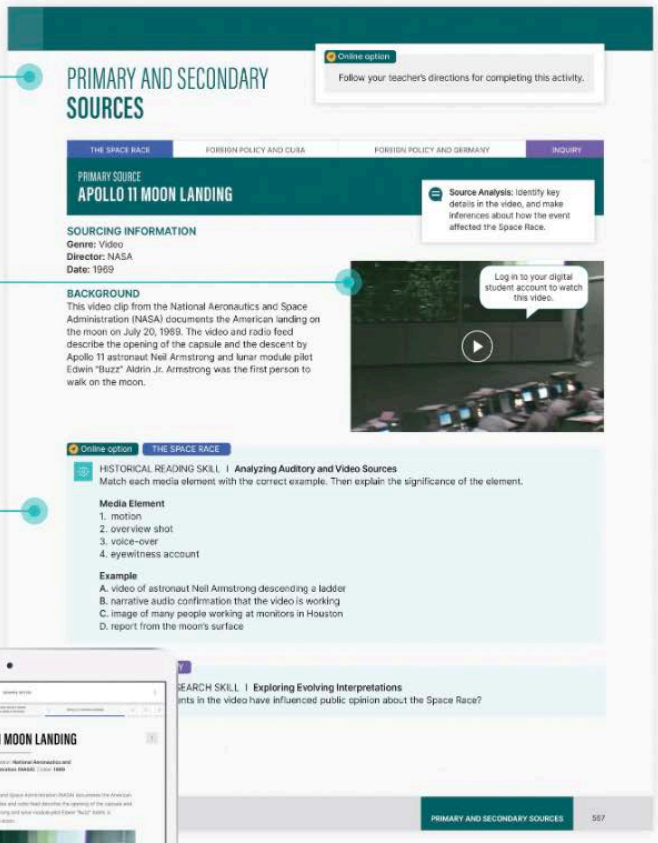
Media Suggestions

Use cues to prompt students to go online and bring social studies to life.

Social Studies Skill Practice

Practice source-analysis skills with questions for every source.

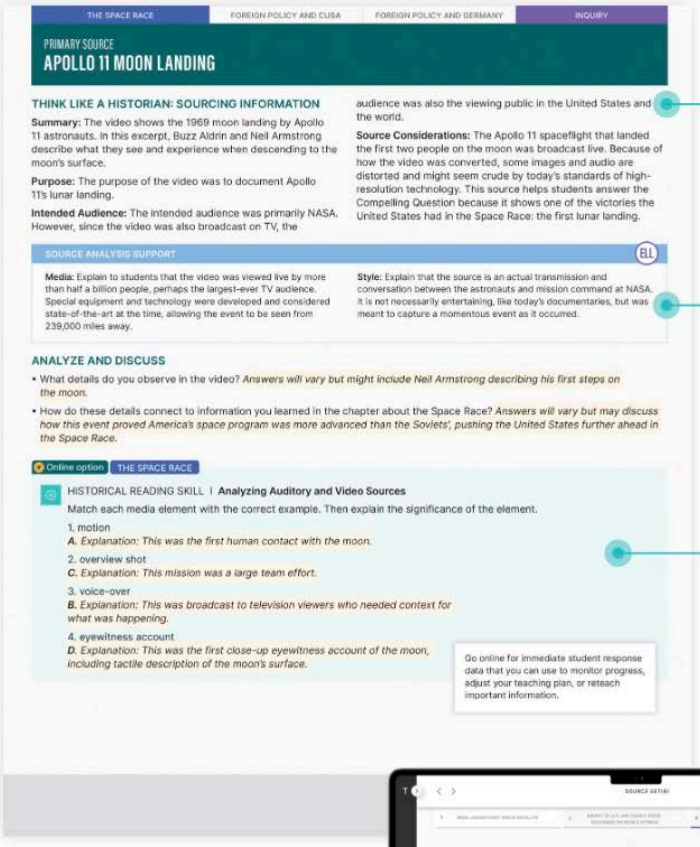
STUDENT





All sources in print are also in digital.

TEACHER



Background Information for Teachers

Develop expertise with in-depth sourcing information.

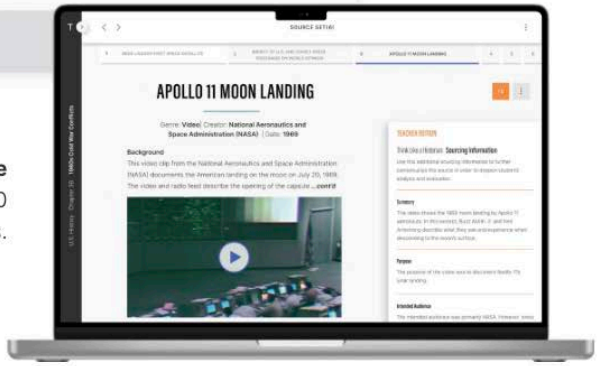
Source Analysis Support

Enrich student comprehension and analysis with additional discussion of a source's genre, style, organization, and more.

Answer Keys

Answer keys provide clarification and information for you, even when students complete questions online.

Our ever-expanding **Traverse Digital Library** features over 1,500 primary and secondary sources.



SEE IT IN ACTION!

Explore the Library

Inquiry-Driven Learning

Social studies examines the relationships between people, societies, and cultures to understand their impact on the world. In Traverse, students will actively participate in that examination and exploration through inquiry-driven instruction.

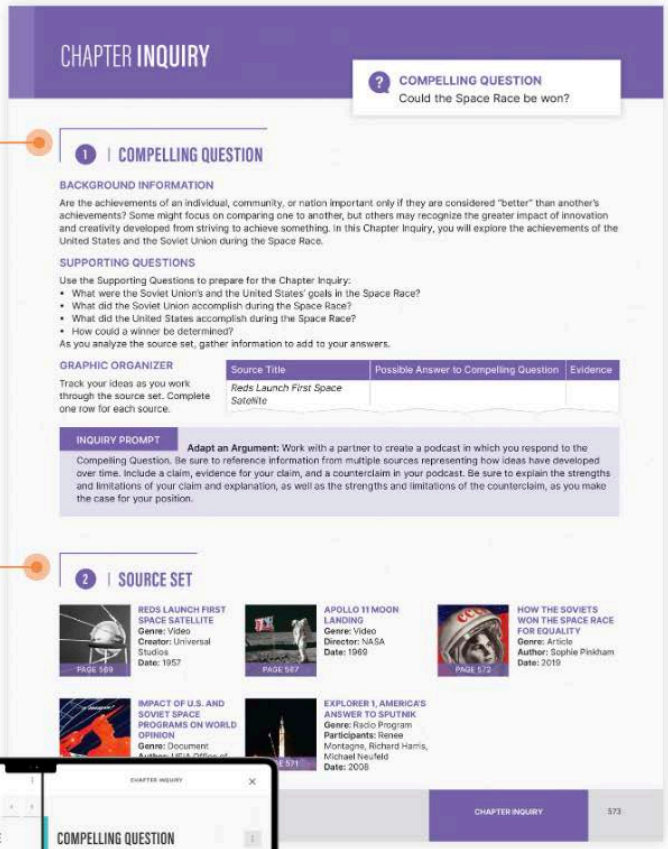
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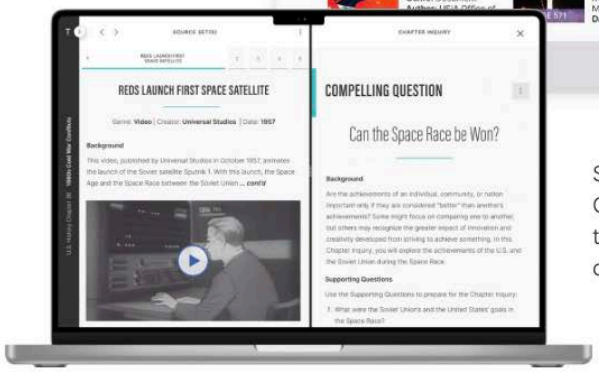
Compelling Question

Introduce each inquiry with the Compelling Question, Supporting Questions, and background information.

Source Set

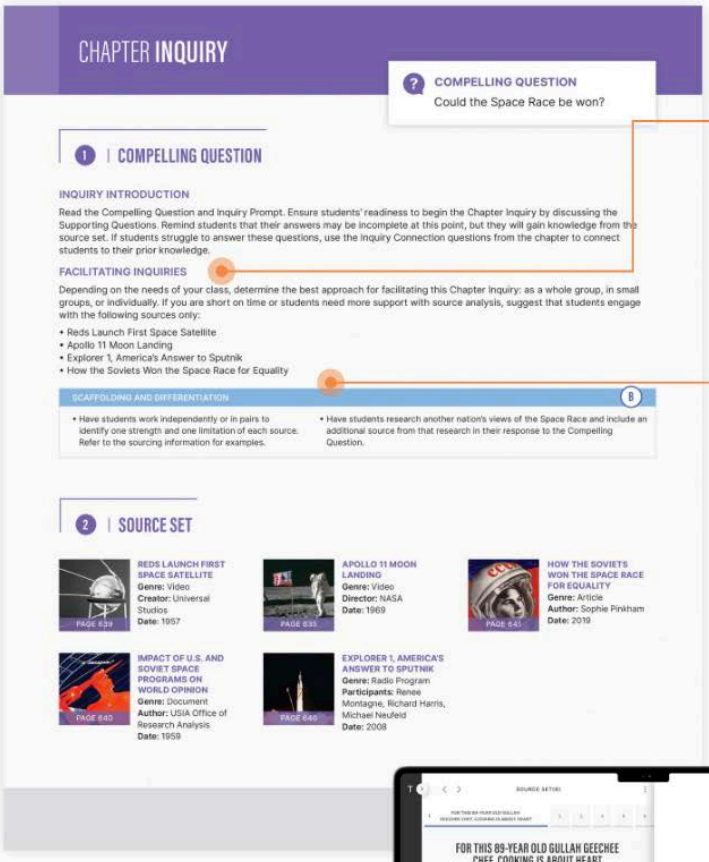
Use the source pages to complete the inquiry.





Students can complete the Chapter Inquiry online using a traveling graphic organizer to complete their source analysis.

TEACHER



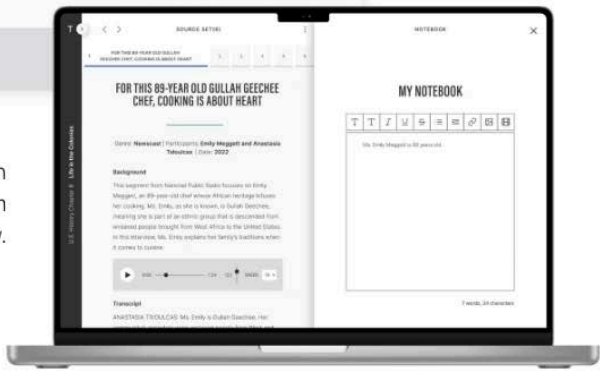
Support for Facilitating Inquiries

Determine your path through the inquiry with options for grouping and pacing.

Scaffolding and Differentiation

Provide targeted inquiry support for beyond-grade-level students, English language learners, and approaching-grade-level students.

Navigate quickly between sources on the platform using the tabbed view.



SEE IT IN ACTION!

Experience inquiry-driven learning

15

Spiraled, Intentional Skill Development

Skill lessons are paired with student edition content, and skills are revisited—spiraled—in later chapters, reinforcing learning and promoting retention.

STUDENT

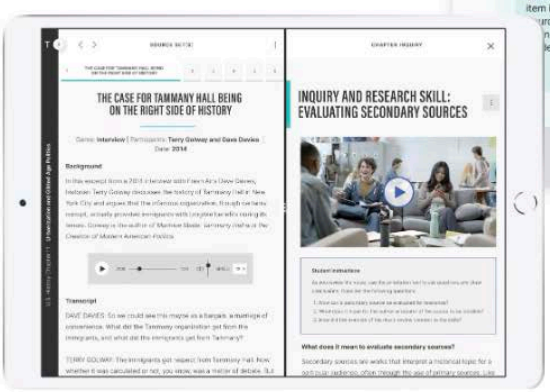
Skill Modeling Videos

Go online to watch episodes of The Beat, which follows a study group over one school year. Students will see social studies skills being modeled using the same sources and inquiry prompts that they are completing.

Checklist

Every skill lesson is accompanied by a checklist that students can use to apply the skill to a variety of sources.



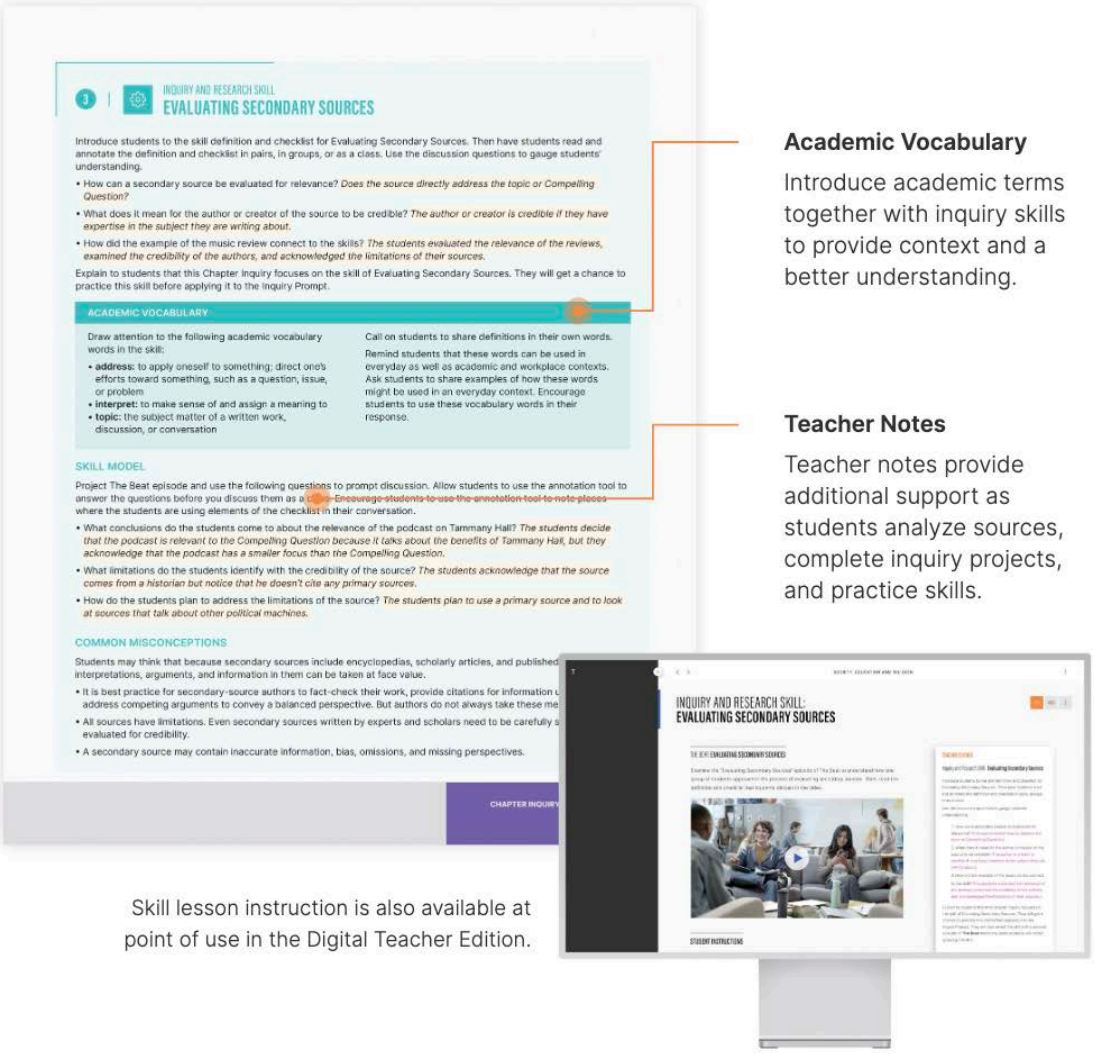


Skill lessons are also available online. Students can use digital tools to split their screen and view two items side by side for easy application of a checklist.

Two types of skill instruction and practice are developed:

- **Reading** to learn how to analyze disciplinary content and sources
- **Inquiry and Research** to learn how to evaluate sources, construct arguments and compelling questions, analyze historical perspectives and evolving interpretations, communicate conclusions, and more.

TEACHER



Academic Vocabulary

Introduce academic terms together with inquiry skills to provide context and a better understanding.

Teacher Notes

Teacher notes provide additional support as students analyze sources, complete inquiry projects, and practice skills.

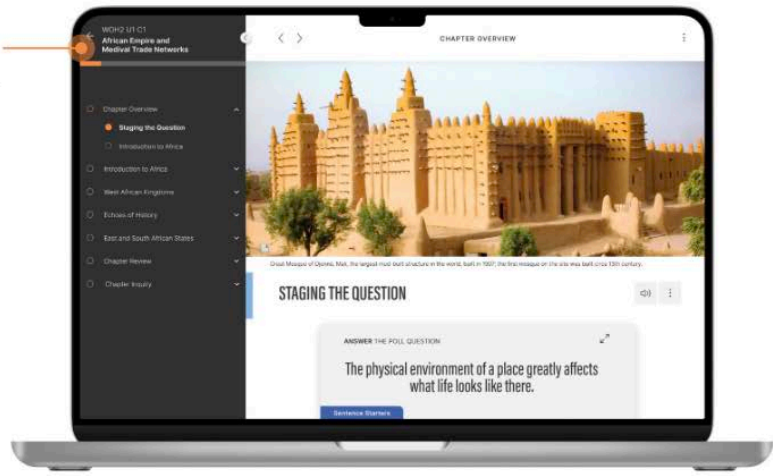
Skill lesson instruction is also available at point of use in the Digital Teacher Edition.

17

Personalize for Every Learner

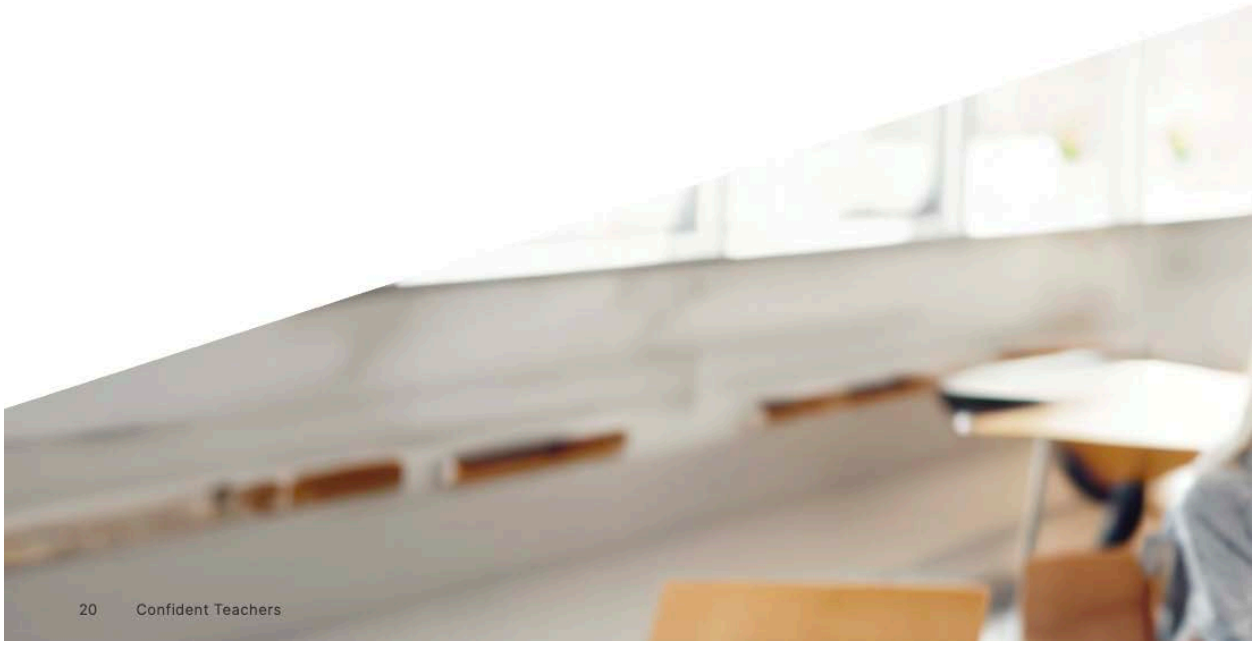
Both the print and digital teacher experiences include point of use differentiation suggestions and instruction. Each lesson offers slide-in digital scaffolds, providing targeted student-facing support you won't find anywhere else.

All scaffolds automatically appear for students based on their teacher's designation.



Six Levels of Support

- Two levels for approaching learners
- One level for beyond-grade-learners
- Three levels for English language learners, plus integrated and designated supports



Data-Driven Assessment

Traverse provides data-driven assessment to measure students' progress through standards and provide essential insights for educators.



01 **Chapter Narrative Formative Assessments** track understanding of key information, sources, and skills.

02 **Chapter Recap** turns content review into opportunities for collaborative learning.

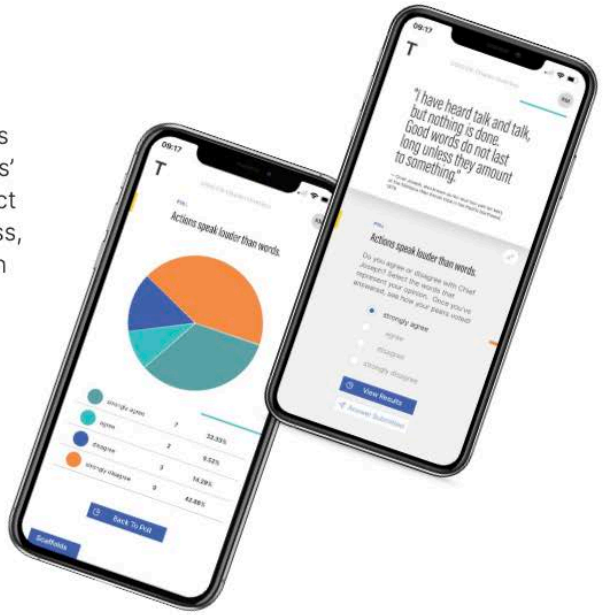
03 **Chapter Assessments** use standards-aligned review questions to gauge mastery of the section objectives and chapter question.

04 **Chapter Inquiry Tasks** evaluate critical thinking skills and understanding.

05 **Unit Assessments** gauge mastery of the unit's key knowledge and skills with question types that match high-stakes tests.

06 **Course Projects** provide creative ways for students to apply learned social studies skills.

Collaborative and tech-enhanced activities encourage interaction and assess students' knowledge of content. Teachers can collect data and remediate in real time during class, enabling students to receive support when they need it.

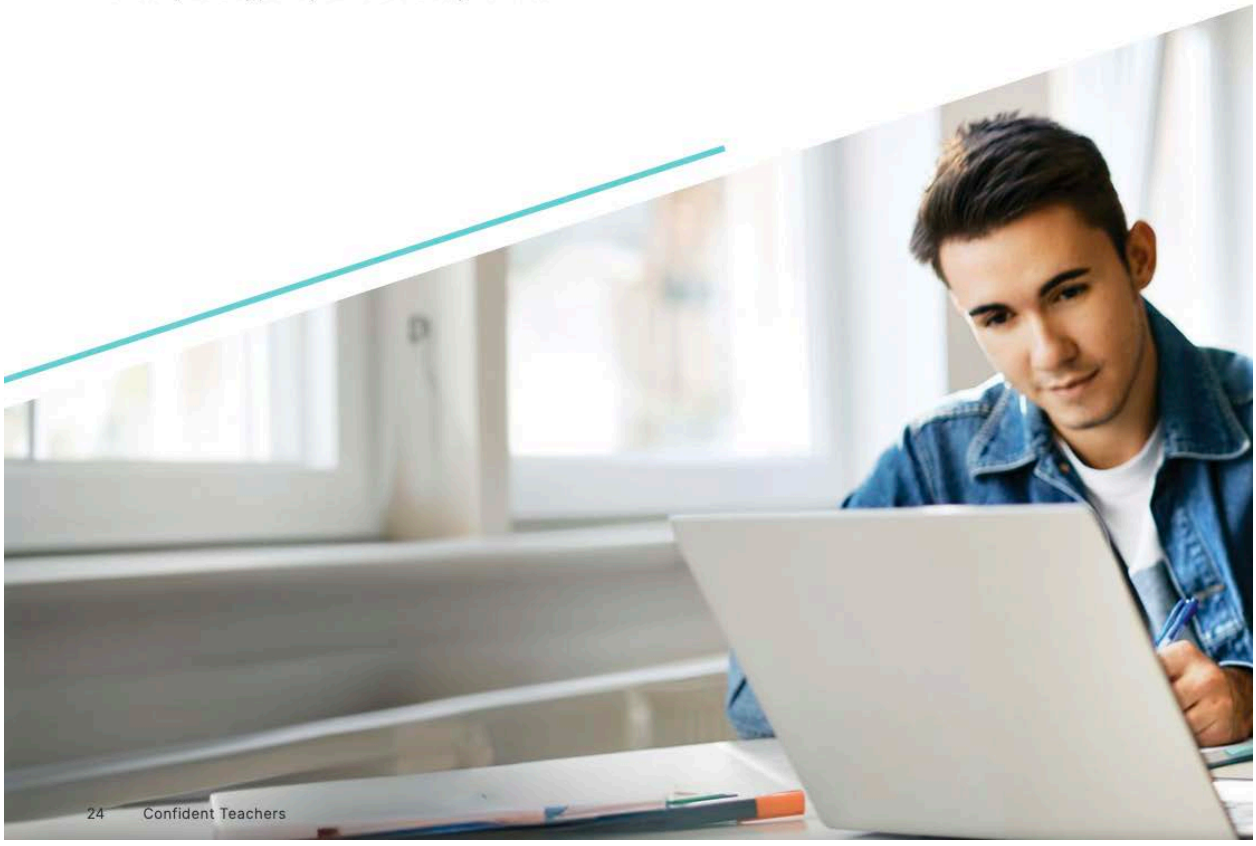


Implementation Support | Professional Learning

We understand the curriculum is only one component of student success in the classroom. Imagine Learning is committed to being your partner through the life of your adoption, supporting educators with both the technical and pedagogical training needed to successfully implement Traverse print and digital tools, helping ensure both student and teacher success.

With your Traverse adoption, you'll have access to:

- A regional **customer success manager** to support your technical questions, implementation, integrations, and rostering and be the point of contact for the life of the adoption.
- A range of **professional development and training options** that can be adapted and customized to support the needs of your school or district.
- An embedded, searchable **Help Center** with video tutorials, platform training, on-demand workshops, resources from expert teachers who have already made the shift to inquiry-based learning, and more.
- **Live webinars** on topics on a range of topics, from initial support to in-depth workshops.
- On-site **Learning Walks** that feature an expert teacher facilitating professional development directly to support your district's priorities.



Footnote 29: Jeffco Social Studies Curriculum and Grade Level Resources Linked

- Kindergarten
- First Grade
- Second Grade
- Third Grade
- Fourth Grade
- Fifth Grade
- Sixth Grade
- Seventh Grade
- Eighth Grade

Footnote 30: SAMR Model for Technology Integration followed by an article from International Journal of the Whole Child

The SAMR Model is a framework created by Dr. Ruben Puentedura that categorizes four different degrees of classroom technology integration. The letters "SAMR" stand for Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition. The SAMR model was created to share a common language across disciplines as teachers strive to personalize learning and help students visualize complex concepts. The SAMR Model can be especially powerful during remote and blended learning when integrated classroom technology makes teaching and learning a more seamless experience for educators and students.

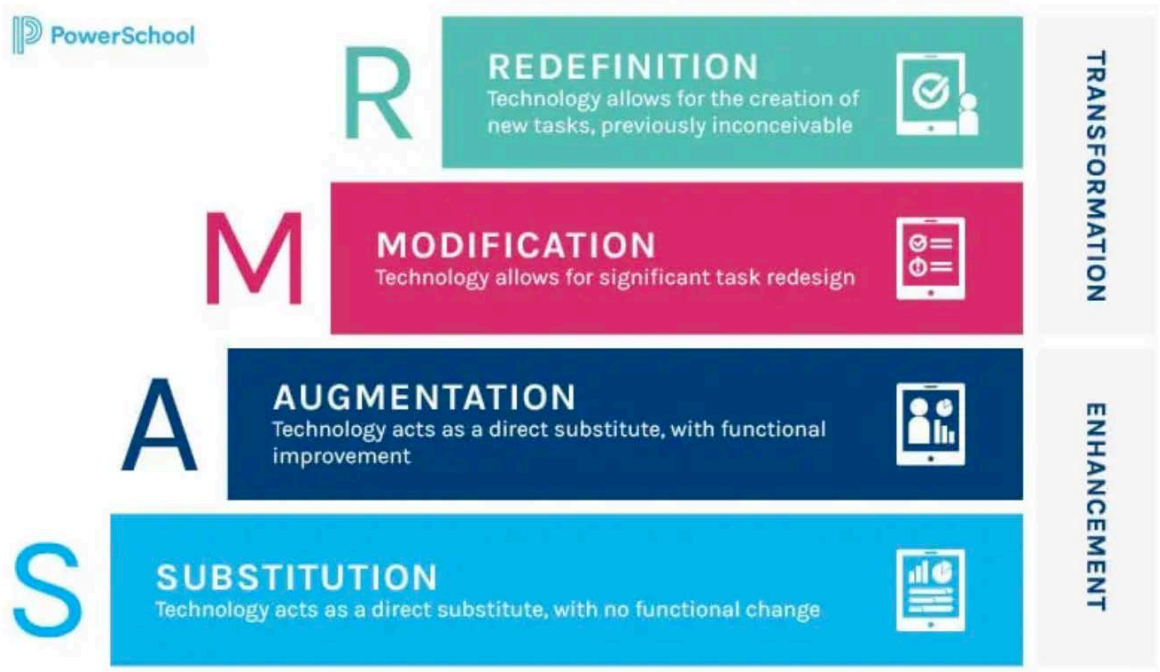


Image Modified from Original by Lefflerd's on Wikimedia Commons

The SAMR framework

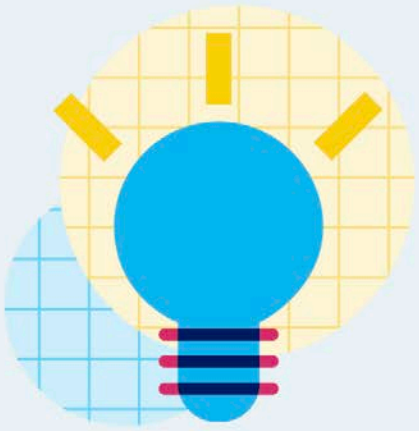
While we often visualize the SAMR model as a ladder or staircase as above, this can be misleading because Substitution (the bottom rung or step) is sometimes the best choice for a particular lesson. This is why it's better to think of the SAMR model more as a spectrum. On one end, technology is used as a one-to-one replacement for traditional tools, and on the other end, technology enables experiences that were previously impossible without it.

Regardless of how you visualize it, the SAMR framework can be a simple and effective way to assess how you incorporate technology into your instruction.

K-12 Classroom Management Platform Buying Guide

Learn how an interoperable and user-friendly classroom management system is the best way to unify data and personalize instruction for each student.

Get the Guide



The SAMR Model Explained (with Examples)

The SAMR model consists of four steps: Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition. Substitution and Augmentation are considered “Enhancement” steps, while Modification and Redefinition are “Transformation” steps. Think of the difference between seasoning an old family recipe (Enhancement) and creating an entirely new, original dish (Transformation).

Substitution

At this stage, technology is directly substituted for a more traditional teaching tool or method. It is a simple, bare-bones, direct replacement. For example, if you are teaching a government lesson on the Constitution, you might use an electronic or web-based version of the document instead of a hard copy. Students might also answer questions about the Constitution by typing them in Microsoft Word instead of filling out a worksheet with a pencil.

Substitution might also include a student using Flipgrid, Keynote, PowerPoint, Prezi, Slides, or a similar program to present information about an article or amendment to the class.

In this step, ask yourself what students stand to gain by replacing traditional tools with technology. Invariably, some situations will be better served by pen and paper.

Augmentation

The technology is again directly substituted for a traditional tool or method, but with significant enhancements to the student experience. Ask yourself if the technology increases or augments a student's productivity and potential in some way.

Returning to the Constitution example, a student might use classroom technology to augment a presentation on the 14th Amendment with a video clip of how equal protection under the law was enforced during school desegregation. It could also include interactive links to relevant supreme court decisions, such as Plessy v. Ferguson or Brown v. Topeka Board of Education.

Modification

In this stage, you are beginning to move from enhancement to transformation using the SAMR Model. Instead of replacement or enhancement, this is an actual change to the lesson's design and its learning outcome. The critical question here is, "does the technology significantly alter the learning task?"

A student presenting research on the 14th Amendment—to continue our example—might create their own unique graphic organizer for the class that not only includes the usual multimedia resources but represents a new product or synthesis of existing material. As another example, a group of students might collaborate in the learning management system (LMS) to propose a modern definition of equal protection under the law and solicit feedback on their proposals from classmates in the discussion section.

Redefinition

The last stage of the SAMR model represents the pinnacle of how integrated classroom technology can transform a student's experience. In this case, you ask yourself if the technology tools allow educators to redefine a traditional learning task in a way that would not be possible without the tech, creating a novel experience.

For example, after completing their group work and soliciting feedback from classmates (both tasks that could be completed "offline" although arguably not with the same experience as in the modified format), students could use technology to network with students in another state to see how regional differences impact how others think about the Constitution. Taking it a step further, students could interact in real time with citizens in another country to examine key differences in constitutional philosophy and law.

SAMR and Webb's Depth of Knowledge

Many educators use the SAMR model and Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) in tandem to make their technology integration more purposeful. However, it's a common mistake to conflate the two models and think that deeper technology integration (the M and R in SAMR) leads to higher-order thinking skills or increased rigor defined in Webb's DOK. This is simply not the case.

So, while it may be helpful to use SAMR and Webb's Depth of Knowledge to better flesh out your instructional strategy, keep in mind that they were designed for very different purposes.

Putting the SAMR Model into Context

A buzzword that's been on everyone's lips several years—even more so since the onset of COVID-19—is "blended learning." Educators talk about incorporating technology into lessons on a regular basis, but are you doing it in a meaningful way?

Simply substituting an eBook for a textbook or streaming the same lessons over video chat aren't going to cut it. It's essential to be purposeful in how you integrate technology into your instruction.

Just don't fall into that ever-present trap of thinking that Redefinition is the goal or the best approach in all cases. Remember: SAMR is a spectrum. Substitution can be your best option for a particular setting. But if your entire instructional approach consists of digitizing your resources without enhancing them—that textbook to eBook transition—then it may be time to evaluate why you're using technology in the first place.

Layering technology into antiquated tasks isn't going to improve the learning experience. But purposefully altering the substance of these tasks to address the skills students need today—and those they'll need tomorrow—will enhance learning.

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SAMR: A Tool for Reflection for Ed Tech Integration

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Introduction

Technology is a part of everyday life as digital tools and devices are ubiquitous. As schools begin to increase technology available in the classroom, it is important for teachers to consider when, how, and why technology fits into a lesson. Used properly, technology is a powerful tool that can transform teaching and learning. It can be a means for collaboration, accessibility, personalization, differentiation, engagement, and innovation (US Department of Education, 2016). Technology should never be considered the classroom "babysitter" or the busy workstation. Rather, technology is used intentionally and strategically as a tool to allow students to engage meaningfully in authentic learning experiences (Herrington & Kervin, 2007).

What is and How to Use the SAMR Model

One way to consider technology use in the classroom is by using the SAMR Model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition). Created by Dr. Ruben Puentedura, the SAMR model helps teachers think about how and why they use technology and how it can help them evolve pedagogically as they grow more comfortable integrating technology into their practice (Puentedura, 2016). In brief, Substitution occurs when technology acts as a simple substitution with no functional change in the assignment; Augmentation is a substitution that is also an improvement in function in the assignment; Modification involves a significant redesign of the assignment through technology; and Redefinition is when technology is used to create new tasks not possible without the technology. The SAMR Model can be compared to a ladder with Substitution on the lowest level and Redefinition on the highest level. When employing technology as a Substitution or an Augmentation, it is considered enhancing the learning experience, whereas when at the Modification or Redefinition levels, it is considered as transforming the learning experience.

As teachers begin thinking about technology integration into the classroom, they often have many questions about how they will effectively use technology. These questions build from the lower level of the SAMR Model upward. For example at the Substitution level, "What will I gain by replacing the task with the technology?" At the Augmentation level, "Does the technology add new features that improve the task?" At the Modification level, "Does the task significantly change with the use of technology?" At the Redefinition level, "Does the technology allow for creation of a new task previously inconceivable?" (Brown, 2015).

The levels of the SAMR Model can be compared to the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. As one proceeds upward, the complexity increases. Substitution and Augmentation within the SAMR Model align with Remember, Understand, and Apply in Bloom's Taxonomy and Modification and Redefinition align with Analyze, Evaluate, and Create. Figure 1 is the authors' illustration of the SAMR model and its alignment with Bloom's Taxonomy based on Puentedura (2014) and questions based on Brown (2015).

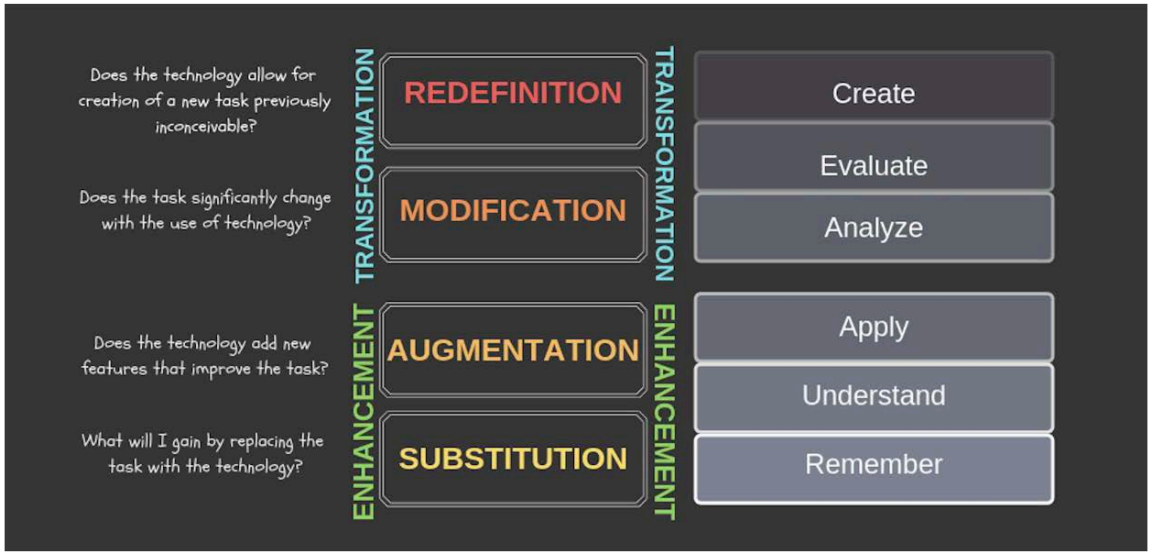


Figure 1: SAMR Model aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy (Puentedura, 2014) and questions to ask (Brown, 2015).

Substitution

When teachers first begin using technology in the classroom, Substitution typically is the easiest application, as it does not change the nature of teaching or learning. With Substitution, for example, students move from hand writing their papers to typing them in a Word document or they move from reading a printed text to reading the text online. While Substitution is considered the most basic form of technology integration in the classroom, it can be a valuable addition to the classroom when considered closely. The question we, as teachers, should ask is, "What will I gain by replacing the task with the technology?"

Consider this classroom: the teacher is instructing a group of English language arts students. The students are working in small groups to analyze the character in a text. Because students have technology, students have the opportunity to make a choice. They can either analyze the character on paper or they can substitute the paper and use an online tool such as Storyboardthat.com to analyze the character. Similarly, in the same classroom, the teacher could ask the students to write a paper. The students may start writing on actual paper or type it in Word. Regardless, the teacher can require the finished paper to be submitted via Word. Additionally, teachers may tell students to submit their work through an online tool rather than turning in a hard copy, which adds another dimension for analyzing student work. While substitution does not alter the nature of teaching or learning, it can make the process of digitally documenting learning and providing feedback easier than through the traditional method (Portnoy, 2018).

In one of the author's classrooms, she found that using the method of substituting technology for paper, thereby giving students some choice in their medium of work, proved empowering. Her

students acknowledge that having choice helps meet their needs and engages them more in the lesson. Students who struggle to get ideas down on pen and paper may feel more confident with a computer screen. However, when teachers move to solely using technology, students may begin to miss the use of pen and paper. Therefore, allowing students to choose which to use gives them agency, helps engage them more in their work, and is a natural way to differentiate instruction. This still allows the substitution to occur and there may be some assignments where the teacher solely wants to substitute technology for paper. It is important to recognize that when technology is simply used to accomplish the same goal that would be accomplished otherwise, it fits into the category of Substitution. We can now answer the question of "What was gained by replacing the task with technology?" in these examples? Choice, as a digital platform, differentiation in instruction and assessment, and ease in providing feedback were all gained from using Substitution.

Augmentation

Augmentation is substitution with an improvement in the task. In other words, the technology replaces the textbook and/or paper with abilities that a textbook and/or paper could not afford. Augmentation is focused on ways that technology can improve the learning experience for the student and the teacher because functionality is present where it may otherwise not exist. The question here is, "Does the technology add new features that improve the task?"

Consider the new features in these learning examples. Teachers may ask students to apply what has been learned using a digital tool. Skitch is a digital tool that allows students to take pictures with a device, mark them up, then send them. For instance, students can take pictures of objects in the environment and then they can mark or trace the geometric figures they see. Students can use Skitch to record observations and collect data, or pictures can be taken of an area on the school grounds that students would like to redesign and then create scale drawings from their markings on the picture. Skitch can be used to capture and annotate almost anything (Bindel, 2013).

Similarly, Seesaw is another tool that allows students to interact with paper texts through taking pictures and then marking them up. Students are able to respond to activities that teachers assign through drawing, annotating, recording, writing, and captioning through this tool. Teachers can use this tool to track learning progress and create a portfolio of a student's work in a variety of mediums. This improves the learning experience because the student is able to respond to the same question in a variety of ways using one tool and the teacher is able to monitor the learning progress in one platform while seeing a variety of the student's work.

Flipgrid is another digital tool that can be used to augment instruction. Flipgrid gives students voice in a video discussion platform. One way to use Flipgrid is to have students introduce themselves to their classmates or respond to a prompt. The teacher could do this in the classroom with all the students present, but by using technology, the teacher is able to use this classroom time in a variety of ways and students are able to express their learning with different alternatives as well. Another possibility is for students to video themselves reading aloud or video

themselves playing their musical instrument. The teacher can leave private video feedback to each student. This also helps the teacher see the student's growth through practice when practice occurs outside of the classroom environment.

When Augmentation is used by a teacher in a classroom, the product that is created changes form to give a different picture of the learning. Another example of a way that Augmentation could be used comes in the form of Exit Tickets, which are responses to a question that a student jots down on paper as they leave the room. Augmentation occurs when, instead of jotting the answer to a question on paper, students use a tool such as Mentimeter.com to respond to the question.

The teacher can use this tool to rearrange the responses with a setting change of the tool into a word cloud to see what the students have learned from the lesson. Exit tickets on paper would not allow the teacher to do this; therefore, technology is used to "offer functional improvement" because learning can be viewed differently through the tool. Kahoot is another tool that can be used as an exit ticket. This platform is a fun and engaging way to formatively assess students that has many applications, including not only whole-class engagement, but individual practice as well. How did the technology add new features that improve the tasks? In these examples, a digital platform was substituted for an analog one and a new feature was added that provided new ways for students to engage with the content and each other.

Modification

Modification allows technology to be used for a significant task redesign. The question to be answered is, "Does the task significantly change with the use of technology?" Consider the example of Flipgrid given under Augmentation. Students' video responses to their peers' video posts can be used to foster dialog on a topic outside of class, this is an example of Modification. A learning experience of a single video post becomes modified when students reflect on a peer's comments and respond with their own. Students providing peer feedback on skills practice on Flipgrid is another example of Modification because students are now practicing not only for themselves or their teacher, but also for their peers and those peers will be using critical and analytical thinking to provide constructive feedback.

Students collaborating on multiple devices on a presentation in Google Drive or Office 365 using Slides, Pages, Docs, Forms, or Sheets in real time or asynchronously can be a redesign of a task where students would have worked on a presentation individually or on a single device during class time. Students creating digital books using bookcreator.com to demonstrate and curate their learning allows for a significant task improvement as students move up the SAMR model and Bloom's Taxonomy as well. The creation of flyers or posters that demonstrate understanding using Canva or Adobe Spark can provide new features of creation not possible with poster board and markers. In fact, Adobe products have a whole suite of tools that can be utilized to creatively modify learning experiences. As we consider each of these examples, we can answer the question, "Does the task significantly change with the use of technology?" with a resounding yes!

Redefinition

Redefinition is the designing of learning experiences that can only happen with the integration of technology. The question is, "Does the technology allow for creation of a new task previously inconceivable?" At this level of the SAMR model, we are truly at the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy. Consider a multimedia project that incorporates music composed by students using Garageband and video captured and then edited using iMovie, or for younger students (grades 3-8) Green Screen by Do-Ink. These learning experiences are only possible using technology. What about virtual field trips? Common Sense Education offers a variety of reviews on virtual field trips. Patricia Brown (2014) also has a list of even more virtual field trips. When it is impossible to go on a field trip, virtual field trips can only occur using technology. A Skype session to a classroom on the other side of the world or a museum across the country or an interview with an author are opportunities that become available to students through Redefinition. Students can engage in online simulations using PHET (K-12 math and science simulations), Geogebra (6-12 - for creating math models and simulations), Walden, a game (grades 8-12-a simulation of Thoreau's experience at Walden). Redefinition allows the teacher to provide opportunities and learning experiences to the student in ways that were never possible before in the confines of a classroom. In these examples we can certainly answer the question, "Does the technology allow for creation of a new task previously inconceivable?" in the affirmative.

Considerations

There are a few things to keep in mind as you consider the SAMR model. The SAMR Model is a reflective tool used to gauge the level of technology integration. It is not a magic bullet for learning. It is possible to have technology integration at the higher levels of the SAMR Model, but still be at lower cognitive levels. For example, Google Maps is a technology that can afford certain learning opportunities that are not possible without it; however, just having students explore Google Maps, without a clear learning target that challenges them at the upper levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, is just using bell and whistles without the proper design to promote 21st century skills and higher order thinking.

Additionally, technology does not have to be used simultaneously by all students at the same time. In the instance where a teacher does not have one-to-one devices, teachers can utilize technology in small groups of student rotations or can utilize the functions of a lesson with one device to several students. Even without a full classroom of computers, the benefits of technology can be explored. The technology cannot replace the curriculum designer's (you, the teacher) content and pedagogical expertise, it can only offer opportunities and options.

As you begin, remember, you don't have to change everything all at once. Start with a learning experience that needs tweaking, a shot in the arm, if you will. Determine a way to substitute in technology or augment the lesson by adding technology that provides a functional improvement. Don't be afraid to experiment. It is easy to get overwhelmed with the many options. Start somewhere and work to get better. Try one strategy, and when you feel comfortable with that strategy, add a new layer. Often, the same tech tool can be used for multiple levels on the

SAMR Model depending on how the teacher designs the instruction. Keep in mind that some learning experiences are best suited for the enhancement levels (Substitution and Augmentation) and do not need to be "improved" to the transformational levels (Modification and Redefinition). Have an open-mind to what could be when considering your curriculum options. Follow teachers on Twitter who are technology savvy. Go to Commonsense.org/education and read the reviews and "how to's" on their website. Be brave and have a growth mindset that allows you to constantly improve your practice through your own growth and learning. You and your students deserve it!

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Footnote 31: EL Education Case Study from Success in Jeffco Public Schools

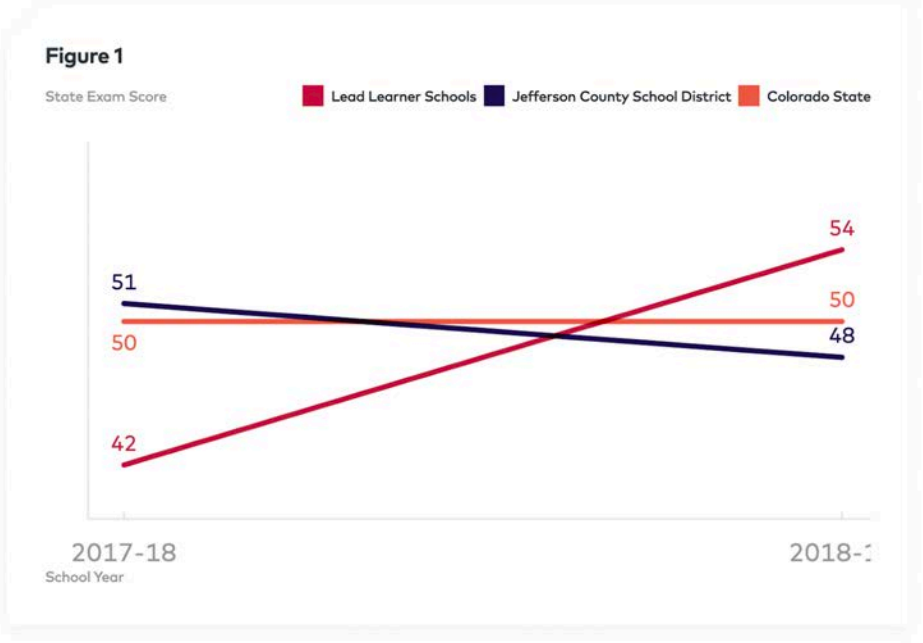
Jefferson County, Colorado: A Case Study

Collaboration can be a powerful accelerant. Educators from six elementary schools in Jefferson County, Colorado worked as a network to implement EL Education practices, using classroom observation data to inform their improvement. Working together, they improved their skills quickly, leading to outstanding student growth.

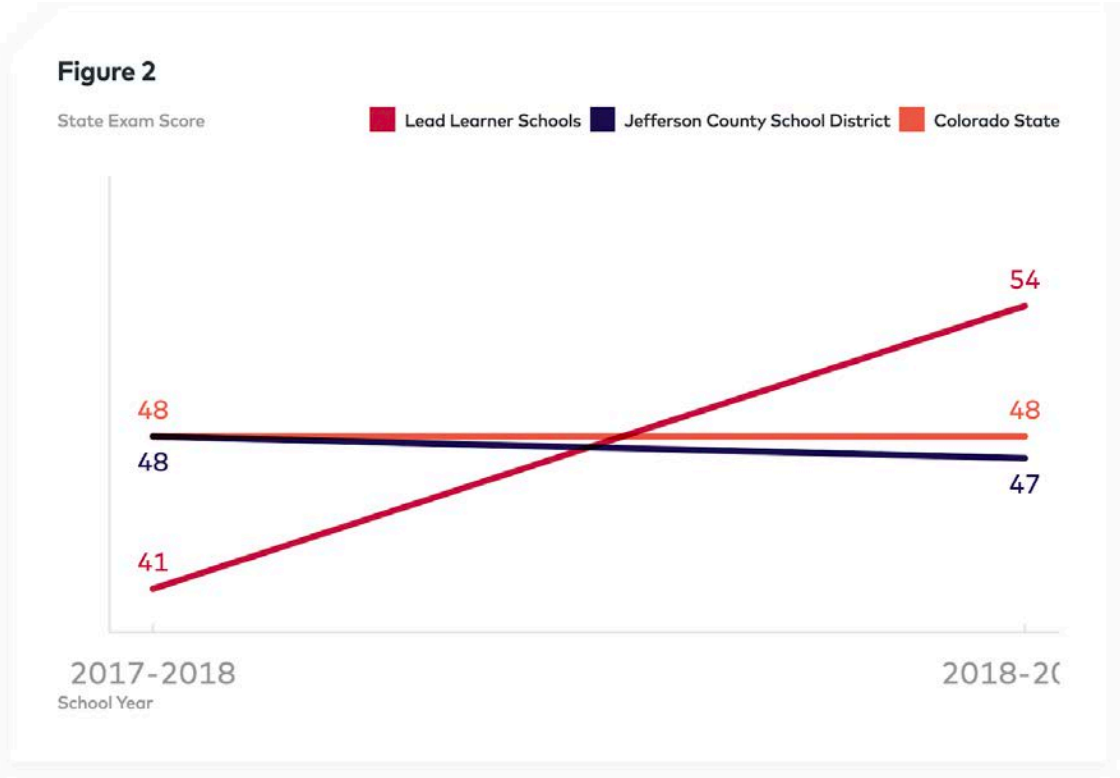
School Profile: Six Schools become Lead Learners for a Large District

In 2018, five K–5 schools and one K–6 school in the Jefferson County (Jeffco) School District were selected to be "lead learners" in a new partnership between the district and EL Education to bring content-based literacy to the districts' elementary schools.

The partnership was focused on building a strong network among the schools, the strategic use of observation data, and coaching to build teachers' capacity to fully implement EL Education's K–5 Language Arts Curriculum. Less than two years later, results became clear: students in the six participating schools had scores on the state exam nearly four times higher than their peers, and increasing at a rate that far outpaced the state (see Figure 1). Students of color also saw a significant increase in test scores over the same two-year period (see Figure 2).



CMAS Assessment Data Comparison



CMAS Assessment Data Comparison: Students of Color

Jeffco, situated just west of Denver, is a large district; it serves nine percent of all K–12 students in the state of Colorado and includes 84 elementary schools. Supported by a grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies and eager to boost literacy for students across the district, the cohort of six schools1 (five K-5 and one K–6) that adopted EL Education's ELA curriculum partnered closely with staff at EL Education for coaching and professional learning services. One of the first things that EL Education and school leaders put in place in Jeffco was a Network Improvement Community (NIC), based on the principles of improvement science.2 The goal of the NIC was to create a data-informed learning community where leaders across the six schools could tackle common "problems of practice" and support strong and cohesive implementation. NICs can be a powerful lever for driving improvement in a peer-focused environment, and Jeffco was no exception.

Figure 3



Spring 2020 Teacher Survey

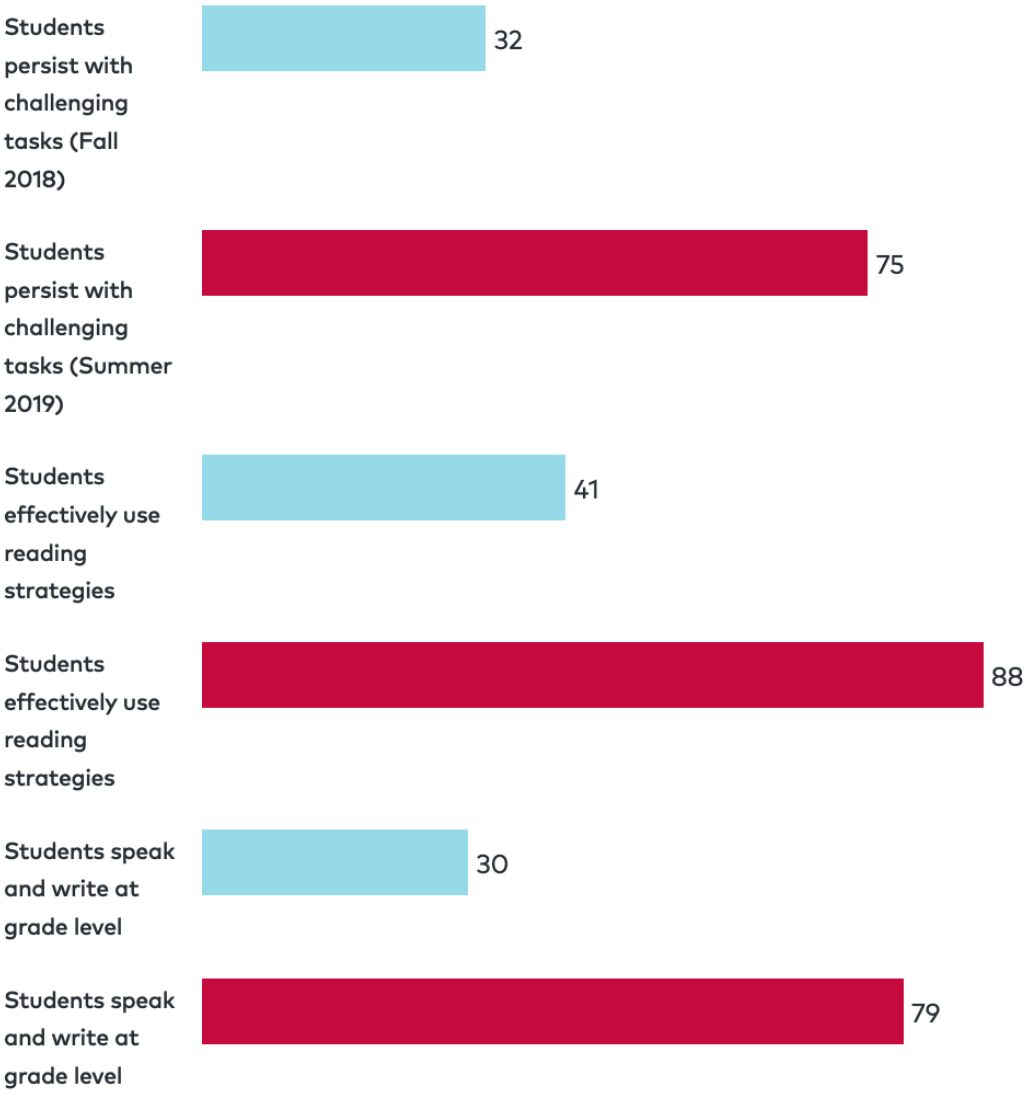
Progress Monitoring

"Teachers often state they need to 'see' what instructional practices look like with populations similar to the students they serve," says instructional coach Kristen Vanosdoll. "Collaborating with schools whose students have similar challenges and seeing what is possible is worth its weight in gold... When teachers use the IPG tool to find evidence of research supported instructional practices, they internalize and reflect on what is possible in their own classrooms." To allow teachers the opportunity to see the curriculum in action in other teachers' classrooms, and imagine them in their own classrooms, EL Education coaches led site-based walkthroughs at the six schools in the cohort using the IPG, and reviewed videos of lessons.

Wendy Woodland, principal at West Jefferson Elementary School, noted how important the walkthroughs were for pushing practice in her school: "As we embarked on walkthroughs in other schools within our network, my eyes were opened to possibilities of differentiation, implementation, and stronger teacher support that I hadn't yet considered." Coaches collected data from the walkthroughs and IPG tool that informed site-based work with leaders and NIC meetings when all leaders in the cohort were together. This data also led to targeted coaching for the school-based coaches on such things as conversation cues in support of student discourse, strategic questioning, protocols in support of evidence-based student collaboration, and looking at student work protocols.

From there, coaches engaged teachers in professional learning with grade-level cohorts across the six schools to dive deeper into practices such as common assessments, progress monitoring in the ALL Block and Skills Block, and eventually leading to more advanced practices like differentiation and student-engaged assessment in year two. Figure 4 shows some of the data collected from the NIC's walkthroughs and IPG.

Figure 4



Walkthrough Data (% of classrooms with evident rating)

Results

The Jeffco lead-learner schools showed impressive growth on the Colorado Measure of Academic Success (CMAS) from Spring 2018 to Spring 2019 compared to the district as a whole and the state. The average Median Growth Percentile (MGP) for students overall rose 11.7 points while the district decreased by 3 points. The growth percentile at the state level remained flat at 50 across both school years. In addition, data for subgroups showed positive trends; MGPs for economically disadvantaged and minority students rose by 18.4 and 13.6 points respectively, while the scores of their peers at the district and state level stayed flat or decreased slightly (see Figure 1).

In addition, students in the Jeffco lead-learner schools produced high-quality work that demonstrates higher order thinking, and they shared their work with the broader community.

In spring 2019:

- 86% of teachers reported that many or all students' work demonstrated higher order thinking.
- 83% of teachers reported students shared their work with the larger community beyond their classroom.

"EL Education has given our students the confidence and the tools to drive their own learning and contribute, not only to their classroom, but the world."

-Kristen Vanosdoll , Instructional Coach

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1. *The six lead-learner schools: Dutch Creek Elementary, Green Gables Elementary, Lumberg Elementary, Peak at Pennington Elementary, Stevens Elementary, and West Jefferson Elementary*
2. *Improvement science deploys rapid tests of change to guide the development, revision and continued fine-tuning of new tools, processes, work roles and relationships. From the Carnegie Foundation.*
3. *The IPG tool was modified slightly by EL Education.*

MESA K-8
Poetry, Poets, and Becoming Writers
4th Grade Success Criteria & Assessment Rubric

Final Product: Students analyze mentor poems, write and revise original poetry, and publish and perform their work during a community Writing Night.

Student "I Can" Goals & Checklist	Teacher Rubric & CCSS Alignment
📚 Reading Like a Poet ☐ Explain theme/message ☐ Identify imagery & figurative language ☐ Use mentor poems for inspiration	4: Insightful analysis with evidence 3: Accurate explanation 2: Partial understanding 1: Limited understanding CCSS: RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.4, RL.4.5
✍️ Writing Like an Author ☐ Write multiple poems in different forms ☐ Use sensory details & craft ☐ Revise with feedback ☐ Edit for conventions	4: Polished, vivid craft & strong revisions 3: Clear grade-level writing 2: Limited craft/revision 1: Incomplete work CCSS: W.4.3, W.4.4, W.4.5, W.4.10, L.4.1–2, L.4.5
🗣️ Speaking & Performance ☐ Rehearse for expression & pacing ☐ Speak clearly & confidently ☐ Present to an audience	4: Engaging, expressive performance 3: Clear & prepared 2: Uneven delivery 1: Hard to hear/follow CCSS: SL.4.4, SL.4.5, SL.4.6
👂 Listening & Collaboration ☐ Listen respectfully ☐ Give helpful feedback ☐ Ask thoughtful questions	4: Leads discussion, specific feedback 3: Participates appropriately 2: Inconsistent 1: Off-task/minimal CCSS: SL.4.1, SL.4.3
🤝 Service & Community Contribution ☐ Help plan Writing Night ☐ Complete team roles ☐ Act professionally with guests	4: Leadership & initiative 3: Responsible contributor 2: Needs reminders 1: Limited contribution CCSS Connections: W.4.4, SL.4.1

Overall Performance Scale:
4 – Exceeds | 3 – Meets | 2 – Approaching | 1 – Beginning
Student Reflection:
How did you grow as a reader, writer, and performer?
_____
_____

MESA K-8
Providing for Pollinators
2nd Grade Success Criteria & Assessment Rubric

Final Product: Students research pollinators, read informational texts, write and create educational resources about pesticide-free gardening, and share their learning with the community.

Student "I Can" Goals	Teacher Rubric & CCSS Alignment
📚 Reading Like a Scientist ☐ Ask and answer questions about pollinators ☐ Identify main idea and key details ☐ Use text features (headings, diagrams, captions) ☐ Compare information from different sources	4: Deep understanding; uses evidence across texts 3: Identifies main ideas/details accurately 2: Partial understanding 1: Limited understanding CCSS: RI.2.1, RI.2.2, RI.2.5, RI.2.9
✍️ Writing Like an Educator ☐ Write facts and explanations about pollinators ☐ Create an informational book/poster/brochure ☐ Use labels, diagrams, and captions ☐ Revise and edit with feedback	4: Clear, organized, detailed information; strong revisions 3: Complete and accurate informational writing 2: Some details missing/unclear 1: Incomplete writing CCSS: W.2.2, W.2.5, W.2.6, L.2.1–2
🔬 Research & Science Learning ☐ Gather information from experts and field trips ☐ Take notes and sort facts ☐ Explain how pollinators help plants grow ☐ Describe pesticide-free alternatives	4: Explains systems and solutions clearly 3: Accurate explanations 2: Basic understanding 1: Limited understanding CCSS Connections: W.2.8, SL.2.2
🗣️ Speaking & Presenting ☐ Share my learning clearly with an audience ☐ Speak in complete sentences ☐ Use visuals to help explain ☐ Present confidently at our service event	4: Clear, confident, engaging presentation 3: Audible and organized 2: Uneven clarity 1: Minimal preparation CCSS: SL.2.4, SL.2.5, SL.2.6

Continues on next page

👂 Listening & Collaboration ☐ Listen respectfully to classmates and experts ☐ Ask questions to learn more ☐ Work cooperatively in teams	4: Leads discussion; thoughtful questions 3: Participates appropriately 2: Inconsistent participation 1: Off-task CCSS: SL.2.1, SL.2.3
🤝 Service & Community Contribution ☐ Help create pesticide-free gardening resources ☐ Complete my team job ☐ Teach others how to protect pollinators	4: Leadership and ownership; strong community impact 3: Responsible contributor 2: Needs reminders 1: Limited contribution CCSS Connections: W.2.4, SL.2.4

Overall Performance Scale:
4 – Exceeds | 3 – Meets | 2 – Approaching | 1 – Beginning

Student Reflection:
What did you learn about pollinators? How can you help protect them?

_____
_____

Footnote 33: Link to Colorado Department of Education Curriculum Adoption and Implementation Guidance

Footnote 34: Impact Story from Implementation of Imagine Learning Illustrative Math



"Students this year more than ever are participating in small-group and whole-group lessons.

They feel more confident, they are able to solve the problems on their own or with a partner, and then are able to explain it to the class.

They actually get really excited to come up and share the ideas. They love to cheer for each other."

Alanna Zawlocki
1st Grade Teacher

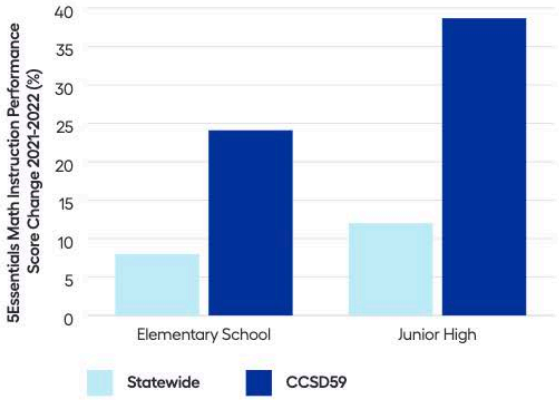


"I am seeing so much growth in teachers and students in working together. Lots of student talk, less teacher talk. The students own their learning and are so proud to share what they have taken away with their classmates, with their peers, and then of course, with their teacher."

Jackie Townsend
Instructional Coach

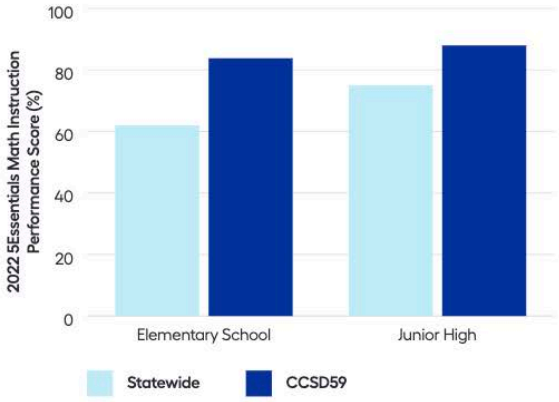
Interest and Engagement

Change in Student Perception of Math Instruction According to 5Essentials Survey 2021–2022



Student perceptions of math instruction in CCSD59 increased substantially after the introduction of Imagine Learning Illustrative Mathematics compared to students in the state as a whole.

Student Perception of Math Instruction According to 5Essentials Survey 2022

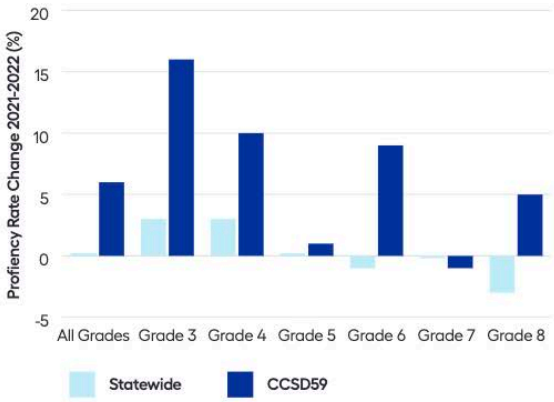


Student perception of math instruction was "Strong" or "Very Strong" in all elementary and middle schools in CCSD59 after the first year of using Imagine Learning Illustrative Mathematics.

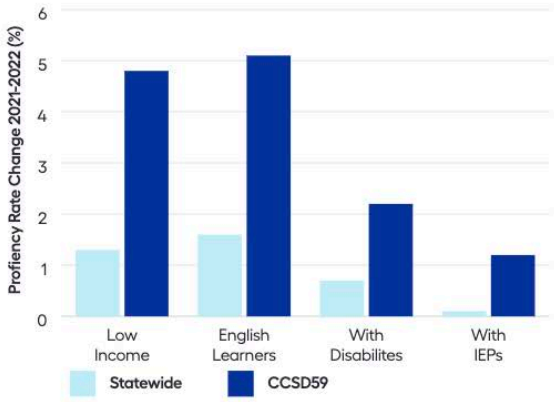
Achievement and Growth

The Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) is administered to students in Grades 3–8. CCSD59 experienced a larger increase in IAR math proficiency rates between 2021 and 2022 than the state overall. Notably, the district outperformed the state by over 10% at Grade 3, with significant improvement also seen in Grades 4, 6, and 8.

2021–2022 IAR Proficiency Rate Change Statewide vs CCSD59



2021–2022 IAR Proficiency Rate Change Statewide vs CCSD59



Low-income students, English learners, students with disabilities, and students with IEPs experienced larger increases in IAR math proficiency rates between 2021 and 2022 in CCSD59 than in the state overall.

"Our three-year goal is that 80% or more of our students are able to adequately be supported by our core instruction. We started off the 2021–2022 school year, prior to implementing IM, at 60%. We are happy to share that we've already grown 5% after our first year of implementation.

97% of our teachers are feeling confident in implementing IM."

Michelle Benages
K–12 Math Coordinator



Hear more about CCSD59's Progress and Achievement

Looking Forward



The hope is that our teachers just get more comfortable and confident in teaching with this resource. We'll continue providing them with high-quality professional learning. We are going to dig deeper with the math language routines and really eliciting that student thinking.

We are looking forward to seeing our math growth continue.

Our teachers are grateful to have Imagine Learning digital and print resources so that they can integrate those together in the learning for students.





Our kids deserve the best instruction and that's what this resource is giving our teachers.

Dr. Nicole Robinson
Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, CCSD59

See the full CCSD59 Impact Story video playlist here



imagine learning

imaginelearning.com/illustrative-mathematics
877-725-4257 • solutions@imaginelearning.com

1074206548

Footnote 35: Case Study from Greeley from Implementation of IM Math

INTRODUCTION

About IM

Illustrative Mathematics® (IM) is guided and inspired by educators who are doing extraordinary work. Since our founding as a non-profit organization in 2013, IM has become a leader in problem-based mathematics education. Our comprehensive, standards-aligned, K–12 curriculum has reached over 1.5 million students. At the same time, our robust catalog of professional learning has served more than 28,000 teachers.

We know this success is the result of mathematicians, educators, and communities working collaboratively. Together, we create the IM Classroom, where *all* students are active participants in their learning. The IM Classroom stands on these four pillars:

- Teachers and students use an IM Certified® curriculum and practice IM's problem-based instructional model with integrity.
- Teachers participate in IM Certified® Professional Learning and have access to implementation support.
- School and district leaders understand and support the systemic changes that are necessary to change teachers' practice.
- Families and communities are engaged with and support their students' learning.

Illustrative Mathematics® LEARN MATH FOR LIFE | imagine learning

In Fall 2022, Illustrative Mathematics set out to identify a school district that exemplifies the IM Classroom model. It didn't take long to find one. In fact, we found many teams doing amazing work implementing the IM curriculum. Our team visited school offices, classrooms, lunchrooms, and gymnasiums. We met with educators and heard stories about why the decision to adopt the IM curriculum was integral to their school district's vision of equitable instruction for all students.

Greeley-Evans School District 6 is one of the districts we chose to spotlight. The case study presented on the following pages captures the intimate conversations that IM had with the school leaders, teachers, and students of Greeley-Evans. It describes their journey from adoption through implementation of IM K–5 Math™ from **Imagine Learning,** an IM Certified® partner. While the narratives are specific to Greeley-Evans, the educational themes and pathways to success will resonate with many school districts across the nation.

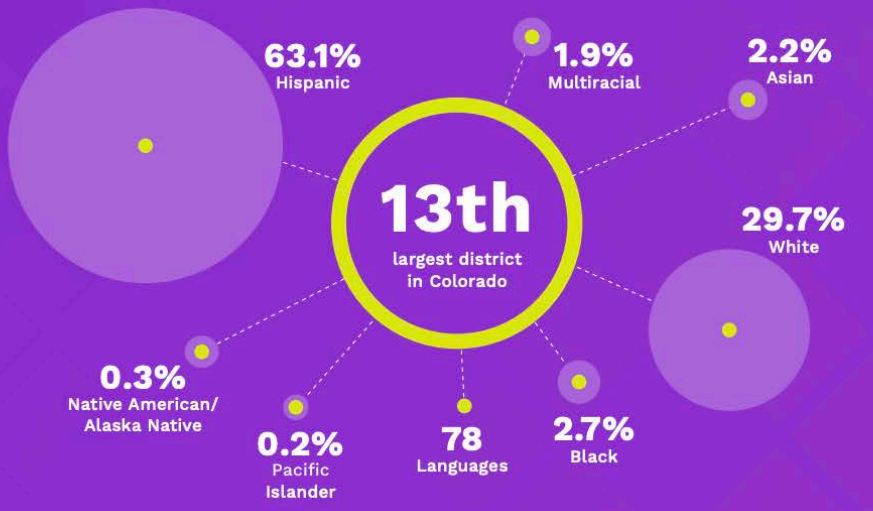
We hope you take inspiration in the stories that you will read about Greeley-Evans School District's journey. Join us in IM's vision of creating a world where all learners know, use, and enjoy mathematics.

THE IM EXPERIENCE

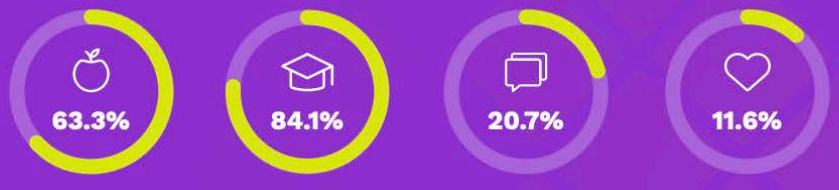
The IM Experience connects educators to engaging experiences and resources. It elevates the IM curriculum journey in a new way — through events, case studies, webinars, support services, digital resources, and more. It is an experience that IM is curating and developing to engage our audiences so they can share what they need beyond adopting our curriculum.



Greeley-Evans District Demographics



STUDENT/ TEACHER RATIO **18:1**



This case study highlights Greeley-Evans School District 6 and their journey from adoption through implementation of IM Math™. Through interviews with teachers and school and district leaders, we learn why their decision to adopt the Illustrative Mathematics curriculum was integral to their vision for equitable instruction for all students.



A Community Where Everyone is Welcome

With over 22,000 students speaking 78 different languages, it goes without saying that diversity is a fact of life for the Greeley-Evans School District. The student body is 63.1% Hispanic, 29.7% White, and students come from nearly every continent. District leaders know that such diversity contributes to broader and deeper understanding in all facets of education. They are striving to achieve equitable instruction for all students.

In pursuit of this goal, Greeley-Evans developed a team specifically for the purpose of ensuring equitable practices for all students and staff members. The District Adoption Committee's tasks, among many others, include creating culturally responsive learning environments that reflect the entire student body.

Greeley-Evans educators describe their district as a close-knit community. The attrition rate is low (approximately 2%). As such, the district is well-positioned to carry out its mission of investing in students and their futures. This investment includes a brand new high school and a K–8 school for pre-engineering. The district also consistently seeks to develop practices that accurately consider and incorporate the cultural and linguistic diversity of their students.

As part of its commitment to inclusion and cultural competence, Greeley-Evans School District actively seeks to bring more young learners into their schools. The district now partners with the Migrant Education Program and the Families in Transition Program. These two programs help children of migrant farmers and families experiencing homelessness to attend school and receive a complete education.

Greeley-Evans teachers echo the sentiments of inclusion and diversity as they create classroom cultures grounded in a sense of belonging. Alyssa Diaz, a 2nd grade teacher at Scott Elementary, says, "We try to celebrate diversity. We've been really pushing for exploring and celebrating all of the different cultures we have represented throughout our school."

CHOOSING IM

A Shift Towards Centering Student Thinking

With 17 elementary and K-8 schools implementing Illustrative Mathematics, the Greeley-Evans School District has a lot riding on the program. The decision to replace their previous curriculum with IM was not taken lightly. In fact, the district went to great lengths to ensure that they made the right decision for their students.

The District Adoption Committee's philosophy focuses on the integration of learning centered on student thinking, the mathematical practices, and culturally responsive pedagogy. This is a combination that the IM K–5 Math™ curriculum is particularly positioned to accommodate.

The teacher-facing materials in IM K–5 Math help teachers respond to student thinking and engage students in grade-appropriate, rigorous, and accessible math tasks. The materials also provide teachers with the guidance and tools they need to ensure equitable instruction for all students. These include embedded suggestions for launching into real-world and relevant contexts, monitoring student work, question posing, and scaffolding the learning within standards.

IM's problem-based instructional model enables students to learn math by doing math. Teachers take on the role of a facilitator as opposed to that of a lecturer, and they operate with the belief that all students are capable of learning mathematics. This model allows students to share their prior and developing knowledge, as they connect what they already know to the new mathematical concepts they are learning.

REAL LEADERS | REAL STORIES

John Fischer

K-12 Math Facilitator, Greeley-Evans School District 6



K-12 Math Facilitator John Fischer shares his thoughts on why the Greeley-Evans chose the IM curriculum and how the process has gone to this point. Fischer says, his "role with the IM rollout has been around professional learning for principals." So, he is in an especially unique position to speak about the adoption of IM in the Greeley-Evans schools.

Regarding the decision to select IM instead of other mathematics curricula, Fischer says: "The adoption committee wrote a philosophy statement around what we believe math instruction should look like, based on research, before we began the adoption process. We spent a couple of months reading *Taking Action* by DeAnn Huinker and Victoria Bill, and then collaboratively writing our philosophy statement as a district team. Illustrative Math was the resource that we felt best fit that philosophy."

Fischer shares how the implementation process has shown that the district made the right choice. "IM was a breath of fresh air. For a lot of teachers in our system, IM has been a very big philosophical shift in math instruction. We've gone from, I do, we do, you do, to problem-based learning," he explains, "We really believe, and our adoption committee really believed, that was the right shift, and research supports that."

> "IM was a breath of fresh air. For a lot of teachers in our system, IM has been a very big philosophical shift in math instruction."
>
> JOHN FISCHER, K–12 MATH FACILITATOR, GREELEY-EVANS

John Fischer, K–12 Math Facilitator for Greeley-Evans, notes that this transition has not been smooth sailing across the board. "That's a really hard shift to make for teachers," Fischer explains. "I think a lot of our teachers are making that shift and are starting to see the power that comes from building different habits in students. They are helping students own their math learning, as opposed to sitting and passively receiving. They're starting to really see the benefits of that."

A New Pathway towards Student Achievement

The decision for Greeley-Evans to switch to the IM curriculum was not exclusively philosophical. Teachers and administrators felt that their previous curriculum had not produced the necessary outcomes for students. They saw a need for a shift in math instruction.

Fischer shares this sentiment: "I think one realization that we've had the last several months is that with an, I do, we do, you do, resource, when you hand out an exit ticket, you can really get a lot of false positives. These students really look like they've got it because they did just what I did on the board, and their paper looks just like mine did. So, I think in the past, we got a lot of false positives from that classroom-level exit ticket data. Whereas now, some of our teachers that I think are having the hardest time getting on board — it's because they look at that data from those cool-downs and they say, wow, look at all my students that didn't get it. "Whereas, if we look at our state test data, we know that those students have always not gotten it, but now we can see who they are. And that doesn't feel very good for teachers, I think. But the transparency is helpful for us to know who those students are so we can support them."



> We really wanted a curriculum that met our purpose as a school too, and our purpose as a school is to prepare students to choose the life that they want."
>
> **ALYSSA DIAZ, 2ND GRADE TEACHER, SCOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Meeker Elementary Principal Alison Ferguson agrees. "Math scores were not moving in the right direction," she explains. "I was not on the adoption committee for math, but we knew we needed something that would move our kids and something that was teaching them the concrete, but also giving them a chance to do the work and explore, and not that complete direct instruction math, and I feel like IM has really hit that."

Along those same lines, Alyssa Diaz notes: "We really wanted a curriculum that met our purpose as a school, which is to prepare students to choose the life that they want." One way to do this, Diaz says, is to truly engage students' abilities. She adds, "We wanted to find a curriculum that allows students to fall in love with math as well. I know that a lot of our staff were unhappy with the previous curriculum. We weren't seeing results. We weren't seeing students mastering concepts. That was probably the biggest push to change from that curriculum."

In short, the Greeley-Evans School District recognized that they needed a new curriculum. From a pedagogical perspective, their previous mathematics instruction did not meet their students' needs. Culturally, the prior instruction was not inclusive enough to reflect their diverse student body. Finally, the old methodology did not result in the high outcomes the district expects for its students. After careful consideration, Greeley-Evans chose Illustrative Mathematics from IM Certified® partner, Imagine Learning, and the district is already seeing success with its adoption and implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION JOURNEY

Leadership Strategy

Implementing any new curriculum presents challenges. In the case of Greeley-Evans, school leaders strategized to solve for potential roadblocks from outset. They wanted to make the transition as smooth as possible for everyone — teachers, students, and parents alike.

One particular strategy the district applied was appointing teachers at each school to work with district leaders to facilitate ongoing professional learning for IM K–5 at their schools. From a teacher's perspective, this builds trust and develops confidence in the material, as well as laying a foundation of support that is consistently available as hurdles present themselves.

John Fischer talks about his experience with the professional learning side of the implementation process: "We meet with principals about once a month for professional learning. I have a team of teacher leaders, two from each school. We have a primary and an intermediate representative from each school that we call our Powerful Math Leaders. Between our lead teachers, our principals and our instructional coaches, they're having the same learning experience, so they can go back into their buildings and be a team that can support each other for implementation."

Tammy Hermance, District Elementary Curriculum Coordinator for Greeley-Evans, points out that the purposeful flow built into the IM curriculum has helped teachers implement the program. "We've done a lot of professional development around pacing," she says. "We love the unit planning guides. These guides were very helpful with giving our teachers a big-picture view of a unit and helping them understand how the lessons fit together. I would say that one of our biggest ah-ha moments in our first year was realizing that you really need to read the narratives at all levels — unit, section, lesson, and activity."

Hermance goes on to describe how understanding the intentionality of IM's flow helps teachers support students to build their mathematical understanding. She says: "It has made a substantial difference having teachers really reading the narratives and knowing how things fit together — that it's not just by happenstance that this program was put together. There really is intentionality behind it."



TAMMY HERMANCE
District Elementary Curriculum Coordinator

INSIGHT

IM K–12 Math Overarching Design Structure

	Invitation to the mathematics	Deep study of concepts and procedures	Consolidating and applying
Unit Level	Introductory Lesson	Instructional Lessons	Culminating Lesson
Lesson Level	Warm-up	Classroom Activities	Synthesis and cool-down
Activity Level	Launch	Work time	Synthesis

IM prides itself on the coherence within our materials as concepts flow from one unit and one course to another. This applies equally to individual lessons. From warm-up through cool-down, the lesson plans have been designed with student engagement and comprehension in mind, from start to finish. Many of the teachers and administrators in the Greeley-Evans School District have noted this structure and are taking full advantage of it.



RESULTS

Impact on Students

The Greeley-Evans School District is pleased with their decision to adopt IM on principle. At the same time, they are seeing genuine change in their classrooms that are a direct result of using the IM curriculum..

John Fischer explains how the district is measuring initial success with their new curriculum. "It's measured in lots of different ways," he explains. "I think the biggest one is state test scores. That's one everyone's looking at to see, 'Are we making a dent, are we moving the needle?' That's a big part of it. We want to see our achievement data go up, but we know there's a whole lot more to the story than that number."

Fischer continues: "We're also looking at, in the short term: Are students tackling a problem and sticking with it? Do they have the drive and the curiosity to stick with something and really figure it out? Do they have some tools in their toolbelt that they can try, different ways that they can approach a problem? Are they willing to look at a problem from a couple different approaches? I think these are the things that are half the battle before we even get to some of the harder skills of computation."

> I really appreciate that IM offers a new opportunity for our students to see math in a different way."
>
> **MONICA WILLIAMS, 3RD GRADE TEACHER**
> **TOINTON ACADEMY**

Fischer says that student discourse is another key indicator of the program's effectiveness: "When we see strong discourse, we know that achievement is going to follow and that growth is going to follow. With the previous curriculum we had a lot of discourse, but it wasn't necessarily mathematical discourse. It wasn't about the ideas that we wanted students to wrestle with. So, one indicator — a soft indicator and a short-term indicator of success for us right now — is this: Is the discourse mathematical? Is it about the ideas we want them to wrestle with? Not just about, well, here's what I did, what did you do? Instead: Here's what I was thinking about, and here's why I made this decision, and here's why I did it this way. So, when we see richer discourse, that's a success indicator, obviously, short term, but we know that's leading in the right direction."

Greeley-Evans teachers and school leaders have also noted a surprising effect of implementing the IM curriculum. Improvements in discourse have actually decreased behavioral issues in the classroom. (See feature on pages 14–15).

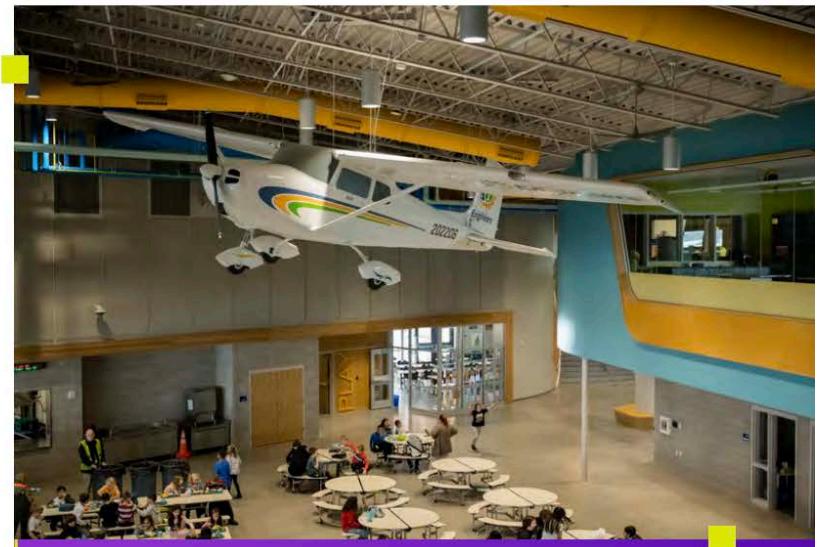
In sum, the district has continued to observe qualitative improvements as a result of adopting the IM curriculum. These include: more resilience and persistence from students, stronger engagement and discourse directly related to mathematics instruction, and better behavior in math classrooms.

Student Expression and Mathematical Identity

Education success comes in multiple ways. While mastery of course material is paramount, it is equally important for young learners to feel welcomed, comfortable, and free to express themselves in their shared educational environment.

With the IM curriculum, the district is meeting these goals through instructional routines and launch activities that invite all students to the math. They encourage students to bring their whole selves to each lesson. Greeley-Evans teachers and leaders value the contributions of each individual student. This core value is visible beyond the interactions between educators and students in classrooms. It extends throughout each school building to the cultural displays and the array of posters and quotes that encourage students to embrace their uniqueness and know their worth.

Similarly, IM K–5 Math is designed based on the belief that all students have brilliant mathematical ideas and valuable experiences that contribute to the learning community. The curriculum supports teachers to implement culturally responsive pedagogy and serves as a resource for mathematically relevant and authentic contexts. These contexts provide opportunities for students to see themselves in the activities or learn more about the cultures and experiences of others.



REAL LEADERS | REAL STORIES

"Will I Ever Use Math?"

This is a question many students ask. When the Greeley-Evans School District opened their Tointon Academy of Pre-Engineering, they answered that question with a resounding "yes!" The Academy focuses on integrating engineering concepts into the core subject areas of math, literacy, science, and social studies. With the IM curriculum, schools like Tointon are empowering students to solve problems that arise in everyday life.

Illustrative Mathematics CEO and cofounder Bill McCallum writes about this "Will I Ever?" question in his blog *What Does It Mean to Use Mathematics?* "If we think of using mathematics as not just 'doing the math,' but using the concepts of mathematics," McCallum writes, "Then we have a good answer to the student's question." As more students gain access to IM's problem-based instruction, they will discover for themselves the value and usefulness of mathematics.



INSIGHT

Fluency in IM K–5 Math

IM K–5 Math includes fluency development as a part of its coherent design. As students experience the warm-ups, lesson activities, and centers, they have numerous opportunities to practice and come to know their math facts. Within and across grades, the IM curriculum helps students develop fluency using the following progression:

- **Students learn the meaning of the operations and the relationships between them.**
- **Students start to learn their facts.**
- **Students relate more complicated facts to simpler ones.**
- **Students know their facts.**

Learn more about supporting fluency development with IM K–5 Math.

Monica Williams, third grade teacher at Tointon Academy, values IM's individualized approach to learning. She says: "I really appreciate that IM offers a new opportunity for our students to see math in a different way. I appreciate the different demographics that we see being shown for our students, including students with different disabilities and abilities. It is really nice to see in the program."

Tammy Hermance believes that IM delivers on all fronts. She says: "What I love best is the problem solving. It's nice that it has activities and routines inside of it that allow all students to come in from wherever they are. So, we have students who are working below grade level, they are able to enter the warm-up routines or activities from where they are. We can meet them where they come in and then use the synthesis to help take them further.

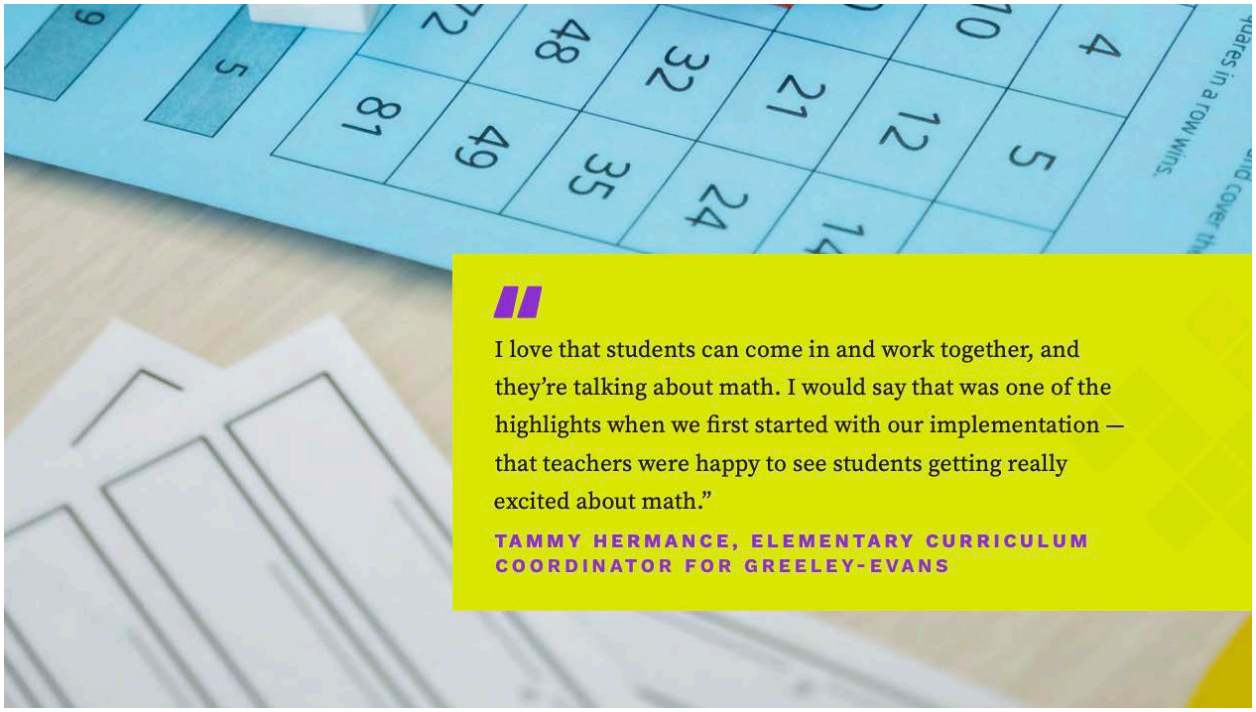
"I love that students can come in and work together, and they're talking about math. I would say that was one of the highlights when we first started with our implementation — that teachers were happy to see students getting really excited about math. As I went out to schools within that first month, teachers and principals were saying to me, 'Our students are really excited about math. They haven't been excited about math in a while, and they're excited about math now.' So, that's a great thing."

One source of excitement for students are the interactive centers that are embedded as part of the lessons in Kindergarten and Grade 1, and are included as suggested activities in Grades 2–5. Centers are standards-aligned game activities that build across multiple stages. They help students review prior learning, address unfinished instruction, or practice grade-level content.

Hermance also shares her thoughts on these centers and how they have enhanced the IM experience for both teachers and students: "That was one of the things we decided from the beginning. We come from a belief of appreciating differentiated support. We spend 60 minutes on grade-level content, and then we have an additional 30 minutes to spend in center time providing that differentiated support. We are fortunate across our district to have a 90-minute math block.

"And it's differentiated support, where the teacher can pull small groups. Students can be working at those centers. I know as our teachers have seen the digital centers in Imagine Learning Classroom, they've been excited about that. I love the way the centers have the different stages because that helps teachers to be able to differentiate and makes it easy for them.

"We're having a lot of discussion right now around fluency. The centers support fluency, so we have to make sure our teachers understand the fluency practice is in the centers even though it looks different. They are used to seeing fluency as repeated fact practice. It is a different philosophy."


I love that students can come in and work together, and they're talking about math. I would say that was one of the highlights when we first started with our implementation — that teachers were happy to see students getting really excited about math."
TAMMY HERMANCE, ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM COORDINATOR FOR GREELEY-EVANS

FEATURE

DOES IM K-5 MATH HELP REDUCE BEHAVIOR CONCERNS?

Does IM K–5 Math help reduce behavior concerns? An unanticipated but welcomed result of implementing the IM curriculum was discovered at Meeker Elementary School when Principal Alison Ferguson conducted an internal review of their behavior statistics, and saw significant improvement. She attributes this success, in part, to the curriculum's focus on student thinking. Because the lessons rely on active student participation, students are more engaged during math time, which positively impacts student behavior. Ferguson recalls:

"We conducted a study last year over our behavior, and when I came here four years ago, we had significant behaviors, almost 700 behavioral referrals in a year. Last year, we were down to below 300. But we were not getting them during math when we first implemented IM, because kids were actually engaging in the work, and they were expected to engage. It wasn't just a sit and get, and that's huge. We had to get them out of passive learning, and IM has helped with that in a lot of different ways."

"We had to get them out of passive learning, and IM has helped with that in a lot of different ways."

FROM

700

BEHAVIORAL REFERRALS

TO UNDER

300

BEHAVIORAL REFERRALS

Schools across the country have seen an uptick of behavioral issues since the pandemic. A 2022 report by The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) found that 80% of schools reported that the pandemic had negatively impacted student behavior. For Meeker Elementary School, however, negative student behaviors decreased, and were ultimately eliminated during math time with IM K–5 Math.


ALISON FERGUSON
PRINCIPAL, MEEKER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
0
OF THESE
BEHAVIORAL
REFERRALS
WERE DURING
MATH

LOOKING AHEAD

Student Success



As Greeley-Evans has moved forward with implementing the IM curriculum, not all teachers have adapted at the same pace. This may be due in part to pedagogical and philosophical differences. In some cases, it's also a matter of how teachers are used to teaching.

Principal Ferguson shares her thoughts on this point: "I have a few teachers who absolutely love every minute of math, and some who are still working on shifting their mindset a little bit, but that's okay. It's not that they don't like it. It's just that mindset shift, which is harder to make sometimes with more veteran teachers."

Thankfully, a district as tight-knit as Greeley-Evans has the capacity to plan ahead and work to overcome whatever challenges the teachers face.

For instance, Tammy Hermance says that there were many times during the previous school year when she was approached by a teacher with questions about the IM curriculum. Each time, she says she was able to support and provide answers to teachers, who were then able to improve the learning experience for their students.

Diversity Is an Educational Asset

The goals of Greeley-Evans continue to align with the diversity of their students. This is one major reason why the district chose the IM curriculum. IM lessons offer a novel path for learning that incorporates culturally responsive materials throughout. As teacher Paige Baldwin at Maplewood Elementary School explains, "Students really like the diversity they see in the images within the curriculum. They say, 'That kid looks like me!' They get so excited to see images they can relate to."

Antonia Fornaro, fourth grade teacher at Meeker Elementary School, points out that many of the students currently learning via the IM curriculum are at a disadvantage compared to students in years past. The main reason is that COVID kept many of these students out of the classroom. Research shows the pandemic years may have negatively affected these students in key ways.

However, Fornaro emphasizes that, even with these unprecedented obstacles to learning success, the IM curriculum is uniquely suited to engage *all* students. She says: "This group, because they were in first grade during COVID, they have a hard time. There are a lot of social pieces missing. So, I think they're struggling to work independently without me holding their hands. It's been more challenging, but I feel like they're actually learning with the IM curriculum. The students are doing the learning.

"Our principal always talks about passive learning. A lot of the time with the previous curriculum, it was great, but it said: here is exactly what you say, here's exactly how the student should solve it, etc. The IM curriculum is more: here is what you don't say, and here is what the student should get from that. So, I think they're actually engaging in the learning, versus me telling them what they should be learning, thinking, or feeling. Once you give them a chance to fail, their brain makes up for that and starts being successful."

The Greeley-Evans School District believes that Illustrative Mathematics provides the right framework to truly give students a real chance to succeed — *on their own terms*. Students can see themselves reflected in the mathematics curriculum and learn it from the inside out. This gives them a unique opportunity to pave their own way. The IM curriculum is helping *all* students discover their math identities — to see themselves as problem solvers inside and outside of the classroom.

> "I feel like they're actually learning with the IM curriculum. The students are doing the learning."
>
> **ANTONIA FORNARO, 4TH GRADE TEACHER, MEEKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Footnote 36: Illustrative Math Content Standards

Examples of IM Math Lessons and Curriculum Materials

Kindergarten Lesson

Unit 2, Lesson 1

Fingers as a Math Tool

Standards

Addressing K.CC.A.1, K.CC.B.4, K.CC.B.5

Instructional Routines

- Choral Count

Goals

- Determine the number of fingers shown within 10 and express (orally) the quantity with the number name.
- Use fingers to represent a given number within 10.

Student Facing Learning Goals

Let's show numbers with our fingers.

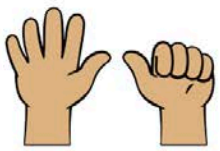
Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is for students to recognize, name, and show quantities with their fingers.

Narrative

Fingers are helpful for representing quantities because they are familiar and always available to students. The structure of fingers also encourages students to notice how numbers are related to 5 and 10. In upcoming lessons, students may find using their fingers helpful when comparing quantities. In later units, using fingers may help students count, add, and subtract.

In these materials, quantities represented with fingers are shown from the student's perspective, as if they are looking at the teacher's palms. The hand shown on the left (the teacher's right hand) shows numbers 1–5, starting with a raised pinky for 1. Numbers 6–10 continue with the thumb on the other hand (the teacher's left hand).



These fingers show 6.

When demonstrating, use the same format, with palms facing students. Start by raising the right pinky to show 1, so that students see the fingers being raised from left to right for 1–10. Students can represent numbers with their fingers in any way, as long as they show the correct number of fingers.

Students should be encouraged to use their fingers whenever they find them helpful. However, some students may not have 10 fingers or may have limited movement in their fingers. Consider offering alternative ways for students to show quantities in activities and centers that focus on using fingers. For example, students could use the Math Fingers cards, or they could use a pair of gloves and move the fingers on the gloves up or down to show quantities. It may be helpful for all students to hold their fingers down on the table or on their lap to represent numbers instead of holding up their hands.

Access for Students with Disabilities

- Representation

Access for English Learners

- MLR8

Required Materials

Materials to Gather

- Materials from previous centers: Activity 3

Materials to Copy

- Math Fingers Cards (1 copy for every 2 students): Activity 3

Lesson Timeline

Warm-up	10 min
Activity 1	10 min
Activity 2	10 min
Activity 3	25 min
Synthesis Estimate	5 min

Teacher Reflection Questions

When do your students feel successful in math? How do you know?

Warm-up

10 min

Choral Count: Fingers and Counting

Standards

Addressing **K.CC.A.1, K.CC.B.4**

Instructional Routines

- Choral Count

The purpose of this *Warm-up* is to introduce the students to a new routine called *Choral Count,* which will be used throughout the year. In this *Choral count*, students practice the verbal count sequence to 10 and show quantities with their fingers.

Student Response

Students count to 10 and put up 1 finger for each number.

Launch

- "Let's count to 10."
- Count to 10 as a class.

Activity

- "As I count to 10, put up 1 finger for each number."
- Count to 10 as students put up their fingers.
- Demonstrate counting to 10, putting up 1 finger for each number.
- "Now let's count to 10 with our fingers. Each time you say a number, put up 1 finger."
- Count to 10 as a class using fingers 2–3 times.

Activity Synthesis

- "As you count and put up your fingers, I will write the numbers."
- Write numbers 1–10 as students count and put up their fingers.

Activity 1

10 min

How Many Fingers?

Standards

Addressing **K.CC.B.4, K.CC.B.5**

The purpose of this activity is for students to recognize and name quantities 1–10 represented on fingers. Students may count to determine how many fingers are held up in this activity. With repeated experience, students begin to recognize quantities represented with fingers without counting (MP7, MP8).

Student Response

Students determine how many fingers their partner is holding up.

Launch

- Groups of 2
- Hold up 3 fingers.
- "How many fingers am I holding up?"
- 30 seconds: quiet think time
- Share responses.
- Repeat with 6 fingers.
- "Take turns playing with your partner. One partner holds up some fingers. The other partner figures out how many fingers they are holding up."

Activity

- 5 minutes: partner work time

Activity Synthesis

- Hold up 2 fingers.
- "How do you know how many fingers I am holding up?" (I can just see that there are 2.)
- Hold up 5 fingers.
- "How do you know how many fingers I am holding up?" (I know that there are 5 fingers on a hand.)
- "In the next activity, we will practice showing a given

Activity 2

10 min

Show Some Fingers

Standards

Addressing **K.CC.B.4, K.CC.B.5**

The purpose of this activity is for students to show quantities 1–10 with fingers. Students may count each finger to show the given amount, or they may automatically know how many fingers to hold up.

Access for English Language Learners

MLR8 Discussion Supports. Invite students to chorally repeat numbers in unison 1–2 times. Use gestures to emphasize connections between the displayed numeral and the number of fingers.
Advances: Speaking, Representing

Access for Students with Disabilities

Representation: Access for Perception. Synthesis: Students might need support when they see the hands being mirrored as they show their partner or their teacher shows them their hands. Use your hand to show students that the hand gestures are the same number of fingers.
Supports accessibility for: Visual-Spatial Processing

Access for Students with Disabilities

Representation: Access for Perception. Synthesis: Students might need support when they see the hands being mirrored as they show their partner or their teacher shows them their hands. Use your hand to show students that the hand gestures are the same number of fingers.
Supports accessibility for: Visual-Spatial Processing

Student Task Statement

1

3

5

4

6

8

10

9

2

7

Student Response

Students hold up the given number of fingers.

Launch

- Groups of 2

Activity

- "When I say a number, hold up that many fingers. Then check with your partner to see if you are holding up the same number of fingers."
- Write or display "1."
- "Hold up 1 finger."
- 30 seconds: independent work time
- "Check with your partner to see if you are holding up the same number of fingers."
- 1 minute: partner discussion
- Repeat the steps with the rest of the numbers. Write or display and say each number from the student workbook.

Activity Synthesis

- "Show a number using only one hand."
- "Show a number using two hands."
- "Which numbers can you show on one hand?" (I can show 3 on one hand with 3 fingers. I can hold up 5 fingers to show 5.)
- "Which numbers do you need two hands to show?" (I need two hands to show 10 fingers. There are only 5 fingers on each hand, so I need the other hand to show more than 5.)

Activity 3

25 min

Introduce Math Fingers—Show and Say

Standards

Addressing **K.CC.B.5**

The purpose of this activity is for students to learn Stage 1 of the *Math Fingers* center. Students hold up the number of fingers shown on a card and their partner determines how many fingers they are holding up. While students may put up fingers in any order, demonstrate by raising fingers starting with the right pinky with palms facing out towards students. Students may count the fingers or recognize the quantity without counting. Students may also count on from 5 to determine how many fingers when 6–10 fingers are displayed. When students connect the number shown on the card to the number of fingers they hold up, they reason abstractly and quantitatively (MP2).

After they participate in the *Math Fingers* center, students choose any previously introduced stage from these centers:

- Pattern Blocks
- Picture Books

Students will choose from these centers throughout the section. Keep materials from these centers organized to use each day.

Required Materials

Materials to Gather

- Materials from previous centers: Activity 3

Materials to Copy

- Math Fingers Cards (1 copy for every 2 students): Activity 3

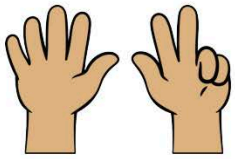
Required Preparation

- Create a set of cards from the blackline master for each group of 2.
- Gather materials from:
  - Pattern Blocks, Stages 1–3
  - Picture Books, Stages 1 and 2

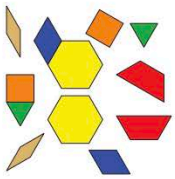
Student Task Statement

Choose a center.

Dedos matemáticos



Pattern Blocks



Picture Books



Launch

- Groups of 2
- Display a card.
- "Hold up your fingers like you see on the card."
- 30 seconds: independent work time
- "How many fingers are you holding up?"

Activity

- Give each group of students a set of cards.
- "Flip over one card and put it in between you and your partner. Decide who will go first."
- "One partner will hold up their fingers like the fingers on the card. The other partner will figure out and say how many fingers their partner is holding up. Take turns playing with your partner."
- 4 minutes: partner work time
- "Now you can choose another center. You can also continue playing Math Fingers."
- Display the center choices in the student book.
- Invite students to work at the center of their choice.
- 10 minutes: center work time
- If time allows, invite students to choose another center.

Activity Synthesis

- "Today we learned a new center using our fingers and cards. What can you do to take care of the cards to make sure that we can use them to play the game again?" (We can make sure we don't bend them. We can make sure we put them all back when we are done.)

Lesson Synthesis

"Today we used our fingers as math tools to show numbers. Tell your partner which number was your favorite to show using your fingers and why it was your favorite."

Observation

Lesson Observations for Unit 2, Section A

Standards

Addressing **K.CC.B.4**

Look Fors

- Answer how many without counting again.
- Say one number for each object.
- Use the structure of 5 (in 5-frames or fingers) to count on from 5 to tell how many.

Unit 2, Lesson 1

What Is Area?

Standards

Addressing 3.MD.C.5, 3.OA.A.1

Building Toward 3.MD.C.5

Instructional Routines

- How Many Do You See?

Goals

- Explain (orally) how to determine if a shape "covers the most space," using informal tools and language.

Student Facing Learning Goals

Let's compare the sizes of shapes.

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is for students to recognize that different shapes cover different amounts of space.

Narrative

In grade 2, students estimated, measured, and compared lengths, using standard units. They learned how the length of the unit affects measurements.

This lesson introduces the concept of **area** as students compare the sizes of different shapes. Students consider what it means for two-dimensional shapes to be larger or cover more space. They measure and describe relative areas with increasing precision as they participate in the activities in this lesson.

Give students access to pattern blocks and scissors during the *Cool-down*.

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Give students access to pattern blocks and scissors during the *Cool-down*.

Access for Students with Disabilities

- Action and Expression

Access for English Learners

- MLR8

Required Materials

Materials to Gather

- Scissors: Activity 1, Activity 2
- Pattern blocks: Activity 2

Materials to Copy

- Pattern Blocks to Compare Shapes Handout (1 copy for every 1 students): Activity 2

Lesson Timeline

Warm-up	10 min
Activity 1	15 min
Activity 2	20 min
Synthesis Estimate	10 min
Cool-down	5 min

Teacher Reflection Questions

What part of the lesson went really well today in terms of students learning? What did you do that made that part go well?

Warm-up

10 min

How Many Do You See: Arrays

Standards

Addressing **3.OA.A.1**

Instructional Routines

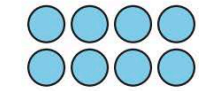
- How Many Do You See?

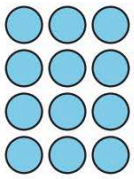
The purpose of this *How Many Do You See?* is for students to subitize or use grouping strategies to describe the images they see. Students may see equal groups in the rows or the columns of the array. Recording the equations for each way of seeing the groups is an opportunity to reinforce the commutative property.

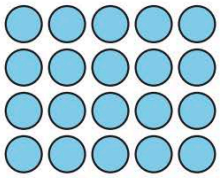
When students use different ways to group dots within the same array to find the total number of dots, they look for and make use of structure (MP7).

Student Task Statement

How many do you see? How do you see them?







Student Response

Sample responses:

- 8: I counted 4 dots in each row and there are 2 rows, which is 8. There are 2 dots in each column and there are 4 columns.
- 12: I saw 3 dots in each row and there are 4 rows. I

Launch

- Groups of 2
- "How many do you see? How do you see them?"
- Flash the image.
- 30 seconds: quiet think time

Activity

- Display the image.
- "Discuss your thinking with your partner."
- 1 minute: partner discussion
- Record responses.
- Repeat for each image.

Activity Synthesis

- "How did the arrays allow us to find the number of dots in different ways?" (We were able to look at the number of dots in each row and think about how many rows there were. I counted the number in each column and multiplied it by the number of columns.)
- As students share, record equations to match their thinking.
- Consider asking, "How do the equations change if we think about the rows as the groups or the columns as the groups?" (For the image with 12 dots, if we think about the rows as the groups, we write $4 \times 3 = 12$, but if we think about the columns as the groups, we

saw 4 dots in each column and there are 3 columns.

- 20: I saw two 10-frames, and 10 plus 10 is 20. I saw 4 rows of 5, which is 20. I saw 5 columns of 4, which is 20.

write $3 \times 4 = 12$. The order of the factors is reversed, but the product stays the same.)

Activity 1

Compare Shapes

15 min
PLC Activity

Standards

Building Toward **3.MD.C.5**

The purpose of this activity is for students to compare shapes to decide which is larger. Given their prior experiences with length, students may initially use length to reason about what it means for a shape to be larger than another shape. The *Activity Synthesis* should bring out the idea that length alone is not enough to compare two-dimensional shapes. Ideas around how much space the shapes cover should be emphasized. If students disagree about which shape is larger, encourage them to share their reasoning so that the class can consider multiple ideas and come to a resolution together (MP3).

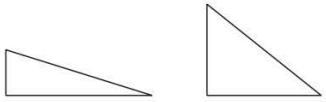
Required Materials

Materials to Gather

- Scissors: Activity 1

Student Task Statement

1. Here are 2 triangles. Which triangle is larger?



2. In each pair of shapes, which shape is larger? Be prepared to explain your reasoning.

   a.



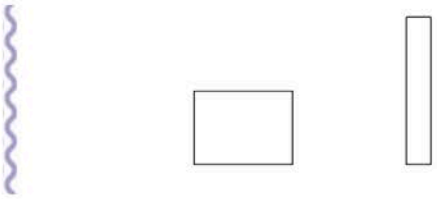
   b.



   c.

Launch

- Groups of 2
- Display or sketch the two triangles in the first problem.
- "Which triangle do you think is larger? Be prepared to explain your reasoning."
- 1 minute: quiet think time
- Share and record responses.
- "How could you decide for sure which shape is larger?" (I could think about putting one shape on top of the other. I could measure which is longer. I could cut one shape out to see if it fits inside the other.)
- 1 minute: quiet think time
- 1 minute: partner discussion
- Share and record responses.
- Give each group scissors.



Student Response

Sample responses:

1. The second triangle is larger because it is taller. The first triangle is larger because it is longer.
2. a. The second oval is larger. I can fit the first one inside it.
   b. The hexagon is larger. The triangle is less than half the size.
   c. The first rectangle is larger. I can fit the second rectangle inside the first if I cut it in half and put the halves next to each other.

Activity

- "Now you are going to decide which shape in each pair is larger. Consider trying some of the strategies we discussed."
- 3 minutes: independent work time
- "Tell your partner which shape in each pair you thought was larger. Explain how you decided."
- 3 minutes: partner discussion
- Monitor for justifications of how much space each shape covers and disagreements that students discuss.

Activity Synthesis

- "Which shapes did you change your mind about as you discussed your ideas with your partner?" (In the last problem, I thought that the skinny rectangle was larger because it was taller. My partner showed me how to cut the rectangles to compare them.)
- "Are there shapes you still disagree about?"
- Have students share their justifications for any lingering disagreements.
- As students share, bring out the idea that the larger shape covers more space.
- Consider asking:
  - "What questions do you have?"
  - "Do you agree with their reasoning?"
  - "Did you justify your choice in a different way?"

Activity 2

20 min

Pattern Blocks to Compare Shapes

Standards

Addressing **3.MD.C.5**

The purpose of this activity is for students to compare shapes by covering them with pattern blocks. Students experience tiling as a way to see which shape covers the most space. There are several ways to tile the shapes, but it may prove most useful to use the same units, such as triangles. The rectangle can be fully tiled only with square pattern blocks. To compare Shapes B and C, students need to notice that the rectangle and the parallelogram can be made the same length, but the square pattern blocks used to tile the rectangle are taller than the blocks used to tile the parallelogram.

The work here prepares students to tile figures with square tiles in the next lesson and to think of area in terms of square units.

Access for English Language Learners

MLR8 Discussion Supports. Synthesis: Create a display of Shapes A, B, and C. As students discuss their comparisons, annotate the display with their observations. For example, when comparing Shape B to Shape C, write "same length, but taller."
Advances: Speaking, Listening

Access for Students with Disabilities

Action and Expression: Develop Expression and Communication. Synthesis: Identify connections between strategies that result in the same outcomes but use different approaches.
Supports accessibility for: Conceptual Processing

Required Materials

Materials to Gather

- Pattern blocks: Activity 2
- Scissors: Activity 2

Materials to Copy

- Pattern Blocks to Compare Shapes Handout (1 copy for every 1 students): Activity 2

Required Preparation

- Each group of 2 students needs at least 2 hexagons and trapezoids, 4 squares and rhombuses, and 8 triangles.

Student Task Statement

Your teacher will give you handouts with some shapes on them.

Use pattern blocks to decide which shape covers the most space. Be ready to explain your reasoning.



Student Response

Shape C covers the most space. Sample response: Shape A can be made with 7 triangles. Shape B can be made with 8 triangles. Shape C is the same length as Shape B if I cut the end off and move it to the other side, but Shape C is taller.

Launch

- Groups of 2
- Give each student a copy of the blackline master.
- Give each group pattern blocks.
- Display the first two shapes (the hexagon and the heart-shaped octagon).
- "What do you notice? What do you wonder?" (Both shapes could be made with pattern blocks. The second shape looks like the first shape, but it's been bent. Which shape covers more space? Which shape is larger?)
- 1 minute: quiet think time
- Share and record responses.
- "Which shape covers more space? How do you know?" (We can cover them with the same blocks, so they cover the same amount of space.)
- 2 minutes: partner discussion
- Share and record responses.

Activity

- "Let's continue comparing shapes. Work with your partner to decide which shape covers the most space. Use pattern blocks if they are helpful."
- 5 minutes: partner work time
- Monitor for students who:
  - Use pattern blocks to determine which shape covers the most space.
  - Notice that Shapes B and C would be the same length if one of the ends of Shape B was moved over, but Shape C covers more space because it is taller.

Activity Synthesis

- Ask selected students to share strategies for tiling each shape with pattern blocks and how the tiling helped them decide which shape covers the most space.
- "When we decide which shape covers the most space, we are talking about the **area** of a shape. We can think about the area as the amount of space covered by a shape."
- "Which shape has the greatest area?" (Shape C takes up the most space, so it has the greatest area.)

Lesson Synthesis

"Today's lesson was about area. We can think about area as the amount of space covered by a shape."

Display the shapes from the first activity.

"Let's revisit the shapes from the first activity. Within each pair, which shape has the greater area? How do you know?" (The shapes we decided were larger have greater areas: the large oval, the hexagon, and the first rectangle. The shapes that covered more space had greater areas.)

Suggested Centers

- Can You Build It? (3–5), Stage 1: Rectangles (Addressing)
- Five in a Row: Multiplication (3–5), Stage 1: Factors 1–5 and 10 (Supporting)

Cool-down

5 min

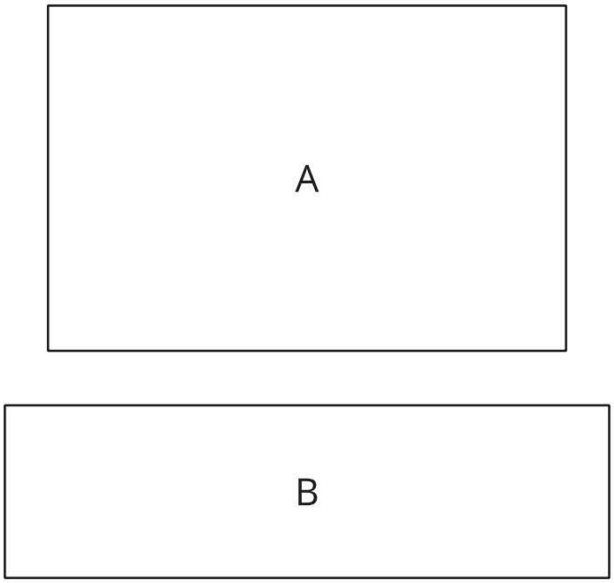
Compare Area

Standards

Addressing **3.MD.C.5**

Student Task Statement

Which rectangle has the greater area? How do you know?



Student Response

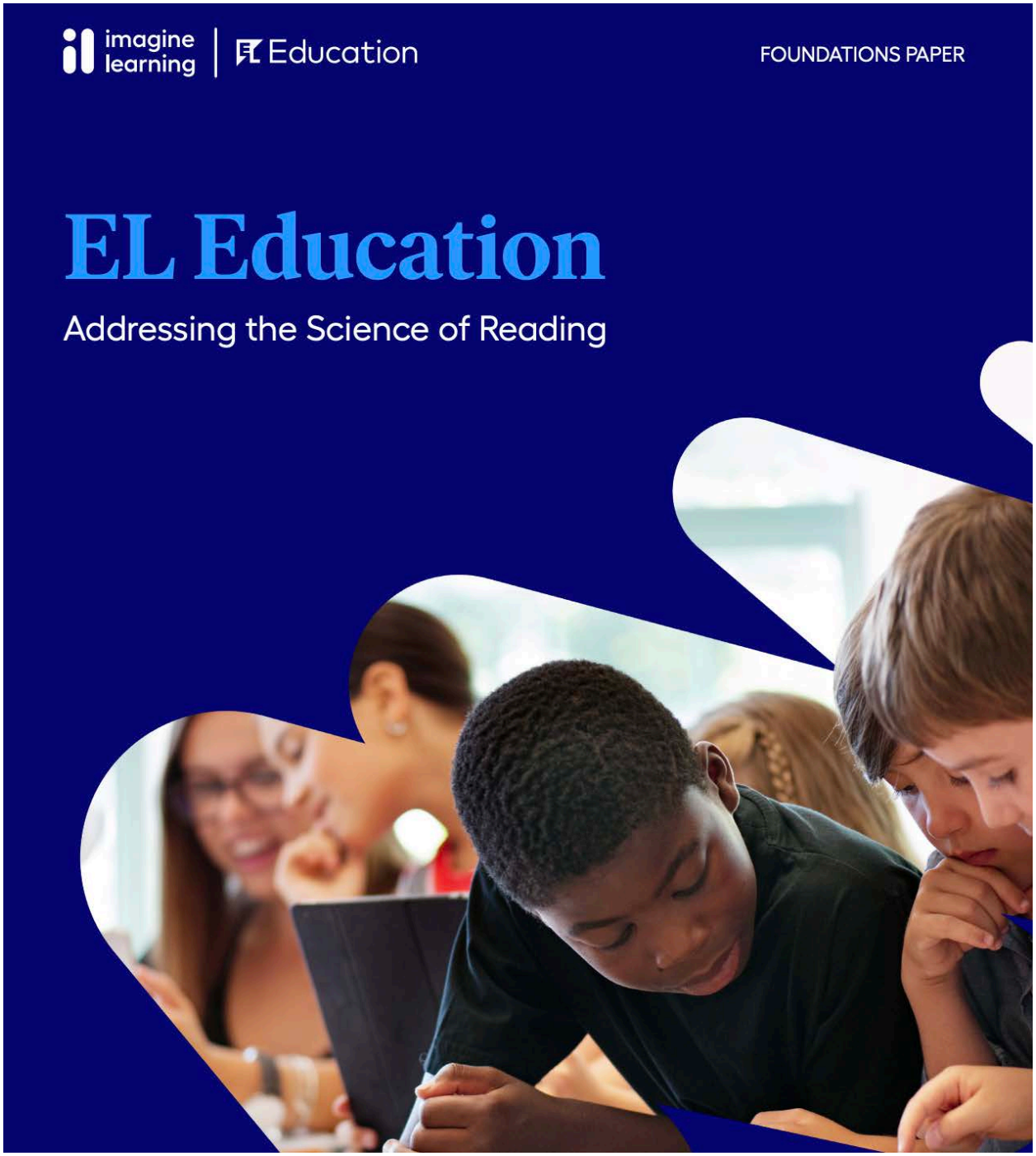
Figure A. Sample response: Figure A covers more space. Even if you cut Figure B in half, it would fit in Figure A with leftover space.

Responding to Student Thinking

Students say that Figure B has the greater area.

Next Day Supports
Before the *Warm-up*, have students discuss which figure has the greatest area.

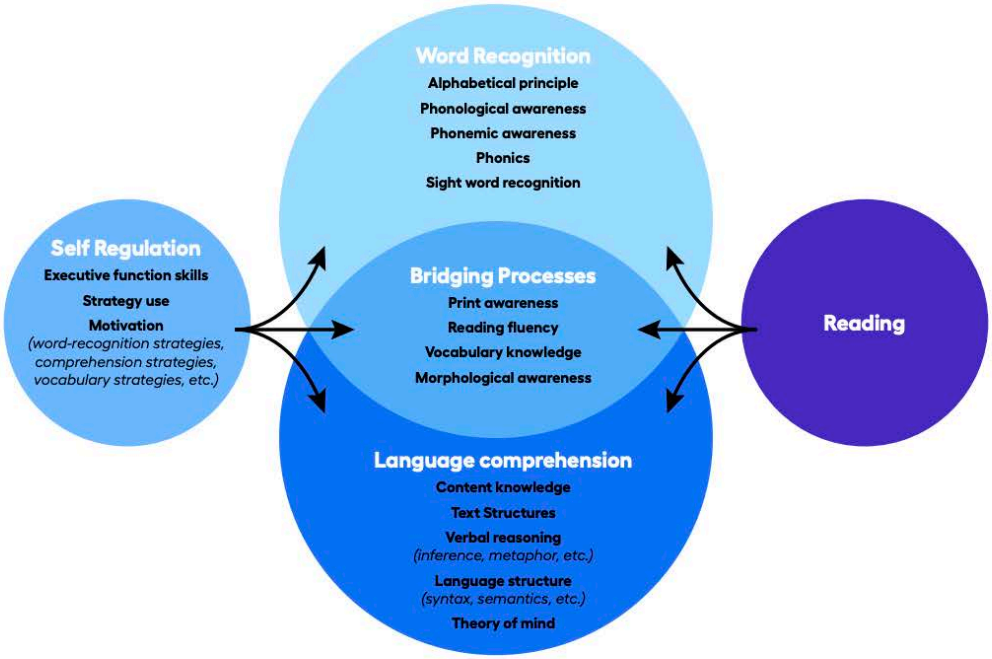
Footnote 37: Addressing the Science of Reading with EL Education with Lesson Examples



Background

More than 35 years of peer-reviewed research from the fields of educational psychology, cognitive science, and neuroscience contribute to our understanding of the science of reading. Scientific evidence shows that students need strong language-comprehension skills (content knowledge, background knowledge, verbal reasoning, language structure, and theory of mind), word-recognition skills (phonological awareness, phonics knowledge, decoding skills, and sight word recognition), and bridging skills (print-concept knowledge, reading fluency, vocabulary knowledge, morphological awareness, and self-regulation skills) to read successfully (Cantor et al., 2018; Catts et al., 2005; Cutting et al., 2015; Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Tunmer, 2018; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000; Rayner et al., 2001; Rose, 2006; Scarborough, 2001). Poor skill development in any of these areas creates a breakdown in reading abilities.

Figure 1: *The Science of Reading*



Note: This model is adapted from Duke and Cartwright (2021), Gough and Tunmer (1986), Scarborough (2001), and Cutting et al. (2015) models of reading.

To address this challenge, a growing number of schools turn to digital and blended learning programs that ensure their curricula address the science of reading. Research shows that blending technology with teacher-led instruction can be particularly effective in improving reading achievement (Means et al., 2013). However, simply putting students in front of a computer is not a guarantee of improved reading achievement. To maximize learning, online reading instruction needs to be research-based and practice-tested.

The Imagine Learning EL Education curriculum focuses on the science of reading by explicitly teaching:

- **foundational skills** (alphabetic principle, phonological awareness, decoding, and sight word recognition) that build word recognition;
- **language-comprehension skills** (content knowledge, background knowledge, language structure, verbal reasoning, and theory of mind) that support strategic reading;
- **bridging skills** (print concepts, vocabulary knowledge, morphological awareness, and self-regulation skills) that predict reading; and
- **self-regulation skills** that support fluent, skilled reading.



Overview of Imagine Learning EL Education

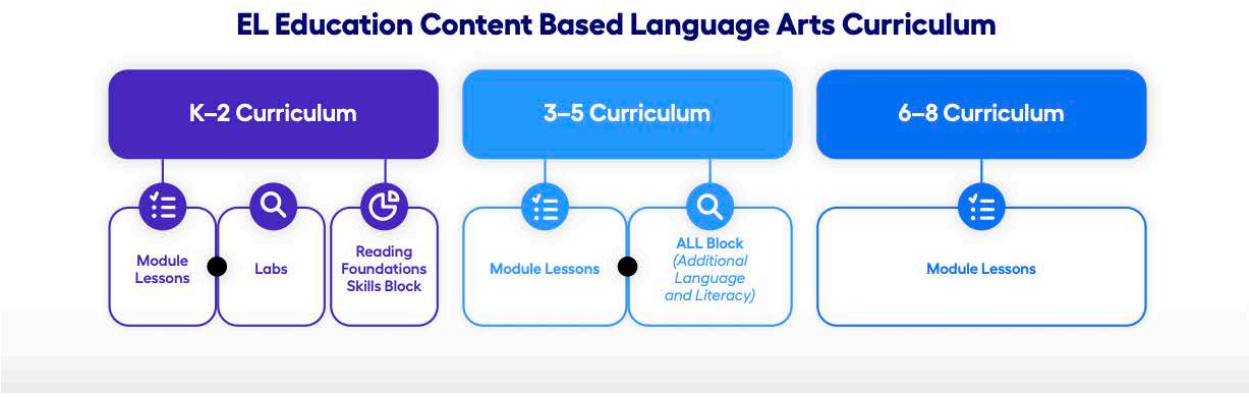
Imagine Learning EL Education is a comprehensive, digital-first, standards-based, K–8 core language arts program that engages teachers and diverse learners through compelling, real-world content. This content-based curriculum focuses on equity, emphasizes social and emotional learning, and engages students with rich, complex text designed to build deeper literacy skills. Each grade level includes four eight-week modules to help students build content knowledge based on a compelling topic related to science, social studies, or literature. Below is a brief overview of the content covered within each grade band.

The K–2 curricula provide two hours of content-based literacy instruction per day (Module Lessons and Labs) and one hour of structured phonics (the K–2 Reading Foundations Skills Block) per day. Modules explicitly teach oral language development (vocabulary, syntax, and listening skills) and engage students with rich, complex informational and narrative text daily. The K–2 Reading Foundations Skills Block teaches students the building blocks of spoken and written language: letter names, sounds, the ability to break words apart and blend them back together, common spelling patterns, and decoding of words.

The 3–5 curricula provide two hours of content-based literacy and writing instruction per day, grounded in complex informational and narrative text (Module Lessons and the Additional Language and Literacy ALL Block), with an hour of optional Life Science instruction in Module 2. The ALL Block provides additional practice with complex texts through independent reading, speaking fluency (grammar, usage, and mechanics), writing, word study, and vocabulary.

The 6–8 curricula provide 45 minutes of content-based literacy instruction within Module Lessons each day.

Figure 2: *Imagine Learning EL Education Language Arts Curriculum*



Translating the Science of Research into Action

Imagine Learning EL Education incorporates four research-based practices into its curriculum, all of which are critical to the science of reading.

1. Explicitly Teach Word-Recognition Skills

To read a text successfully, a reader must accurately and effortlessly pronounce and recognize a word (Scarborough, 2001). This requires the ability to map print to sounds—skills related to knowledge of the alphabetic principle, phonological awareness, decoding, and sight word recognition (Castles et al., 2018). Below is an overview of how the EL Education curricula address these skills.

- The **Alphabetic Principle** refers to the systematic, predictable relationship between sounds and letters in print and spoken words. As Vaughn and Linan-Thompson (2004) note, "Children who understand that the sequence of letters in written words represents the sequence of sounds in spoken words and who know letter-sound correspondences can use this knowledge to decode both familiar and unfamiliar regular words" (p. 33). According to Ehri (2005), the development of the alphabetic principle occurs in four phases:
  - **Pre-alphabetic:** Children can identify a few letters in print, but cannot yet identify letter sounds.
  - **Partial-alphabetic:** Children can identify many upper- and lower-case letters and some letter sounds. Children have weak phonemic awareness (confusing vowels and vowel sounds), decoding, and spelling skills.
  - **Full alphabetic:** Children know all major letter-sound correspondences, can blend and segment sounds in a word, have memorized a growing number of sight words, and can decode and encode one-syllable words.
  - **Consolidated alphabetic:** Children know all major letter-sound correspondences, have a large bank of sight words, and can use affixes, root words, onsets, rimes, context, and syllables to decode multisyllabic and irregularly spelled words.
- **Phonological awareness** is the recognition that spoken words are made up of smaller parts such as words, syllables, onsets, and rimes (Gillon, 2018). For example, the **onset** of a word is the initial consonant or consonant blend before a vowel (e.g., /fr/ in frog), and the rime is the word part that follows (e.g., /og/ in frog). Understanding onset and **rime**, as well as rhyming words (families of words that share the same rime), builds students' awareness of common word parts and helps students decode unfamiliar words (Adams, 1990; Hudson, 1996).

- **Phonemic awareness** is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds in words (Bowey, 2005; Ehri et al., 2001; Gillon, 2018; Hulme et al., 2012). Phonological and phonemic awareness helps readers decode words (Ehri, 1992; Ehri, 2005; Yopp, 1992) and significantly predict word recognition, reading comprehension, and spelling performance (Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Gillon, 2018). Research suggests that effective phonological-awareness instruction should be explicit and systematic, prioritize teaching letter-sound correspondences, and capitalize on interactive word-building activities (Foorman et al., 2016; NICHD, 2000). According to the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000), phoneme manipulation, which includes isolating phonemes in words, segmenting words into phonemes, blending and adding phonemes to form words, deleting phonemes from words, and manipulating onsets and rimes is critical to building students' word recognition (Schuele & Boudreau, 2008).

- **Phonics** explicitly highlights the relationship between letter symbols and sounds. **Decoding** is the process of seeing a written symbol and being able to say what sound it represents (Adams, 1990; NICHD, 2000). A large body of research indicates that phonics is the most efficient and effective way to teach the alphabetic principle (NICHD, 2000; Rose, 2006; Rowe, 2005). Effective phonics instruction should explicitly and systematically teach: letter identification, letter-sound correspondence, blending, sound-spelling patterns, word recognition, and encoding (the ability to determine the spelling of a word based on the sounds in the word) (Castles et al., 2018; Foorman et al., 2016; Hudson et al., 2012; NICHD, 2000). The progression should start with major sound-spelling correspondences of consonants, short and long vowels, and vowel and consonant digraphs, and then progress to blends (NICHD, 2000).

- **Sight Word Recognition**—the ability to fluently read irregularly spelled words or words that frequently appear in the English language—is critical to fluent reading (Ehri, 2014; Paige et al., 2019). As Ehri (2005) notes, if readers use all their working memory to "attempt to decode words, to analogize, or to predict words, their attention is shifted from the text to the word itself to identify it, and this disrupts comprehension" (p. 170).

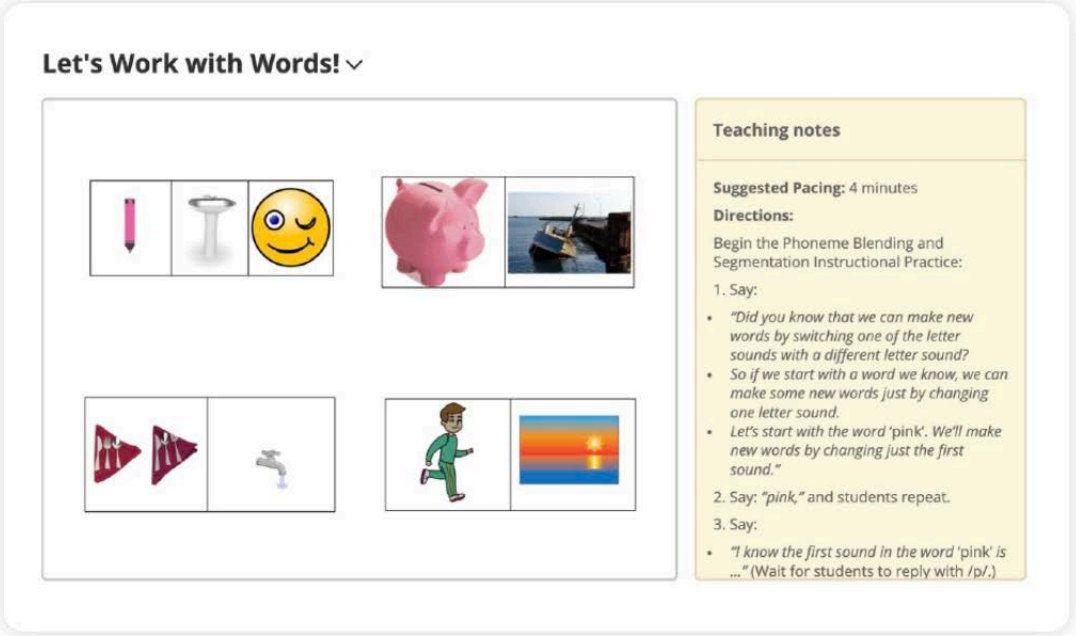
Our Solution: Imagine Learning EL Education's K–2 Skills Block explicitly teaches the alphabetic principle, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding, and sight word recognition based on Ehri's (2005) developmental phases of reading development. The program systematically progresses from easier phonics skills to more complex skills to ensure students develop a strong foundation before moving on to more difficult concepts.

- In the **Pre-alphabetic Phase**, students identify letters (uppercase and lowercase) and letter-sound correspondence through oral and written texts. An introductory text, titled *Jeffi and the Search for Names*, teaches the most common consonant and vowel sounds (/a/, /t/, /h/, /p/, /n/, /c/, /m/, /r/, /v/, /s/, /g/, /i/, /l/, /d/, /f/, /k/, /y/, /x/, /q/, /u/, /b/, /o/, /w/, /j/, /e/, and /z/). As students hear the names of creatures and objects the story characters encounter, students practice letter mnemonics, phoneme identification, letter name, sound formation,

and rhythm of speech. Feel the Beats lessons focus on letters. Students practice counting, pronouncing, identifying, segmenting, and manipulating first, last, and middle syllables in these lessons. To help them learn about word families and recognize chunks of words, students play multisensory rhyming games, in which they learn to attend to onsets and rimes. For example, in *Color-Coded Rhymes* and *Rhyme a-Lot-Bot*, students identify, sort, and color pictures that rhyme with each other. They also practice blending onsets with rimes to determine whether the blends make real words.

- In the **Partial-alphabetic Phase**, students learn how the 44 speech sounds of English can be written with graphemes. Students learn consonant digraphs (ch, sh, th, wh, ck, and ng), spoken short vowels (/a/, /i/, /u/, /o/, and /e/), long vowels sounds, r-controlled vowels, –ank and –ink, initial/consonant blends (–bl, –br, –cl, –cr, –dr, –fr, –tr, –fl, –gl, –gr, –pl, –pr, –sl, –sm, –sp, and –st), and consonant clusters (–st, –nt, –nd, –nk, –ng, –ll, –ss, –ff, and –zz) in spoken words. As students progress through modules, they encounter more complex sound-spelling patterns, such as –nch, –ang, –ing, –ung, –ong, –ank, –ink, –unk, and –onk, and learn to use suffixes (e.g.,. –s, –ing, –ed, and –es) to identify word parts. Broader phonological-awareness instruction then shifts to phonemic awareness, where students learn to segment and blend phonemes to decode and encode VC (vowel consonants), CVC (consonant vowel consonant), and CVCC (consonant vowel consonant consonant) words. For example:
- In the Reading Foundations Skills Block Grade 1, Module 1, students listen as the teacher reads the poem, *Open a Book, Unlock a Door.* The teacher asks what vowel sound is heard in the word “lands.” This process is repeated throughout the poem. Next, students have the option to complete a short vowel picture sort found on the Activity Bank page. Students sort twelve pictures by the long and short vowel sounds, with two, three, and four phonemes.
  - In the Reading Foundations Skills Block Grade 1, Module 1, students segment words before writing the words. The teacher says the words “van, path, math.” Students segment each word by pronouncing the phonemes. Students receive ample opportunities to practice foundational reading skills, including deleting phonemes within words.
  - In Skills Block Kindergarten, Module 4, students explore phonemic substitution in –ink words including pink, wink, etc. Lessons provide engaging realia (images and multimedia). Teachers use sample phrases such as, “Did you know that we can make new words by switching one of the letter sounds with a different letter sound?” to help students attend to word parts. In addition to clear instructional materials and student-facing materials, teachers have access to additional reference materials like Articulatory Gestures Charts to explicitly teach students proper mouth positioning with letter and sound formation.

Figure 3: *Kindergarten Phonemic Substitution Activity*



Students learn high-frequency words from the Dolch and Fry word lists (high-frequency sight words), including regularly and irregularly spelled words. They practice identifying and decoding sight words through engaging, interactive activities:

- Students play a game in *Sight Word Parking Lot* that requires reading a word correctly to successfully "park" their car in a parking space.
- In *Clothes Pin Match*, students match and read the letters on a popsicle stick by matching clothespin letters to the sight word written on each stick (e.g., the, of, to, you, she, my, is, are, do, and does).
- In *Fishing for Sight Words*, sight words are written on cutout paper fish. Each child is given a "fishing pole" with a string and a magnet on the end. Students go fishing for sight word fish and keep them if they are read correctly.
- In *Sight Word Hopscotch*, students demonstrate their ability to read high-frequency words while playing digital hopscotch.

Imagine Learning EL Education Language Arts Kindergarten Phonemic Substitution Activity

- In the **Full Alphabetic Phase**, students learn to identify and use closed syllables (a syllable that has a short vowel ending in a consonant), open syllables (a syllable that ends with a vowel sound that is spelled with a single vowel letter), CVC spelling patterns (consonant, vowel, consonant, and then the letter e), r-controlled sounds (e.g., /ar/, /or/, and /er/) and vowel teams ("ai," "ea," "oa," "ay," "ow," "ee," "-y," "igh," and "ie") to decode and encode one-syllable and then two-syllable words. For example, in one lesson, students learn that the consonant -le syllable is a final syllable with one consonant followed by l and a silent e. These syllables occur at the end of the word and have no vowel sound. In Grade 2, Word Workout: Same Sounds, students work with a partner to complete exercises with C-le endings and decide if each word is spelled with the following endings: –dle, –ble, –fle, –ple.

  Students also learn that different graphemes and letter combinations can make up the same sounds. In Grade 2, Cycle 3, Lesson 13, teachers use the Word Rules instructional practice to review /ē/ words spelled with "ee," "ea," and "y." To begin, the teacher reads /ē/ words in random order: "need," "squeeze," "peach," "dream," "party," and "happy." Next, students work with a partner to review the /ē/ word rules (in "ee" and "ea" words, the vowel sound is in the middle of the syllable and followed by a consonant sound). They also review the "y" sound at the end of words. Finally, students take turns reading the words and then writing the words they hear using the Word Rules Word Cards and whiteboards.

- In the **Consolidated Phase**, students engage in deep word analysis. They learn spelling rules to help them generalize spelling patterns for vowel teams and affixes, and that there are many words in English for which rules do not apply (e.g., "turn," "her," and "bird" all have the /er/ sound but are all spelled with different vowels). Students also apply new spelling patterns ("oi," "oy," "ou," and "ow"), common prefixes (re–, un-, and–, pre–), suffixes (–ed, –ing, and –er), contractions, and word endings such as –tion and –sion to decode words. They also spell words from dictation and practice using encoding strategies while writing words (e.g., using sound-letter-sound relationships, applying spelling rules and conventions, capitalizing on knowledge of root words and affixes, and utilizing word parts to spell words).



2. Explicitly Teach Language-Comprehension Skills

In addition to word-recognition skills, a reader needs "fluent execution and coordination of language comprehension skills (content knowledge, text structures, verbal reasoning, language structure, and theory of mind) to make meaning from a text" (Scarborough, 2001, p. 98).

- **Content Knowledge:** Cognitive psychologists and reading researchers agree that readers need to integrate text information with prior content knowledge to successfully understand text (Adams, 2009; Cabell & Hwang, 2020; Lee & Spratley, 2010; Torgesen et al., 2007). In fact, decades of research show that content knowledge significantly contributes to reading comprehension (e.g., Cabell & Hwang, 2020; Recht & Lesley, 1988; Smith et al., 2020). Cabell and Hwang (2020) note content knowledge is predictive of reading comprehension because it helps students connect ideas across sentences and make inferences about missing information in passages. According to Adams (2009), knowledge builds knowledge—that is, the more one knows about a topic, the more one can read and understand about the topic. In fact, weaker readers with strong content knowledge could compensate for generally poor comprehension skills (Recht & Leslie, 1988). However, content knowledge is only useful when it can be organized into a schema, contextualized, and transferred to other contexts (National Research Council, 2000).

Our Solution: Imagine Learning EL Education intentionally builds student content knowledge through the program's Module Lessons, Labs, and ALL Block lessons. The program's foundation is hour-long Module Lessons that expose students to authentic texts related to a diverse array of science, social studies, and literature. For example, Grades K–5 passages' range of age-appropriate topics includes toys and play, birds and plants, frogs, and human-rights stories.

Within each grade level, students complete four modules per year. There are three units within each module. In the K–5 materials, the first unit activates students' prior knowledge to help them connect new knowledge to known knowledge by asking students to recall and verify prior learning. This prompts thinking about a subject, connects a topic to students' own lives, challenges students to reflect on a new idea,



Figure 4: *Grade 7 Harlem Renaissance Lesson*

or poses a compelling problem. For Example, in a lesson on the Harlem Renaissance, the teacher asks why a 1914 magazine by a Black American would portray justice as blind (Figure 4). The 6–8 materials are connected and organized into modules with grade-level-appropriate topics. At the beginning of each module, guiding questions and big ideas are presented to build content knowledge and thematically tie anchor texts together.

The K–2 program contains a third instructional block, focusing on Labs, facilitating knowledge transfer to new contexts. For example, in Grade 2, Module 1, students study schools and why they are important. They read the anchor text *Off to Class: Incredible and Unusual Schools Around the World* by Susan Hughes to learn about various international schools and the challenges some communities face sending their students to school. In the Module 1 Performance Task, students create an informative book about the most important elements of a school. The four Labs for Module 1 provide additional opportunities to apply content knowledge in new settings. For example:

- In the **Create Lab**, students draw portraits of important school community members as they learn how to use artistic skills and concepts such as features of a face, shapes, and details.
- In the **Engineer Lab**, students think creatively to design an ideal space for their school. Then, as students learn what makes schools important in the Module Lessons, they can apply that learning to their reasons for designing their school space.
- As students learn about the similarities and differences among schools across the globe, they use the **Imagine Lab** to act out and understand the critical parts of schools, no matter where they are.
- The **Research Lab** allows students to learn more about their school community by conducting surveys of the people in their schools.



The Grade 3–5 ALL Block further facilitates content literacy through reading. For example, in Grade 4, Module 1, students read texts about how monarch butterfly, armadillo, ostrich, springbok, and robin bodies and behaviors help the animals survive. During the corresponding ALL Block lessons, students read three additional engaging texts about animal defense mechanisms: *Animal Behavior: Animal Defenses* by Christina Wilsdon, *Venom* by Marilyn Singer, and *Can You Survive the Wilderness?* by Matt Doeden. They also read free-choice texts on any topic of their interest. They log their reading, respond to reading prompts in independent-reading journals, and share their learning from reading in a group discussion. These activities facilitate vocabulary development and the expansion of content knowledge.

- **Text Structures:** Text structure refers to the way authors organize words, pictures, and ideas within a text. Because text structures follow a predictable format, understanding text structure can help students more quickly organize the information and details they are learning, identify the important elements in a passage, show how parts of a text relate to each other, make logical predictions, and monitor comprehension (Zimmerman et al., 2018). Research shows that explicitly teaching text features for narrative texts (e.g., characters, setting, conflict, plot, resolution, and theme) and informational texts (e.g., description, chronology, comparison, problem/solution, and cause/effect) improves reading comprehension and recall from texts (Hebert et al., 2016; NICHD, 2000).

Our Solution: Imagine Learning EL Education teaches students the structural features and conventions of informational texts (e.g., biographies, news articles, essays, speeches, technical writing, and other forms of expository writing) and literary texts (e.g., children's adventure stories, folktales, historical fiction, legends, mysteries, fables, fantasy, poetry, and realistic fiction). For example:

- In Grade 2, Module 3, an informational-text lesson teaches students to use a table of contents, headings, captions, diagrams, labels, bold print, glossaries, and photographs to locate information about plants and pollinators (see Figure 5).
- When fifth-grade students read *The Most Beautiful Roof in the World* by Kathryn Lasky in Module 2, they learn to look for signal words for a problem-solution text (e.g., the problem is, the dilemma is, solved, one challenge, and this led to). Then, after filling out a graphic organizer, they note that while the rainforest is difficult to study, skilled scientists developed new technology and ways to study the canopy (Figure 6). Additional passages provide practice analyzing descriptive, chronological, comparison, and cause-and-effect text formats.
- Lessons also explore features of literary and narrative texts, including story elements (character, setting, and major events), characterization, conflict, theme, voice, point-of-view, figurative language, and poetic structure. For example, in Grade 6, Module 3, students read the anchor text, *Two Roads* by Joseph Bruchac, and analyze the main character's response to prejudice and privilege at a Native American boarding school and what that reveals about his character.

Figure 5: *Grade 2 Informational Text Lesson*

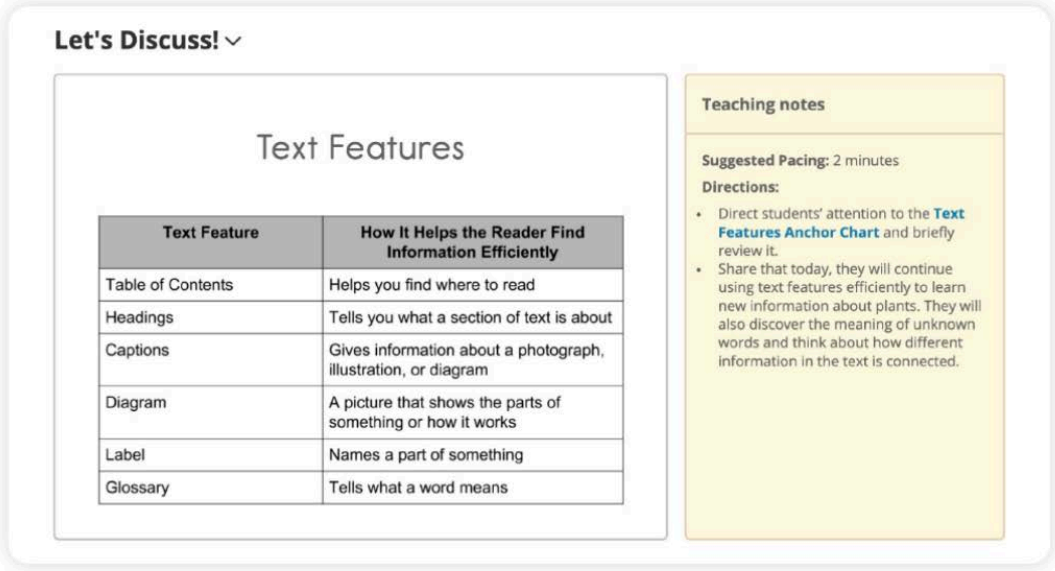
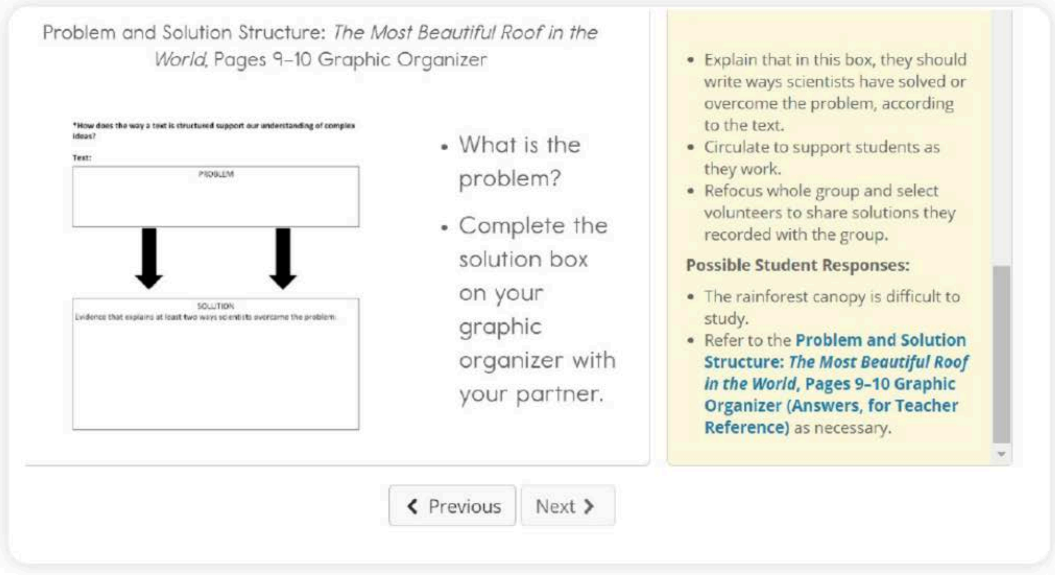


Figure 6: *Problem and Solution Text Structure Lesson*



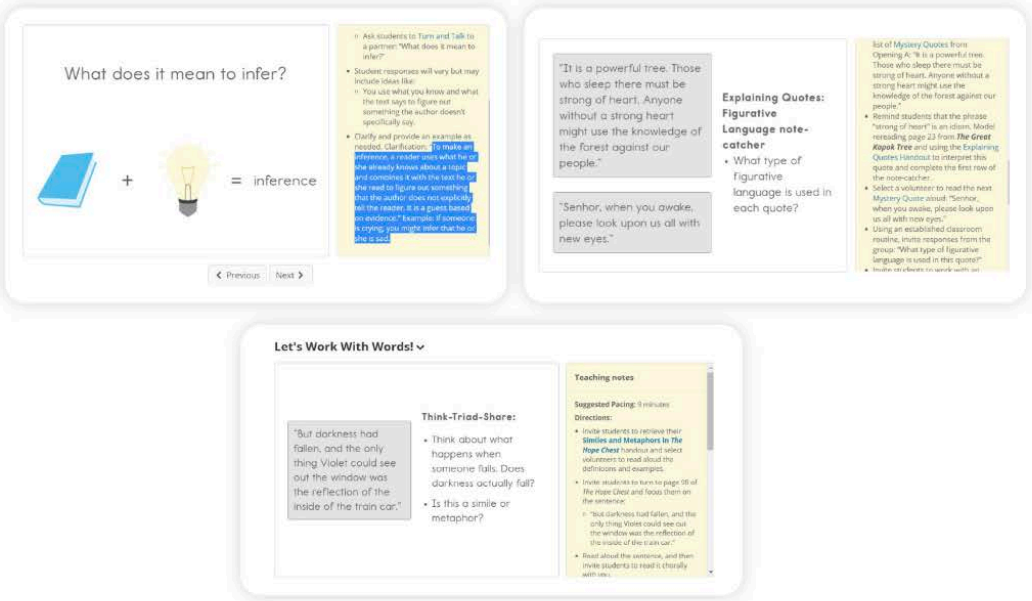
- **Verbal Reasoning:** Verbal-reasoning skills—drawing conclusions based on information that has been implied rather than stated—predicts reading comprehension (Elleman, 2017). Research shows that effective verbal-reasoning instructional techniques include teaching students to interpret the nonliteral meanings of metaphors and figurative speech (Duke & Cartwright, 2021) as well as instructing students to "use their background knowledge and integrate it with the information in the text, self-generated elaborations, graphic organizers that connect concepts, and text clues" (Elleman & Oslund, 2019, p. 5).

Our solution: Imagine Learning EL Education explicitly teaches verbal-reasoning skills. Students learn to make inferences about the meaning of words, ideas within sentences, and ideas within and outside texts. At the beginning of each unit, students use the Infer the Topic Protocol that links what they already know about a text and what images or words help them gain new information about a module topic. The program shows how to use linguistic cues and facts stated in a text to uncover the meaning of unfamiliar words. Students learn to make global inferences based on ideas expressed in different sentences or passages in a text. For example, in Grade 8, Module 4, students make connections among—and distinctions between—individuals, ideas, and events in the book *Farewell to Manzanar*. Sixth-grade students read excerpts from *The Lost Garden and Dragon Wings* to infer Laurence Yep's perspective on the police. In a Grade 5, Module 1 lesson, students make connections between the books *Esperanza Rising, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,* and *A Life Like Mine*.

Imagine Learning EL Education also teaches students to identify and interpret figurative language (idioms, metaphors, and similes) in context (Figure 7).

- In Grade 4, students explore how authors use idioms (expressions whose meanings are not predictable from words) by analyzing phrases such as "drop like flies" or "to add insult to injury."
- They investigate how authors use metaphors to communicate their message more clearly and vividly. For instance, a Grade 5, Module 1 lesson introduces metaphors by discussing the phrase "the elephant in the room." Students learn that the elephant refers to a large, conspicuous problem no one wants to talk about because it is too uncomfortable. They then analyze metaphors in books such as *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan, *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry, and *Eight Days: A Story of Haiti* by Edwidge Danticat.
- In Grade 4, Module 4, students explore how the simile, "I was sold and willed and bartered about like so much livestock", in the book *Hope Chest* by Karen Schwabach, means the character was treated badly (sold like a farm animal rather than treated like a human).

Figure 7: *Figurative Language and Inferences*



- Language Structure: To read successfully, readers need to understand how language is organized to convey meaning (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Research shows that syntactic awareness (awareness of the grammatical structures of a sentence) and pragmatics (communicative competence) significantly contribute to reading proficiency (Mokhtari & Niederhauser, 2013)

Our Solution: Imgagine Learning EL Education develops students' understanding of how syntax and semantics dictate sentence meaning. The K–2 Module Lessons explicitly teach the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prepositions, and adverbs, and students analyze these parts of speech in sentences, songs, and poems. In the Grades 3–5 ALL Block lessons, students practice conventions of written English, including usage, mechanics, capitalization, and punctuation. Knowledge of standard writing conventions and spelling is deepened through short and fully developed writing assignments.

Teacher-facilitated Language Dives help students analyze the meaning, purpose, and language structure of a compelling sentence from a complex text. These structures within the sentence help students learn grammar, syntactical constructions, word groupings, and idiomatic expressions. For example, a Grade 3, Module 4, Language Dive helps students better understand the role of conjunctions and adverbs. Students learn that conjunctions are parts of speech that join two words or phrases together. They also learn that adverbs are words that can modify a verb, adjective, or another adverb, and that they tell us how, when, where, why, how often, or how much the action is performed. Students then read the sentence, "Because water is not evenly distributed across the globe, nearly one-fifth of the world's population does not have access to

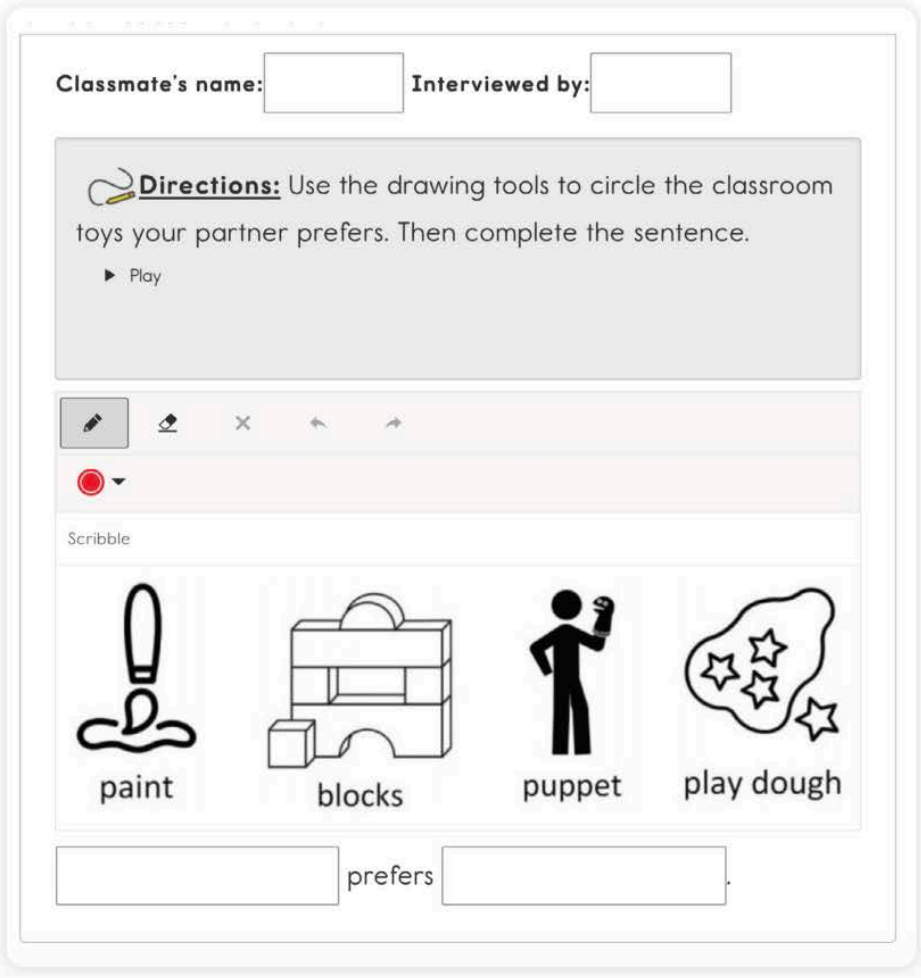
enough water." They explore what would happen if the words *because, evenly,* and *nearly* were removed. For instance, if the word *because* were removed, the sentence would not make sense; students separate the first and second parts into two distinct sentences. Without the word *evenly*, the sentence implies that water is not distributed globally (which does not make sense because water is everywhere). Students then replace the words *evenly* and *nearly* with other adverbs without changing the meaning of the sentence: *Because water is not _____ distributed across the globe, _____ one-fifth of the world's population does not have access to enough water.* During the Language Dives, teachers help students notice effective communication, and common grammar mistakes and errors that interfere with speech and writing.

The program also builds students' social-language skills through texts they are reading and materials they are learning. Because each lesson requires conversation with peers, students get practice narrating a story, explaining an event, giving directions, or persuading someone in an argument. In addition, students learn to consider context and culture to have productive and equitable conversations with peers.

- **Theory of Mind:** In addition to word-recognition and language-comprehension skills, "understanding a text requires that we put ourselves in the mindset of the [text's] characters" (Dore et al., 2018). This necessitates having a theory of mind, or an understanding that other people have different mental states that drive their actions. It also requires the knowledge that others may have beliefs or perspectives that differ from one's own (Premack & Woodruff, 1978). Being able to make social inferences about characters' thoughts, feelings, and intentions contributes to reading (Guajardo & Cartwright, 2016).

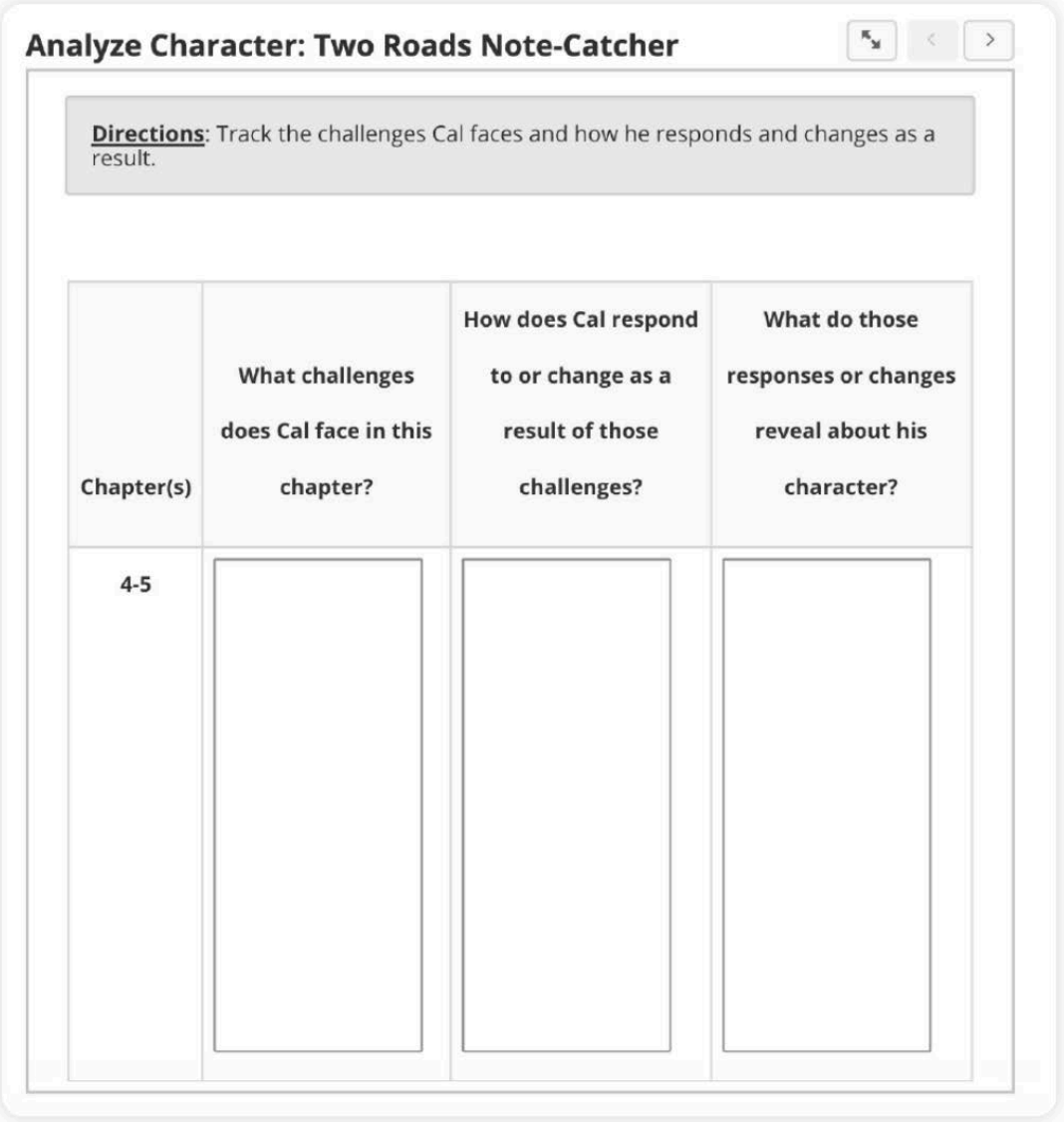
Our Solution: Imagine Learning EL Education teaches students that individuals have their own diverse thoughts and beliefs, and that these perspectives could be different from their own. Through the instruction, students are given opportunities to explore diverse perspectives and how their perspectives might change after reading a text or discussing a topic with their peers. For example, in Kindergarten, Module 1, students explore how people have varying toy and game preferences (Figure 8).

Figure 8: *Kindergarten Theory of Mind Lesson*



In Grade 6, Module 3, students analyze characters' thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions (and why they have them) while reading the compelling text, *Two Roads* (Figure 10). Learners make predictions and then read on to see if those predictions were correct. They also dissect how characters' actions contribute to events in texts and how these behaviors impact others around them.

Figure 9: *Grade 6 Theory of Mind Lesson*



Analyze Character: Two Roads Note-Catcher

Directions: Track the challenges Cal faces and how he responds and changes as a result.

Chapter(s)	What challenges does Cal face in this chapter?	How does Cal respond to or change as a result of those challenges?	What do those responses or changes reveal about his character?
4-5			

3. Explicitly Teach Bridging Skills

Duke and Cartwright's (2021) synthesis of reading research indicates that four constructs—print awareness, reading fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and morphological awareness—make a direct and large contribution to reading comprehension by themselves, and directly contribute to word recognition and language comprehension. Because these bridging skills are malleable and have been implicated in reading difficulty, experts agree they should be explicitly taught (Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

- **Print Awareness:** Research indicates that print awareness—having a basic understanding of how letters, words, sentences, and books function—is highly predictive of language comprehension, word recognition, and reading achievement (Adams, 1990; Clay, 2005; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Scarborough, 1998; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Wagner et al., 1997). Yet, many students do not come to school with an understanding of basic print concepts (Clay, 1985). As such, experts recommend explicitly teaching struggling students the conventions of printed language, such as how to locate the front and back of a book, identify letters and words, notice when words and letters are out of order, and recognize sentence punctuation (NICHD, 2000).

Our Solution: Imagine Learning EL Education teaches students concepts of print, such as left-to-right directionality, through various stories, poems, and other shared texts. They learn that written sentences start with capital letters and end with full stops, and that the spacings between words, sentences, lines of print, and paragraphs follow a meaningful pattern.

- **Reading Fluency:** The National Reading Panel defines fluency as the ability to read words and text "with speed, accuracy, and proper expression" and phrasing (NICHD, 2000, p. 3-1). Reading fluency facilitates word recognition and reading comprehension because "it releases a reader's cognitive resources (e.g., working memory) to focus on meaning" (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). Effective fluency strategies include modeling fluent oral reading, asking students to read a text aloud and having a teacher provide feedback, and engaging in repeated oral readings of text (Hudson et al., 2005; Marshall & Campbell, 2005; NICHD, 2000; Rasinski, 2004).

Our Solution: Imagine Learning EL Education teaches students to decode and read texts with automaticity and fluency. As students progress through the program, they interact with increasingly difficult text and read complex and decodable passages multiple times (reading themselves or hearing them read aloud). Students learn specific criteria for reading fluency by watching teachers read connected text out loud. Educators model reading text smoothly, with meaning, and at the right speed, as well as making corrections as they read (Figure 11). Students read with a partner or practice reading in small groups where they receive peer and teacher critiques. K–2 students recite poems and songs across multiple lessons. In Grades 3–5, students self-assess their fluency skills during ALL Block (Figure 12). Students

in Grades 6–8 read as part of a performance (e.g., podcasts, documentary voiceover, audio museum). The program capitalizes on assisted reading, choral reading, shared reading, and paired reading to improve prosody and expression. In K–2, the Skills Block program includes benchmark, cycle, and snapshot assessments that measure students' fluency and reading comprehension.

Figure 10: *Grade 2 Reading Fluency Lesson*

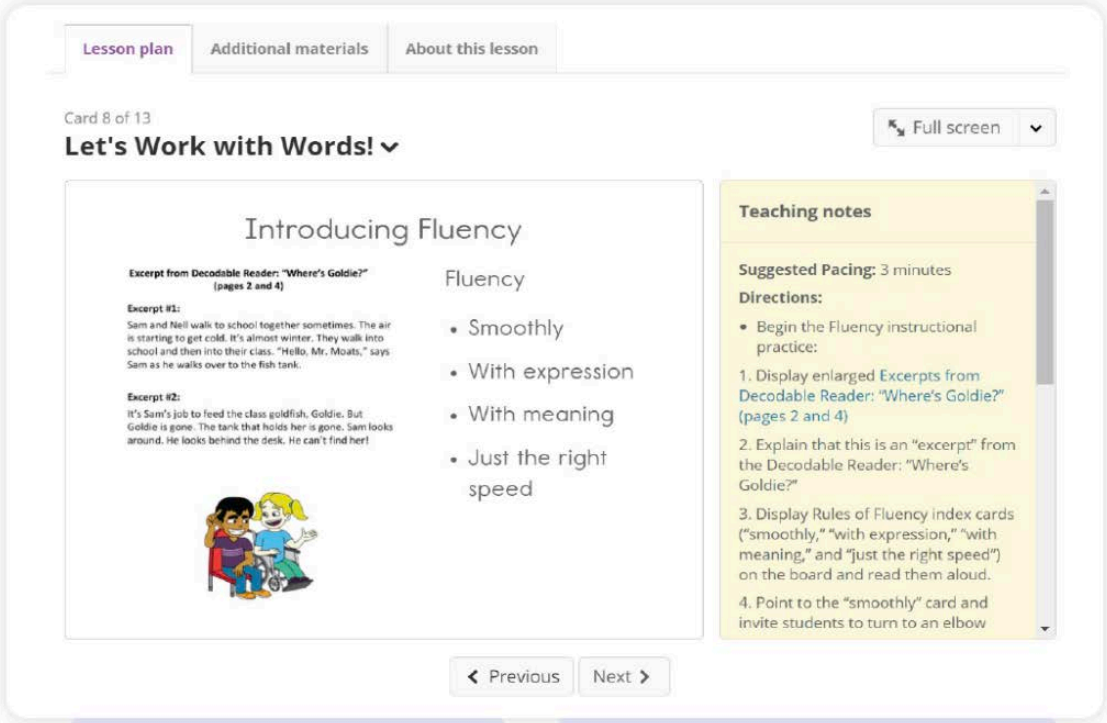
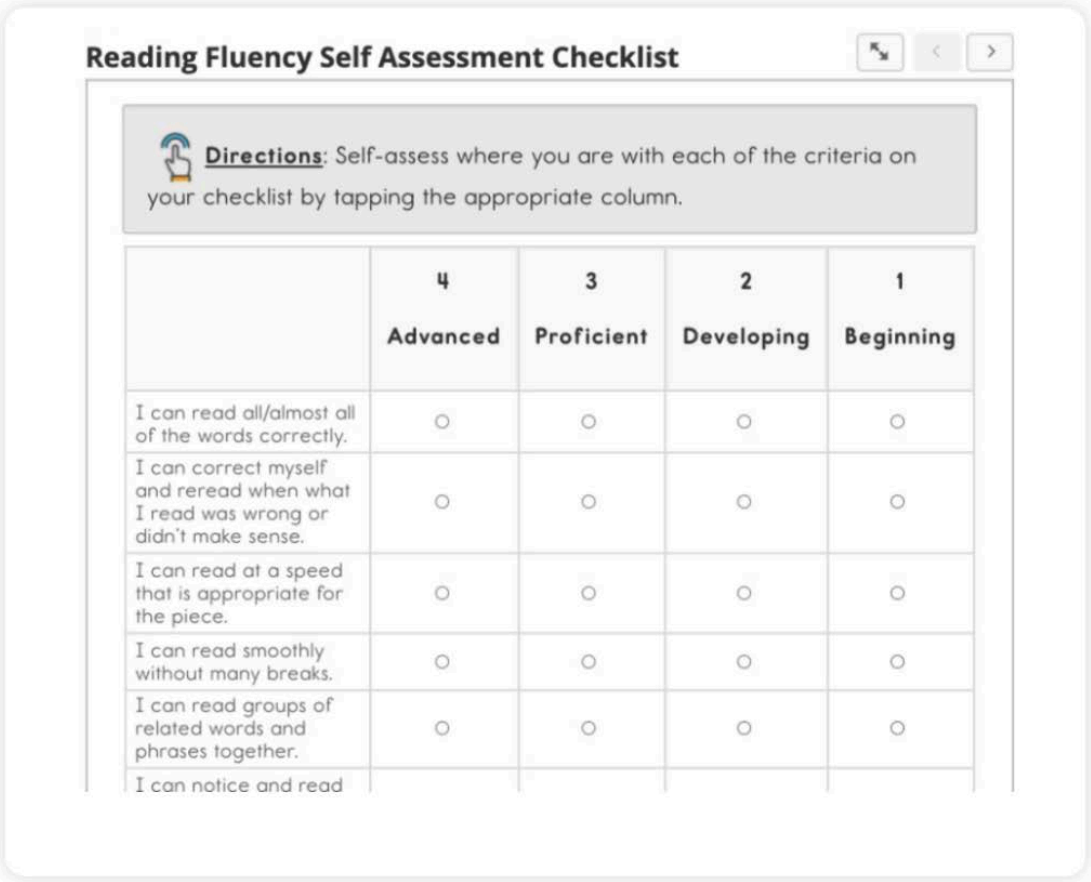


Figure 11: *Grade 3-5 Fluency Self-Assessment Checklist*



Reading Fluency Self Assessment Checklist

Directions: Self-assess where you are with each of the criteria on your checklist by tapping the appropriate column.

	4 Advanced	3 Proficient	2 Developing	1 Beginning
I can read all/almost all of the words correctly.	○	○	○	○
I can correct myself and reread when what I read was wrong or didn't make sense.	○	○	○	○
I can read at a speed that is appropriate for the piece.	○	○	○	○
I can read smoothly without many breaks.	○	○	○	○
I can read groups of related words and phrases together.	○	○	○	○
I can notice and read				

- **Vocabulary Knowledge:** Research shows that vocabulary predicts decoding, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Duke & Cartwright, 2020; Elleman et al., 2009; Perfetti, 2010; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Tunmer & Chapman, 2012; Wagner & Meros, 2010). Beck et al. (2013) found that effective vocabulary instruction: (a) teaches Tier 2 high-utility academic words and Tier 3 content-specific words; (b) introduces words using everyday language and avoids dictionary definitions; (c) presents words in multiple contexts; (d) provides multiple exposures; and (e) teaches word-learning strategies. Students who read a series of texts on the same topic demonstrate greater vocabulary growth than those who read the same amount of texts on different topics (Cervetti et al., 2015; Landauer & Dumais, 1997; Pimentel & Liben, 2021).

Our Solution: Imagine Learning EL Education builds academic and content-specific words throughout lessons and multiple reads of compelling text. For example:

- At the start of all lessons, educators explicitly teach students academic vocabulary words while unpacking learning targets related to standards (e.g., *determine* the main idea and *build* on another's idea).
- Interactive word walls, word maps, vocabulary logs, graphic organizers, illustrations, and Frayer Models enhance student understanding through examples and non-examples of critical words. For example, in a Grade 8 lesson, students learn the meaning of the word *infer*. The program provides visuals and asks students to make an inference about them. Examples include a broken window with a baseball next to it (someone threw a baseball and shattered the glass) and a dog covered in mud (the dog played in the mud and got dirty).
- Students have opportunities to work with words through various learning formats (e.g., text, poems, plays, artwork, and songs).
- Students apply newly learned word knowledge in writing assignments.
- During close reading of texts, students explore and write their own definitions of words within a text's context. Text-dependent questions ask students about the meaning of words and how the words convey the author's point of view.
- The program intentionally teaches students to become "word detectives" and apply strategies (e.g., using contexts, past learning, or word parts such as word roots and affixes) to uncover the meanings of unknown words and multiple-meaning words.
- Collaborative conversations and K-2 Labs provide opportunities for students to use content-specific and academic vocabulary while applying speaking and listening skills taught in the lesson.
- The K-2 Skills Block curriculum includes word inventories that can assess students' knowledge of spelling patterns and high-frequency words for grouping and differentiation of instruction.
- Vocabulary protocols and routines make domain-specific and general academic words come alive for students through creating meaningful context, connecting new words to the previous schema, and repeating shared use of the words. Vocabulary protocols and strategies also help students understand that acquiring new words is an active process requiring interaction and application.

- **Morphological Awareness:** A large body of research shows that morphological awareness—the ability to recognize and manipulate words into smaller parts such as prefixes, suffixes, roots, or base words—directly facilitates vocabulary development, word recognition, and reading comprehension (Bowers et al., 2010; Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Goodwin & Ahn, 2013; NICHD, 2000; Tighe & Binder, 2015; Zhang & Ke, 2020).

Our Solution: Imagine Learning EL Education explicitly teaches students how to use roots, prefixes, and suffixes as a strategy to uncover the meaning of unfamiliar words across all grade

levels. For example, students in Grades K–2 participate in the interactive *Base Word Bingo* activity, in which they demonstrate the ability to match inflectional endings with base words to make new words. In *Inflection Match-Up,* students practice creating and reading words with inflectional endings by blending base words with various inflectional endings. Students then determine if a word is real and, if so, record that word. In *Find the Ending*, they circle the suffixes and underline the base words in words provided by the teacher. During the Grades 3–5 ALL Block, students participate in context-driven Word Study four times a week, every other week. For example, in Grade 3, Module 2, students learn that their conclusion paragraph must include a restated focus statement. The teacher writes "restate" on the board, points to the prefix "re-," and asks students to read other words with the same prefix. The teacher then asks: "What do you think re– means based on how it is used in each of these words?"

4. Explicitly Teach Self-Regulation Skills

In addition to word-reading and language-comprehension knowledge and skills, skilled reading requires readers "to regulate themselves, actively coordinate the various processes and text elements necessary for successful reading, deploy strategies to ensure reading processes go smoothly, maintain motivation, and actively engage with text" (Duke & Cartwright, 2021, p. 520). Furthermore, a large body of research shows that self-regulation skills such as executive functioning, motivation, and strategy use help explain differences in reading abilities (Liew et al., 2020).

- **Executive Function:** Studies show that executive functioning skills—working memory, cognitive flexibility, and self-control—directly predict reading comprehension. Working memory is the limited-capacity "brain system that provides temporary storage and manipulation of the information necessary" to remember and execute "complex cognitive tasks" (Baddeley, 1992, p. 556). Cognitive flexibility is the ability to adapt thoughts or actions as demanded by the situation (Cragg & Nation, 2010). Inhibitory control is the ability to filter out distracting information irrelevant to a task (Kieffer et al., 2013). These factors contribute to reading competence "because reading requires the ability to direct attention to particular aspects of text (attentional control), build and maintain a model of text meaning while decoding the words in the text (working memory), suppress distracting information (inhibitory control), shift continuously between key processes (cognitive flexibility), and plan and manage one's progression toward the goal of a reading task (planning)" (Duke & Cartwright, 2021, p. 530).
- **Motivation:** Research shows that motivation predicts variance in reading ability, above and beyond academic and cognitive skills, among Grades K–12 students (Guthrie et al., 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2002; Toste et al., 2020). As Brandt and colleagues (2021) note, "When students have little motivation to read, they read less, spend less time with texts, and are slower to develop early skills such as decoding and fluency" (p. 723). Students who are motivated demonstrate greater conceptual understanding, exhibit higher satisfaction with school, and have more confidence than unmotivated students (Guthrie, 2002; Schunk &

Zimmerman, 2012). Experts have identified several practices that promote students' reading motivation (Brand et al., 2021; Gambrell, 2011; McRae & Guthrie, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2017). These include presenting students with reading activities that are authentic and relevant, offering meaningful choices to students, fostering students' feelings of competence and self-efficacy, promoting relatedness (relationships with students and teaches), emphasizing mastery goals, and strengthening student autonomy. More specifically, choosing high-interest texts that build upon students' interests can also foster a value for reading (Guthrie et al., 2007). Moreover, setting achievable goals and monitoring progress can increase motivation (Dignath & Büttner, 2008).

- **Strategy Use:** Duke and Cartwright's (2021) synthesis of research suggests that training students to use vocabulary strategies (Wright & Cervetti, 2017), word-learning strategies such as decoding (Lovett et al., 2000), and comprehension strategies (Okkinga et al., 2018) can help students attain higher levels of reading comprehension. To facilitate self-regulated learning and reading comprehension, research suggests teaching students to identify the main idea of a passage, and monitoring their comprehension and ability to visualize, make inferences, summarize, self-explain, self-evaluate, and answer questions about the text (Duke et al., 2011; Marchand-Martella et al., 2013; Okkinga et al., 2018). In addition, engaging students in multiple reads of short, complex texts, facilitating rich discussions based on worthy text-dependent questions, and revisiting and annotating the text all help students learn to extract meaning from text (Fisher & Frey, 2015).

Our Solution: Imagine Learning EL Education engages students in activities that are designed to build self-regulation skills. For example:

- **Executive Function:** Imagine Learning EL Education's curricula include activities that build students' working memory, promote cognitive flexibility, and teach self-control. The program deliberately breaks new information into smaller pieces to help boost students' working memory. Teachers use checklists and routines that foster fluent, automatic reading, and students have multiple opportunities to apply flexible thinking and adapt their behavior or reasoning to tasks in various contexts. The program promotes inhibitory control by teaching students different ways to stay focused when they need to be productive. Techniques include creating a calendar and deciding which assignments are most pressing, completing tasks when energy levels are highest, setting a timer, and doing something active when distracted.
- **Motivation:** Imagine Learning EL Education's curricula help motivates students to engage in reading and comprehend texts.
  - The program optimizes relevance with various informational and literary text sets that reflect genres, including literary texts, mythology, speeches, informational articles, primary-source accounts of historical events, and other historical documents. These texts feature diverse authors, time periods, and characters to meet the goal of attending to students' diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds. For example, texts focus on past and

relevant issues, including gender roles, working conditions, refugee experiences, and access to schooling and education around the world. In addition, the representation of diverse characters means that students see themselves and the perspectives of others in the texts they read. In Grade 7, Module 1, for example, students explore the experiences of people of South Sudan during and after the Second Sudanese Civil War, building practice using textual evidence to support ideas in their writing. The unit assessment asks students to demonstrate their ability to cite textual evidence that articulates perspective in an informational text, specifically regarding how history and culture affect social identity. Similarly, in one Kindergarten, Module 4, students build on their scientific knowledge of trees from the previous module by exploring the importance of trees to people in various communities. Students learn how different people, both real and imaginary, enjoy and appreciate trees, and consider how real people and characters have used trees to fill a need in their community. They read and analyze the texts, *A Tree for Emmy* by Mary Ann Rodman, *Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai and the Trees of Kenya* by Donna Jo Napoli, and *Oliver's Tree* by Kit. Students also write about the different ways trees can be enjoyed in their Enjoying Trees Journal, Part I.

- Student choice is emphasized throughout the lessons. Students are given multiple opportunities to independently select and read books of their choosing. They also study how characters' decisions and their own choices have consequences. For example, after reading The *Omnivore's Dilemma*, Grade 8, Module 2, students study how their choices about food contribute to a better world.
- Imagine Learning EL Education builds student competency and relatedness through engaging in group discussions and projects. Lesson notes provide guidance on how teachers can provide explanatory feedback that encourages persistence, resilience, and a learning growth mindset.
- The curriculum emphasizes mastery, from the learning targets that start every lesson to protocols that engage students in academic discourse, to debriefs that ask students to reflect on their learning and habits of character. In addition, the program teaches students to set goals, control attention, self-monitor, organize, and reflect.
- The curriculum strengthens student autonomy by providing multiple practice opportunities, and provides teachers with suggestions for scaffolds to support students as they learn new content (these scaffolds can be found in the Teaching Notes of each lesson). The program also teaches students strategies for approaching passages, such as identifying the passage's structure by determining how the key ideas connect or, when reading an informational text, determining what the headings tell the reader about each section.

- **Strategy Use:** Imagine Learning EL Education teaches students vocabulary strategies (e.g., breaking down sentences and using word parts and context clues to find the meaning of words), decoding, and a wide variety of comprehension strategies. For example, students are taught pre-reading strategies (previewing the text, accessing prior knowledge,

formulating questions, clarifying understanding, setting a purpose, and making predictions), during-reading strategies (visualizing, making connections, monitoring understanding, making inferences, rereading, questioning, and summarizing), and after-reading strategies (comparing, synthesizing, and drawing conclusions). Throughout lessons, students engage in a structured, close reading process that requires them to read passages multiple times and answer text-dependent questions about what the text says, how it works, and what it means. During the first read, students determine the gist (their initial sense of what the text is mostly about) and then focus on key vocabulary (e.g., focusing on the prefix "un" in the word "unemployment" and using dictionaries and their Affix List to help them determine the meaning of "favorable" in this context). Students then read, think, talk, and write about a text with a partner and then share to check for and deepen understanding. Along the way, students learn to underline key ideas, circle confusing or unclear words, and create margin notes. Lessons that include close reading feature Close Read-Aloud Guides (Grades K–2) or Close Reading Guides (Grades 3–8).

Conclusion

Imagine Learning EL Education's content-based curriculum was built on best research practices, including well-accepted research from cognitive science and the science of reading. In addition, the program explicitly teaches students word recognition, language-comprehension skills, bridging skills, and self-regulation skills to ensure reading success.



Footnote 38: Abstract of The Teach Like a Champion Guide to the Science of Reading: Translating Research to Reignite Joy and Meaning in the Classroom by Doug Lemov

After effectively teaching phonics in the early grades, what does the science of reading tell us should happen in literacy classes? *The Teach Like a Champion Guide to the Science of Reading* by Doug Lemov, Erica Woolway, and Colleen Driggs, addresses the pressing challenges educators face in effectively incorporating the Science of Reading into their instruction once students already know how to decode. By offering actionable guidance grounded in seven evidence-based principles, this book helps teachers elevate their instructional practices and better prepare students to be lifelong readers and thinkers.

Grounded in proven classroom instruction, the book focuses on techniques that can allow teachers to use the science as effectively and actionably as possible. *The Teach Like a Champion Guide to the Science of Reading* is enhanced with more than 50 video clips from the classroom and covers ways to practically apply the Science of Reading. The book describes the often overlooked role of fluency in reading comprehension, even into the high school years; the profound importance of managing and socializing attention in an age of technology; the central role of background knowledge in understanding text; and the doubly important role of teaching vocabulary as a form of knowledge. It adds a discussion of how writing can make students better readers and how important it is that reading classes focus on reading actual books—great ones, ideally. And it closes with a discussion of close reading and the challenge of preparing students to rise to the challenge of complex text.

Inside the book:

- An innovative approach to building and reinforcing background knowledge in reading
- Over 50 video demonstrations of effective teaching techniques
- Sample lesson plans and materials for immediate classroom application

The Teach Like a Champion Guide to the Science of Reading is essential for educators, literacy coaches, and administrators who aim to foster rigorous literacy instruction in their classrooms and schools. This guide shows you how to implement techniques that ensure students find joy in reading and become better, wiser, more engaged and more motivated readers, both in their classrooms and in their lives beyond.

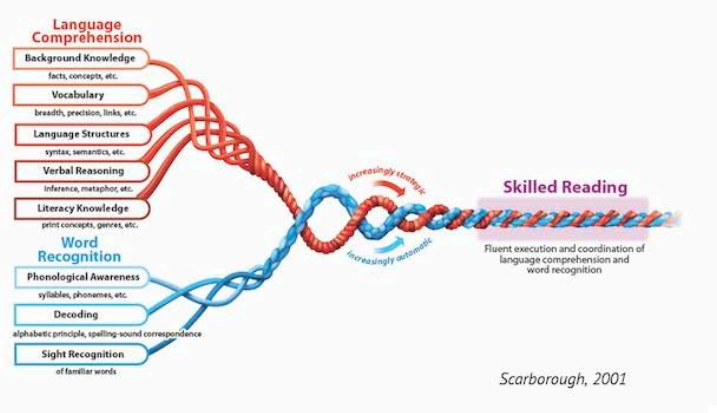
Footnote 39: Scarborough's Reading Rope

11/18/2024

What is Scarborough's Reading Rope?

Students must successfully thread together eight discrete skills to grow into fluent, skilled readers. Should they experience weaknesses in one or more of them, they might have difficulty developing the decoding skills, vocabulary, and background to fully grasp what they're reading.

Teachers can use the concept of Scarborough's Reading Rope to pinpoint where students are struggling and target intervention accordingly. Hollis Scarborough, Ph.D., introduced the concept of these intertwined skills in her design of Scarborough's Reading Rope. An early language development researcher, Scarborough used the rope to describe the many strands that make up skilled reading and its connection to later literacy. Using pipe cleaners to demonstrate the interconnectedness and interdependence of reading components, Scarborough described the complexities involved in learning to read. Her evidence-based research is one of the frameworks supported by the science of reading.



The strands of the Reading Rope are divided into two sections: Word Recognition (phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition of familiar words) and Language Comprehension (background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge). Together, these two sections produce a skilled reader. Each of these strands in each section is dependent upon one another.

In Scarborough's Reading Rope, Word Recognition is a combination of:

- Phonological awareness
- Decoding
- Sight recognition

Of these three, Scarborough proposed decoding is the element that ties everything together. A student's ability to decode words begins with their understanding of the language sound system. Then, it moves to their knowledge of the writing system through understanding phonology, orthography, and morphology.

Language Comprehension is the other necessary component of reading comprehension. It makes up the top half of the Reading Rope. Language comprehension requires the combination of:

- Background knowledge
- Vocabulary
- Language structures
- Verbal reasoning
- Literacy knowledge

While the skill components in the Reading Rope differ slightly from other science of reading theories, such as the Five Pillars of Reading and the Simple View of Reading, each strand illustrates a fundamental part of a Structured Literacy approach.

Lower Strands: Word Recognition

The Word Recognition, or lower strands of the Reading Rope, is foundational to reading fluency and requires students to process written words automatically and effortlessly. The three strands in Word Recognition include phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition.

Phonological Awareness

When students develop phonological awareness, they begin to understand spoken words are made up of sounds and blends of sounds in language. Children may not be aware of these sounds when they learn to speak, but to read, they must associate spoken sounds to letters, and, later, words on a page. When students develop phonological awareness, they can learn letter-sound correspondence and blend sounds together to form words.

Background Knowledge

The more students know about a subject before they read about it, the easier it is for them to derive the meaning behind a text. Background knowledge, or what students already know about topics such as plants, the weather, or a historical figure, impacts their understanding of what they read. Students reading about Benjamin Franklin's discovery of electricity will get a lot more meaning out of the text if they understand the concept of electricity in general. By including reading materials in the context of the rest of their curricula, teachers can teach reading concurrently with science, social studies, or math topics. This helps students learn from content-rich texts and improve literacy skills simultaneously.

Vocabulary

Students can't understand what they are reading unless they know the meaning of the words in a text. In some cases, new readers skip words they don't know or attempt to read them without fully understanding them. By increasing their vocabulary knowledge, students can read and enjoy a wider variety of books. If they have to pause frequently to determine a word's meaning, they're more likely to lose interest in reading. Students develop their vocabulary knowledge both orally and by reading. Teachers can practice vocabulary with their students by making word learning a part of their everyday classwork.

Language Structures

According to the Literacy Engagement Action Project at George Mason University, students must grasp several concepts to understand language structures. These include syntax (the order of words) and semantics (the meaning of the text). Syntax refers to the rules governing the arrangement of words in sentences to convey meaning, including grammar and sentence structure. Semantics refers to the meaning of words and sentences, including vocabulary and context. Readers continue to build skills in both areas as they encounter more challenging texts.

Decoding

Decoding refers to the process of linking spoken sounds to printed words or letters on a page. Students can't decode words until they understand the English language sound system and alphabet through an understanding of phonology, orthography, and morphology. The ultimate goal of teaching students how to decode is to help make reading automatic. Decoding has gained more attention as the science of reading movement has illuminated the role of word recognition in early literacy acquisition.

Sight Recognition

Sight recognition improves reading fluency and efficiency, according to The Digital Promise. When students can recognize irregularly spelled words that do not follow regular spelling conventions, they can better pronounce and understand the meaning of those words without struggling to decode them. Also known as orthographic mapping, sight recognition refers to a student's ability to recognize and permanently store words.

Students acquire orthography by learning frequently recurring patterns required to match sounds to letters or groups of letters. As they become more experienced readers, they learn syllable types, the major syllable division matters in English, and ultimately begin reading grade-appropriate texts aloud to build fluency skills.

Upper Strands: Language Comprehension

The upper strands of the Reading Rope refer to the components of language comprehension that work in tandem with word recognition skills to develop skilled reading. These strands help readers understand the meaning of a text after they decode the words that comprise them. While the lower strands focus on the technical aspects of reading, the upper strands focus on deriving meaning from what is read through background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literary knowledge.

Background Knowledge

The more students know about a subject before they read about it, the easier it is for them to derive the meaning behind a text. Background knowledge, or what students already know about topics such as plants, the weather, or a historical figure, impacts their understanding of what they read. Students reading about Benjamin Franklin's discovery of electricity will get a lot more meaning out of the text if they understand the concept of electricity in general. By including reading materials in the context of the rest of their curricula, teachers can teach reading concurrently with science, social studies, or math topics. This helps students learn from content-rich texts and improve literacy skills simultaneously.

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Verbal Reasoning

Scarborough's Reading Rope defines verbal reasoning as the understanding of the ways words can be used literally and figuratively. Students use verbal reasoning to decipher the meaning of metaphors, analogies, idioms, and other types of figurative language. For example, students must understand that the metaphor "my home is my castle" doesn't necessarily mean the protagonist in the story lives in a castle. Likewise, they must recognize the simile "sick as a dog" refers to someone feeling ill.

Literacy Knowledge

Literacy knowledge refers to understanding a book's parts, including how its Table of Contents relates to the book, the difference between fiction and nonfiction, and an understanding of different genres—including poetry, fantasy, or biography. Teachers can build students' literacy knowledge by exposing them to diverse texts.

How is the Simple View of Reading Connected to the Reading Rope?

A Structured Literacy approach teaches skill components identified by the National Reading Panel in an explicit, systematic, and responsive way that effectively helps all students learn to read. Scarborough's Reading Rope is one view of literacy acquisition, similar to the Simple View of Reading (SVW).

Philip Gough and William Tunmer (1986) developed the SVR formula to show how word recognition and language comprehension lead to reading comprehension. The equation shows that neither of these concepts is sufficient on its own—a lack of understanding of one concept could lead to overall reading failure. This is why it is so important for students to develop both concurrently.

Word Recognition (WR)	x	Language Comprehension (LC)	=	Reading Comprehension (RC)
Symbols on a printed page must be translated into spoken words		Meaning must be connected to spoken words		

Both the Simple View of Reading and the Reading Rope show that for readers to understand what they are reading, they must be able to read automatically—or recognize words by sight. When students develop automaticity, they can more efficiently derive the meaning of a text.

How Can Teachers Use Scarborough's Reading Rope?

Teachers can use the components outlined in the Reading Rope to inform their curricula and teaching practices. By including explicit instruction in reading skills ranging from phonemic awareness to vocabulary and semantics, teachers can ensure all students have the opportunity to develop into fluent readers. Following the Reading Rope framework, teachers can more easily identify where struggling readers may need additional instruction.

For example, a student may be good at decoding but have difficulty making sense of a text. The teacher can offer targeted interventions by identifying which language comprehension strands the student struggles with (vocabulary or background knowledge, for example), saving time, and providing the specific support the student needs.

How Can the Reading Rope Help Students With Learning Disabilities?

"Reading disabilities may stem from the learner's weakness in, or delayed acquisition of, some kind(s) of underlying knowledge and skill that are known to contribute to successful reading development," according to Scarborough.

The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity reports dyslexia affects up to 20% of the population and represents up to 90% of all people with learning disabilities, making it the most common of all neurocognitive disorders. Students with dyslexia often have difficulty reading aloud, guess when they cannot read unfamiliar words, and are slower to master reading skills. Despite the commonality of dyslexia, many people with this learning disability have never received a diagnosis nor participated in reading intervention programs.

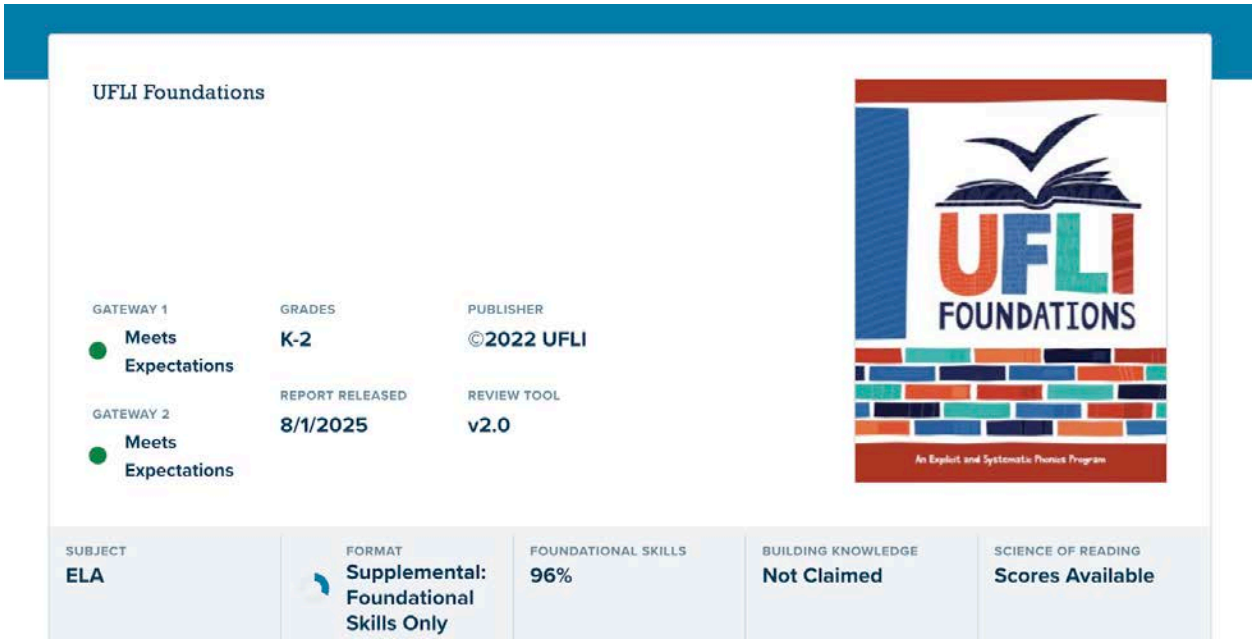
The strategies identified by the science of reading help all children; those with dyslexia, those who struggle to learn to read, and those who do not struggle to learn to read. By guiding new readers through the mechanics of reading—including sound-letter correspondences, decoding, synthesizing, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, spelling, and comprehension—all students receive the instruction they need to become competent readers. Reading programs rooted in the science of learning address the unique challenges learners with dyslexia face, ensuring they receive tailored instruction that meets their unique needs.

Structured Literacy programs, such as Lexia® Core5® Reading and Lexia® PowerUp Literacy®, accelerate the development of literacy skills for students of all abilities, helping them make the critical shift from learning to read to reading to learn. Core5 follows an Adaptive Blended Learning model that offers explicit, systematic, and personalized reading instruction for pre-K–5 students. Adolescent students using PowerUp benefit from a targeted approach that allows them to develop the reading and critical thinking skills necessary to meet the demands of a secondary curriculum and beyond.

With a knowledge of the science of reading and frameworks like the Reading Rope, teachers can develop focused strategies to ensure all students—especially those who have or may have dyslexia—become confident readers.

No theory replaces a skilled, knowledgeable teacher, but having the right tools and resources makes a difference. Discover how evidence-based resources can support your reading instruction.

Footnote 40: EdReports Rating for UFLI (full rating per grade linked)



Footnote 41: EdWeek Research about UFLI's Impact

A new study has found evidence of big gains in students' reading ability from using one specific phonics program—and suggests that consistent implementation is key to getting the strongest results.

The foundational-skills curriculum, UFLI Foundations, was created by researchers at the University of Florida Literacy Institute. When kindergarten and 1st grade teachers in one Florida district used the program for a year, their students grew at a much faster rate than similar students in other classrooms in the district that continued business-as-usual reading instruction.

Teachers who followed the program more closely saw better results than those who didn't teach lessons in the recommended sequence, or with all of the listed steps.

The results are "dramatic," said Devin Kearns, a professor in early literacy at North Carolina State University, who was not involved with the study. Gains from UFLI are equivalent to 8 months of additional instruction for kindergarteners, and almost a year-and-a-half of extra instruction for 1st graders, he said.

"In reading studies these days, these kinds of findings are rare," Kearns said.

Decades of research have shown that phonics instruction—teaching children how letters represent sounds, and how to blend those sounds together to make words—is the most effective way to get beginning readers to start decoding words. But on average, effect sizes in this research are moderate. Some programs work better than others. And that's led to confusion about how much phonics to teach, and for how long.

As the "science of reading" movement has spread, at least 40 states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation or enacted policies requiring that schools use evidence-based approaches to teaching students how to read. This almost always includes a mandate for systematic, explicit phonics instruction. Some states have issued lists of approved programs. In this landscape, identifying what works—and why—has taken on a new urgency.

UFLI Foundations has many similarities to other programs that aim to teach the building blocks of reading, said Holly Lane, the director of the University of Florida Literacy Institute, and the lead author on the study. Lane is one of the developers of the curriculum.

The program explicitly teaches letter sounds, how they correspond to print, and how to blend letters together into words. But Lane thinks the opportunity for a lot of practice—applying these skills in different contexts, again and again—sets UFLI apart.

"When we're introducing the new concept, we're still practicing that last one," Lane said. "And that goes on for weeks and weeks."

How the UFLI program works

Lane and her colleagues tested the program with more than 2,700 students in Florida schools during the 2021-22 school year.

Students in the control classrooms received the district's regular reading instruction, in which teachers used a core instructional program designed to address all areas of reading. In the treatment classrooms, teachers still used this core program, but used UFLI Foundations for foundational-skills lessons. The UFLI program was taught for 30 minutes daily.

Each lesson is built around activities designed to cement students' letter-sound knowledge and apply that knowledge to reading. For example, students are presented with letters and asked to identify the sounds those letters make, they listen to letter sounds and write the letters those sounds represent, and then they read individual words and passages that use those letter-sound correspondences.

Phonics patterns are introduced in a systematic sequence, and students get opportunities to practice the patterns they've learned previously as new ones are introduced.

Using statistical models, the researchers compared kids who received UFLI to kids who didn't, but shared similar demographic characteristics. The kindergartners and 1st graders who completed the UFLI lessons scored higher on DIBELS, an assessment of word-reading ability and oral-reading fluency.

Teachers using the program were also observed, to evaluate how closely they followed its scope and sequence. In classrooms where teachers adhered tightly to the plan—completing each step of each lesson, using the recommended materials, and doing lessons each day—students made more progress.

"Some teachers just out and out refused to do it, or would do it sporadically or inconsistently," said Lane. "And others were right off the bat bought in and implemented it as designed, and that made a difference."

Can a structured program simplify teaching?

Implementation has been a consistent challenge for school districts as they shift to new methods of reading instruction.

Teachers have voiced concerns that they aren't getting enough guidance about how to put new approaches into practice, or that they don't have the instructional materials—for instance, decodable books—they need to do so.

UFLI is designed in a way that lowers some of those barriers, said Kearns. It has a clear scope and sequence and comes with activities, assessments, and online tools that are aligned to the curriculum.

But it's not the only curriculum that could lead to student success, he added. One big takeaway from this study is more general, he said—that it's important for teachers to have a research-tested model to work from.

"Get a program" with some evidence behind it, he said. Relying on teachers to create hands-on manipulatives or design all their own activities isn't sustainable, he said.

"It's so hard these days to do anything well, all the demands on people's time, that adding to their burden by saying to them, 'Make a bunch of stuff,' is just totally overwhelming," said Kearns.

Having materials to work from gives teachers some breathing room, he said. "Instead of figuring out what you're going to teach, you have time to figure out how you're going to teach it."



Sarah Schwartz FOLLOW

Staff Writer, Education Week

Sarah Schwartz is a reporter for Education Week who covers curriculum and instruction.

Footnote 42: Abstract of Accelerating Learning for All, PreK-8: Equity in Action

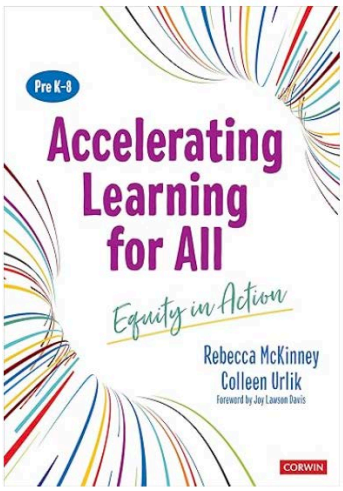
Ensure high expectations and engaging learning experiences for all students

Providing *all* students with authentic experiences focused on strengths and learning progression—not deficits and gap filling—can change their trajectory. It's time to use strategies typically reserved for advanced and gifted learners to advance *all* students' learning.

Designed to support equitable access and opportunities through rigorous and engaging assessment, curriculum, and instruction, *Accelerating Learning for All, PreK-8,* provides strategies to move all students towards becoming independent critical thinkers and problem-solvers—a goal that should not be contingent on background, assessment performance, or zip code. Packed with evidence-based practices and culturally responsive teaching methods, this book includes:

- Strategies to support diverse learners and develop student voice
- Support for social emotional learning
- Tools, prompts, and exercises

The current educational environment is ripe for change. Authors McKinney and Urlik help teachers put equity into action with strategies proven to deepen and accelerate learning for all.



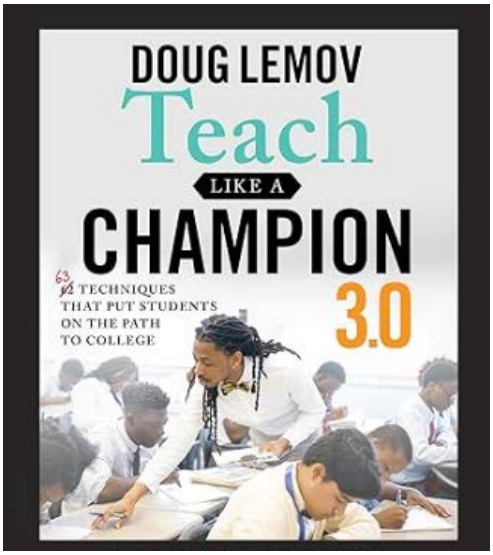
Footnote 43: Abstract of Teach Like a Champion 3.0 by Doug Lemov

Teach Like a Champion 3.0 is the long-awaited update to Doug Lemov's highly regarded guide to the craft of teaching. This book teaches you how to create a positive and productive classroom that encourages student engagement, trust, respect, accountability, and excellence. In this edition, you'll find new and updated teaching techniques, the latest evidence from cognitive science and culturally responsive teaching practices, and an expanded companion video collection. Learn how to build students' background knowledge, move learning into long-term memory, and connect your teaching with the curriculum content for tangible improvement in learning outcomes.

The new version of the book includes:

- A chapter on mental models for teachers to use to guide their decision-making in the classroom
- A brand new chapter on Lesson Preparation
- Updated and revised versions of all the technique listeners know and use
- Extensive discussion of research in social and cognitive science to support and guide the use of techniques.

Listen to this powerful update to discover the techniques that leading teachers are using to put students on the path to success.



Footnote 44: Webb's Depth of Knowledge and Connection to Common Core State Standards

A Guide for Using
Webb's Depth of Knowledge
with
Common Core State Standards
by Karin Hess, Ed.D.

The COMMON CORE Institute

Center for College & Career Readiness

This guide was developed by Karin K. Hess for the Common Core Institute. It consolidates numerous tools educators use to implement Webb's Depth of Knowledge for curriculum and assessment. The examples herein are drawn from several classroom-tested DOK tools: Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrices for ELA-Social Studies, Writing, and Math-Science developed by Karin Hess, at the Center for Assessment; Norman Webb's Alignment Tool from Wisconsin Center of Educational Research; and the Florida Department of Education's guide for Depth of Knowledge Questions.

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An Educator's Guide for Applying Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge Levels to the Common Core State Standards

Overview

At the heart of College and Career Readiness is the need to increase the level of rigor in our classrooms for all students. The Common Core State Standards are a step in the right direction. However, the standards alone will not bring rigor to our classrooms. The implementation of these standards requires practical tools to develop local curricula and assessments and to promote classroom discourse aligned to higher levels of cognitive demand.

Norman Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge (DOK) schema has become one of the key tools educators can employ to analyze the cognitive demand (complexity) intended by the standards, curricular activities, and assessment tasks. Webb (1997) developed a process and criteria for systematically analyzing the alignment between standards and test items in standardized assessments. Since then the process and criteria have demonstrated application to reviewing curricular alignment as well. The model categorizes assessment tasks by different levels of cognitive expectation, or depth of knowledge, required to successfully complete the task. Hess (2004-2012) further articulated the model with content-specific descriptions for use by classroom teachers and organizations conducting alignment studies. The table below outlines the Webb DOK levels:

DOK Level	Description of Level
1	Recall & Reproduction
2	Skills & Concepts
3	Strategic Thinking & Reasoning
4	Extended Thinking

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The intended DOK level can be assigned to anything from an instructional question, to broader course objectives and assessment items/tasks using the following general guidelines:

- The DOK level assigned should reflect the level of work students are most commonly required to perform in order for the response to be deemed proficient, such as in rubric descriptions describing proficient performance.
- The DOK level should reflect the complexity of cognitive processes demanded by the learning or assessment objective and task, rather than its difficulty. Ultimately, the DOK level describes the depth of understanding required by a task, not whether or not the task is considered "difficult."
- If there is a question regarding which of two levels a standard addresses, such as Level I - Level 2, or Level 2 - Level 3, it is appropriate to assign the highest level as the "DOK ceiling" for the task, but also provide opportunities at the lower DOK levels as an instructional progression (e.g., summarizing a text/DOK 2 before analyzing a text/DOK 3; making observations/DOK 2 before conducting investigation/DOK 3) (Hess, 2004-2006).
- The DOK level should be assigned based upon the cognitive demand (mental processing) required by the central performance described in the objective or task.
- The task's or objective's central verb(s) alone is/are not sufficient to assign a DOK level. Developers must consider "what comes after verb" - the complexity of the task and content/concepts -- in addition to the mental processing required by the requirements set forth in the objective (Webb's Depth of Knowledge Guide).

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Level 1: Recall & Reproduction

Curricular elements that fall into this category involve basic tasks that require students to recall or reproduce knowledge and/or skills. The subject matter content at this level usually involves working with facts, terms, details, calculations, principles, and/or properties. It may also involve use of simple procedures or formulas. There is little or no transformation of the target knowledge or skill required by the tasks that fall into this category. A student answering a Level I item either knows the answer or does not; that is, the answer does not need to be figured out" or "solved.

Verbs	Teacher Role	Student Role
Locate, calculate, define, identify, list, label, match, measure, copy, memorize, repeat, report, recall, recite, recognize, state, tell, tabulate, use rules, answer who, what, when, where, why, how	Questions to direct or focus attention, shows, tells, demonstrates, provides examples, examines, leads, breaks down, defines	Recognizes, responds, remembers, memorizes, restates, absorbs, describes, demonstrates, follows directions, applies routine processes, definitions, and procedures

Possible Products

- Fill-in-the-blank tasks
- Recite-math facts, poems, etc.
- Plot/locate points on a graph
- Edit sentences
- Identify/write sentence types
- Highlight key words
- Bookmark websites
- Use key word search
- Use dictionary, thesaurus
- Follow steps/directions (e.g., recipe, long division, make model)
- Explain, demonstrate
- Show & Tell
- Locate or recall quotes
- Document /cite sources
- Brainstorm related ideas
- Represent math relationships in words, pictures, or symbols
- Write complete sentences
- Identify parts of speech
- Label or locate parts in diagram
- List related parts or kinds (e.g., triangles)
- Vocabulary definitions-look up, recall, use in sentences
- Calculate, compute
- Measure, record data
- Reproduce map or diagram
- Use map key to locate information
- Oral reading fluency
- Decoding words
- Use formulas
- Evaluate expressions

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Potential Activities

- Use step-by-step directions to make a model, plant seeds, bake a cake, etc.
- Describe an event, character, setting, etc. in a story
- Write a list of key words you know about...
- Recite/recall a fact or date related to ...
- Write/retell in your own words ...
- Cut out, draw, or match a picture that illustrates an event, process, or story
- Report or present findings to the class
- Memorize lines for a play
- Skim for facts/details/dates about an event
- Retell in your own words/paraphrase
- Locate information found in a map, chart, tables, graph, diagram, caption
- Use a dictionary, glossary, or thesaurus to find word meanings
- Make conversions between metric and customary units
- Recall, restate, remember, or recognize facts, terms, properties heard, viewed, or read
- Complete basic /routine calculation tasks (e.g., addition, subtraction, division, etc.)
- Locate or retrieve information in verbatim form to answer a question
- Recognize or identify features, objects, or steps that don't vary greatly in form (e.g., recognizing features of basic tools or shapes, properties of materials or objects)
- Edit applying a standard set of conventions and/or criteria that should eventually be automated (e.g., applying rules for punctuation, grammar, spelling)
- Complete measurement tasks (e.g., use a ruler to measure length; thermometer or temperature probe to measure temperature)
- Memorize and recognize formulas and algorithms
- Use a formula where at least one of the unknowns are provided (e. g., area formula, y=mx + b)

ELA, History & Social Studies Alignment to Bloom's Taxonomy (source: Hess ELA-SS CRM)

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Level 1 | Recall & Reproduction
REMEMBER Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify	▪ Recall, recognize, or locate basic facts, details, events, or ideas explicit in texts ▪ Read words orally in connected text with fluency & accuracy
UNDERSTAND Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion, predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	▪ Identify or describe literary elements (e.g., characters, setting, problem-solution, conflict, etc.) ▪ Select appropriate words when intended meaning/definition is clearly evident ▪ Describe/explain who, what where, when, or how ▪ Define/describe facts, details, terms, principles ▪ Write simple sentences
APPLY Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation, carry out (apply) to a familiar task, or use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	▪ Use language structure (pre/suffix) or word relationships (synonym/antonym) to determine meaning of words ▪ Apply rules or resources to edit spelling, grammar, punctuation, conventions, word use ▪ Apply basic formats for documenting sources
ANALYZE Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, find coherence, deconstruct (e.g.for bias or point of view)	▪ Identify whether specific information is contained in graphic representations (e.g. map, chart, table, graph, T-chart, diagram) or text features (e.g., headings, subheadings, captions) ▪ Decide which text structure is appropriate to audience and purpose
EVALUATE Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect, inconsistencies, or fallacies, judge, critique	Not Applicable
CREATE Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, produce	▪ Brainstorm ideas, concepts, problems, or perspectives related to a topic or concept

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Math & Science Alignment to Bloom's Taxonomy (source: Hess Math-Science CRM)

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Level 1 | Recall & Reproduction
REMEMBER Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify	▪ Recall, observe & recognize facts, principles, properties ▪ Recall/identify conversions among representations or numbers (e.g., customary and metric measures)
UNDERSTAND Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion (such as from examples given), predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	▪ Evaluate an expression ▪ Locate points on a grid or number on a number line ▪ Solve a one-step problem ▪ Represent math relationships in words, pictures, or symbols ▪ Read, write, compare decimals in scientific notation
APPLY Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation, carry out (apply to a familiar task), or use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	▪ Follow simple procedures (e.g., recipe-type directions) ▪ Calculate, measure, apply a rule (e.g., rounding) ▪ Apply algorithm or formula (e.g., area, perimeter) ▪ Solve linear equations ▪ Make conversions among representations or numbers, or within and between customary and metric measures
ANALYZE Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, lind coherence, deconstruct	▪ Retrieve information from a table or graph to answer a question ▪ Identify whether specific information is contained in graphic representations (e.g. table graph, T-chart, diagram) ▪ Identify a pattern/trend
EVALUATE Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies or fallacies, judge, critique	Not Applicable
CREATE Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, construct, produce	▪ Brainstorm ideas, concepts, or terms related to a topic

Level 2: Skill/Concept

Level 2 includes the engagement of mental processing beyond recalling, reproducing, or locating an answer. This level generally requires students to compare or differentiate among people, places, events, objects, text types, etc.; apply multiple concepts when responding; classify or sort items into meaningful categories; describe or explain relationships, such as cause and effect, character relationships; and provide and explain examples and non-examples. A Level 2 "describe or explain" task requires students to go beyond a basic description or definition to predict a possible result or explain "why" something might happen. The learner makes use of information provided in context to determine intended word meanings, which tools or approach is appropriate to find a solution (e.g., in a math word problem), or what characteristics to pay attention to when making observations.

At this level, students are asked to transform/process target knowledge before responding. Example mental processes that often denote this particular level include: summarize, estimate, organize, classify, extend, and make basic inferences.

Key Words	Teacher Role	Student Role
Infer, categorize, organize and display, compare-contrast, modify, predict, interpret, distinguish, estimate, extend patterns, interpret, use context clues, make observations, summarize, translate from table to graph, classify, show cause/ effect, relate, edit for clarity	Questions to differentiate, infer, or check conceptual understanding, models, organizes/reorganizes, explores possible options or connections, provides examples and non-examples	Solves routine problems/tasks involving multiple decision points and concepts, constructs models to show relationships, demonstrates use of conceptual knowledge, compiles and organizes, illustrates/explains with examples or models, examines

Possible Products

- Captioned Photos Summary
- Timeline
- Demonstration
- Presentation Interview
- Diary entry
- Graphic organizer
- Reverse-Engineering
- Cracking Codes Outline
- Relationship Mind Maps
- Blog Commenting
- Survey development
- Spreadsheet
- Science logs

Potential Activities

- Sequence a key chain of events and supporting details using a timeline, cartoon strip, outline or flow chart
- Write a summary /informational report or develop an outline of central ideas and supporting details
- Develop a concept map or diagram showing a process or describing relationships about a topic of study
- Explain a series of steps used to find a solution
- Construct a model to demonstrate how it looks or works
- Make a diorama to illustrate/explain an event
- Write a diary/blog entry for a character or historical figure
- Make a captioned scrapbook or photo essay about the area of study
- Make a topographic map using data provided/data collected
- Make a puzzle or game about the topic
- Explain the meaning of a concept using words, objects, and/or visuals
- Demonstrate how to perform a particular task
- Complete complex recognition tasks that involve recognizing concepts and processes that may vary in how they "appear"
- Complex calculation tasks involving decision point s (e.g., standard deviation)
- Identify appropriate strategies or sources for conducting research projects that involve locating, collecting, organizing and displaying, and summarizing information
- Create a questionnaire or survey to answer a question
- Conduct measurement or observational tasks that involve organizing the data collected into basic presentation forms such as a table, graph, Venn diagram, etc.
- Participate in a simulation in order to understand and describe differing perspectives

Potential Questions

How or why would you use ...?
What examples/non-examples can you find to ...?
How would you organize_ to show ...?
How could you show your understanding of ... ?
What approach/tools would you use to ...?
How would you apply what you learned to develop ... ?
What other way could you solve/find out...?
What is your prediction … and why?
How would you organize these facts/observations?
If you changed these elements … what would/might happen ?
What facts are relevant to show ...?
What questions would you ask in an interview /survey about ...?
What question is being asked in this problem?

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ELA, History & Social Studies Alignment to Bloom's Taxonomy (source: Hess ELA-SS CRM)

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Level 2 | Skills & Concepts
REMEMBER Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify	Not Applicable
UNDERSTAND Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion, predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	▪ Specify, explain, show relationships, explain why, cause-effect ▪ Give non-examples/examples ▪ Summarize results, concepts, ideas in one text or one data set ▪ Make basic inferences or logical predictions from data or texts ▪ Identify main ideas or accurate generalizations of texts or issues ▪ Locate information to support explicit-implicit central ideas
APPLY Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation, carry out (apply) to a familiar task, or use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	▪ Use context to identify the meaning of words/phrases ▪ Obtain and interpret information using text features ▪ Develop a text that may be limited to one paragraph ▪ Apply simple organizational structures (paragraph, sentence types) in writing
ANALYZE Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, find coherence, deconstruct (e.g.for bias or point of view)	▪ Categorize/compare library elements, terms, facts/details, events ▪ Identify use of literary devices ▪ Analyze format, organization & internal text structure (e.g., signal words, transitions, semantic cues) of different texts ▪ Distinguish relevant-irrelevant information, fact/opinion ▪ Identify characteristic text features; distinguish between texts, genres
EVALUATE Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies, or fallacies, judge, critique	Not Applicable
CREATE Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, produce	▪ Generate conjectures or hypotheses based on observations or prior knowledge and experience

Math & Science Alignment to Bloom's Taxonomy (source: Hess Math-Science CRM)

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Level 2 | Skills & Concepts
REMEMBER Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify	Not Applicable
UNDERSTAND Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion (such as from examples given), predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	▪ Specify and explain relationships (e.g., non-examples/examples, cause-effect) ▪ Make and record observations ▪ Explain steps followed ▪ Summarize results or concepts ▪ Make basic inferences or logical predictions from data/observations ▪ Use models (e.g., diagrams to represent or explain mathematical concepts) ▪ Make and explain estimates
APPLY Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation, carry out (apply to a familiar task), or use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	▪ Select a procedure according to criteria and perform it ▪ Solve routine problem applying multiple concepts or decision points ▪ Retrieve information from a table, graph, or figure and use it to solve a problem requiring multiple steps ▪ Translate between tables, graphs, words, and symbolic notations (e.g., graph data from a table) ▪ Construct models given criteria
ANALYZE Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, find coherence, deconstruct	▪ Categorize, classify materials, data, figures based on characteristics ▪ Organize or order data ▪ Compare/contrast figures or data ▪ Select appropriate graph and organize & display data ▪ Interpret data from a simple graph ▪ Extend a pattern
EVALUATE Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies or fallacies, judge, critique	Not Applicable
CREATE Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, construct, produce	▪ Generate conjectures or hypotheses based on observations or prior knowledge and experience

Level 3: Strategic Thinking & Reasoning

Tasks and classroom discourse falling into this category demand the use of planning, reasoning, and higher order thinking processes, such as analysis and evaluation, to solve real-world problems or explore questions with multiple possible outcomes. Stating one's reasoning and providing relevant supporting evidence are key markers of DOK 3 tasks. The expectation established for tasks at this level require an in-depth integration of conceptual knowledge and multiple skills to reach a solution or produce a final product. DOK 3 tasks and classroom discourse focus on in-depth understanding of one text, one data set, one investigation, or one key source, whereas DOK 4 tasks expand the breadth of the task using multiple texts or sources, or multiple concepts/disciplines to reach a solution or create a final product.

Verbs	Teacher Role	Student Role
Critique, appraise, revise for meaning, assess, investigate, cite evidence, test hypothesis, develop a logical argument, use concepts to solve non-routine problems, explain phenomena in terms of concepts, draw conclusions based on data	Questions to probe reasoning and underlying thinking, asks open-ended questions, acts as a resource and coach, provides criteria and examples for making judgments and supporting claims, encourages multiple approaches and solutions; determines when/where (text, concept) depth and exploration is most appropriate	Uncovers and selects relevant and credible supporting evidence for analyses, critiques, debates, claims and judgments; plans, initiates questions, disputes, argues, tests ideas/solutions, sustains inquiry into topics or deeper problems, applies to the real world

Possible Products

- Complex Graph
- Set up a database
- Conduct or critique a designed investigation
- Video cast or podcast
- Analyze survey results
- Debate from a given perspective
- Develop storyboard for film or cartoon animation
- Multi-paragraph essay or short story
- Literary critique
- Play, book, music, or movie review
- Informational report with several subtopics
- Fact-based argument (Is this criticism supported by the historical facts?)
- Create a Wiki or website

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Potential Activities

- Analyze results of a questionnaire or survey (e.g., survey classmates/ industry members to find out what they think about a current issue)
- Prepare an informational report about an area of study
- Write a letter to the editor after evaluating a product
- Prepare for and participate in a debate
- Use evidence to generate criteria for making judgments
- Make a booklet or brochure about a topic, organization, or issue
- Participate on a panel to discuss differing viewpoints on...
- Prepare a speech to support your perspective about ...
- Explain and apply abstract terms and concepts to real-world situations
- Solve complex, non-routine problems that draw upon multiple skills, concepts, and processes
- Write an essay, short story, poem, or play
- Create complex graphs or databases where reasoning and approach to data organization is not obvious
- Design, conduct, or critique an investigation to answer a research question
- Propose an alternate solution to a problem studied

Potential Questions

What are the possible design flaws in …?
What is the theme/the lesson learned ... ?
How would the theme change if …?
What underlying bias is there ... ?
What inferences will these facts support ... ?
How does the author create tension/suspense…?
What is the author's chain of reasoning or point of view for …?
What is the impact on the reader /viewer for use of this (rhetorical device, analogy, figurative language use, visual image, etc.)?
What conclusions can you draw ... ?
How can you prove that your solution or estimate is reasonable?
What evidence can you find to support ... ?
What ideas justify this position ... ?

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ELA, History & Social Studies Alignment to Bloom's Taxonomy (sources: Hess ELA-SS and Writing CRMs)

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Level I3I Strategic Thinking & Reasoning
REMEMBER Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify	Not Applicable
UNDERSTAND Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion, predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	▪ Explain, generalize, or connect ideas using supporting evidence (e.g., quote, example, text reference) ▪ Identify/make inferences about explicit or implicit themes ▪ Describe how word choice, point of view, or bias may affect the readers' interpretation of a text ▪ Write multi-paragraph composition for specific purpose, focus, voice, tone & audience
APPLY Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation, carry out (apply) to a familiar task, or use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	▪ Apply a concept in a new context ▪ Revise final draft for meaning or progression of ideas ▪ Apply internal consistency of text organization and structure to composing a full composition ▪ Apply word choice, point of view, style to impact readers'/viewers' interpretation of a text
ANALYZE Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, find coherence, deconstruct (e.g.for bias or point of view)	▪ Analyze information within a text or source ▪ Analyze interrelationships among concepts, issues, problems ▪ Analyze or interpret author's craft (literary devices, viewpoint, or potential bias) to create or critique a text or to support text interpretations ▪ Use reasoning and evidence to generate criteria for making and supporting an argument of judgment (e.g., Was FDR a great president? Who was the greatest ball player?)
EVALUATE Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies, or fallacies, judge, critique	▪ Cite evidence and develop a logical argument for conjectures ▪ Describe, compare, and contrast solution methods ▪ Verify reasonableness of results ▪ Justify or critique conclusions drawn
CREATE Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, produce	▪ Synthesize information within one source or text ▪ Develop a complex model for a given situation ▪ Develop an alternative solution

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Math & Science Alignment to Bloom's Taxonomy (source: Hess Math-Science CRM)

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Leve13I Strategic Thinking & Reasoning
REMEMBER Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify	Not Applicable
UNDERSTAND Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion, predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	▪ Use concepts to solve non-routine problems ▪ Explain, generalize, or connect ideas using supporting evidence ▪ Make and justify conjectures ▪ Explain thinking when more than one response/solution is possible ▪ Explain phenomena in terms of concepts
APPLY Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation, carry out (apply to a familiar task), or use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	▪ Design investigation for a specific purpose or research question ▪ Conduct a designed investigation ▪ Use concepts to solve non-routine problems ▪ Use and show reasoning, planning, and evidence ▪ Translate between problem & symbol notation when not a direct translation
ANALYZE Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, find coherence, deconstruct	▪ Compare information within data sets or texts or across related data sets ▪ Analyze and draw conclusions from data, citing evidence ▪ Generalize a pattern ▪ Interpret data from complex graph ▪ Analyze similarities/differences between research procedures or solutions
EVALUATE Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies or fallacies, judge, critique	▪ Cite evidence and develop a logical argument for concepts or solutions ▪ Describe, compare, and contrast solution methods ▪ Verify reasonableness of results
CREATE Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, construct, produce	▪ Synthesize information within one data set, source or text ▪ Formulate an original problem given a situation ▪ Develop a scientific/mathematical model for a complex situation

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Level 4: Extended Thinking

Curricular elements assigned to this level demand extended and integrated use of higher order thinking processes such as critical and creative-productive thinking, reflection, and adjustment of plans over time. Students are engaged in conducting multi-faceted investigations to solve real-world problems with unpredictable solutions. Employing and sustaining strategic thinking processes over a longer period of time to solve the problem or produce an authentic product is a key feature of curricular objectives assigned to DOK 4. Key aspects that denote this particular level typically include authentic problems and audiences, and collaboration within a project-based setting.

Verbs	Teacher Role	Student Role
Initiate, design and conduct, collaborate, research, synthesize, self-monitor, critique, produce/present	Questions to extend thinking and broaden perspectives; facilitates teaming, collaboration, self-evaluation	Designs, takes risks, researches synthesizing multiple resources, collaborates, plans, organizes, and modifies, creates concrete tangible products

Possible Products

- Short film
- Agency presentation
- Research report
- Play
- Video Game
- Documentary
- Newspaper or series of articles
- Multi-Media product
- Anthology of original writing, art, music, etc.

Potential Activities

- Applying information from more than one discipline to solve ill-defined problems in novel or real-world situations
- Research tasks that involve generating questions, and formulating and testing hypotheses
- Tasks that require making multiple strategic and procedural decisions as new information is processed
- Tasks that require multiple roles and collaboration and coordination with others (e.g., script writing, camera work, editing, and acting/ talent)
- Tasks that involve drawing evidence from multiple sources to support solutions/conclusions
- Conducting an internship in industry where students are faced with real-world, unpredictable problems
- Organizing/conducting a community service project or school-based event

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Potential Questions

What changes would you make to solve or address this major problem/ or ssue...?
How would you improve upon this invention or innovation?
Can you propose an alternative solution to...?
What could be done to minimize (maximize) ...?
In what way would you design or redesign ... and why ?
What evidence would you cite to defend the actions of ...?
How would you evaluate ... ?
How would you prioritize criteria for making this (local zoning) decision … and why?
How would you evaluate the works by this author over time?
Can you formulate and test a conjecture for...?
Can you predict the potential benefits and drawbacks if this law does/does not pass ?
Can you construct a model that would change ...?
Can you think of an original way to apply ... ?
Do you agree with the actions ...? with the outcomes ... ? with the decision to …?
How would you prove ...? disprove ...?
Can you assess the value or importance of ...?
What information would you use to support a differing perspective ... ?
What can be learned about this time in history from reading and analyzing various cultural, political, and social perspectives?

ELA, History & Social Studies Alignment to Bloom's Taxonomy (sources: Hess ELA-SS and Writing CRMs)

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Level 4 | Extended Thinking
REMEMBER Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify	Not Applicable
UNDERSTAND Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion, predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	▪ Use multiple sources to elaborate on how concepts or ideas specifically draw from other content domains or differing concepts (e.g., research paper, arguments of policy: – should this law be passed? What will be the impact of this change?) ▪ Develop generalizations about the results obtained or strategies used and apply them to a new problem or contextual scenario
APPLY Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation, carry out (apply to a familiar task), or use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	▪ Select or devise an approach among many alternatives to research and present a novel problem or issue ▪ Illustrate how multiple themes (e.g., historical, geographic, social) may be interrelated within a text or topic
ANALYZE Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, find coherence, deconstruct	▪ Analyze multiple sources of evidence, or multiple works by the same author, or across genres, or time periods ▪ Analyze complex/abstract themes, perspectives, concepts ▪ Gather, analyze, and organize multiple information sources ▪ Compare and contrast conflicting judgments or policies (e.g., Supreme Court decisions)
EVALUATE Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies or fallacies, judge, critique	▪ Evaluate relevancy, accuracy, and completeness of information across multiple sources ▪ Apply understanding in a novel way, provide argument or justification for the application ▪ Critique the historical impact (e.g., policy, writings, discoveries, etc.)
CREATE Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, construct, produce	▪ Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts in order to articulate a new voice, alternate theme, new knowledge or nuanced perspective

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Math & Science Alignment to Bloom's Taxonomy (source: Hess Math-Science CRM)

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Level 4 | Extended Thinking
REMEMBER Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify	Not Applicable
UNDERSTAND Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion (such as from examples given), predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	▪ Relate mathematical or scientific concepts to other content areas, other domains, or other concepts ▪ Develop generalizations of the results obtained and the strategies used (from investigation or readings) and apply them to new problem situations
APPLY Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation, carry out (apply to a familiar task), or use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	▪ Select or devise an approach among many alternatives to solve a problem ▪ Conduct a project that specifies a problem, identities solution paths, solves the problem, and reports results
ANALYZE Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, lind coherence, deconstruct	▪ Analyze multiple sources of evidence ▪ Analyze complex/abstract themes ▪ Gather, analyze, and evaluate information
EVALUATE Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies or fallacies, judge, critique	▪ Gather, analyze, & evaluate information in order to draw conclusions ▪ Apply understanding in a novel way, provide argument or justification for the application
CREATE Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, construct, produce	▪ Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts ▪ Design a mathematical model to inform and solve a practical or abstract situation

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Resources:

Anderson, L., Krathwohl, D., Airasian, P., Cruikshank, K., Mayer, R., Pintrich, P., Raths, J., & Wittrock, M. (Eds) (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

Florida Department of Education, Depth of Knowledge Questions

Hess, K. K. (2004-2012). Center for Assessment, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc. [papers posted and available] www.nciea.org

Webb, N. (March 28, 2002) "Depth-of-Knowledge Levels for four content areas, " unpublished paper.

Webb, N. (August 1999). Research Monograph No. 18: "Alignment of science and mathematics standards and assessments in four states." Washington, D.C.: CCSSO.

Webb, N. (1997). Research Monograph Number 6: "Criteria for alignment of expectations and assessments on mathematics and science education. Washington, D.C.: CCSSO.

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Footnote 45: RELAY Data Protocol

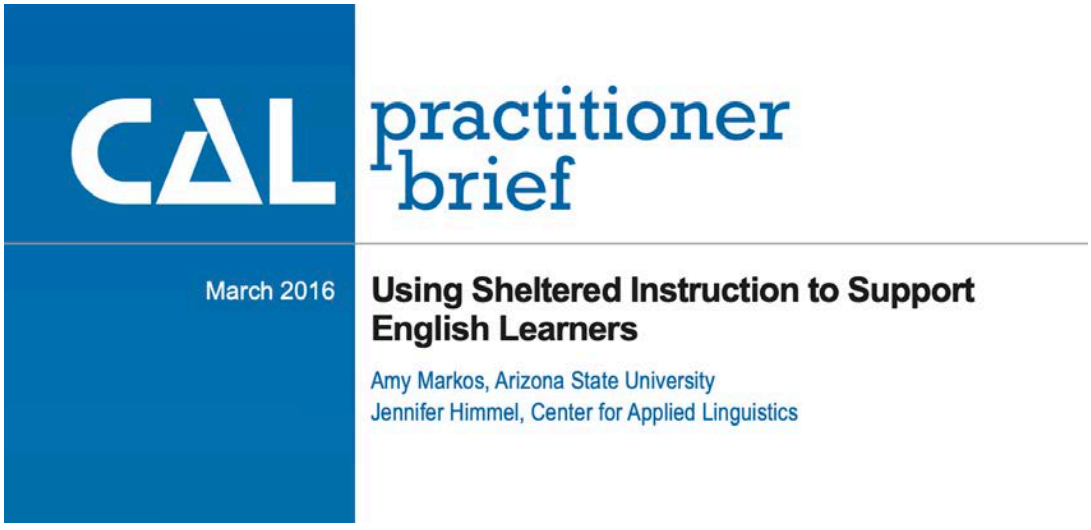
This data protocol presents a structured reflection process for teachers and other school stakeholders to observe trends and discuss ideas for continuous improvement. It emphasizes the importance of examining data with an equity lens and elevating a range of perspectives when interpreting data.

Data Protocol Step	General Guidance	Guidance for Student Work	Guidance for Summative Data
Step 1: Set Purpose	Ask and answer the following questions: • What question are you trying to answer by looking at the data? • What predictions or assumptions do you have about the data? • How might those predictions or assumptions be informed by implicit	Remind yourself of the learning outcome Clarify what evidence you will be looking for in relation to the learning outcome	Review the learning outcomes that are the focus of instruction over the period of time you are examining Identify the evidence that will provide meaningful and relevant information about student performance in relation to the learning outcome Name assumptions you have about student performance and evaluate them for bias (confirmation, hindsight, negativity, availability)
Step 2: Select the Data	Focus yourself on the data set(s) you will use: • Identify the qualitative and/or quantitative data that is aligned to your purpose • Consider whether you will disaggregate data and/or hide subjects' identities	Select the problem(s) to examine. Identify the criteria for success by: • Creating an exemplar • Anticipating other correct responses that may utilize different strategies	Select the assessment instrument(s) that will be used to collect information about student performance in relation to the learning outcome Evaluate the tool that you will be using to organize and analyze the data from the assessment instrument to ensure it aligns with your purpose Consider disaggregating the data IF examining student performance by subgroup supports your purpose

Step 3: Describe the Data	As you engage with the data set(s): • Make concrete observations about the data. • Point out specifics ("On question 3…") and focus on descriptive observations of 'Who,' 'What', 'Where', and 'When.' • Do not examine 'Why' or 'How' yet. This enables you to avoid jumping to conclusions	Observe each students' work in relation to the exemplar and other correct strategies. You might consider sorting work samples into groups based on common trends you observe.	Avoid labeling noticings too quickly as "strengths" or "areas of growth", since that tends to trend more towards interpretation, but do be aware of negativity bias. Be as specific as possible with what you observe. Review specific items where student performance is noteworthy (i.e. above/below a certain score; an outlier in comparison to other items)
Step 4: Interpret the Data	Brainstorm interpretations for the data: • What did you do as a teacher that led to these results? • What are the understandings, actions, or beliefs of students, families, or others that led to these results? Can you connect these back to teacher actions? • What aspects of the assessment may have led to these results? Did anything about the assessment advantage some over others? • Point to specific areas of strength or growth, use person-first language, and use terms such as "yet" to indicate a growth mindset.	Identify the methods and strategies students used Determine mistakes versus errors and form hypotheses about what students believe about mathematical concepts Consider how format or structure of the assessment may have contributed to student outcomes Trace evidence of student understanding to your instructional methods and materials	Brainstorm as many interpretations as possible: teacher understandings/actions/beliefs, student understandings/actions/beliefs Also consider: • Does this data give a full picture of students' abilities? What else would complete the picture? • Is there anything about this assessment/assignment that disadvantages some students? • What might students share if you were to discuss the data with them? • What kinds of academic interventions have we been offering so far? Are these interventions being implemented effectively? Are they being accessed in an equitable way?

Step 5: Determine Implications for Practice	Consider your next steps: • What worked well, that you should continue to do? • What improvements can you make to your teaching practice in response to this data? • What additional context would be helpful in interpreting and acting on this data? How will you gain that context?	Plan for future lesson(s) by considering these questions: • What did you do in your instruction that was effective for students that you want to continue doing? • Based on your purpose of supporting student mastery of the learning outcome, what steps could be taken next? • What strategies might be most effective to support your purpose? • Visualize the impact your next steps and strategies will have on upcoming student work. What will students be able to say, do, or write?	Consider these questions: • What did you do in your instruction that was effective for students that you want to continue doing? • What have your students already mastered that you need to maintain mastery of? What is your strategy for reinforcing these skills? • What have your students not yet mastered that you need to reteach? What is your strategy for reteaching this content in the context of the content you're teaching next? • How might additional qualitative data be used to inform design and implementation of action steps? Describe the ways in which each action step is within your locus of control. If an action step is not within your locus of control, then consider an alternative. Define how the action step will further students' understanding of concepts and skills, not just performance on a specific assessment item.

Footnote 48: Brief on using Sheltered Instruction for MLLs



Sheltered instruction is an essential component of any program for English learners (Genesee, 1999; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Saunders & Goldenberg, 2010; Williams, Hakuta, & Haertel, 2007; Wright, 2010). Sheltered instruction delivers language-rich, grade-level content area instruction in English in a manner that is comprehensible to the learners. When partnered with English language development and, when possible, native language instruction, sheltered instruction allows English learners to progress academically while developing proficiency in English (Faltis, 1993; Fritzen, 2011; Genesee, 1999; Short, 1991; Wright, 2010). Sheltered instruction also incorporates opportunities for students to develop general academic competencies, such as study skills, learner strategies, and critical thinking skills (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2012; Genesee, 1999; Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1989).

This brief provides an overview of sheltered instruction. It first describes when and how to use sheltered instruction to support English learners. It then discusses fundamental components of sheltered instruction, including content and language objectives, instructional strategies (with suggestions for specific content areas), and assessment of content learning. It concludes with a list of resources to help teachers support students through sheltered instruction as they develop their English proficiency and master grade-level academic content.

When and How to Use Sheltered Instruction

Figure 1 illustrates how sheltered instruction should be part of a broader educational program for English learners that ideally includes the following:

- Native language instruction as a foundation for content area learning
- Sheltered instruction to continue content area learning as appropriate based on a student's level of English proficiency
- English language development to foster students' ability to listen, speak, read, and write in English

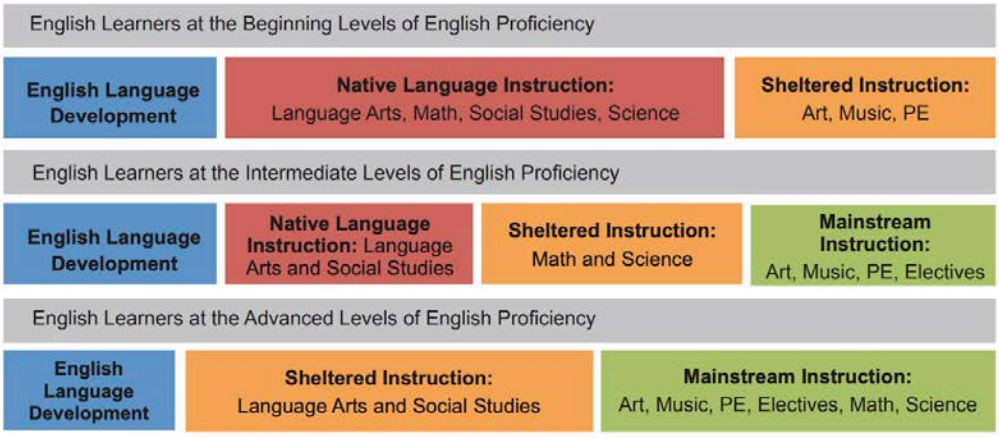


Figure 1. Sheltered instruction as one component of a comprehensive education program for English learners

The goal is for students to acquire the English proficiency and content area knowledge needed to transition successfully to mainstream instruction. Although many programs eliminate native language instruction when learners become proficient in English, it is beneficial to continue to provide them with opportunities to develop their native language skills.

Ideally, at the earliest stages of English language development, learners participate in sheltered instruction only for highly context-embedded areas such as art, music, and physical education, with other content instruction provided in their first language. Once students have an intermediate level of English proficiency, they can transition into sheltered English for grade-level math and science instruction (two content areas that easily lend themselves to context-embedded instruction). Finally, at the advanced levels of English proficiency, students can learn social studies and language arts through sheltered instruction and move into mainstream instruction for most previously sheltered areas. In this way, as the students' levels of English proficiency increase, so do their exposure to and participation in sheltered instruction, followed by their eventual transition to mainstream instruction (Echevarria & Graves, 2007; Wright, 2010).

It is important to note that the model presented in Figure 1 may need to be adjusted based on the age of the students and may not be feasible in all schools. Feasibility is influenced by the availability of bilingual teachers and resources, state laws and policies about the language of instruction, and the number of English learners in a school or at a grade level. Often, students at beginning levels of English proficiency participate in sheltered instruction for all content area learning and receive no native language instruction. When this is the case, schools should aim to provide them with teachers who are prepared to teach both content and language. Teachers who have a bilingual or ESL endorsement, teachers who have extensive training or education related to English learners, and even teachers who share students' non-English language may be best suited to support all levels of learners through sheltered instruction.

Fundamentals of Sheltered Instruction

To better provide English learners with access to core content concepts, multiple efforts and approaches have been used over time. Early approaches to fostering second language competencies included grammar-translation and the audio-lingual method. As more English learners entered U.S. schools in the 1970s, educators designed special English language development courses that embraced a communicative approach. In the 1980s, researchers and educators began to see the benefit of developing language through the use of

grade-level content curricula, and content-based English classes became a popular approach to educating English learners. However, concerned that language development was taking a backseat to the teaching of content, ESL and content-area teachers began collaborating to strategically and systematically incorporate English language development into content-area instruction. This integration is now generally referred to as sheltered instruction (Echevarría & Short, 2010).

Since the rise of sheltered instruction in the early 1980s, the most prominent models that have been used in schools include the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA; Chamot & O'Malley, 1986), Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE; Echevarria & Graves, 2007; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008), the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model (Short & Echevarria, 1999), and Guided Language Acquisition and Design (GLAD; Brechtel, 2001). These models share the following features:

- A focus on content and language objectives
- Making content comprehensible for students by—
  - Connecting students' backgrounds and prior knowledge to content area concepts
  - Explicitly teaching content vocabulary, academic language, and language structures of the content area
  - Presenting cognitively demanding information and tasks in context-embedded ways (e.g., graphic organizers, visual representations)
  - Using cooperative learning to facilitate content understanding and promote language development through language use
- The use of alternate assessments to accurately determine what students know about a content area regardless of their English proficiency level

While often mistaken as "just good teaching," quality sheltered instruction requires teachers who are not only certified to teach their content area but who also know how to teach English learners effectively (as evidenced, e.g., by an ESL endorsement). Sheltered instruction teachers must be able to use their knowledge of approaches that promote both content and language learning along with their knowledge of second language acquisition and of their students' culture, language, and community to address the unique needs of English learners in purposeful ways (August & Hakuta, 1997; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008).

Setting the Stage: Content and Language Objectives

The use of instructional objectives is a relatively well-established practice in U.S. K–12 classrooms and has some research base to indicate that their implementation can lead to enhanced learner performance in areas like reading and math (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Saunders & Goldenberg, 2010). In sheltered instruction, teachers utilize two types of instructional objectives: content and language.

Content objectives, typically derived from state content standards, state the cognitive skills or knowledge that students are expected to acquire during a lesson and specify how students will demonstrate what they have learned. For example, see the possible content objective below for a seventh-grade standard from the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS):

> *NGSS Standard MS-LS1-2:* Develop and use a model to describe the function of a cell as a whole and ways parts of cells contribute to the function.
>
> *Possible content objective:* Students will analyze how parts of a cell function in normal cells and cancerous cells to demonstrate knowledge of parts of a cell.

As a result of the standards-based reform movement in the United States, most teachers are familiar with the practice of creating content objectives. However, using language objectives to drive classroom instruction for English learners is still a relatively new idea, and the literature suggests that teachers require much support in order to become comfortable creating objectives that identify academic language worth teaching (Baecher, Farnsworth, & Ediger, 2014; Fisher & Frey, 2010; Short, Himmel, Gutierrez, & Hudec, 2011). Familiarity

in creating, posting, and teaching to language objectives is important to ensure that English learners have equal access to the curriculum (Hudson, Miller, & Butler, 2006; Short, Echevarría, & Richards-Tutor, 2011). By definition, English learners are still learning academic English and hence may not be able to access and engage with the content concepts without explicit language instruction (Echevarria, Short, & Vogt, 2012; Lyster, 2007).

Language objectives articulate for learners the academic language functions and skills they need to master to fully participate in the lesson and meet the grade-level content standards (Echevarria, Short, & Vogt, 2012). Quality language objectives complement the knowledge and skills identified in the content objective. Here is a sample language objective that corresponds to the sample content objective mentioned earlier:

> Students will be able to **summarize in writing** the differences and similarities between normal and cancer cells using the following key words and phrases: *unlike, in contrast to, the same as, similarly, cytoplasm, nucleus/nuclei, nucleolus,/nucleoli, and chromatin.*

Though the impetus behind language objectives was to provide English learners with equitable instructional opportunities, there is growing consensus that many students can benefit from the clarity that comes with a teacher outlining the requisite academic language to be learned in each lesson (Lindhal & Watkins, 2014; Zwiers, O'Hara, & Pritchard, 2014).

Creating Appropriate Language Objectives

Language objectives should be informed by the grade-level content standards and, more narrowly, by the daily content objectives. Once teachers have articulated content objectives that support the content standards and tasks, they must identify and analyze the academic language embedded in those tasks. This academic language will become the basis for the lesson's language objectives. In other words, teachers should keep the perspective of English learners in mind and ask themselves, "Of all the skills and functions addressed in my lesson, which is most important for helping students meet the grade-level standard and develop or enhance their academic language proficiency?" Like content objectives, language objectives must be measureable (i.e., teachers must be able to observe and assess the students' mastery of the objective) and written in language that accounts for the linguistic and cognitive development of the students.

Although teachers who shelter instruction typically include all four language domains (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in a lesson and highlight one or more grammatical structures or language learning strategies, they do not need to post a language objective for every language-related task present in the lesson. Teachers address many instructional needs in a 50- or 60-minute lesson. Rather than highlight all language uses in a particular lesson, it is perhaps more useful for teachers to think about what is nonnegotiable in that lesson in terms of language. This nonnegotiable then becomes the impetus for the language objective. The language skill or concept is then directly taught during the lesson, and students participate in a measurable language task. The following classroom vignette illustrates two teachers' process toward identifying language and literacy forms.

> Mr. Zhang's 7th grade science students have been working on the cell cycle. The content standards for 7th grade science indicate that students must be able to investigate and understand that all living things are composed of cells, with a key concept being cell division. The content objective for this lesson asks the students to demonstrate knowledge of parts of a cell by comparing and contrasting a normal cell with a cancer cell.
>
> Because the students have already focused on the new vocabulary and grammar structures in this unit, Mr. Zhang and Mr. Lewis, the ESL teacher, decide that addressing the language functions required to complete tasks should be their next linguistic goal for the students. From there, Mr. Zhang and Mr. Lewis brainstorm some scientific language and functions related to the cell cycle that might need to be directly taught in order for the students to master the content and English language proficiency standards:

- The language of comparison—in order to have students explain what they learned about the normal and cancer cells (e.g., *more than*, *less than*)
- Recording ideas in a graphic organizer—for students to be able to identify main ideas and organize them (e.g., Venn diagram)
- Summarizing either orally or in writing—in order to have students demonstrate mastery of the topic

Once Mr. Zhang and Mr. Lewis have identified the language objectives they want to focus on, they must look at the state's Grades 6–8 English language proficiency standards. When they look at the standards, they see that the students at low–intermediate to advanced language proficiency must be able to record information from oral input and explain, with detail, the similarities and differences between ideas, concepts, or things. Given these standards and the content objective, they decide that the best use of class time is to highlight oral language development and thus create the following language objective:

> Students will be able to **orally explain** the differences and similarities between normal and cancer cells, using the following key words/phrases*: unlike, in contrast to, the same as, similarly, cytoplasm, nucleus/nuclei, nucleolus/nucleoli, and chromatin.*

From Himmel, 2012. Reproduced with permission from Colorín Colorado.

As illustrated in this vignette, teachers can use a variety of approaches to create language objectives, thinking about worthwhile language and literacy to teach from the perspectives described below.

Key vocabulary, concept words, and other academic words that students will need to know in order to talk, read, and write about the lesson. These words might include general academic terms, like *distribution,* which appear in many different content areas, or content-specific words, like *nuclei.*

Language functions related to the topic of the lesson, such as describing, explaining, and comparing. See the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards (2007) and the *Framework for English Language Proficiency Development Standards Corresponding to the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards* (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012) for examples of these functions for English language arts, math, science, and social studies. Teachers can also access language functions related to content areas in their grade-level content area standards.

Students' language skills. Typically, sheltered instruction lessons include opportunities for English learners to use listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, but not all four domains are directly taught and assessed in one lesson. As teachers plan language objectives, they can consider students' language abilities as well as the language skills needed to accomplish the lesson's activities. For example, if the students must report on what they observe during a scientific demonstration and they need to develop their speaking skills, the language objective might state that they will be able to present a short, structured talk on the outcomes of the experiment.

Grammar or language structures common to the content area. For example, if students will be asked to create an analogy between being a child in a family and being a colonist as a subject of England, the language objective could address the use of comparative language and language structures to write about how these two situations are similar and different.

Language learning strategies that support comprehension of the lesson. For example, if students are starting a new chapter in the textbook, the strategy of previewing the text might be an appropriate language objective.

(Adapted from Short, Himmel, Guttierez, & Hudec, 2011).

Sharing the Objectives With Students

To help students take ownership of their learning, it is important that the objectives be shared with them at the beginning of the lesson and reviewed

with them at the end. This allows them to assess the ways in which they have met the objectives. To ensure that the objectives are comprehensible, teachers sometimes use color coding to highlight what students will be learning and the tasks they must complete. Images or pictures can also make academic vocabulary in the objectives more comprehensible for English learners.

Posting and referring to objectives varies according to instructional context. Some teachers like to have the students choral read the objectives, while teachers of older students sometime have them write the objectives in their journal in addition to asking a student to read them aloud. Some science teachers prefer to reveal the objectives later in the lesson, perhaps after the warm up or exploratory activity, so they can still maintain an inquiry-based approach (Echevarria & Colburn, 2006).

In addition to posting and referring to the objectives at the beginning and end of a lesson, it is important to refer to them throughout the lesson. Having students assess their progress midway through a lesson can provide valuable formative assessment data that teachers can use to better meet their students' needs. For example, if the language objective is to use persuasive language in writing, and students indicate with a thumbs down that the task of writing a persuasive letter to a historical figure is too difficult, the teacher might re-teach a mini-lesson on persuasive language or utilize more scaffolds, such as providing a model of persuasive writing, giving the students sentence frames, or reminding students of the word wall that contains vocabulary terms used to persuade.

When implemented correctly, content and language objectives provide a road map for both the teacher and the students and help the students take ownership of their content learning and language development.

Strategies for Sheltering Instruction in the Content Areas

There are considerations specific to the use of sheltered instruction in the content areas that teachers should be aware of. This section describes these considerations and offers specific strategies for sheltering instruction in math, science, social studies, and language arts. It is important to note that a strategy described under one content area may also be effective in other content areas.

Mathematics

Although math is often assumed to be an easy content area to teach to English learners ("It's just numbers, right?"), teaching math through sheltered instruction is more complicated than some may think. First, when it comes to connecting students' background knowledge and prior experiences to the math curriculum, teachers need to remember that English learners may have learned to add, subtract, multiply, and divide using different computational methods than those taught in U.S. schools. Some may have learned to use commas where we use decimal points (e.g., $15,00 instead of $15.00) and vice versa (e.g., 10.000 instead of 10,000 for ten thousand). Chances are also good that English learners will not be familiar with the U.S. system of measurement (inches, feet, cups, ounces, pounds, etc.), having learned the metric system instead.

When approaching the explicit instruction of vocabulary, teachers need to pay close attention to the various types of math vocabulary students need to learn:

- Words specific to math, such as *divisor* and *quotient,* as well as common English words that, when used in math, take on a particular meaning, such as *table, tree, cone, face, positive,* and *negative*
- Math synonyms or different terms that indicate the same operation, such as *add, plus, sum,* and *combine*
- Functional vocabulary that students will use to interpret math problems and communicate their mathematical thinking and ideas, such as *solve, graph,* and *compare*

Teachers must also consider the syntax of math. First, there is not always a one-to-one correlation between something written using math symbols (e.g., $18 > 7$) and the words used to write or say it (e.g., eighteen is greater than seven). Another challenge when translating math symbols into spoken or written words is word order. For example, the numerical sentence $(3x)^2$ may be read as "the square of three times x." English learners also

need to understand the language structures used in math, such as comparatives (e.g., *greater than),* prepositions (e.g., *two into four),* and structures that signal logical connections *(if . . . then).*

Word walls, sentence strips, and charts or dictionaries that include visuals specific to the lesson vocabulary can help make math lessons comprehensible for English learners. The sentence strips should include math phrases commonly written with math symbols (e.g., > for *greater than*, = for *equal to*) and their spelled-out versions. Useful manipulatives include a protractor, a hundreds cube, and fraction strips. Teachers can also model the steps to be followed in solving problems using a doc cam or white board that allows them to use a print size large enough for all students to see from anywhere in the room. While modeling math procedures, teachers can use predetermined sentence stems to describe what they are doing. In this way, they are modeling not only the math skills but also the language used to describe the math procedures, paying close attention to the syntax challenges mentioned above.

The use of these strategies provides scaffolding for students at varying levels of English proficiency to work through math problems, help them talk through the procedures as they go, and report out to the class what they did to solve a problem (Moschkovich, 2012). Teachers should also teach and encourage the use of non-math phrases that support group work, such as *Can you please repeat that?* and *Can you show me what you mean?* When placing students in groups, teachers should consider each student's ability in language and math and, if possible, partner students at lower levels of English proficiency with classmates who share their native language.

Science

With its tangible concepts and processes that are perfect for hands-on learning, science is considered a good subject to shelter for English learners, even for those students at lower levels of English proficiency (see Figure 1). The inquiry approach is recommended in sheltered instruction (Deussen, Autio, Miller, Lockwood, & Stewart, 2008; Settlage, Madsen, & Rustad, 2005; Wright, 2010), but inquiry poses certain challenges for English learners. While students at all levels of language proficiency will be able to engage with the thinking demands of inquiry—questioning, predicting, hypothesizing, and testing—English learners will need varying levels of support to develop the language of these processes. As with math instruction, it is necessary to teach the language of inquiry if students are expected to use it with peers or in writing as they work through inquiries in science. When the language of inquiry is directly taught, modeled, and supported through vocabulary instruction and the use of sentence stems, students will be able to work collaboratively and write about their inquiry experiences. Some English learners, because of their cultural background, may not be comfortable with some of the expectations involved in inquiry, such as making predictions and working through possible solutions. It is important for teachers to get to know the background of their students and, when necessary, make the norms and expectations of inquiry clear to help bridge any cultural differences (Lee, 2002; Lee & Buxton, 2011).

Although directly teaching content area vocabulary at the beginning of a lesson or unit might impede some aspects of the inquiry approach, teachers should consider which words they could teach up front and why. For example, students might need support with prepositions, adjectives specific to physical characteristics (e.g., colors, textures, and states of matter for describing what they might see in an inquiry investigation), and verbs commonly used in inquiry (e.g., *be, have,* and *looks like)* (Deussen et al., 2008; Janzen, 2008). Teachers can pre-teach these words along with language structures specific to inquiry, such as structures for conducting experiments (e.g., predicting/hypothesizing, describing, comparing, analyzing), sharing findings (e.g., explaining, summarizing, questioning) and arguing (e.g., supporting ideas with data, responding to others' ideas) (Quinn, Lee, & Valdés, 2012).

Teachers can also make content more comprehensible by incorporating multiple forms of input throughout a lesson. Posters, diagrams, other visuals, and hands-on experiments are great ways to bridge content and language divides. Visual tools can also be used to make directions accessible for English learners—for example, by using images to show steps in a lab or to illustrate lesson agenda

items. Of course, consistent routines in the science classroom, whether for daily activities or for experiment or lab procedures, are an added benefit for English learners.

Science teachers often utilize cooperative learning or peer work. When grouping students in a sheltered classroom, teachers should consider the language proficiency of English learners, as well as their background knowledge and experience with science. If the class includes English proficient students, then ideally groups would include a heterogeneous mix of language abilities that could allow students at various levels of English proficiency to communicate with other English learners and with proficient English speakers in social and content interactions. Heterogeneous groups can promote English language development while also allowing native language communication as students navigate through new science content. Regardless of group configurations, teachers need to explicitly teach cooperative learning norms, such as appropriate ways to ask questions and make suggestions (e.g., *Can you please repeat that? Can you show me what you mean? What if we also tried . . . ? I'm not sure about . . . . What do you think? I don't understand . . .*) and turn-taking and other participation expectations.

Finally, teachers can use graphic organizers to make content comprehensible for English learners and to support their participation in oral and written expressions about their learning (Hamilton, 2005). For example, when teaching lab procedures, a teacher can use a flow map to show the progression of steps for a given experiment. Then, when asking students to report out on their progress in the lab, the teacher can display the graphic organizer along with sentence stems to support student output: *Today we were able to complete everything up to . . . . Tomorrow we need to begin with . . .* . In this way, students can access the key words included in the flow map and, if necessary, point to the graphic organizer as they orally share out what they were able to accomplish and where they will begin the next day.

Graphic organizers are also useful in making content presented through text (e.g., science books, articles, lab reports) more comprehensible to English learners. Typically, students who are still developing their abilities to read in English struggle to read and comprehend grade-level science texts. Teachers can shelter instruction by illustrating, condensing, or summarizing key concepts from text in a visual way using graphic organizers that are appropriate for the topic. As students work toward proficiency in English, teachers have the added responsibility of teaching them the discourse of science and how to read the types of information texts typically found in science learning environments. They must help students learn to interpret information from diagrams or visuals found in a text, to understand that some information may be presented only in the image or only in the text, and to identify key ideas and supporting details—recognizing that in many science texts, the details precede the main idea (Wright, 2010).

Social Studies

With its abstract concepts and texts that include a high concentration of new vocabulary, complex sentences, passive voice, and pronouns, social studies is a challenging subject to learn in a second language. For this reason, it is recommended that social studies be taught in the students' first language until they have an intermediate level of English proficiency (Weisman & Hansen, 2007). Once students' English proficiency is sufficient to enable them to learn social studies through sheltered instruction, there are some things teachers can do to make the content comprehensible.

An important strategy is to connect the content to students' background knowledge and experiences. Teachers must remember that some students may not be familiar with terms, concepts, and experiences related to the United States (Weisman & Hansen, 2007; Wright, 2010). From geography concepts (nation, state, city, town) to legislative concepts (national and state government systems) to historical events (Civil War, Civil Rights Movement, 9/11), teachers must be keen to access information that students do have and then build any background knowledge that is essential for learning about the concept under study. Connecting to students' backgrounds and prior knowledge also means opening up space for them to share knowledge or perspectives on a topic that may be different from those presented in the text or curric-

ulum. Teachers should keep in mind that a lesson taught using a sheltered instruction approach may take more time given the amount of background knowledge the teacher must first help the students develop.

Another useful strategy involves using a modified K-W-L chart (to show what the class **k**nows, **w**ants to know, and has **l**earned) at the beginning of a unit. This offers teachers a more layered and context-embedded approach to access and build on students' background knowledge and allows students to share personal connections to the learning at hand. To use this strategy, a teacher selects three or four items relevant to the lesson, such as maps, photographs, video clips, picture books, or realia, and uses them to talk with students about what they know and what questions they have. For example, when introducing a unit on the Japanese internment camps during World War II, a teacher could gather a picture of Japanese American families waiting in line to board a bus, a picture of Japanese Americans behind barbed wire fences, the book *Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki, and a newspaper article from the 1940s that talks about the internment of Japanese Americans. The teacher presents one item at a time to the class, asking "What do we know from this?" and "What questions do we have?" Taking the time at the beginning of a unit to access students' prior knowledge, a teacher can see the connections the students are making, what they already know, and which concepts still need to be addressed. (See chapter 9 of Allen, 2000, for more information on this modified approach to the K-W-L strategy.)

Finding alternative ways to present information is a particularly useful strategy in social studies, where texts are typically very difficult for English learners to read independently. One alternative would be reading texts to or with students. Ideally, teachers would also use context-embedded tools such as videos, documentaries, reenactments, images, diagrams, maps, and realia. When using films or video clips, it is important to stop and talk with students throughout, taking time to further scaffold the information presented (through visuals, gestures, translation of key words) and to check students' comprehension. Graphic organizers are another excellent tool for presenting cognitively demanding information to students before or in lieu of independent reading. Graphic organizers can illustrate the concept as well as the overarching structure of the information being presented (e.g., classification, description, sequence, cause and effect). Then, when students are asked to talk or write about the topic, the teacher can use the graphic organizer to teach the necessary language structures to do so. For example, teaching the language of cause and effect might include phrases such as *led to, which caused,* and *resulted in.* Pairing the language teaching with the visual representation of the information in the graphic organizer supports both language and content learning.

When explicitly teaching vocabulary and language structures in social studies, it is important to recognize that many key vocabulary words represent large, abstract concepts. So, while tools such as maps, timelines, charts, and so forth maybe be helpful for teaching some academic words, other concepts—such as taxation, poverty, and government—might be hard to represent in an image or picture. For abstract concepts, taking a long-term approach to developing students' understanding is best. Using many of the strategies presented above, teachers can support English learners in developing their understanding of concepts over time.

Language Arts

Language arts broadly includes two areas: reading and writing. Educators often talk about reading in two ways: learning to read (e.g., letter recognition, phonemic awareness, word identification) and reading to learn (e.g., comprehension and analysis of text). Similarly, writing may be thought of as learning to write (e.g., letter formation, spelling, punctuation) and writing to communicate (e.g., telling stories, explaining, arguing a point, providing information). Comprehensive coverage of how English learners develop a second language is beyond the scope of this brief. What it offers instead are a few considerations for sheltering language arts content to help students learn to read and write for a variety of purposes. (See the resource section for in-depth resources on the language and literacy development of English learners.)

Considerations for teaching English learners how to read and write

One of the main ways to make content comprehensible for English learners is to connect the content to their prior knowledge and experience. Knowing students' backgrounds and first language proficiency is the first step in sheltering reading and writing instruction. Research shows that students' reading and writing abilities in their first language support their acquisition of reading and writing skills in English (August & Hakuta, 1997; Bialystok, 2002; Collier & Thomas, 1992).

If the school does not assess students' first language abilities, teachers should communicate with the students and their parents about what the children can do and enjoy doing regarding reading and writing. If an English learner can read and write in the first language, then these cognitive abilities can be transferred to reading and writing in English (Cummins, 2000). The teacher can shelter instruction by using what a student already knows about reading and writing and by valuing the child's first language abilities as an aid to the acquisition of reading and writing skills in English (Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010). Skills that commonly transfer from one language to the next include phonological awareness, print concepts, the knowledge that text is made up of letters and words put together in a specific format, and the understanding that language is made up of words and symbols that have meaning (Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010, p. 33). Hence, once a student has learned to read in one language, that student does not need to be taught the mechanics of learning to read in a second or third language.

Teachers can also shelter instruction by presenting learning in context-embedded ways, such as these:

- Starting with commonalities between a student's first language and English (sounds, patterns, print concepts)
- Using culturally relevant or high-interest words for phonemic awareness instruction
- Using words and phrases that students know as the basis for practicing letter formation and for learning print concepts and spelling patterns (Ford, n.d.; Helman, 2004; Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010)

Considerations for teaching English learners how to read to learn and write to communicate

When sheltering instruction to help English learners comprehend text and write to communicate, it is important to keep in mind two key factors that affect student learning: students' ability to read and write in the language of instruction; and students' background, culture, and interests. Because language arts involves reading and writing in English, students' proficiency in English is a factor. This factor can be mitigated, to some extent, by integrating students' background experiences, knowledge, and interests into language arts instruction. Familiarity with the content of a text can offset comprehension difficulties stemming from a student's reading ability (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008). For literature, this could be familiarity with the setting, the characters, or a relatable issue or problem; for informational text this could be familiarity with the topic, idea, or person under study. Similarly, writing about a shared experience (e.g., a field trip or science experiment) or about a topic familiar to students (e.g., their routine for getting ready for school) can offset the challenges of learning to write different types of texts as well as learning the writing process (Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Wright, 2010). When teachers use texts or choose writing assignments based on students' background and interests, they are presenting cognitively demanding content in context-embedded ways.

Another excellent way to shelter language arts instruction is to use and develop students' listening and speaking skills while they are engaging with and writing texts. Several sheltering techniques that use oral language scaffolds are described below.

Reading the text aloud to students. A text can be read aloud by the teacher or a student, or the teacher can play an audio recording of the text.

Using interactive reading strategies that utilize and build on students' listening and speaking abilities as they make sense of and engage with text. Strategies such as Think-Pair-Share, Directed Listening/Thinking Activity (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008), Critical Questions, and Visualize-Interact-Predict (Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010) allow students to learn about

reading concepts (e.g., predicting, finding the main idea, determining the meaning of unknown words) through listening and speaking. These strategies allow English learners to talk with a peer, a small group, or the teacher as they participate in lessons and demonstrate their understanding of the concepts. The reading concepts learned through talk then transfer to the skills students will use when they read and engage with texts independently.

Bringing students attention to general academic terms to counteract publishers' tendency to focus on low-utility and specialized vocabulary in language arts texts. During shared reading experiences or close reading, teachers can prompt students to select words that might be essential to the understanding of a short passage. Teachers can also utilize instructional techniques such as List Group Label (GLOBE Tech, n.d) and Concept Definition Maps (Reading Educator, n.d.) to provide students with multiple opportunities to interact with the words at a semantic level.

Building on ideas and stories dictated by students to promote reading comprehension and writing abilities while at the same time showing students that through reading and writing we communicate. The Language Experience Approach (Dixon & Nessel, 1983) is a method wherein students dictate the text to be studied. It could be a personal story a student wants to share or a dictation about an experience the class shared. A student (or students) dictates the ideas to a writer (usually the teacher, but the writer could also be a more capable peer), who writes the ideas verbatim. The written texts are then used to support students' comprehension and analysis of text (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Wright, 2010). Sheltering through oral language allows English learners to understand and participate in language arts content, and research shows that this kind of sheltering is key to helping students move beyond word-level comprehension to text-level analysis (August & Shanahan, 2006).

Teachers must also provide scaffolds to support students in learning the writing process and in writing texts for a variety of purposes. Two techniques for sheltering writing instruction are described below.

Using a combination of direct and interactive instruction. Direct instruction involves the direct teaching of skills or strategies, such as identifying discourse patterns for text types, revising a peer's paper, using transitional words and phrases between paragraphs, and using dialogue in a story to show emotions. Interactive instruction involves students working with others in pairs, small groups, or as a class to produce written texts. Examples include writing a class book, writing a manual for classroom procedures, or writing a report on a science concept studied in class. The Language Experience Approach is useful for supporting students' writing experiences. English learners with limited writing ability in English can participate in writing experiences and demonstrate their understanding of writing skills and strategies through dictation (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Wright, 2010). This combination of direct and interactive instruction is very effective for English learners (Genesee & Riches, 2006).

Providing students with sentence frames and key words to support their writing. For students who are ready to move beyond the support that dictation provides, sentence frames or key words offer a next level of scaffolding to support student output. After some direct instruction, modeling, and time to talk through ideas with a peer, English learners can use sentence frames to start their writing or to add structure to their ideas. For example, "It all started when . . . " is a sentence stem that can help students start a basic narrative. "I think . . . because . . . " is a stem that can help add structure to an opinion piece. Sometimes, providing students with key words from a word bank or word wall can be the right amount of support. In deciding which stems or key words to use, teachers should consider the writing task, the students' writing ability in English, and the students' understanding of the vocabulary needed to complete the task. Hence a teacher's understanding of students' language background and proficiency and familiarity with instructional techniques that scaffold the four language skills are essential in effectively sheltering language arts instruction.

Assessing Content Learning in Sheltered Instruction

Effective sheltered instruction teachers continually assess student progress toward the content and language objectives of the lesson and use formative

assessment data to plan lessons that meet the linguistic and academic needs of all of their students. Teachers of English learners must understand that until students reach a certain level of English proficiency, content area achievement can be masked by limited language ability (Abedi & Lord, 2001). Indeed, the results of most classroom assessments reflect students' language proficiency, even if their intended purpose is to measure only content area achievement. Although teachers have little control over the standardized, summative assessments administered to their students, they can also reflect on and use appropriate formative assessments. Teachers who shelter instruction should be purposeful about the goal of the assessment instruments they use (i.e., what they want their assessment to measure) and modify them as appropriate.

The following test item illustrates the confounding relationship between content knowledge and language proficiency:

> *All of the following are examples of the causes of the Industrial Revolution in England except*
>
> a. *Advances in technology*
> b. *Religious uniformity*
> c. *Government stability*
> d. *Increased trade overseas*

Although the intent of the item is to assess whether students know the causes of the Industrial Revolution, what this item measures for some English learners is whether they understand the meaning of the word *except*.

To mitigate the influence of low English proficiency when assessing content knowledge, teachers need to adapt the assessments they use—especially formative assessments, which often provide the most relevant data for day-to-day instruction. One way to do this is to reduce the linguistic demands of the assessment—for example, by avoiding grammatical structures that English learners may not know. Another strategy is to provide linguistic supports such as sentence frames for students who are not yet able to write complete sentences or paragraphs for essays and short-response items. Teachers can also let students use a word wall and glossaries in English and their native language, or let students show mastery in different ways: via nonverbal response, hands-on activities, models or visual displays, or sorting (Gottlieb, 2006; Valdez-Pierce, 2003).

Teachers may also choose to adapt assessments so there is purposeful measurement of academic language. For example, if the language objectives in a social studies unit focus on comparative language, the teacher would want to explicitly assess student mastery of comparative language. So, for example, in addition to using multiple choice or true/false items on the assessment for the unit, the teacher might include items that require extended language production. Perhaps the students will write a short paragraph with the expectation that at least four of the comparative language structures taught in the lesson be used in the response. The teacher could also ask the students to upload a media file where they present a short talk that incorporates comparative language. When teachers identify the purpose of their assessments and are cognizant of the interdependence of content and language ability, they will get more reliable data about their students' ability and be better prepared to adjust instruction accordingly.

Conclusion

As research in sheltered instruction and professional development indicates, teachers who set off to shelter instruction for English learners will need comprehensive and job-embedded professional learning opportunities to effectively explore and integrate effective instructional ideas (Short, 2013) such as those addressed in this brief. Moreover, teachers will need the support of colleagues and administrators to harness and effectively use available resources to better amplify academic language instruction in the content areas for English learners. Consulting the resources listed below is one way to begin the process of sheltering instruction in order to help English learners master academic content while developing proficiency in English.

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Footnote 47: The Power of Habits of Discussion

The Power of Habits of Discussion

What makes a discussion a *good* discussion? Darren Leslie explores the complexities of oracy and offers tactical advice on how to improve the quality of your teaching with *Habits of Discussion*.

Discussions in my classroom were often a form of disjointed verbal interactions. You could compare them to verbal tennis. I would ask a question, a pupil would respond, I'd ask another, another pupil would respond, and it would go on like that until I was satisfied that we had concluded. Over time, I came to realise that this didn't qualify as a discussion in its fullest sense. Mainly because the ideas presented were not connected to each other.

To dig a little deeper, a hallmark of a discussion is listening, *really* listening to one another and this key feature was also missing. You could say we were talking *past* one another as opposed *to* talking to one another. The comments would have been slightly related but would not really constitute a discussion, rather a set of statements grouped together to make it look like a discussion, mediated by me, the teacher.

So, I resolved to make discussions in my classroom better and this is when I came across "Habits of Discussion" as outlined by Doug Lemov in *Teach Like a Champion 3.0*. In his book, Lemov writes that 'a discussion is supposed to be a mutual endeavour by a group of people to develop, refine, or contextualise an idea or set of ideas, and that's different from a series of loosely related comments'.

To make the discussions in my classroom stronger I needed to implement a set of tools and behaviours that build belonging, ensure psychological safety, and maximise the potential of my pupils so that they would feel comfortable contributing.

Our pupils often provide us with the most profound thinking, if only we take the steps necessary to allow them to shine.

"Our pupils often provide us with the most profound thinking, if only we take the steps necessary to allow them to shine."

Build belonging first

Habits of Discussion are a powerful set of tools but to set it up requires developing a series of 'nearly invisible behaviours that are displayed by participants that signal the importance of the endeavour'. These behaviours such as establishing and maintaining eye contact and subtle prosocial behaviours including nodding to show appreciation and understanding are key to building a strong scholarly classroom culture where pupils feel comfortable to both participate and listen attentively.

Listening carefully to the speaker is a fundamental action that participants need to take. Listening with the intent to "follow on" encourages pupils to show the speaker that they care about what they have said.

No one makes profound contributions or shares razor-sharp thinking with their peers, if the signals in the room tell them that nobody cares.

"No one makes profound contributions or shares razor-sharp thinking with their peers, if the signals in the room tell them that nobody cares."

Another fundamental action that links directly to listening carefully is maintaining eye contact with the speaker. Not only does this show the speaker that you are keen to hear what they have to say, looking at them while they do and giving them your full concentration will help you to hear more of what they are saying. By looking at the speaker you can also pick up on gestures and facial expressions that add meaning and context to what they are saying.

This is extremely useful, especially if you are the one called upon next to contribute. I recognise that maintaining eye contact is not suitable for some pupils and it isn't a guarantee that pupils will listen to one another, but it is a behaviour worth developing for the majority.

These behaviours are important because pupils, and most of society, seek affirmation that their words matter. If after you share an insight no one builds on it or recognises your contribution you soon begin to conclude that it isn't worth speaking.

Encouraging these behaviours begins slowly but they compound to encourage pupils to share their thoughts safe in the knowledge that their peers will listen to them and demonstrate this through sending signals of belonging. This is akin to the same young people who post pictures on Instagram and wait desperately for 'likes'. This affirmation is powerful and we crave it just as much when we speak, as we do online.

By showing that you 'like' what a peer has to say through simple hidden cues, it makes it more likely that they will share a first-thought or even a half-developed thought, necessary for a high-quality emerging classroom discussion.

Provide the tools

Once the behaviours are in place that signal belonging and pupils feel that they are safe to contribute their thoughts to discussions we now need to provide them with the tools necessary, a framework you could say, for talking to, not past, each other.

First, it is vital that the pupils are armed with the necessary knowledge to take part in a discussion. It is of no use to start a discussion if the pupils lack the prior knowledge necessary to take part in a fact-based and connected discussion. Without being well-informed, discussions could easily result in emotive and argumentative contributions. We want discussions to be rich and connected, this requires a well-informed group of participants.

Pupils need a framework to help get them started, to teach them how to take part in an academic discussion. To start, I gave them sentence starters that they could use such as 'I think that…', 'I agree with…' and 'I disagree with…'. This encouraged the pupils to begin by recognising the previous speaker before offering their own contributions. It also allows for the teacher to ask questions that don't demand a correct response immediately.

By asking a pupil what they think you are ensuring that they can kick start a discussion without the fear of wanting to be right. This allows them to start by offering their thoughts on the matter in hand.

The next pupil that is called upon then as a choice, do they agree or disagree with the previous speaker. This recognition is not only affirming that what you said matters it encourages you to want to speak again.

By beginning your contribution with ‘I agree with Kieran because’ or ‘I disagree with Kieran because’ shows that you were listening. The third pupil that contributes has even more choice, they can agree or disagree with the previous speakers.

This adds even more layers to our fundamental behaviours. The pupils are now looking at one another, using each other’s names in their responses and building on each other contributions. Making it much more of a discussion than the tennis matches we previous embarked upon.

Building momentum

Once the initial framework is being utilised and perhaps even changed by the pupils. You can build momentum in discussions by adding in a simple question, ‘agree, disagree or build’.

After calling upon a student to provide their thoughts you could say ‘agree, disagree or build’. This does a few things for us. It keeps the correct answer from being revealed and encourages participation and leaves the space open for anyone to contribute.

A pupil may want to agree with Vanessa or disagree with James or build upon what Angus had to say. When the conditions are ripe it is such a powerful question to ask. Three words from the teacher and a series of hands shoot up.

The real power, however, is hearing the students use and build upon the initial framework. Now, when called upon, a pupil could say ‘I’d like to build on what Jessica said because they said this, and I think that they are right, but they missed out this key point’.

This technique builds a strong classroom culture because it involves pupils making a habit of referring to or revising a previous comment and referencing by name the peer who made the previous point. By doing this we are building belonging and raising the standards of our discussions.

Uncommon Schools | Change History.

Habits of Discussion Scope & Sequence

Below you will find a list and trajectory of the habits of discussion most often used during reading discussion—these are directly aligned to Common Core Speaking & Listening Standards* & are listed in order of teaching them.

LEARNING TO SHARE (Start in Grades K-1)		
CORE HABIT OF DISCUSSION	**IDEAL STUDENT ACTIONS**	**TEACHER TRAINING OR PROMPTING to encourage these actions**
Listen & talk only in turn SL.K.1.A, SL.1.1.A	o Track the speaker o Hands down when someone is speaking o Do not interrupt	o Teacher models hands down o Teacher eye contact, hand movement o Teacher prompts students to give peers a chance to think/talk
Speak Audibly SL.K.6	o Students speak audibly	o Teacher prompts: "Loud and proud"
Speak in **Complete Sentences** SL.1.6, SL.2.6	o Restate the question in the response; no incomplete sentences	o Teacher non-verbal: fingers pursed together, and then spread apart (like pulling gum apart)
Interact Peer-to-Peer: direct answers to the group SL.3.1.A	o Look at every group member when giving an answer, not just the teacher	o Nonverbal prompts: fingers pointing to eyes and then to the rest of the group o Teacher prompts: "Tell him."

LEARNING TO BUILD (Start in Grades 1-3)		
CORE HABIT OF DISCUSSION	**IDEAL STUDENT ACTIONS**	**TEACHER TRAINING OR PROMPTING to encourage these actions**
Elaborate on your answer SL.3.1.D, SL.4.1.D, SL.5.1.D	o Teacher prompts students to give a more developed answer o Students prompt students	o Teacher prompts students to give a more developed answer: "Tell me more." o Teachers gestures for student to keep going.
Build Off another's answer SL.K.1.B, SL.1.1.B, SL.2.1.B	o Responses build off of what the previous student said; comments are not in isolation	o "Build off that." o "Tell me more about what ____ said." o "Can you tell me more about what ____ is thinking?"
Evaluate others' responses (Agree/disagree /somewhat agree) SL.4.1.D, SL.5.1.D	o Thumbs up/side/down o Students saying ""I agree with what you said because…" and "I somewhat agree with what you said but…"	o Teach the stems of agree/disagree/somewhat disagree: "I agree with what you said because…" and "I somewhat agree with what you said but…" o Teacher prompts this nonverbal: "Do you agree…." Teacher then asks "Why do you think that…" o Teacher prompts the group: "What do you think about that?" "Do you agree?"
Peer Praise	o Praise each other's work or thinking	o Teacher prompts for praise: "What did you like about Jason's answer?" "Could someone offer some praise for that answer?"
Prompt Peers with Universal Prompts: SL.4.1.C, SL.5.1.C	o "Tell me more." o "What in the story makes you think that?" o "Why is that important?" o "Why do you think that?" o Repeat the original question	o Teacher trains: "So now we're at a point where if you don't agree you need to prompt that student with a universal prompt."
Hint, Don't Tell: cue peers to help them in their response	o Give a hint to another student to find the answer without telling them o Prompt a peer to make a	o Teacher could say, "I want you to help your neighbor" or "Instead of telling the answer you could have prompted like this…" o Teacher could tie in another lesson: "Remember in

SL.5.1.C	connection (to another text, to a life experience)	read aloud this morning what we did? How can you tie that in/use that here?"
No Hands: aid the conversation without raising their hand SL.5.1.C	o Understand wait time, and know when to prompt a peer in the conversation	o Teacher non-verbal: they back away in their chair and reach out their hands to the students to encourage them to continue the conversation)
Lead: facilitate the conversation from start to finish SL.4.1.B, SL.5.1.B	o Stay focused on the core question o Identify when the sharing strays from the core questions and redirect conversation	o No teacher action (just signs of watchful oversight) o Signs of re-directing a literature circle that's off-task. o Teacher intervenes: "What is our core question? Are you answering that question?"
Come Prepared in Writing: use written response to aid discussion SL.3.1.A, SL.4.1.A, SL.5.1.A	o Use written responses done during independent reading to guide the discussion	o Prompt: "As you were writing, I noticed that many of you wrote _____. What were you thinking?"

* NOTE: CCCS SL Standards 2 & 3 are embedded in Read Aloud (see Chapter 4), and Standards 4 & 5 are addressed on Social Studies & Science Classes.

Footnote 48: Scientific American Article “Why Writing By Hand is Better for Memory and Learning”

Handwriting notes in class might seem like an anachronism as smartphones and other digital technology subsume every aspect of learning across schools and universities. But a steady stream of research continues to suggest that taking notes the traditional way—with pen and paper or even stylus and tablet—is still the best way to learn, especially for young children. And now scientists are finally zeroing in on why.

A recent study in ***Frontiers in Psychology*** monitored brain activity in students taking notes and found that those writing by hand had higher levels of electrical activity across a wide range of interconnected brain regions responsible for movement, vision, sensory processing and memory. The findings add to a growing body of evidence that has many experts speaking up about the importance of teaching children to handwrite words and draw pictures.

Differences in Brain Activity

The new research, by Audrey van der Meer and Ruud van der Weel at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), builds on a foundational 2014 study. That work suggested that people taking notes by computer were typing without thinking, says van der Meer, a professor of neuropsychology at NTNU. “It’s very tempting to type down everything that the lecturer is saying,” she says. “It kind of goes in through your ears and comes out through your fingertips, but you don’t process the incoming information.” But when taking notes by hand, it’s often impossible to write everything down; students have to actively pay attention to the incoming information and process it—prioritize it, consolidate it and try to relate it to things they’ve learned before. This conscious action of building onto existing knowledge can make it easier to stay engaged and grasp new concepts.

To understand specific brain activity differences during the two note-taking approaches, the NTNU researchers tweaked the 2014 study’s basic setup. They sewed electrodes into a hairnet with 256 sensors that recorded the brain activity of 36 students as they wrote or typed 15 words from the game Pictionary that were displayed on a screen.

When students wrote the words by hand, the sensors picked up widespread connectivity across many brain regions. Typing, however, led to minimal activity, if any, in the same areas. Handwriting activated connection patterns spanning visual regions, regions that receive and process sensory information and the motor cortex. The latter handles body movement and sensorimotor integration, which helps the brain use environmental inputs to inform a person’s next action.

“When you are typing, the same simple movement of your fingers is involved in producing every letter, whereas when you’re writing by hand, you immediately feel that the bodily feeling of producing A is entirely different from producing a B,” van der Meer says. She notes that children who have learned to read and write by tapping on a digital tablet “often have difficulty distinguishing letters that look a lot like each other or that are mirror images of each other, like the b and the d.”

Reinforcing Memory and Learning Pathways

Sophia Vinci-Booher, an assistant professor of educational neuroscience at Vanderbilt University who was not involved in the new study, says its findings are exciting and consistent with past research. “You can see that in tasks that really lock the motor and sensory systems together, such as in handwriting, there’s this really clear tie between this motor action being accomplished and the visual and conceptual recognition being created,” she says. “As you’re drawing a letter or writing a word, you’re taking this perceptual understanding of something and using your motor system to create it.” That creation is then fed back into the visual system, where it’s processed again—strengthening the connection between an action and the images or words associated with it. It’s similar to imagining something and then creating it: when you materialize something from your imagination (by writing it, drawing it or building it), this reinforces the imagined concept and helps it stick in your memory.

The phenomenon of boosting memory by producing something tangible has been well studied. Previous research has found that when people are asked to write, draw or act out a word that they’re reading, they have to focus more on what they’re doing with the received information. Transferring verbal information to a different form, such as a written format, also involves activating motor programs in the brain to create a specific sequence of hand motions, explains

Yadurshana Sivashankar, a cognitive neuroscience graduate student at the University of Waterloo in Ontario who studies movement and memory. But handwriting requires *more* of the brain's motor programs than typing. "When you're writing the word 'the,' the actual movements of the hand relate to the structures of the word to some extent," says Sivashankar, who was not involved in the new study.

For example, participants in a 2021 study by Sivashankar memorized a list of action verbs more accurately if they performed the corresponding action than if they performed an unrelated action or none at all. "Drawing information and enacting information is helpful because you have to think about information and you have to produce something that's meaningful," she says. And by transforming the information, you pave and deepen these interconnections across the brain's vast neural networks, making it "much easier to access that information."

The Importance of Handwriting Lessons for Kids

Across many contexts, studies have shown that kids appear to learn better when they're asked to produce letters or other visual items using their fingers and hands in a coordinated way—one that can't be replicated by clicking a mouse or tapping buttons on a screen or keyboard. Vinci-Booher's research has also found that the action of handwriting appears to engage different brain regions at different levels than other standard learning experiences, such as reading or observing. Her work has also shown that handwriting improves letter recognition in preschool children, and the effects of learning through writing "last longer than other learning experiences that might engage attention at a similar level," Vinci-Booher says. Additionally, she thinks it's possible that engaging the motor system is how children learn how to break "mirror invariance" (registering mirror images as identical) and begin to decipher things such as the difference between the lowercase b and p.

Vinci-Booher says the new study opens up bigger questions about the way we learn, such as how brain region connections change over time and when these connections are most important in learning. She and other experts say, however, that the new findings don't mean technology is a disadvantage in the classroom. Laptops, smartphones and other such devices can be more efficient for writing essays or conducting research and can offer more equitable access to educational resources. Problems occur when people rely on technology *too much*, Sivashankar says. People are increasingly delegating thought processes to digital devices, an act called "cognitive offloading"—using smartphones to remember tasks, taking a photo instead of memorizing information or depending on a GPS to navigate. "It's helpful, but we think the constant offloading means it's less work for the brain," Sivashankar says. "If we're not actively using these areas, then they are going to deteriorate over time, whether it's memory or motor skills."

Van der Meer says some officials in Norway are inching toward implementing completely digital schools. She claims first grade teachers there have told her their incoming students barely know how to hold a pencil now—which suggests they weren't coloring pictures or assembling puzzles in nursery school. Van der Meer says they're missing out on opportunities that can help stimulate their growing brains.

"I think there's a very strong case for engaging children in drawing and handwriting activities, especially in preschool and kindergarten when they're first learning about letters," Vinci-Booher says. "There's something about engaging the fine motor system and production activities that really impacts learning."

A version of this article entitled "Hands-on" was adapted for inclusion in the May 2024 issue of Scientific American.

MESA Lesson Plan Template

This template reflects MESA's commitment to rigorous, language-rich instruction and aligns with Jeffco expectations, Expeditionary Learning practices, and MESA's literacy-forward approach.

Lesson Overview

- **Teacher:**
- **Grade / Content Area:**
- **Date:**
- **Lesson Title, Place in Scope and Sequence:**
- **Time Allotment:**

Standards & Learning Targets (CLO Generator)

- **CCSS Content Standard(s):**
- **Language Standard(s):**
- **Learning Target(s) (Student-Friendly):**
  I can…

Lesson Purpose & Rigor

- **Why this lesson matters:**
  (How does this lesson connect to prior learning, essential questions, real-world application, or an expedition/project?)
- **Level of Cognitive Demand (Bloom's Resource):**
  □ Recall □ Skill/Concept □ Strategic Thinking □ Extended Thinking

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Language Domains (Structural Requirement)

At MESA, all four language domains—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—are non-negotiable components of every lesson, regardless of grade level or content area. Lesson plans are considered complete only when all domains are intentionally planned for and implemented. This structure ensures that literacy development, academic discourse, and content mastery are reinforced throughout the day for all learners.

Reading (Required)

- **What students read:**
  (Text, problem, prompt, data set, directions, visuals with text, or primary/secondary sources.)

Writing (Required — Every Lesson)

- **What students write:**
  □ Reflection □ Short Response □ Constructed Response □ Explanation □ Argument □ Problem-Solving Justification □ Other: _____
- **How writing is used as a thinking tool:**
  (Writing is used to process, synthesize, explain, or apply learning—not only to record answers.)

Listening (Required)

- **What students listen to:**
  (Teacher modeling, peer discussion, read-aloud, expert voice, multimedia, or directions connected to the learning target.)

Speaking (Required)

- **How students speak:**
  □ Turn-and-talk □ Structured protocol □ Small-group discussion □ Academic debate □ Presentation □ Reflection share

---

Instructional Sequence

1. **Opening / Connection (5–10 min)**
   - Activate background knowledge
   - Introduce learning target
2. **Instruction & Practice (Core of Lesson)**
   - Modeling / mini-lesson
   - Guided practice
   - Student collaboration
   - Focus question and exemplar answer
3. **Independent or Applied Practice**
   - Students apply learning through task, problem, or product
4. **Closing / Reflection**
   - Writing-based reflection or synthesis
   - Check for understanding

Differentiation & Support (MTSS)

- **Universal Supports (Tier 1):**
- **Targeted Supports (Tier 2):**
- **Intensive Supports (Tier 3):**

(Include supports for MLLs, students with IEPs/504s, and extension for advanced learners.)

Assessment & Evidence of Learning

- **Formative Check(s):**
- **Student Work Collected:**
- **Criteria for Success**
    - **1.**
    - **2.**
    - **3.**
- **Progress Monitoring for Mastery: ____ of _____**

Materials & Resources

- Texts / Handouts:
- Technology:
- Manipulatives / Visuals:

Teacher Reflection (Post-Lesson)

- What worked well?
- What evidence shows students met the learning target?
- What adjustments are needed for the next lesson?

Note: Writing is intentionally embedded in every lesson at MESA. Research indicates that writing increases memory retention and cognitive engagement, reinforcing both literacy development and content mastery across disciplines.

MESA Instructional Walkthrough Checklist

(10–15 minute observation tool)

Observer:

Staff observed:

Date/time:

Curriculum & Rigor

- ☐ EL/IM lesson aligned to unit and standard
- ☐ Grade-level text/task in use
- ☐ Learning target and success criteria visible

Student Thinking & Discourse

- ☐ Students explaining thinking or reasoning
- ☐ Use of Habits of Discussion
- ☐ "Stretch It" questioning evident

Active Observation (Tier 1)

- ☐ Teacher circulating with pen-in-hand
- ☐ Real-time checks for understanding
- ☐ Instruction adjusted based on student work

Inclusion & Language Development

- ☐ Speaking, listening, reading, writing evident
- ☐ Vocabulary and visuals support access
- ☐ Multilingual learners fully engaged

Enrichment & Application

- ☐ Real-world or problem-based connection
- ☐ Extension or compacting visible (if applicable)

Assessment & MTSS

- ☐ Formative assessment observed
- ☐ Lesson aligned to WDM focus or reteach plan

Quick Ratings

- Overall Tier 1 Strength: ☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Needs Support
- Follow-Up Needed: ☐ Coaching ☐ WDM ☐ PD

☐ Quick positive note sent/ written

MESA Teacher Observation

Scoring Levels

4 – Exemplary: Consistently exceeds expectations; practice is student-driven and transferable

3 – Proficient: Meets expectations; practice is effective and standards-aligned

2 – Developing: Inconsistently meets expectations; partial implementation

1 – Beginning: Does not yet meet expectations; significant support needed

Proposed MESA Scholar Bell Schedule (1 of 3 pages)

Time	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
7:00-7:10	Before care activities	Before care activities	Before care activities	Before care activities	Before care activities	Before care activities
7:10-7:20	7:00-7:30	7:00-7:30	7:00-7:30	7:00-7:30	7:00-7:30	7:00-7:30
7:20-7:30						
7:30-7:40	Breakfast served	Breakfast served	Breakfast served	Breakfast served	Breakfast served	Breakfast served
7:40-7:50	7:30-7:55	7:30-7:55	7:30-7:55	7:30-7:55	7:30-7:55	7:30-7:55
7:50-8:00	Transition to Homeroom and Morning Greetings 7:55-8:00	Transition to Homeroom and Morning Greetings 7:55-8:00	Transition to Homeroom and Morning Greetings 7:55-8:00	Transition to Homeroom and Morning Greetings 7:55-8:00	Transition to Homeroom and Morning Greetings 7:55-8:00	Transition to Homeroom and Morning Greetings 7:55-8:00
Start of School Day						
8:00-8:10	Unpack and Morning Crew Meeting	Unpack and Morning Crew Meeting	Unpack and Morning Crew Meeting	Unpack and Morning Crew Meeting	Unpack and Morning Crew Meeting	Unpack and Morning Crew Meeting
8:10-8:20	8:00-8:20	8:00-8:20	8:00-8:20	8:00-8:20	8:00-8:20	8:00-8:20
8:20-8:30	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Math	Math	Mini Lesson	Mini Lesson
8:30-8:40	8:20-8:40	8:20-8:40	Mini Lesson	Mini Lesson		
8:40-8:50	Writing Mini Lesson and Writing Time	Writing Mini Lesson and Writing Time				
8:50-9:00	8:40-9:10	8:40-9:10	Centers/ Groups	Centers/ Groups		
9:00-9:10	Small Groups, Literacy Centers and Independent Work	Small Groups, Literacy Centers and Independent Work			Small Groups, Literacy Centers and Independent Work	Small Groups, Literacy Centers and Independent Work
9:10-9:20	9:00-10:00	9:00-10:00				
9:20-9:30			8:20 - 9:30	8:20 - 9:30		
9:30-9:40			Recess Break 9:30-9:40	Read Aloud		
9:40-9:50			Read Aloud	9:30-9:50		
9:50-10:00			9:30-9:50	Writing Mini Lesson and Writing Time	8:20-10:00	8:20-10:00

Proposed MESA Scholar Bell Schedule (2 of 3 pages)

10:00-10:10	UFLI Phonics	UFLI Phonics	Writing Mini Lesson and Writing Time	Small Groups, Literacy Centers and Independent Work	Fluency practice / Interventions	Fluency practice / Interventions
10:10-10:20	10:00-10:20	10:00-10:20		9:30-10:20		
10:20-10:30	Recess Break 10:20-10:30	Essentials	Small Groups, Literacy Centers and Independent Work	Snack break 10:20-10:30	10:00-10:30	10:00-10:30
10:30-10:40	Snack 10:30-10:40	10:20-11:00		Enrichment or Production	Enrichment or Production	Enrichment or Production
10:40-10:50	Science or Social Studies			10:30- 11:20	10:30- 11:20	10:30- 11:20
10:50-11:00			9:40-11:00			
11:00-11:10		Lunch and Recess	Snack break 11:00-11:10			
11:10-11:20	11:40-11:20		Essentials			
11:20-11:30	Choice Centers		11:10 - 11:50	Science or Social Studies	Recess Break 11:20-11:30	Snack 11:20 - 11:30
11:30-11:40					Math	Math
11:40-11:50		11:00 - 11:50			Mini Lesson	Mini Lesson
11:50-12:00	11:20-12:00	Choice Centers	Science or Social Studies	11:20-12:00		
12:00-12:10	Lunch and Recess			Essentials	Centers/ Groups	Centers/ Groups
12:10-12:20				12:00-12:40		
12:20-12:30		11:50-12:30				
12:30-12:40		Snack 12:30- 12:40	11:50-12:40		11:30 -12:40	11:30 - 12:40
12:40-12:50	12:00 - 12:50	Math	Lunch and Recess	Lunch and Recess	Snack 12:40-12:50	Recess Break 12:40-12:50
12:50-1:00	Math	Mini Lesson			Essentials	Science or Social Studies
1:00-1:10	Mini Lesson	Mini Lesson			12:50-1:30	
1:10-1:20						
1:20-1:30	Centers/ Groups	Centers/ Groups	1:30-2:20	1:30-2:20		
1:30-1:40			UFLI Phonics	UFLI Phonics	Lunch and Recess	
1:40-1:50			1:30-1:50	1:30-1:50		12:50-1:50

Proposed MESA Scholar Bell Schedule (3 of 3 pages)

1:50-2:00	12:50-2:00	12:40-2:00	Small Groups, Literacy Centers and Independent Work	Small Groups, Literacy Centers and Independent Work		Recess
2:00-2:10	Essentials	Recess Break 2:00-2:10				Lunch
2:10-2:20	2:00-2:40	Science or Social Studies			1:30-2:20	1:50-2:20
2:20-2:30			1:50-2:30	1:50-2:30	Science or Social Studies	Choice Centers
2:30-2:40			Choice Centers	Recess Break 2:30-2:40		2:20-2:40
2:40-2:50	Recess Break 2:40-2:50	2:00-2:50	2:30-2:50	Fluency practice / Interventions		Essentials
2:50-3:00	Enrichment or Production	Enrichment or Production	Enrichment or Production			2:40-3:20
3:00-3:10	2:50-3:30	2:50-3:30	2:50-3:30	2:40-3:10	2:20-3:10	
3:10-3:20				Choice Centers	Choice Centers	
3:20-3:30					3:10-3:30	
3:30-3:40				3:10-3:30		
3:30-3:50	Pack up and Closing Crew Meeting	Pack up and Closing Crew Meeting	Pack up and Closing Crew Meeting	Pack up and Closing Crew Meeting	Pack up and Closing Crew Meeting	Pack up and Closing Crew Meeting
3:50-4:00	3:30-3:55	3:30-3:55	3:30-3:55	3:30-3:55	3:30-3:55	3:30-3:55
End of School Day - Begin after care						
4:00-4:10	Aftercare Crew Meeting	Aftercare Crew Meeting	Aftercare Crew Meeting	Aftercare Crew Meeting	Aftercare Crew Meeting	Aftercare Crew Meeting
4:10-4:20	4:00-4:20	4:00-4:20	4:00-4:20	4:00-4:20	4:00-4:20	4:00-4:20
4:20-4:30	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack
4:30-4:40	K-2 group activities	K-2 group activities	K-2 group activities	3-5 Sports practice/ Choice Club Meeting	3-5 Sports practice/ Choice Club Meeting	3-5 Sports practice/ Choice Club Meeting
4:40-5:00	4:30-5:00	4:30-5:00	4:30-5:00	4:30-5:30	4:30-5:30	4:30-5:30
5:00-5:10	K-2 Outside or Gross Motor Time	K-2 Outside or Gross Motor Time	K-2 Outside or Gross Motor Time			
5:10-5:20	5:00-5:30	5:00-5:30	5:00-5:30			
5:20-5:30						

5:30-5:40	Quiet reading or Academic Tutoring Time	Quiet reading or Academic Tutoring Time	Quiet reading or Academic Tutoring Time	Quiet reading or Academic Tutoring Time	Quiet reading or Academic Tutoring Time	Quiet reading or Academic Tutoring Time
5:40-5:50	5:30-6:00	5:30-6:00	5:30-6:00	5:30-6:00	5:30-6:00	5:30-6:00
5:50-6:00						
End of Day - Aftercare over						

Footnote 49: TLAC Science of Reading Reference Pages 47-49

Chapter 2

Attending to Attention

The universal adoption of smartphones and other digital devices has changed the life of every young person we teach. The changes wrought have been at times beneficial and at times foreboding—at times both things at once. Sometimes, given the pace and complexity of the changes, it's hard to even say what they mean and what their consequences will be.

And, of course, we experience a version of those changes alongside our students. As we write this, for example, we note that we are shortening our sentences. We are told that readers will be far less likely to persist in reading this if the sentences are too long and complex.

The decline of attentional skills associated with time spent in a digital world characterized by constant distraction means that we and our students find tasks that require sustained concentration—like making sense of this longish sentence—a little harder. And when it comes to harder things, we are a little less likely to persist than we once were.

Poor Charles Dickens. The mark of his craft was the intertwining of multiple ideas and perspectives within a single, complex sentence. The resulting sentences could be thirty or forty words in length. With writing like that, he'd struggle to find readers in the twenty-first century. In fact, in most classrooms he does struggle—and for exactly that reason.

The fact that his books are long was, once upon a time, a positive attribute. He was the nineteenth century's most popular English-language writer, not so much despite his lengthy

writing but because of it. Picking up *David Copperfield* (1,024 pages) was, to a nineteenth-century audience armed with the stamina to read without interruption for hours at a time, more or less like binge-watching a Netflix series today.[1] You built your evenings around it. Jane Austen is often said to have been ahead of her time, but her observation that "If a book is well-written, I always find it too short"[2] is now an anachronism.

Today, long, like complex, is not a virtue. There is internet slang for this: tl;dr (too long; didn't read), which the Cambridge dictionary glosses as "used to comment on something that someone has written: If a commenter responds to a post with 'tl;dr,' it expresses an expectation to be entertained without needing to pay attention or to think."

Even in university settings, tl;dr is in the zeitgeist. "Students are intimidated by anything over 10 pages and seem to walk away from reading of as little as 20 pages with no real understanding," one professor recently wrote.[3]

"Fewer and fewer are reading the materials I assign. On a good day, maybe 30 percent of any given class has done the reading," wrote another.[4]

Yet another professor notes "I've come to the conclusion that assigning students to read more than one five-page academic-journal article for a particular class session is, in sum, too much."[5]

In *Stolen Focus*, Johann Hari chats with a Harvard professor who struggles to get students "to read even quite short books" and so now offers them "podcasts and YouTube clips . . . instead."[6]

And in an *Atlantic* piece on "The Elite College Students Who Can't Read Books," a first-year student at Columbia University told her professor that his assignments of novels to be read over the course of a week or two were too challenging because "at her public high school, she had never been required to read an entire book. She had been assigned excerpts, poetry, and news articles, but not a single book cover to cover."[7]

Reading, increasingly, is too hard, too long, and too tedious to minds attuned to the arrival of novel stimulus every few seconds—or at least it is if we make no effort to build young people's capacity to focus and sustain concentration.

Then again, we could ask, is this just moral panic—the judgment of every generation that the subsequent one is lacking? It's an important question to ask, but the answer is, probably not. There's a lot of science to suggest exposure to screens changes attention in measurable ways.

Research tells us that your nearby cellphone, even turned off and face down on a table, distracts you. A 2023 study by Jeanette Skowronek and colleagues assessed how students performed on a test of "concentration and attention" under two conditions: when a phone was visible nearby but turned off or when it had been left in another room. They found that "participants

under the smartphone presence condition show significantly lower performance . . . compared to participants who complete the attention test in the absence of the smartphone." In other words, "the mere presence of a smartphone results in lower cognitive performance."[8]

Similarly, University of Texas professor Adrian Ward and colleagues found that even unused, "smartphones can adversely affect . . . available working memory capacity and functional fluid intelligence."[9] Part of the reason for this is that it takes cognitive resources to inhibit the impulse to look at it as soon as you are aware of its presence.

You see a device and it triggers a desire to find out what's become new in the past fraction of a minute. While it doesn't even need to be turned on to have this effect, it usually is, of course. And turned on—almost always on and constantly attended to—means an attractive distraction from a difficult task is pushed into your consciousness every few seconds.

In time, you don't even need your phone to be present to become wired for distractibility. Researchers at Temple University found that "heavier investment in mobile devices is correlated with a relatively weaker tendency to delay gratification . . . and a greater inclination toward impulsive behavior."[10]

"If kids' brains become accustomed to constant changes, the brain finds it difficult to adapt to a nondigital activity where things don't move quite as fast," Michael Manos, clinical director of the Center for Attention and Learning at Cleveland Clinic, recently told the *Wall Street Journal*.[11]

For teens who are constantly exposed to screens—and for the rest of us too, in all probability—this has rewired not only the way they think when their phones are in-hand but the way they think, period.

While this surely demands greater reflection among schools, most relevant to this book are the particular implications those changes have for reading and reading teachers.

THE BOOK IS DYING

Consider the fact that far fewer students read for pleasure compared with just a few years ago. For time immemorial, we teachers have cajoled, encouraged, and prodded students to read on their own. But even multiplying our efforts tenfold now won't get us back to baseline reading rates of, say, 2005. The numbers of students who read outside of school and the amount of reading they do have fallen through the floor.

Take data gathered by San Diego State professor Jean Twenge. She and her colleagues have studied responses by about fifty thousand nationally representative teens to a survey that has been administered since 1975, enabling broadscale changes over time to be easily observed and tracked.[12]

Footnote 50: Examples of mentioned Conscious Discipline School Family Practices

<table>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution Time Machine
 
 
</td>
<td>Classroom Jobs
 
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greetings
 
</td>
<td>Safe Place (aka Cozy Corner)
 
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Footnote 51: Benefits of Conscious Discipline at Any Age



Conscious Discipline is most often practiced in early education, Head Start, Early Head Start and elementary settings. Resources such as the **Feeling Buddies Self-Regulation Toolkit** and **Baby Doll Circle Time**, and the implementation of practices such as **I Love You Rituals** create a solid foundation for optimal brain development, mental health, resilience, and social-emotional development in the earliest years. But the benefits of Conscious Discipline's powers, practices, and skills aren't just for young children. In fact, the lasting effects reach far into secondary education into adulthood.

Diane Phelan, a former secondary education administrator in Texas and current Director of Engagement at Conscious Discipline, has vast experience implementing Conscious Discipline in secondary education settings. She cites one essential theme that ties relevancy throughout all ages and grade levels: the creation of a School Family.

When Diane opened a new middle school, Keller Middle School, in Keller, TX she knew she wanted to implement Conscious Discipline from the very beginning. She brought staff from each grade level (15 in all) to a Conscious Discipline Institute with a vision and purpose. She said, "It changed everything." From then on, she committed to sending faculty every year. Keller was also at the front end of Academies.

When Diane moved to a high school in Texas, she knew how long it took for implementation to reach fidelity. This made her even more intentional about building a School Family. She implemented tools school-wide such as incorporating breathing and wish wells into school announcements in the morning to make things more purposeful. "You have to make it safe for teachers to take risks," Diane says, "Teachers must feel a difference."

What is the School Family?

In the simplest terms, building a **School Family** requires investing in relationships and cultivating a compassionate classroom culture. Positive connections are attributed to the lowering of anxiety and depression, and the raising of self-esteem in both children and adults (**BetterHealth)**. A positive school climate has a myriad of effects such as dramatically increased teaching time and academic success, and a significant decrease in behavioral issues. School climate is contingent on building healthy and strong relationships between teachers, students, and stakeholders.

Connection Over Content

A **School Family** can't be successful if you do not first attempt to connect with others in a meaningful way. There are some who believe connections come a bit easier in the early education or elementary level. Lesson plans that include music, graphics, etc., tend to be more common at these ages but School Families also thrive in middle school and high schools. Diane says, "Secondary education staff, teachers and even administrators are hungry for the kind of connection that the School Family provides. And they can create it, it just looks different than it would at the earlier ages." Often, professional development is content based in secondary education where teachers instruct specialized subjects; however, without a felt sense of safety, belonging and connection, content is dead in the water.

Meaningful Rituals

At Conscious Discipline, we create powerful connections through eye contact, presence, touch, and playfulness. Connections with early childhood and elementary ages can start with a simple greeting ritual in which we offer each student choices about how they would like to be greeted as they arrive in the morning, and then offer that connecting ritual authentically. Diane connected with students and staff via morning greetings in high school as well, but they were more of the fist bump sort than the "butterfly hi" and superhero greetings you might employ at younger ages. Diane also made an intentional choice to "celebrate *everything*," and to open the floor to input at staff meetings and assemblies to increase both connection and agency. "Connection invites cooperation, increases mental health and even impacts teacher retention in a positive way," Diane said. "Establishing connection is everything!" Rituals, routines, and learning structures such as the Safe Place and the Kindness Tree heavily contribute to building a School Family.

"Keep the Tenets, Adjust the Delivery"

The **powers**, **skills**, and **principles** of Conscious Discipline are beneficial for every age group. The challenge can come when trying to convey that message in a way that is applicable to different age groups, cultures, and school environments. This is why Conscious Discipline's adult-first model of learning, reflection and internalization becomes essential. Once we understand the core tenets of Conscious Discipline, it is possible to implement them in any setting. Those who operate in the secondary education space will naturally use language that sounds different and classroom structures that look different from those employed by elementary-focused educators to achieve the same goals. Diane stresses the importance of maintaining fidelity to the core teachings of Conscious Discipline while also adjusting the language to reach your students' unique needs. It can be a simple reframe such as: "We practice the skill this way… We adjust the language this way…" The same concept can be used when introducing implementation tools across ages and grades, such as the **Conflict Resolution Time Machine.** "The reality is that a conflict resolution tool is something we should all be using," says Diane, "Some of the Conscious Discipline visuals can be

adapted to fit specific demographics and audiences, but the focus remains. You must be willing to self-regulate and then work through the problem together."

Conscious Discipline as an Adult-First Practice

Conscious Discipline is an adult first self-regulation practice that focuses on the whole person of any age, "from infants to in-laws" making it beneficial in all education settings. The goal is to highlight the value of self-regulation at every stage and age of development. Then, provide inroads for educators to recognize and apply those benefits in relatable ways. Conscious Discipline is not always considered a secondary education practice, and according to Diane, "It will not be a secondary education practice unless the adults see their jobs as taking care of the whole child and every aspect of their lives, not just their field or department. Conscious Discipline gave our school's teachers the tools they needed to reach *all* kids in our low socio-economic school district in Texas."

Break It Down

TECHNIQUE 37: BREAK IT DOWN

Break It Down is a powerful teaching tool, but it can be challenging to use because it is primarily a reactive strategy. It's useful immediately after an incorrect or insufficient answer. How to respond effectively and efficiently in those situations is one of teaching's ongoing challenges. We know that repeating the question a little slower or louder isn't likely to help, but what do you do instead?

With *Break It Down,* the goal is to ask a question or present a piece of new information that will help the student answer correctly and will still cause the student to do as much of the thinking as possible. In the simplest terms, you want to provide the smallest viable hint, helping the student activate what he or she *does* know to get the correct answer.

In the video *Narlene Pacheco: Keystone*, you can see an example that shows both Narlene's skill and the challenges of the technique. Her kindergarteners are segmenting words—"bat" in this case—but one of her students has the letters out of order. She has b-t-a. "Segment bat for me," Narlene says, carefully managing her tell (see technique 12, *Culture of Error*). When her young scholar does this correctly, she points at her paper: "What did you write?" It's an ideal *Break It Down* since Narlene hasn't provided any new information. She's just asked her student to review her work with heightened attentiveness. If her scholar was able to get it right now it would be based entirely on a self-correction. But she does not yet see her mistake.

"Read what you have," Narlene now says, her second effort to *Break It Down,* but again it's not enough so Narlene goes a step further. "What's the first sound? Do you have that?" she asks. Her tone is impeccable: supportive, without a hint of frustration or judgment. "What's the second sound?" she continues. "Tuh" her student replies. She's narrowing her focus to a specific part of the work that's challenging. "What's the word?" Narlene now asks. "Buh-ah-tuh," her student says and in so doing catches her error and fixes it. Narlene has helped her student solve while doing as much of the work as she can, and her students is happy: She's figured it out rather than simply being told.

Smallest Viable Hint

A teacher never really knows what knowledge a given student has, nor exactly how big the gap is between what the student knows and what he needs to know to succeed. Because the ideal is to cause a student to apply what he knows to the greatest degree possible, it's useful to try to provide the smallest (successful) hint possible.

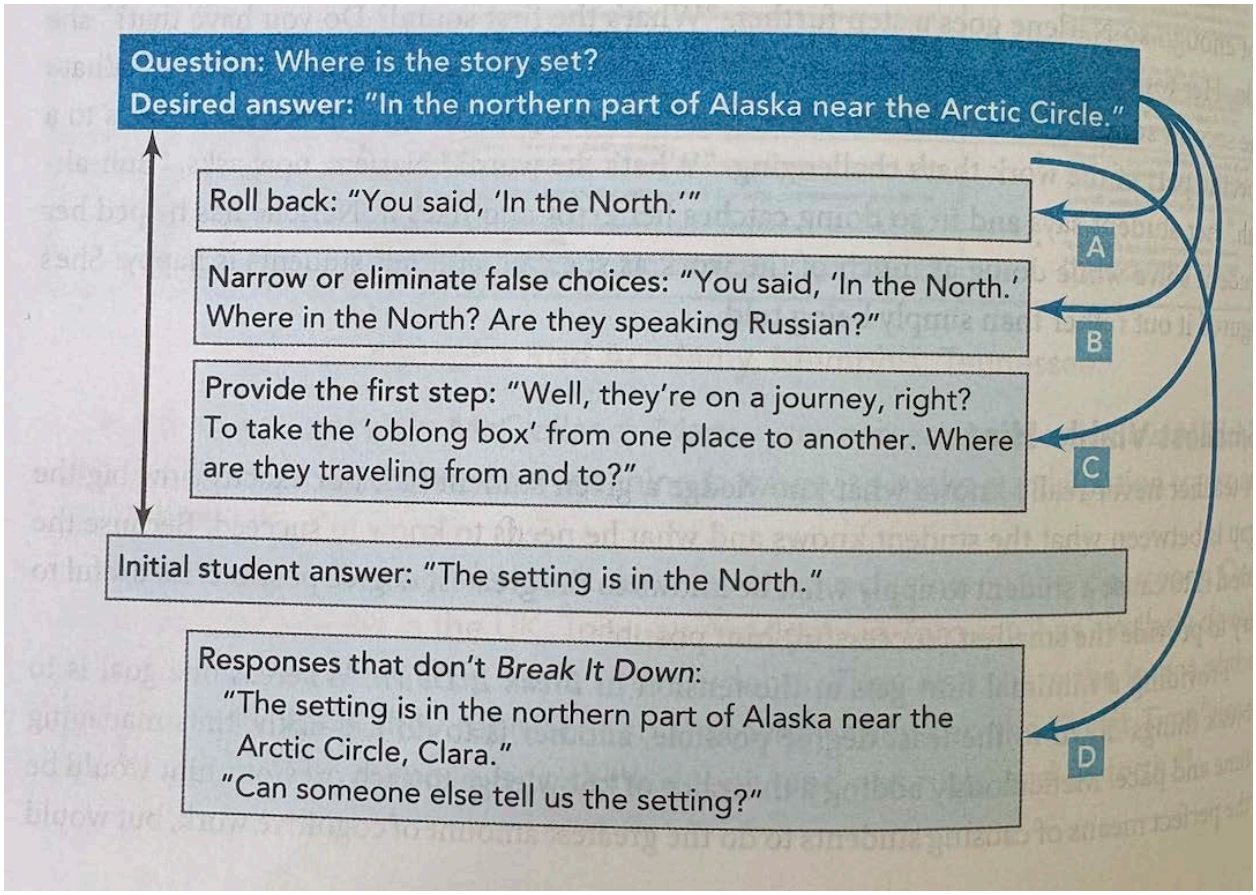
Providing a minimal hint gets at the tension in *Break It Down.* Whereas one goal is to break things down to the least degree possible, another is to do it quickly, thus managing time and pace. Meticulously adding a thin slice of knowledge to each previous hint would be the perfect means of causing students to do the greatest amount of cognitive work, but would

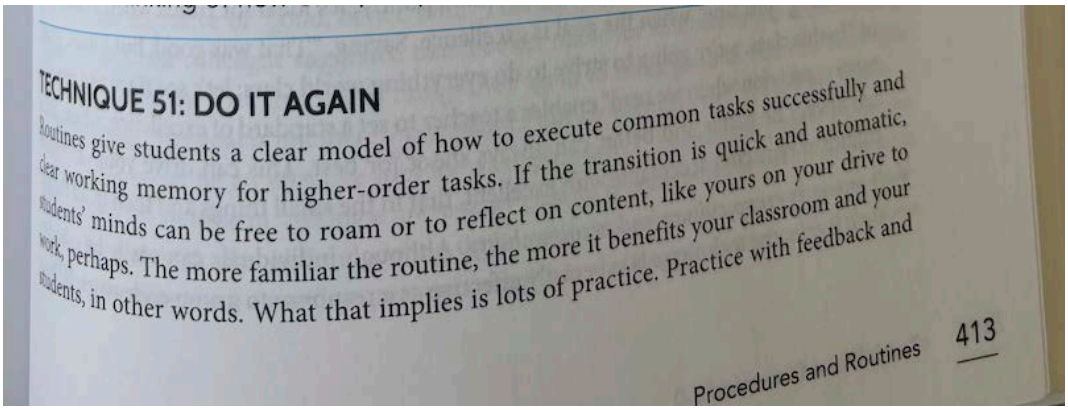
How *Break It Down* Works

When you ask a questions and the answer is not sufficient to be considered correct, your first goal is to get the student to the correct answer. Your second goal is to keep your *Break It Down* rigorous by providing the smallest viable cue.

Take a look at the following figure. If you can provide a cue like A that makes the student fill in most of the gap, your student is likely to learn and remember more than if you use a cue like C. "Memory is the residue of thought," Daniel Willingham tells us. There's more thinking to remember in A.

Both are more challenging than D, which solves the problem without any *Break It Down* (by giving the answer or having another student give the answer). Again, you want the smallest cue that will work in consideration of pacing, timing, rigor, and so on. A is desirable if you can, but you won't always be able to. You'll have to use D sometimes, too.





TECHNIQUE 51: DO IT AGAIN

Routines give students a clear model of how to execute common tasks successfully and clear working memory for higher-order tasks. If the transition is quick and automatic, students' minds can be free to roam or to reflect on content, like yours on your drive to work, perhaps. The more familiar the routine, the more it benefits your classroom and your students, in other words. What that implies is lots of practice. Practice with feedback and

correction is the only way to build a habit. That's where *Do It Again* comes in. It is a ver simple idea: when we are learning something and need to refine the routine or when we hav not done something as well as we might, the most productive response is simply to do it ove a little better, a little sharper. This response—"That wasn't quite right; let's try it again," o "That was good, but let's try it again and see if we can be great"—is far superior to the alter natives: either ignoring the issue and letting quality of follow-through degrade, or chastenin students for poor execution, or loading up their working memory with feedback they don' really get to use. By having students strive to do it over and better, you leverage the power o repetition and practice to painlessly build strong culture and self-discipline.

Do It Again, in other words, is the perfect tool to help maintain proficiency at something your students know how to do. It can as easily be applied to math procedures—"Try that again and make sure your decimals are lined up"—and classroom habits—"Just a minute, guys. Carlton, please start your answer over again and we'll all make sure we're giving you strong eye contact while you're speaking."

In a range of situations it's effective because:

- *It shortens the feedback loop.* Behavioral science has shown that the shorter the time lag between an action and a response, the more effective the response will be in changing the behavior. Let's say you have a clear expectation for entering the classroom, and a group of students comes in from recess in a disorderly way. Having the group stay in for recess three hours later is less likely to change their behavior than is a lesser response that occurs right away. If the reaction comes immediately after, while the original action is fresh in the students' minds, the two will be more clearly associated in their memory. In the three-hours-later scenario, they will be more likely to think, "She kept me in for recess." In the moment, they are more likely to recall and reflect on how they entered the classroom. *Doing It Again* shortens the feedback loop in comparison to almost any other consequence.
- *It sets a standard of excellence, not just minimal follow-through. Do It Again* is appropriate not just for times when students do something poorly; it's ideal for times when students do something "just fine" when the goal is excellence. Saying, "That was good, but I want great" or "In this class, we're going to strive to do everything world class; let's see if we can use a bit more expression when we read" enables a teacher to set a standard of excellence, where good can always be better and better can always shoot for best. This can drive your classroom culture by replacing acceptable with excellent, first in the small things and then in all things.
- *It promotes group culture and accountability.* Although individuals can easily be asked to *Do It Again*, the technique is especially effective as a response to group endeavors. If three

or four students don't bother to engage in the *Turn and Talk* the best solution may be to pause the whole class and say, "Just a second. A couple of us might have been distracted at the beginning of that *Turn and Talk*. It's important that we all engage the question and your partner. I'll cue you again and I look forward to seeing your best conversational skills. Go!" As an aside, there are times when it feels wrong to hold groups too accountable for individuals who try to co-opt their purposes. Suffice it to say that because you *can* leverage group accountability does not mean you *should* in every situation.

- *It ends with success.* The last thing you remember of an event often shapes your perception of it more broadly. *Do It Again* ends a situation where a process was done with insufficient quality with success. The last thing students do in a sequence is to do an activity the right way. This helps engrain the perception and memory of what right looks like. It also helps build muscle memory. Students build the habit of doing it right, over and over. In fact one of the most interesting times to *Do It Again* is to encode success. As in: "That was perfect. Do it again just like that so you remember just what it feels like." The "it" could be a math problem or playing a perfect eighth note. In fact, watch the video *John Burmeister: Trill.* In it, John, who is one of my favorite music teachers, is teaching cello to an individual student. Notice how many times she plays a trill in the course of learning it—eleven times, actually. Sometimes because it's not quite there; sometimes to add a layer of detail; sometimes to encode success—three more just like that.
- *It is reusable. As John's cello video shows, Do It Again* can be reused frequently so you always have a way to respond that's productive. You don't need to keep inventing new responses. You can be positive in administering the third iteration: "I still think we can do this even better. Let's give it one more shot!" Add a stopwatch to some routines, and the challenge of *Do It Again* (and do it better) only becomes more powerful.

However, it's important to execute the technique well. *Do It Again* should be positive whenever possible, with a keen focus on getting better and, in a great classroom, informed by a constant narrative of "good, better, best." That is, "just doing it" gets replaced by doing it well. In fact, one colleague suggested that a better name for this technique is *Do It Better*, as better captures the idea that doing things over again to be as good as you can be is what school is about. The goal is not merely compliance but excellence, even in the little things.

Do It Again can be an effective tool for managing affect. Sometimes people's attitudes change from the outside in. Asking a low-energy class to repeat something with enthusiasm (especially, and critically, while modeling those attributes yourself) can start to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. *Do It Again* is a great opportunity to challenge students positively to show

you their best. Saying, "Oooh, let's line up again and prove why we're the best reading group in the school" is often better than saying, "Class, that was very sloppy. We're going to do it again until we get it exactly right," even if the purpose in both cases is to *Do It Again* until you get it exactly right. You can see Kirby Jarrell do a lovely job of that in *Kirby Jarrell: Go Brown.* The class is timing themselves at how long it takes to get materials from the previous class put away and to have their novels out and ready. Michaela is running the clock and she reports that it took 48 seconds, an excellent time, so Kirby playfully decides to celebrate by having her kids say, "48 seconds? Go Brown!" [They're nicknamed after the university]. Students do it and the energy is a bit mixed. With a warm smile and a bit of bravery—everyone wants to cut bait when an idea appears not to work—Kirby playfully asks students to do it again with more enthusiasm. And they do it! And the energy level rises in the class and students appear energized a bit. It's a tiny throwaway moment but imagine—maybe Kirby keeps the chant for next class, maybe she doesn't—but imagine the message if she'd just let the mediocre follow-through remain the end point. The message might have been *Oh, that was awkward. If Ms. Jarrell asks you to do something silly just wait it out and we'll give up on it.* Here it ends pleasant and off-handed but at no loss to her enthusiastic and playful classroom culture.

Lastly, teachers sometimes think they need to wait until an entire routine or activity is done before asking the class to try it again. In fact, you should have students go back and try it again as soon as you know that the level of execution will not meet the standard you set for it. Don't wait for the routine to end. Again, this will better connect the stimulus to the response. Let's say students are lining up for lunch, and the drill is to stand up quietly, push in their chairs, turn to face the door, and then follow the table leader to the door. If students forget to push in their chairs, have them sit back down and try it again right then. This saves time and reinforces instant accountability.

TECHNIQUE 13: SHOW CALL

Let's return to what is perhaps the crucial moment in the clip from Denarius Frazier's math class that we've been examining in the course of this chapter, *Denarius Frazier: Remainder*. Circulating and observing actively, Denarius recognizes that there's something that students have misunderstood about finding the remainder when dividing polynomials. He has recognized an error in real time but this is only half of the equation in *Checking for Understanding*. The second half, deciding how to address it, is a much more challenging question than it appears. Teachers bury the data—recognize student misunderstandings and fail to take action on them—all the time. In many cases this is because of the difficulty of changing one's lesson plan on the spur of the moment in front of thirty students. Or a failure to address the error may be due to the pressure of time. But Denarius hardly bats an eye. He chooses the work of a student, Fagan, who made a characteristic error, walks to the front of the room and projects it to the class. Seconds later the class is engaging with interest and openness in a study of the mistake, why it happened, and what it could teach them.

What's the quickest and most productive way to respond to an error in the midst of teaching, in other words? Often it's to study the error itself.

If you can pull that off, you have a simple, reliable tool to use in response to student errors. If students struggle to understand the first time, you may not have to plan a backup lesson or a new way of teaching the material if you can instead make a useful version of the error instantly visible and then build a culture that supports open study of the thinking that led to a mistake.

That's a powerful idea. If we can find and study our mistakes with openness and fascination, if we can discuss them in substantive conversations, then we have a replicable way to react to error when we see it and we are teaching a process we'd wish our students to copy for much of their lives: Find the mistake. Study it without defensiveness. Relish it as a learning opportunity.

The technique Denarius uses to accomplish this is *Show Call*, choosing a student's work and sharing it, visually, with the class so they are not just talking about it but studying it in a durable sustained way. An essential component of making this sustained study possible is the fact that the mistake is visible to all students. If Denarius had not projected Fagan's work to the class, the class would have learned far less from it.

This opportunity for learning is too important for Denarius to accept anything but the most productive example. Using *Show Call* effectively implies being able to choose

deliberately whose work to project. *A Show Call is therefore not just projecting work but selecting the example regardless of who's volunteered to share. Show Call is a visual Cold Call.* To learn optimally from an example, students must see it well, and they need to be looking at just the right case study.

You will also probably notice that Fagan, the accomplished young woman whose work he's chosen, is not bothered when Denarius takes her paper. She doesn't look surprised, as you might expect her to have been. It's a familiar procedure, in other words, one that happens, if not daily, then regularly, and one that began with Denarius explaining to the class what he would do and why before he did it the first time. Then they practiced it—tried the idea out under controlled circumstances where success was more assured. For example, the first few times he used *Show Call*, Denarius probably focused on making *Show-Called* students feel honored by and comfortable with the process. Over time his *Show Calls* became more rigorous. Now he doesn't need to explain why he is taking Fagan's or any student's paper, and students all have learned to engage in error analysis respectfully and productively.

Further, the culture Denarius has built—and which we can see him reinforcing in this clip—communicates the importance of studying mistakes and reinforces a strong sense of psychological safety for students as they do so. Ironically, students in classes like Denarius's often come to love *Show Call*. If they don't love it, they certainly see the value of it. In observing how Denarius approaches the technique we can learn a lot about why. It's also worth noticing that *Show Call*, used frequently, reinforces accountability for written work. On tomorrow's problem set, students will be strongly incented—perhaps even motivated—to do their best work. This will result in better and better examples to share with the class.

Notice Denarius's actions when he begins his *Show Call* and how much importance he assigns to the task of shared error analysis. He deliberately ensures full attention—notice his formal body language (technique 58, *Strong Voice*) and his use of a brief positive group correction, "Waiting on one" (see technique 55, *Least Invasive Intervention*), before commencing. He is communicating the heightened importance of the upcoming task.

As soon as he begins the process of studying a student mistake, he deliberately reinforces a few essential cultural messages. "As I walked around, on a few of our papers I'm noticing that we're getting an incorrect remainder," he says. Immediately it's a "we" issue. He's going to show one example of what is a classwide challenge. Message: It's our work we're studying, not just that of a single *Show-Called* student. "We have check mechanisms in place that we

can use to check this," he says, again stressing the class's group ownership of the problem and the solution.

Now to Fagan's work. "Snaps first to Fagan for using long division," Denarius says. "You didn't have to use long division. You don't have to use synthetic. There's even another approach that I saw on Quinetta's paper. . . ." In introducing Fagan's work, the teacher first establishes that there is plenty of successful work in the classroom, even if they are going to improve something about it. Fagan's first instinct may have been to think, *Oh, I got it wrong*, but in fact she *didn't* get it all wrong. She got a *small piece* of it wrong and a lot of it right. She's doing fine, and he's helping her to see that.

Notice also Denarius's emotional constancy and how he treats the error as being completely normal. As I discuss in technique 12, *Culture of Error*, Denarius establishes that mistakes are interesting, valuable even, and definitely not something a teacher gets frustrated at learners about. This is not a culture where people are afraid to discuss a mistake. Why would they be afraid when mistakes have been established as a necessary and helpful part of the learning process and the examination of them is a completely routine part of class?

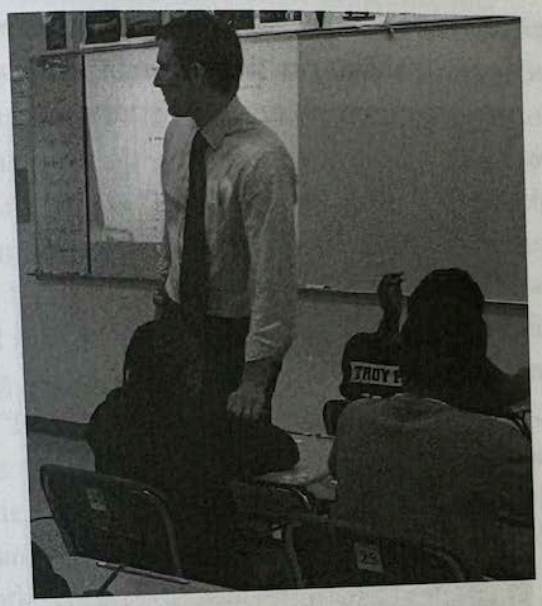
Students do most of the analysis throughout this *Show Call*, even when he guides them to recognize that they should use the remainder theorem. Denarius doesn't solve the problems; all he really does is tell them how to perceive that their answer does not make sense. Once he's guided them to that realization, they know how to solve it.

Show Call is a simple and powerful concept but one that can feel risky to try for some teachers. If you've never done it, you can imagine how you or your students would feel if it didn't work.

In light of that I will describe a typical progression—what *Show Call* might look like at different stages in a classroom so the pathway to a lesson like Denarius's becomes clear. The technique involves shared culture and routines that must be intentionally built. A *Show Call* is unlikely to look like Denarius's the first time a teacher and her students try it.

An early *Show Call* could, however, look a bit like Paul Powell's in the video *Paul Powell: Show Call*.

The student whose paper Paul takes is Kahlila. Here's a still shot of him doing that. Paul's pretty nonchalant in his body language—casual (see technique 58, *Strong Voice*), but Kahlila is not. It's likely she feels a bit anxious; even if Paul has explained what a *Show Call* is and why he does it, she's nervous. *My paper? Oh no!*

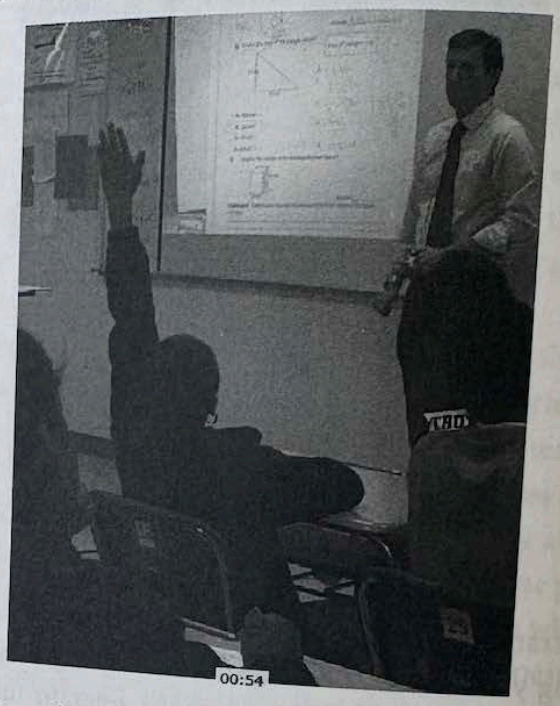


That's why Paul's framing when he presents student work is so important. "The theme of the day is showing your work," Paul says. "So I'm going to show off Kahlila's work." Suddenly everything has changed. My team and I refer to this moment in the *Show Call* as "the reveal": the moment when you show the student work and frame how the class should think about it. You'll notice again and again how important the reveal is in building culture. Kahilia now knows that Paul's sharing her work is a good thing. He's showing it off.

"Look at that," Paul continues, pointing out details of her now-projected work. "*Boom.* Formula. Plugged it in. Very neat. *Boom.*" If, a moment before, Kahlila's primary emotion was anxiety, it's now pride.

The culture Paul is building isn't simplistic, though. He's also sowing the seeds of self-study and improvement—a good-to-great culture. As he highlights the many things to love about Kahlila's work, he normalizes the process of making it better. "There's one little thing we're going to fix here in a second," he says, making sure that the first few times he asks students to share their mistakes feel especially safe and nonthreatening.

A few moments later, Paul returns to the idea of improvement. "What is the one she can fix?" he asks, and here is Kahlila's reaction:



There are lots of hands up, but Kahlila's is the straightest. Her body language is unmist able. "Call on me now, Mr. Powell! I can make it even better!" She's proud, in other wor and eager to show how much else she knows.

What we see here is not just a single *Show Call* that helps students to better see how solve a problem and how to avoid a common mistake, but a procedure—and the culture t support it—that makes students feel lovingly accountable for their written work and unafraid of having it presented to the class. Paul's example is a road map for the first few times you use the technique; emphasize positivity and make students feel honored by and comfortable with the process.

Over time the goal is to build a culture in which, as we saw in Denarius's class, students understand implicitly that one of the ways they honor a classmate's work is by helping them to see both its success and also how to improve.

You can see this progression of Show Call culture clearly in the video *Ijeoma Duru: Almost-There Work*. Ijeoma is sharing the work of a student named Deborah and starts by asking students to give Deborah some "snaps and shine." This ideally makes Deborah feel supported; it also, perhaps even more importantly, reminds the class: this is a classmate's work. We'll study it and improve it, but don't forget to be appreciative in your tone and comments as we discuss.

Like Denarius and Paul, Ijeoma uses her "reveal" to shape the culture that surrounds the *Show Call*: "Deborah has some 'almost there' work but I want us to work together and use her annotations to fix it," she says. She then asks students to focus on the second half of Deborah's work and "snap if you see something you agree with." This is a clever move. Every one of Deborah's classmates just affirmed that, like Fagan, she got plenty right in her answer. Even if there's something to improve on, there's a lot to the good and it's obvious to everyone. Ijeoma next asks a few students to describe what they agree with. This isn't just about building Deborah up; it also reinforces their understanding. It's a form of *Retrieval Practice* (technique 7), encoding knowledge more deeply in long-term memory via recall and, here especially, elaboration. "Beautifully explained," Ijeoma says to Jules, whom we can't see, after he has put the ideas he sees on the graph into new words. He's done well, but it was hard work. You could hear the labor in his voice. Memory is the residue of effort. He's worked hard to elaborate precisely, and this will help him remember and encode, and Ijeoma shows her appreciation for his work.

But there's another crucial benefit to *Show Call* that we see evidence of in Ijeoma's class. Deborah has annotated the diagram to show that there are corresponding angles in it—she's written the phrase across the side—but not *where* they are. She knows they're there —she just isn't sure how to find them. This underscores the critical and underrated role of perception in learning.

"She says that there must be corresponding angles somewhere," Ijeoma says, referring to Deborah's annotation, "and I agree," but then she asks: "Where should I place a star for the other angle that corresponds to that 25?" She calls on Michaela and as Michaela narrates her thought process, something very important is happening. *Everyone is looking at what Michaela is describing as she describes it*. If you want a group of people to problem solve, they need to all be looking at the same version of a problem. With the work projected, Ijeoma can guide students' eyes through their study of it. She is teaching them mathematical concepts *and how to perceive on their own when they apply*. While this is an example from a math class, perception is equally important, if not more critical, in studying a section of text, either from a writing or a close reading perspective. The discussion can be radically improved when a student states vaguely that she likes the "details" or the "writing style" in a peer's passage. "Great," you can suddenly say, "let's take a look at some of the details that stand out to you," or "Great, let's read it together and annotate some of the lines that help her create such a distinctive tone."

Learning starts, most often, with perception, something so basic we often overlook it. Most of our brain is a system for visual perception—much of it unconscious. We look where we look out of habit, and if we learn to look in the right places, we're far more likely to

be successful. Decisions almost always start with our eyes. In that sense, students are a b
athletes. Those who see at a glance where to pass or how to block an opponent make
decisions first and foremost because they are looking for the right things and in the
places. Their eyes go to the parts of a problem where the relevant signal will appear. Thi
key piece of their expertise. The more expert the decision maker, the more likely this pre
looking is to happen. Or perhaps it's the other way around. The more likely a decision ma
is to look at the right things, the more expert they are likely to be.[12] Projecting a probl
allows us to engage student's perception in the problem-solving process. In a mome
I'll show you another example of this.

Show Call works because there is learning power in looking: we build students' perce
tion ability. The content that we look at together remains fixed in students' attention a
engages the portions of their brains—the majority of the brain—that rely on and proce
visual information.

Watch how powerfully Julia Addeo leverages the idea of guided or shared perception in th
video *Julia Addeo: Expand*, in which she *Show Calls* Monet's work and where Monet, inter-
estingly, has made two different efforts to solve a problem. Julia doesn't tell students which
one is correct. The goal is for students to discern which solution is correct and why—or for
them to be able to look and perceive what mathematical tool will work. Notice how focused
on perception Julia's questions are: "What did Monet do on the left?" The first student Julia
calls on does not correctly perceive the strategy Monet is using and Julia's response is power-
ful. "What did she do in this first line here?" She still hasn't told them the answer; she's just
helping them know where to see it.

Show Call can also work by asking students to use comparative judgment—it can place
two examples close together and ask students to discern the differences. When the next stu-
dent describes Monet's first step correctly, Julia labels it. Now that they can see the math, she
wants to associate a name with it. "Let's write that in our notes: expand," Julia says. Now they
can see what it looks like and associate it with its technical name. Then another perception
question: "Once she [Monet] expanded, what did she do then?" And then for the other side.
Julia again asks a perception-based question, "What did she do?" To perceive is to under-
stand. Now that they understand the steps Monet took in each case, students have to decide
which solution was more useful. Julia goes to a *Turn and Talk* (technique 43) and then uses
Show Me (technique 10).

In the video *Rousseau Mieze: Source Line*, you can observe Rousseau *Show Calling* two
examples of student work and asking the class to discern why one of them is stronger than the
other. Once again this demonstrates how *Show Call* can be especially powerful when it asks
students to compare examples because it leverages the power of a cognitive principle called

"the law of comparative judgment"—simply put, this is the idea that people are better at making comparisons between pieces of work than at making absolute judgments about quality. Humans are likely to learn more by comparing one piece of work to another, rather than to an abstract standard.[13] Want students to see the subtle differences between good and great writing? Show them two different examples and suddenly the conversation will accelerate—and the subtler the differences, the more advanced and more nuanced a conversation they will yield. In other words, if you want to do really rigorous study of student writing, compare a very good example to a great one. Or show the class two similar approaches and study how the small differences allow them to achieve different ends. "I want to talk about which one is strongest," Rousseau tells the class in his reveal. Then notice how he reads the two student answers aloud, one immediately after the other, to make subtle differences as apparent to students as possible.

The video *Rose Bernunzio: Good Catch* also shows the benefit of using *Show Call* to compare two students' work, and it's worth comparing some of the similarities and differences between Rose's approach and Rousseau's. Both begin with a question that emphasizes perception—essentially, what's the difference—and both intentionally try to boost their ratio in this critical moment, getting every student to discuss via a *Turn and Talk*. They want everyone doing this cognitive work. But whereas Rousseau asks students to "snap it up" for two classmates whom he identifies, Rose deliberately keeps the identities of her students anonymous. Balancing anonymity and credit is a variable you can consider in the "reveal."

There are also variables in the "take," the name we use for another key culture-setting part of the *Show Call*, the moment when you take a student's paper. Do you explain why? Do you merely take it and presume it's understood? Do you ask? In this case, Rose subtly asks the student whose paper she takes. It's more of a courtesy than anything else. Rose also diffuses the pressure a bit by saying, "Lots of people are making this mistake." Ironically, the "take" is often smoother if it's simpler. Rousseau, like Denarius and Paul, uses an "unnarrated take." He does not ask permission. It's important to note that he can do this because, in his classroom, *Show Calling* is an established procedure that students understand clearly. And because a *Culture of Error* is intact, an unnarrated take won't work without those things in place. Another important difference between the clips is what happens afterwards. Rousseau asks students to revise their answers. Rose asks students to apply the same method to parts B and C of the problem. Two slightly different applications of an idea we also saw in Ijeoma's *Show Call*, which ended with the phrase "Make sure you have this written on your paper." The message in all three cases is: *We just spent a lot of time learning something important; make sure you have it down*. This foreshadows technique 14, *Own and Track*.

Example of a Conversation between Teacher and Scholars during use of a Show Call

Teacher: "Mathematicians, I'm going to do a show call. I'm sharing Maya's work because it's almost there and will help us think together." (Projects Maya's work: 36 + 27 = 513)

Teacher: "First, quick reminder — what's our success criteria for adding two-digit numbers?"

Students: "Line up place values." "Add ones first." "Regroup if we need to."

Teacher: "Great. Now, quietly: what did Maya do well?"

Student 1: "She lined up the numbers correctly."

Student 2: "She added both places. She didn't skip anything."

Teacher: "Yep — strong setup. Now, where does it drift from the criteria?"

Student 3: "She wrote 6 + 7 as 13 but kept the 3 and the 1 next to each other instead of regrouping."

Teacher: "Say more."

Student 3: "She should put the 3 in the ones place and carry the 1 to the tens."

Teacher: "Do we agree?"

Class: "Yeah."

Teacher: "So what's our next step to fix it?"

Student 4: "Regroup the 1 ten, then add 3 + 2 + 1."

Teacher: "Try it. What do we get?"

Class: "63!"

Teacher (smiling): "Nice. Thanks, Maya, for letting us learn from your thinking. Mistakes help our brains grow."

Maya: "Ohhh, I forgot to carry. That makes sense now."

Teacher: "Exactly. That's what mathematicians do — we study the error and adjust."

MESA Draft Assessment Calendar

Name of Assessment	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Week 1		READ Act BOY	KEA		READ Act MY	n/a	Data reviews	ELA Module 3	CMAS 3rd-8th	READ Act EOY		Data reviews
Week 2		READ Act BOY	Data reviews		READ Act MY	ACCESS	Data reviews		CMAS 3rd-8th	READ Act EOY		Data reviews
Week 3		READ Act BOY, KEA	Data reviews		ELA Module 2	ACCESS			CMAS 3rd-8th	READ Act EOY, ELA Module 4		Data reviews
Week 4		KEA	ELA Module 1		n/a	ACCESS			CMAS 3rd-8th (Make ups)			
Point Person												
Accommodations Reviewed and Planned (Sped sign off)												
Notes												

*Math end of unit test times vary per grade level

Appendix Section F: Plan for Evaluating Pupil Performance

FAQ about Class Dojo

What's ClassDojo?

ClassDojo is a global community of more than 50 million teachers and families who come together to share kids' most important learning moments, in school and at home—through photos, videos, messages, and more.



Creating a positive school culture

PBIS helps schools set consistent expectations across all classrooms, like "Helping others" and "Making good choices." Teachers can add these expectations to their classes in ClassDojo and then give specific, positive feedback to students Teachers can give neutral feedback in ClassDojo to guide students toward classroom expectations. To provide more details on what happened, teachers can add notes describing the rationale and intervention taken. This makes ClassDojo very useful as a PBIS Tier 1 intervention system.

With a mobile app and simple collaboration features, ClassDojo helps educators encourage PBIS expectations throughout the school campus, like art class, the playground, and the library.





Capture and share important data for PBIS

A counselor, teacher, or school leader is often appointed as a PBIS coordinator, tasked with gathering all feedback data to ensure all students are succeeding. ClassDojo makes it easy to download and share all feedback points given to students as a spreadsheet. Teachers can also invite the PBIS coordinator to share their class, so they can see in real-time how students are progressing.

Improve family engagement

Teachers can easily get parents involved in their PBIS program, too, using ClassDojo. Parents can see their child's feedback in real-time, message privately with teachers, and also see photos and videos from the classroom. Parents can connect using any iOS/Android device or computer.



WEEKLY DATA MEETINGS

Leading Teacher Teams to Analyze Student Daily Work

Prepare **Before the meeting**	**Prepare** • **Student work ready:** student exemplar and representative sample of work that meets standard, is almost there and further off (including from students with disabilities and English Language learners). • **Lesson materials ready:** Upcoming lesson plan(s), pertinent prompting guides, reteaching one-pager • **Prime the pump:** unpack standard, ID the gap(s) in student understanding; script the reteach plan(s) • **Lock in participants:** core teachers that teach/support (general education, special education and ELL) • **Preview protocol with teachers**: assign roles, novice teachers speak first, veteran teachers add on and clarify, leader provides additional clarity at end, chart, preview the need for concision from more verbose team members, use of a timer, creation of note taking template
See It **12 min**	**See Past Success, See the Exemplar, and See and Analyze the Gap** **See Past Success (1 min):** • "Last week we planned to reteach _____ and we went from ___ % proficient to ___%. Nice job!" • "What actions did you take to reach this goal?" **See an Exemplar (8 min):** • Narrow the focus: "Today, I want to dive into [specific standard] and the following assessment item." • Unpack the standard/text: o Humanities: Analyze the text and task o STEM: Interpret the standard(s) o "Take 1 min: in your own words, what do students need to know/and be able to do to master this task & text?" o Chart it: Know and Show (OR use a previous know/show chart) o Go last: add anything that is missing • Unpack the teacher's written exemplar: o "Take 1-2 min to review the exemplar: What were the keys to an ideal answer?" o "How does this [part of the exemplar] align with the standard?" o "Is there anything you would add to our chart of the unpacked standard?" • Analyze a student exemplar: o "Take 1 min: How does your student exemplar compare to the teacher exemplar? Is there a gap?" o "Do students have different paths/evidence to demonstrate mastery of the standard?" o "Does the student exemplar offer something that your exemplar does not?" **See the Gap (5 min):** • Look at a representative sample of un-mastered student work: o "Take 2 minutes: What are the key gaps between the rest of our student work and the exemplar?" o "Look back at our chart: using the language of the standard and exemplar, what are the key misconceptions for our students?" o (When multiple teachers present) Each teacher determines the gap for their set of student work
Name It **2 min**	**Stamp the key conceptual ("know") and procedural ("show") misunderstanding** **Punch it—Stamp the Conceptual & Procedural Understanding:** • "So our key area to reteach is: o the conceptual understanding (the "know"): "If they get this right and you ask them why, what do you want them to say?" o the procedural gap (the "show"): e.g. annotating text, showing work, line-by-line computation, etc. • Highlight the key parts of your Know/Show chart or write down the highest leverage action for students

	Plan the Reteach, Practice, and Follow Up
Do It **20-45 min**	**Plan the Reteach for the Trending Gap (8-10 min):** • Select the re-teach structure: o "Should we use modeling or guided discourse?" "Why?" ▪ Prompt to use the reteaching one-pager if they need guidance • Select upcoming task & needed knowledge, & identify exemplar response: o Select materials: task, text, student work to show-call, what to chart o Activate/drop knowledge: "Is there any knowledge we need to activate or teach that will help them understand the model/discourse?" o "What is the ideal answer we want to see that will show we've closed the gap?" o (If needed—follow-up question): "What is the 'why' that students should be able to articulate?" • Plan the re-teach: o "Take _____ min and write your script. I will do the same so we can spar." ▪ **If a model**: write the think aloud and questions ▪ **If guided discourse:** select student work for show-call, write prompts ▪ Plan what knowledge needs to be activated or given o Spar: "Let's compare our reteach plans. What do you notice? What can we pull from each to make the strongest plan?" (Revise the plan) • Plan the independent practice: o "What will you monitor to see if they are doing this correctly? What laps will you name?" **Practice the Gap (remaining time):** • "Let's practice." o **If a model:** practice modeling the thinking, precision of language, & checking for understanding o **If guided discourse:** practice Show-Call, prompting students, and stamping the understanding o **If monitoring:** practice the laps, annotations, and prompts when students are stuck • (If a struggle) "I'm going to model the teaching for you. [Teach.] What do you notice?" • Repeat until the practice is successful. CFU: "What made this more effective?" • Lock it in: "How did our practice meet or enhance what we planned for the reteach?" **Follow Up (last 2 min):** • Set the follow-up plan: when to teach, when to re-assess, when to revisit this data o (When multiple reteach plans) Finalize which students will get which reteach plans o Observe implementation within 24 hours; teacher sends re-assessment data to leader o Spiral: Identify multiple moments when teacher can continue to assess and track mastery: Do Now questions, homework, modified independent practice • Move to the lowest scoring work: o "What students do we need to pull for tutoring? What do we need to remediate?" o "How can we adjust our monitoring plan to meet the needs of these students?"

RE-TEACHING STRUCTURES

Please reference the Re-teaching one-pager for more guidance on each structure.

	Teach students what they need:
Structures for Re-teaching	**Activate or Drop Knowledge:** • Activate: "What do we know about….?" • Drop—Give them knowledge at just the right time: "Convoluted means___. Now go back and re-read with this definition in mind." **Monitor Academically:** • Create a monitoring pathway, give quick written/oral feedback, collect data on the trend **Model:** • Set up the think aloud, model replicable thinking steps, and check for understanding **Guide Discourse:** • Show-Call: start from student work to analysis • Strategically call on students based on learning needs • Stamp the key understanding

DDI Protocol

Based on RELAY GSE

Prework: High Level Analysis
High level analysis focuses on MLLs and CUKU students

Before the DDI meeting, the teacher will…

- Do the work/complete the task (except for literacy foundational skills)
- Gather your assessment item or exit ticket, notate your MLLs and CUKU Ss
- Sort into 3 piles: got it (+80%), almost (50-79%), not yet (-50%)
- Look at your 'almost' pile, is there a trend, similarity, etc?

Before the DDI meeting, the leader will…

- Communicate the specific task to bring

Meeting Part 1: Zoom In Analysis
Standards Breakdown

Step 1: Unpack the grade level work, language and thinking required

- Do the work/complete the task (except for literacy foundational skills).
- Use the know/show chart below to break down the standard.

Standard:

Know (Conceptual, language)	Show (procedural)

Step 2: Analyze student data and actual student work, identifying both student strengths and assets, and opportunities for deeper proficiency

- What does the group in 'almost' have mastery of? What's the piece holding them back right now?
- Name it: *If the students* _____, *then they'll master this standard.*

Meeting Part 2: Action Plan and Follow-Up

Action plan and follow-up outline the next steps based on the data analysis

Step 3: Identify Next Steps: *The What*

- Identify specific and time-bound next steps that address the root causes of the opportunities and equity gaps for our underserved students.

What is the gap?	Who is in this group?	Any consideration for MLLs?	Any SWD accommodations needed?

Step 4: Create Action Plan: *The When and How*

- Develop an action plan that outlines specific instructional adjustments or supports that will be carried out in order to address opportunities for deeper proficiency.

Time/ Dates for small group, student names	Focus area (gap), possible misconceptions	Resource being used	Strategy: guided discourse or model	Reassessment Date (by next DDI)
Names: Date(s)/Times(s):				

- Determine plan and timing for follow-up (i.e. observation of reteach, how/when reassessment will occur)

Please send your coach 2 to 3 15-minute times via Google Calendar invite, and keep this plan in your binder/drive

Step 5: The Follow Up → *bring reengagement data (same standard) to the next DDI meeting for the above mentioned group.*

Modified RELAY GSE Protocol: Unit/ Lesson Internalization

Name: **Grade:** **Subject (Curriculum):**

Unit Internalization

1. Gather upcoming unit materials - teaching guide, readers, workbooks, etc, as well as, Common Core Companion Guide.
2. Find the end of unit assessment. Print this. Take the assessment as if you were an exemplar student (15 mins).
3. Record the essential questions of the unit and draft a response to those to guide your thinking. Stay focused on these questions to ensure enough opportunity for mastery.

Essential Question	Answer(s) and Key Understandings	Other notes
1.		Possible misconceptions: Connections to previous learning: Important vocabulary for this question:
2.		Possible misconceptions: Connections to previous learning: Important vocabulary for this question:
3.		Possible misconceptions: Connections to previous learning: Important vocabulary for this question:
What is the end of unit performance task/ assessment? *Text here* When does that happen? *Date here*		

4. What are the 3 major standards that need to be mastered for proficiency on this assessment? (15 mins) Break this down just like DDI. A Common Core Companion Guide will be helpful.
   Resource: Instructional shifts to major content focus of grade levels (Achieve the Core), Literacy focus on: RL.1, RI.1, W.2 and W.8

Standard	Know? (Conceptual)	Show? (Procedural, Application)	Possible Misconceptions (Trends in the past or future misconceptions)

The Features of Academic Language operate within sociocultural contexts for language use.

	Performance Criteria	Features
Discourse Level	**Linguistic Complexity** *(Quantity and variety of oral and written text)*	Amount of speech/written text Structure of speech/written text Density of speech/written text Organization and cohesion of ideas Variety of sentence types
Sentence Level	**Language Forms and Conventions** *(Types, array, and use of language structures)*	Types and variety of grammatical structures Conventions, mechanics, and fluency Match of language forms to purpose/perspective
Word/Phrase Level	**Vocabulary Usage** *(Specificity of word or phrase choice)*	General, specific, and technical language Multiple meanings of words and phrases Formulaic and idiomatic expressions Nuances and shades of meaning Collocations

5. Script an exemplar written response using the CFS for language. Identify language demands (function, form at discourse, sentence and word level)
6. Then, using the WIDA Rubric and LCL/Principal, score your exemplar collaboratively to see where it falls on the WIDA rubric.

Written Exemplar (name form, function) with color coding
Explicit Academic Language Resources **Language function**: explain, describe, compare/contrast, recount **Language form:** dimensions of academic language (see above) • Word Level: *vocabulary usage* : • Sentence Level: *language forms, grammatical structures, and conventions*: • Discourse Level: *linguistic complexity, quantity, variety, organization*: Script exemplar here: WIDA Scores: W:____ S:____ D:_____ Sign off for feedback:

7. Cross-check with your unit plans for this subject area. What opportunities do students have for at-bats with each of these standards (goal of leading to mastery? (30 mins) Use the calendar below.

Daily Planning (Lesson Level)

Part A:

a. Go through your teacher's guide, and look at the standard and CLO of each lesson. Identify lessons that do NOT hit those focus standards. Choose whether to keep, toss, or change to stay on pace towards the essential questions and demands of the unit assessment.
b. Start mapping out each lesson by day in the calendar below. Write the focus standard(s) of that lesson. Also note what is the Check for Understanding (CFU) of each lesson.
c. Reference back to ICLD/SERVE and your vocabulary and language function from the top portion to include these in your CFUs daily. (i.e. write to compare/contrast life of a lord and serf)
d. Complete calendar map below until assessment is given.

Part B:

e. When will you progress monitor each standard? What is the tool (i.e. exit ticket, written response) and mark those on your calendar as progress monitoring.
f. Use this map calendar to guide instruction towards mastery of the focus standards for the assessments. Stay on track with it. You got this!

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Date: Lesson: Standard(s): Form and function: CFU:	Date: Lesson: Standard(s): Form and function: CFU:	Date: Lesson: Standard(s): Form and function: CFU:	Date: Lesson: Standard(s): Form and function: CFU:	Date: Lesson: Standard(s): Form and function: CFU:

Appendix Section G: Budget and Finance

MESA K-8 School
Draft Compensation Plan
Last Updated: November 2025

Step	Teaching Role	Lead Teacher Role	Principal/Director Role
1	$65,000	$75,000	$95,000
2	$66,950	$77,250	$97,850
3	$68,900	$79,500	$107,000
4	$70,850	$81,650	$103,550
5	$72,800	$84,000	$106,400
6	$74,750	$86,250	$109,250
7	$76,700	$88,500	$112,100
8	$78,650	$90,750	$114,950
9	$80,600	$93,000	$117,800
10	$82,550	$95,250	$120,650
11	$84,500	$94,500	$123,500
12	$86,450	$96,750	$126,350
13	$88,400	$99,000	$129,200
14	$90,350	$101,250	$132,050
15	$92,300	$103,500	$134,900

Excellence Compensation: 1% one-time bonus for effective EOY evaluation, 1.5% one-time bonus for highly effective EOY evaluation

Assumed benefits in addition to salary

- $18,000 for teacher roles
- $28,000 for director roles

Appendix Section H: Governance

Nonprofit Articles of Incorporation

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
MESA SCHOOL

Pursuant to the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act (C.R.S §7-121-101 et seq.), the undersigned incorporator hereby forms a nonprofit corporation and adopts the following Articles of Incorporation:

ARTICLE I
NAME

The name of the Corporation shall be Mesa School.

ARTICLE II
PERIOD OF DURATION

The Corporation shall have perpetual existence.

ARTICLE III
PURPOSES

This Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) and Section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended ("Code"). Specifically, the Corporation shall be a Colorado charter school called Mesa School. It will engage in educational and charitable endeavors as described in Section 501(c)(3).

ARTICLE IV
MEMBERS

Mesa School shall not have members.

ARTICLE V
POWERS

5.1 **Powers.** The Corporation may exercise all powers available to nonprofit corporations under Colorado law, subject to the limitations of these Articles.

5.2. **Restriction on Powers.**

5.2.1 No part of net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any individual, except for reasonable compensation for services rendered.

5.2.2 The Corporation shall not carry on propaganda or attempt to influence legislation as a substantial part of its activities.

5.2.3 The Corporation shall not participate or intervene in political campaigns.

5.2.4 No grants or loans shall be made to board members or officers.

5.2.5 Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles of Incorporation, the Corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (the "Code").

Furthermore, in any year in which the Corporation is classified as a private foundation (as defined in Section 509(a) of the Code), it shall comply with the following requirements, in accordance with Sections 4941–4945 of the Code:

a. The Corporation shall distribute its income for such taxable year at such time and in such manner as not to become subject to the tax on undistributed income under Section 4942 of the Code.

b. The Corporation shall not engage in any act of self-dealing, as defined in Section 4941(d) of the Code.

c. The Corporation shall not retain any excess business holdings, as defined in Section 4943(c) of the Code.

d. The Corporation shall not make any investments in such manner as to subject it to tax under Section 4944 of the Code.

e. The Corporation shall not make any taxable expenditures, as defined in Section 4945(d) of the Code.

ARTICLE VI
REGISTERED OFFICE AND AGENT

The principal office of the Corporation is:

1100 Upham Street
Lakewood, CO 80214

ARTICLE VII
PRINCIPAL OFFICE

The initial registered agent is:

Eric Hall
24 South Weber Street, Suite 400
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

The registered agent has consented to serve.

ARTICLE VIII
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Corporation shall be managed by a Board of Directors. The number, terms, and method of appointment shall be defined in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX
LIMITATION OF LIABILITY OF DIRECTORS FOR BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTIES

No director shall be personally liable for breach of fiduciary duty, except for:

a. any breach of the director's duty of loyalty to the Corporation,

b. any acts or omissions of the director not taken in good faith,

c. any acts or omissions of the director or involving intentional misconduct or knowing violation of law,

d. any liability for unlawful distributions under C.R.S. Section 7-128-403, as it now exists or hereafter may be amended,

e. any other transaction from which the director directly or indirectly derived an improper personal benefit, or

f. any other act for which indemnification of directors is prohibited under the provisions of the Act.

ARTICLE X
INDEMNIFICATION

Nothing herein limits the Corporation's ability to indemnify or advance legal expenses to officers, directors, or agents to the fullest extent allowed by law and the Bylaws. Procedures for indemnification shall be set forth in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE XI
BYLAWS

Bylaws shall be adopted by the Corporation's initial Board of Directors. The Board may amend the Bylaws in accordance with procedures therein. No bylaw shall give proprietary interest in the Corporation's assets to any individual.

ARTICLE XII
INCORPORATOR

The name and address of the incorporator are:

Jennifer Norris
1100 Upham Street
Lakewood, CO 80214

DELIVERY

The name and mailing address of any individual who causes this document to be delivered for filing, and to whom the Secretary of State may deliver notice if filing of this document is refused, are:

Eric Hall

24 South Weber Street,
Suite 400
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

ARTICLE XIII
DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution, the remaining assets shall be transferred to a Colorado charter school similar to Mesa School if it qualifies under Section 501(c)(3) as determined by the Board of Directors. If not to a charter school, then assets shall go to one or more qualifying charitable organizations as determined by the Board or, if the Board cannot act, then by the Denver County District Court.

Colorado Secretary of State

Colorado Secretary of State
ID#: 20261164253
Document #: 20261164253
Filed on: 02/06/2026 03:04:06 PM
Paid: $50.00

Articles of Incorporation for a Nonprofit Corporation

filed pursuant to § 7-122-101 and § 7-122-102 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.)

The domestic entity name of the nonprofit corporation is Mesa School

The principal office street address is

1100 Upham St
Lakewood CO 80214
US

The principal office mailing address is

1100 Upham St
Lakewood CO 80214
US

The name of the registered agent is ERIC VONLEVERN HALL

The registered agent's street address is

24 S Weber St Ste 400
Colorado Springs CO 80903
US

The registered agent's mailing address is

24 S Weber St Ste 400
Colorado Springs CO 80903
US

The person above has agreed to be appointed as the registered agent for this entity.

The name(s) and address(es) of the incorporator(s)

Jennifer Norris
1100 Upham St
Lakewood CO 80214
US

Certificate of Good Standing

Details			
Name	Mesa School		
Status	Good Standing	**Formation date**	02/06/2026
ID number	20261164253	**Form**	Nonprofit Corporation
Periodic report month	February	**Jurisdiction**	Colorado
Principal office street address	1100 Upham St, Lakewood, CO 80214, US		
Principal office mailing address	1100 Upham St, Lakewood, CO 80214, US		

Registered Agent	
Name	ERIC VONLEVERN HALL
Street address	24 S Weber St Ste 400, Colorado Springs, CO 80903, US
Mailing address	24 S Weber St Ste 400, Colorado Springs, CO 80903, US

MESA Board Member Agreement

This Board Member Agreement ("Agreement") outlines the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of members of the Governing Board of MESA (the "School"), a Colorado nonprofit public charter school. This Agreement is aligned to the Governance Plan described in Section G of the charter application and supports the board's responsibilities for mission alignment, legal compliance, fiscal oversight, and academic accountability. By signing this Agreement, each Board Member affirms their commitment to the mission, vision, and values of MESA and agrees to fulfill their fiduciary, legal, and ethical duties in accordance with applicable law.

1. Mission and Purpose

Board Members commit to advancing MESA's mission to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders, and to ensuring that the School remains mission-focused, academically strong, fiscally sound, and legally compliant, as described in the Governance section of the charter application.

2. Legal and Fiduciary Responsibilities

Board Members understand and agree that they are legally responsible for the governance and oversight of the School and will:

- Act in good faith and in the best interests of the School;
- Exercise the duties of care, loyalty, and obedience required under the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act and the Colorado Charter Schools Act;
- Ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, district laws, and the charter contract;
- Provide financial oversight, including approval of budgets, monitoring of financial statements, and review of audits.

3. Governance Role

Board Members agree to:

- Focus on governance, strategy, and oversight rather than day-to-day operations;
- Hire, support, and evaluate the Executive Director/School Leader in accordance with board policy;
- Adopt and review policies required by law and by the charter contract;
- Participate in board self-assessment and governance improvement.

4. Meetings and Participation

Board Members commit to:

- Attend and actively participate in all scheduled board meetings;
- Review materials in advance and engage in informed decision-making;

- Maintain confidentiality as required by law and board policy.

5. Training

Board Members agree to participate in orientation and ongoing governance training, including training related to charter law, financial oversight, and open meetings requirements.

6. Ethics and Conflict of Interest

Board Members will avoid conflicts of interest and comply fully with the School's Conflict of Interest Policy, as referenced in Section G of the charter application.

7. Term of Service

Board Members agree to serve in accordance with board terms and term limits established in the bylaws.

Founding Board Member Signature

Founding Board Member Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Operational Board Member Signature

Operational Board Member Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

MESA Board Member Conflict of Interest Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Conflict of Interest Policy is to protect the interests of MESA when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a Board Member, officer, or key employee. This policy is intended to supplement, not replace, any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest, including the Colorado Revised Statutes.

2. Definitions

Interested Person: Any Board Member, officer, or committee member with governing board-delegated powers who has a direct or indirect financial or personal interest.

Financial Interest: A person has a financial interest if they have, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the School has a transaction or arrangement;
- A compensation arrangement with the School or with any entity or individual with which the School has a transaction or arrangement; or
- A potential ownership or compensation interest in, or arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the School is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

3. Duty to Disclose

Interested persons must disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest as soon as it arises and before the board or committee considers the proposed transaction or arrangement.

4. Procedures for Addressing a Conflict of Interest

- The interested person shall disclose the existence of the conflict and all material facts.
- The interested person shall leave the meeting during discussion and voting on the matter.
- The remaining board members shall determine whether a conflict exists.
- If a conflict exists, the board shall determine whether the transaction or arrangement is in the School's best interest and fair and reasonable.
- The board may approve the transaction by a majority vote of disinterested members.

5. Violations of the Policy

If the board has reasonable cause to believe that a member has failed to disclose a conflict, it shall inform the member and allow an opportunity for explanation. If a violation is determined, the board may take appropriate corrective action, including removal, consistent with the bylaws.

6. Records of Proceedings

The minutes of board meetings shall contain:

- The names of persons who disclosed or were found to have a conflict;
- The nature of the conflict;
- The board's decision regarding the conflict; and
- The vote taken.

7. Annual Statements

Each Board Member shall annually sign a statement affirming that they:

- Have received a copy of this Conflict of Interest Policy;
- Have read and understand the policy;
- Agree to comply with the policy; and
- Understand that the School is a public, nonprofit entity and must engage in activities that primarily accomplish its exempt purposes.

8. Review

The governing board shall review this Conflict of Interest Policy annually and update it as necessary to ensure continued compliance with law and best practices.

Acknowledgement of Conflict of Interest Policy

I have read and understand the Conflict of Interest Policy and agree to comply with it.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Resume of Founding Board Member: *Patty Kipp, Board Chair*

Patricia Kipp

3914 Reed Street
Wheat Ridge CO 80033
C- 303-941-3080 / pattykipp@comcast.net

EDUCATION

1990, Type D Principal Licensure, University of Colorado at Denver
1976, M. A., Reading Specialist, University of Colorado at Denver
1972, B. A., Spanish and History, Monmouth College, Monmouth, Illinois
1971, Spanish and History, University of Barcelona, Spain

EXPERIENCE

2019-Current- Design Improvement Coach
* Assist in designing, preparing and delivering content for Design Improvement Convenings
* Coach selected schools through Design Improvement processes and phases

2011-2019- Assistant Professor of Practice
* Planned, prepared and delivered instruction for the Ritchie Fellows
* Lead instructor for Adams County cohort
* Advised certification students
* Facilitated select Ritchie Fellows

2006- 2011– Adjunct Faculty, University of Denver, Ritchie Program for School Leaders
* Participated in planning, preparing and delivering instruction for the Ritchie Fellows
* Facilitated select Ritchie Fellows
* Lead instructor for Adams County cohort, 2010-2011
* Assisted in planning and implementing the Adams County Schools' Ritchie Program for 2007-2008

2006- 2010- Principal Mentor, Program Developer, Denver Public Schools
* Developed AIM Program- Administrator Induction Mentor Program for the Denver Public Schools
* Developed and implemented professional development for Administrators
* Mentored first year Principals, Assistant Principals and consulted with veteran Principals

1992-2005- Principal, Palmer Elementary School, Denver Public Schools
* Provided instructional leadership and school management to urban school of 300 students and twenty-seven staff members * Introduced programs that led to increased student enrollment and decreased mobility- Gifted and Talented Program, Integrated Arts Program, Early Childhood Education, Full Day Kindergarten, Advanced Kindergarten, After-school Enrichment Clubs * Partnered with staff members to ensure that assessments reflected authentic student progress and made significant yearly increases * Collaborated with community groups, private institutions and DPS to bring resources and educational events to school * Promoted parent engagement through parent focus groups, family activities, committees and direct, ongoing communication * Implemented, coordinated and participated in numerous district professional development activities

1990-1992- Title I, Denver Public Schools
* Designed and delivered staff development to Title I teachers.
* Collected and analyzed student data

1989-1990- Administrative Assistant, Alternative High Schools (East, Zuni, Byers), Denver Public Schools * Coordinated educational programs for three alternative high school sites
* Collaborated with students and families to assure school success
* Provided staff development for staff members
* Facilitated long range planning

1986-1989- Director, CORPS Program, Federal Dropout Prevention Program, Denver Public Schools * Initiated CORPS Program grant proposal and designed program components
* Managed program components in three articulation locations each including an elementary, middle and high school *Selected and worked with staff of counselors and teachers

1974-1986- Teacher, Denver Public Schools
* Taught high school and junior high/ middle school Bilingual Education, History and Literacy

ANNIE CARLON

Board Member | Financial Governance & Oversight
Denver, Colorado

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Partner
ACRU Solutions | Denver, CO

- Provide strategic accounting and financial leadership for growing and mission-driven organizations
- Advise clients on budgeting, cash flow management, and financial decision-making ● Support the development of scalable financial systems and internal controls

Senior Manager / Director of Accounting (Financial Leadership)
Stage 1 Financial

- Supported high-growth and emerging organizations with outsourced finance and accounting leadership
- Provided budgeting, forecasting, and financial reporting to executive teams and boards ● Strengthened financial processes to support organizational sustainability and growth

Founder
Abaci Financial

- Delivered accounting and financial advisory services to clients across multiple industries ● Supported compliance, reporting, and process improvement initiatives ● Partnered with leadership to improve financial clarity and operational effectiveness

EDUCATION

University of Colorado
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
Emphasis: **Finance**

Resume of Founding Board Member: *Dino Reyes, Jr., Vice Chair*

DINO REYES JR.
720.229.2032 | dinoreyesjr@gmail.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Dynamic, relationship-driven school culture leader with 16 years of experience in Denver Public Schools and over 25 years of youth leadership experience. Expert in restorative practices, culturally responsive programming, and school turnaround. Proven track record of improving school climate, increasing enrollment, and creating innovative programs that amplify student voice and build community trust. Skilled communicator who effectively engages students, families, staff, and partners to foster inclusive, thriving school environments.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Lake Middle School – Denver Public Schools
Dean of Culture | 2018 – Present
● Led a schoolwide culture transformation that helped improve the Colorado Department of Education SPF rating from red to green.
● Increased enrollment from 245 to 620 students while maintaining a commitment to serving low-income communities.
● Designed and facilitated weekly all-school student assemblies, empowering students to lead and share their voices.
● Collaborated with community partners (Colorado UpLift, diversion officers, DPS Transitions Department) to provide preventative support for students and families.
● Coordinated multimedia activities including behavior tracking systems, discipline data, and event production.
● Head coach for boys basketball and flag football, leading multiple successful seasons and building student-athlete character.

Denver West 6–12 – Denver Public Schools
Dean of Culture | 2015 – 2018
● Maintained daily school culture systems and led restorative conversations with students addressing academic, behavioral, and social challenges.
● Coordinated behavior tracking systems, school-wide discipline, and multimedia activities.
● Facilitated weekly assemblies to strengthen school identity and celebrate student success.
● Built strong partnerships with local organizations and case workers to provide wraparound services for students.
● Coached boys basketball and flag football, fostering teamwork and resilience.

Trevista at Horace Mann – Denver Public Schools
Dean of Students | 2009 – 2015
● Supported elementary and middle school students through restorative approaches, social-emotional counseling, and family engagement.
● Coordinated behavior tracking systems and produced multimedia projects, including culminating 8th grade videos.
● Partnered with GRASP, Colorado UpLift, and community agencies to deliver intervention services.
● Coached boys basketball and flag football, building character and sportsmanship.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING
● Cahn Fellowship Program (2022–2023) – Cahn Ally, national leadership development program
● Teach Like a Champion – Training Conference (Jan. 2020)
● School Culture Advisor PLCs (2013–2023) – Led network trainings and supported district colleagues
● NCIS Training (2012)
● Restorative Justice Training (2011–Present) – Monthly district-level training

EDUCATION
● Ohio Center for Broadcasting – Broadcasting Certification, 2002–2003
● Warren Technical School – GED, 2000

Resume of Founding Board Member: Jill Duncan, *Secretary and Prospective Parent*

Jill Duncan

Admissions and Enrollment

jillduncan89@gmail.com
908-461-3599
311 18th Street, Golden, CO

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Vivvi - Director of Client Success — **Nov 2021 - Present**

- Designed and led scalable enrollment and onboarding systems supporting families through multi-step care access journeys
- Partnered with the operations teams to build and refine registration, tracking systems, and communication tools
- Developed foundational playbooks and processes to support consistent, high-quality family engagement across teams
- Used engagement and utilization data to identify gaps, improve retention, and inform strategic planning
- Supported a diverse national population of families while maintaining a personalized, relationship-centered approach

MyVillage - Assistant Director of Educator Enrollment — **Mar 2020 - Oct 2021**

- Led the launch of a national enrollment program for in-home child care providers, supporting growth across multiple regions
- Built and managed application, onboarding, and support processes for educators entering the platform
- Guided educators through a multi-step enrollment and onboarding process, emphasizing clarity, support, and long-term fit
- Partnered with internal teams to refine messaging and outreach strategies for a diverse, national applicant pool
- Led onboarding and training sessions that improved understanding, engagement, and overall participant experience for launching an in-home childcare program

CozyKin - Senior Enrollment Lead — **June 2018 - October 2019**

- Led family enrollment for Montessori-inspired childcare programs in a competitive, choice-driven market
- Guided families through high-stakes enrollment decisions using a consultative, values-based approach
- Built trust with families navigating complex early-education choices focused on philosophy, community, and long-term fit
- Managed and coached enrollment staff to ensure consistent, high-quality family engagement

City on a Hill Charter School - Manager of Student Recruitment & Enrollment — **August 2017 - July 2018**

- Led student recruitment and enrollment for a diverse charter school serving students from varied racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds
- Designed and implemented enrollment strategies that increased applications by 17% while prioritizing equity and mission alignment
- Planned and led admissions events, open houses, and school tours featuring faculty, staff, and students
- Guided families through a transparent school-choice process centered on expectations, culture, and partnership

University of Washington - Admissions & Enrollment Leadership — **2013 - 2017**

- Supported undergraduate and graduate admissions for programs with tuition up to $50,000 per year
- Coached students through application, financial, and academic decision-making processes
- Improved enrollment systems and applicant support, contributing to a 20% increase in graduate applications
- Led outreach and program operations that increased applications by 30% and participation from underrepresented students by 7%

Education

Master of Education | Education Policy, University of Washington 2016

Bachelor of Science | Human Development and Family Studies, University of Vermont 2011

Appendix Section I: Employees

DRAFT MESA K-8 School: Staff Handbook

Last Updated: October 2025

Mission

MESA provides an excellent educational experience through Expeditionary Learning and enrichment for all scholars.

Vision

MESA exists to serve scholars from all backgrounds to become exceptional community leaders and lead tables where real world problems are solved.

Core Beliefs and Values

MESA is grounded in the belief that diversity is a strength and that learning is most powerful when it is purposeful, inclusive, and rooted in service. The pillars of MESA—**Motivation, Engagement, Service, and Accountability**—guide all adult and student actions.

- **Motivation:** We cultivate learners who are curious, persistent, and driven to improve themselves and their community.
- **Engagement:** Learning at MESA is joyful, rigorous, and relevant. We do not do "boring."
- **Service:** We act with empathy and responsibility, recognizing our obligation to contribute positively to our community.
- **Accountability:** We hold ourselves and one another to high expectations, understanding that excellence is a shared responsibility.

Professional Culture and Expectations

MESA operates as a professional learning community aligned to Expeditionary Learning and Jeffco's focus on extraordinary student experiences. All staff are expected to:

- Model professionalism, integrity, and inclusive practices
- Engage in continuous improvement through coaching, feedback, and reflection
- Uphold student-centered decision-making grounded in inclusion and access

Collaboration, respectful communication, and solution-oriented problem solving are foundational to the MESA staff culture.

Instructional Program Alignment

Instruction at MESA is grounded in EL Education, Illustrative Mathematics, and a talent-development approach for all students. Staff are expected to:

- Plan and deliver standards-aligned instruction
- Participate in data-driven instructional cycles
- Implement inclusive practices and MTSS structures
- Maintain high expectations for all learners

Protected collaboration time is built into the schedule to support co-planning, progress monitoring, and instructional responsiveness.

Student Support, Behavior, and Restorative Practices

MESA maintains a safe, supportive, and service-oriented learning environment. Behavior systems are instructional, restorative, and aligned to Jeffco expectations.

- Restorative practices are used to repair harm, build relationships, and strengthen community
- MTSS frameworks guide academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports
- Discipline practices prioritize learning, accountability, and reintegration into the classroom

Staff are expected to implement schoolwide expectations consistently and document interventions as required.

Dress Code Philosophy

MESA's dress code reflects its mission to develop scholars as leaders. Staff and students are expected to dress in a manner that supports readiness to learn, professionalism, and respect for self and others. The dress code is inclusive, culturally responsive, and implemented through instructional—not punitive—approaches.

Family and Community Partnership

Families are valued as essential partners in the educational experience. Staff are expected to:

- Communicate regularly, respectfully, and proactively with families
- Engage families in learning, exhibitions, and community events

- Uphold confidentiality and student privacy at all times

Governance and Accountability

MESA operates in accordance with its approved charter, governing board policies, and all applicable state and federal laws. Staff are expected to understand and uphold policies related to:

- Student safety and supervision
- Confidentiality and FERPA
- Professional ethics and conduct

Commitment to Inclusion and Access

MESA is committed to eliminating barriers and expanding opportunity for all students, particularly those historically underserved. This commitment guides staffing, instruction, student support systems, and professional learning.

Appendix A: Attendance Procedures (Internal Draft)

Regular attendance is essential to student learning and community membership at MESA. Attendance procedures are designed to support students and families while meeting Jeffco and state requirements.

- Daily attendance is taken and recorded in accordance with district and state expectations.
- Families are expected to report absences promptly using school-designated communication channels.
- Patterns of absenteeism are monitored through the MTSS framework to identify students who may require additional support.
- When attendance concerns arise, staff engage families proactively to problem-solve barriers and connect students to appropriate supports.

Appendix B: Staff Leave and Absence Procedures (Internal Draft)

MESA recognizes the importance of staff wellness and professional sustainability. Leave procedures are designed to balance staff needs with continuity of instruction for students.

- Staff leave is requested and documented according to school procedures and applicable employment policies.
- Whenever possible, planned absences should be communicated in advance to allow for instructional continuity.

- Substitute plans should be provided that align to ongoing instructional goals and maintain high expectations for student learning.

Appendix C: Safety, Emergency, and Drill Procedures (Internal Draft)

The safety and well-being of students and staff are a shared responsibility. MESA follows Jeffco guidance and state requirements related to emergency preparedness.

- Required drills (e.g., fire, lockdown, secure, evacuation) are conducted regularly and documented.
- Staff are trained annually on standard response emergency protocols and expectations.
- Safety procedures are reviewed with students in developmentally appropriate ways to promote preparedness without fear.

These procedures are reviewed annually and updated as needed to ensure alignment with district guidance and best practices.

MESA K-8 School Operations Guidelines *DRAFT*

Narrations: I notice (student) did (action).
That was kind/safe/respectful/helpful/honest/responsible.

ARRIVAL (from cafeteria) Point person: Staff Name Here		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Students can enter building and head to cafeteria at 7:20am -Go through the line to pick up breakfast if desired, then sit at homeroom table in cafeteria and eat/wait for teacher pick up -Treat others with kindness and respect -Keep hands and personal belongings to yourself -Enter the building walking in an orderly fashion -Tell an adult if you need anything -Throw trash away and take all personal items with them to classroom -Students will line up with homeroom teacher at 7:40am and walk to classroom	-Be at morning duty/arrival spot on time (Support staff: 7:20 am, Teaching staff to cafeteria hallways by 7:39 am) -Arrange for someone to cover for you if you'll be late/absent -Greet students and parents warmly -Direct folks to where they need to go -Share any immediately helpful information -Save non-immediate questions for a meeting/email/call/note -Positively narrate expectations -Walk students up to classroom from cafeteria exit points	-Support the school in a safe and orderly arrival by being kind and respectful on school grounds -Bring students to their arrival spot (side doors leading to cafeteria) on time -Share any immediately helpful information -Save non-immediate questions for a meeting/email/call/note -Say goodbye and wish your student well for the day at the doors -Follow all traffic laws

ATTENDANCE and LUNCH COUNT (taken by 7:50 am) Point person: Staff Name Here		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Respond in a loud and proud, kind and respectful way to their teachers call their name for a response -Be kind, quiet, and patient while teacher is completing this routine -Give the correct and honest information	-Enter in both lunch count and attendance by 7:50 am -Attendance taken -Lunch count in Year at a Glance tab -Call the main office with any difficulties -Ask para or one student (with a hall pass) to take the lunch wipe off list to the cafeteria -If you have a planned absence, guest teacher will take attendance and lunch count on paper roster	-Bring students to school on time -If sending a lunch from home, please make sure belongings (i.e. lunch box) are labeled with students' name -Call the attendance line if student will be out/tardy and provide documentation for excused absence

BATHROOM EXPECTATIONS Point person: Staff Name Here		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Enter the bathroom quietly -Use the bathroom, flush, and wash their hands -Throw away trash -Stay in own stall/ at own urinal -Go back to their learning area as soon as they're done and make sure they have their pass	- Provide a pass and sign out for students -Allow only 2 students at a time to exit the room during learning time -Teach and reiterate bathroom expectations for students -Let office know if bathroom needs attention or a student hasn't returned for 10+ mins	- Let staff know if bathrooms need attention and maintain a clean and safe environment

BREAKS* (out of class only as identified on IEP, 504, through MTSS) Point person: Staff Name Here ***This is NOT for a Tier 2+ behavior need**	
Students will…	Staff will…

-Respectfully ask for permission for a break and state their need/reason -Set or see the set timer (5 mins) from the teacher -Go to the Cozy Corner to stop, take a breath, and relax (STAR) -Choose an activity in the Cozy Corner to do quietly and independently -When the timer goes off, clean up materials and return with a calm body to the learning happening	-Follow expectations of the IEP, 504, or MTSS intervention plan -Pre-teach expectations for a safe and respectful Cozy Corner -Listen to the child's need and agree on the immediate break or set a different time for it -Set/give the student a timer (5 mins) -Welcome the student back warmly after the break is complete -Connect with Principal if the breaks are becoming a trend (more than once a day) and/or could be work avoidance

BREAKFAST EXPECTATIONS Point person: Staff Name Here		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Enter the cafeteria quietly and calmly (walk down right aisle, exit down left side) -Get food from line using manners -Sit at assigned tables, staying seated while eating, and using a level 1 or 2 voice to visit with friends -Eat only own food (no sharing or trading) -Clean up (check table top, floor, for spills) when prompted and line up with teacher for class	-Welcome students in -Assist students in getting breakfast and directing them to a place to sit -Remind students of expectations -Positively narrate expectations -Dismiss students at 7:39 to meet their teacher at arrival spot -Wear orange high visibility vest -Actively supervise (not being on phone/computer)	-Assist students in getting breakfast and directing them to a place to sit -Remind students of expectations -Note: parents/guardians should kiss and go at doors outside of the building

CELEBRATIONS (birthdays, holidays, events) Point person: Staff Name Here		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…

-Follow expectations for the class event that uphold our school core values of community, kindness, and respect -Earn these events through positive behavior and completing classwork -Clean up after and leave the area as clean or cleaner than you found it -Have fun :)	-Host at least 1 in-class celebration of learning during the year before April -Communicate celebrations and events with students and families at least 1 week prior to the event -Set a schedule and expectations for the event ahead of time -Double check for religious, dietary, cultural, etc needs of students -Follow the guidelines laid forth in the staff handbook -Positively narrate expectations -Clean up after -Have fun :)	-Follow the policy of celebrations at the end of the month for all birthdays -Bring only store bought items -Check with teacher regarding times, dietary needs, and schedules

CAFETERIA EXPECTATIONS Point person: Staff Name Here		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Enter the cafeteria quietly and calmly (walk down right aisle, exit down left side) -Get food from line using manners -Sit at assigned tables, staying seated while eating, and using a level 1 or 2 voice to visit with friends -Eat only own food (no sharing or trading) -Clean up (check table top, floor, for spills) when prompted and line up with staff member for recess -Save candy/pop/hot chips for after school	-Welcome students in -Assist students in getting food and directing them to assigned tables -Remind students of expectations -Positively narrate expectations -Dismiss students after 20 minutes to line up for recess -Monitor and dismiss students who haven't finished eating -Wipe down tables between lunch times -**Remind students to use the bathroom BEFORE going outside (only 2 students at a time, with the pass)** -Wear orange high visibility vest -Actively supervise (not being on phone/computer) -**NOT** eat students' food or their own food while supervising	-Assist students in getting food/opening and directing them to assigned place to sit -Remind students of expectations

CHROMEBOOK/ DEVICE CARE Point person: Staff Name Here		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…

-Treat the devices and chargers with kindness and respect -Not put stickers/ etc on the device -Uphold the District and school technology use agreements -Use only their assigned device at the assigned times in order to complete assignments and work	-Treat the devices and chargers with kindness and respect -Not put stickers/ etc on the device (on an additional cover is fine) -Alert the via help ticket if you or a student has a tech need -Uphold the District and school technology use agreements -Positively narrate expectations	-Remind students to return devices and chargers to school -Uphold the District and school technology use agreements

CLASSROOM ENTRY Point person: Classroom teacher, para teachers		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Choose a greeting to share with the teacher -Wait in a quiet line then walk into the classroom -Let a teacher/staff know if you need a check-in conversation or need help -Say hello and welcome to a visitor and then continue with classroom instruction. “Hello, ___, welcome to MESA.”	-Share the students’ chosen greeting -Have a warm and welcoming rapport -Respond or ask a fellow staff member to respond if a child needs help -Say hello and welcome to a visitor and then continue with classroom instruction “Hello, ___, welcome to MESA.” -Positively narrate expectations	-Say hello upon entering a room and then follow the teacher's lead on where to sit, etc. -Not disrupt instruction -Be kind and respectful

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS Point person: Classroom teacher, para teachers		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Be kind and respectful to yourself and others -Engage in instruction i.e. tracking the speaker, loud and proud voice, using habits of discussion -Be a safe community member by taking care of yourself and following school expectations	-Be prepared for that day’s instruction -Be kind and respectful -Positively narrate expectations -Maintain professionalism and expectations set forth in the MESA Staff Handbook, School Culture Commitments, and these Operations Guidelines	-Be kind and respectful -Not disrupt learning/teaching

DO NOW & FIRST FIVE MINUTES THRESHOLD Point person: Staff Name Here	
Students will…	Staff will…

-Line up with teacher at level zero outside of room entrance -Hang up belongings on hooks outside of room -Listen for what-to-do directions with a 5 minute time stamp -Say hello with greeting to teacher and enter classroom -Independently complete do now work for 5 minutes -Hard stop for morning meeting at 7:50	-Have a do now out on each student's spot -- *this should be a review of content from grade level curriculum and take ~5 minutes independently* -Say good morning to students and tell them to hang up belongings on hooks outside of room -Give quick what-to-do directions with a 5 minute time stamp -While standing in threshold of door, greet students outside of the classroom and narrate what's going on inside the classroom -Enter classroom after last student -Enter attendance and lunch count -Hard stop for morning meeting at 7:50

BEFORE AND AFTER CARE Point person: Staff Name Here		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Follow expectations of MESA that uphold our school core values of motivation, engagement, service and accountability	-Maintain professionalism and expectations set forth in the MESA Staff Handbook, School Culture Commitments, and these Operations Guidelines -Regularly communicate with parents including positive messages home (utilizing Class Dojo) -Positively narrate expectations -Actively supervise students at all times -Ensure areas are picked up and left neat and clean after use	-Regularly communicate comments, concerns, and scheduling needs with before/after care supervisor -Uphold our schools culture commitments of being a safe and inclusive community grounded in motivation, engagement, service and accountability -Maintain up to date contact information

DISMISSAL (Walkers) Point person: Staff Name Here		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…

-Arrive to their designated spot no earlier than 2:39 pm -Wait in line with their school adult supervision -Treat others with kindness and respect -Keep hands and personal belongings to yourself -Exit the building walking in an orderly fashion -Tell an adult if you need anything -Tell your teacher when you are leaving and see who's meeting you for pick up	-Arrive to their designated spot no earlier than 2:39 pm -Arrange for someone to cover for you if you'll be absent -Dismiss students and parents warmly -Direct folks to where they need to go -Share any immediately helpful information -Save non-immediate questions for a meeting/email/call/note -Positively narrate desired behaviors	-Support the school in a safe and orderly arrival by being kind and respectful on school grounds -Meet students at their arrival spot on time -Share any immediately helpful information -Save non-immediate questions for a meeting/email/call/note -Follow all traffic laws

HALLWAY PASSING (individual) Point person: Staff in charge of supervision		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Walk calmly and quietly on the right side of the hall -Keep hands to self -Go to location on hall pass and return to class in a timely manner -Sign in and out	-Positively narrate expectations -Smile at students in hall -Hold private/sensitive conversations outside of the hallway -Provide a hall pass for students and sign in and out sheet	-Walk quietly on the right side of the hall -Step aside or into a room/opening to hold a conversation

HALLWAY TRANSITIONS (groups) Point person: Staff in charge of supervision		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Walk calmly and quietly in one line on the right side of the hall -Keep hands to self -Stop at stopping points -Maintain a safe community of learning by being kind and respectful	-Positively narrate expectations -Hold private/sensitive conversations outside of the hallway -Designate natural stop points -Reward students with Dojo Points -Practice the routine, when needed, to get to 100% commitment	-Walk quietly on the right side of the hall -Step aside or into a room/opening to hold a conversation -Hold private/sensitive conversations outside of the hallway

PACKING UP AT THE END OF THE DAY Point person: Classroom teachers and Facilities		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Stack chairs -Pick up pencils and trash off of the floor -Complete jobs around the classroom to help prepare for the following day -Get only their own belongings/things -Stay quiet and quick in the hallway and return back to the classroom	-Positively narrate expectations -Send 5 or less students at a time to get backpacks/coats -Have a routine for where to sit (classroom rug) when packed -Remind students to pick up pencils, trash, and stack chairs -Reward students with Dojo Points -Return student cell phones, if any collected	-Pick up students at least 15 minutes before dismissal if leaving early, otherwise, students will dismiss with class at 2:40

PRESENTATION & ASSEMBLY EXPECTATIONS (auditorium, classroom, etc) Point person: Staff in charge of supervision		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Maintain a safe community of learning by being kind and respectful -Follow the expectations of teachers/presenters -Keep hands to self and eyes on the speaker	-Positively narrate expectations -Reward students with Dojo Points -Actively monitor students (i.e. not on phone/computer)	-Follow school culture commitments of MESA -Bring students to school on time, unless there's an excused absence, to ensure the student gets to have the fun experience

PURCHASING PROCEDURE Point person: Executive Director	
Staff members will…	School leader will…
-Make budget requests which center kids' learning environment and maximize instructional times and align with school priorities -Double check to see if the items needed are here at the school -Send links and prices (with total sum) to the principal and Executive Director via email -Ensure tax exempt status is honored	-Respond within 48 hours of ask -Keep ledger of remaining balances -Serve as liaison between school and finance department -Make budget decisions which center kids' learning environment and maximize instructional times and align with school priorities -Forward order status to teachers via email -Follow MESA Board policies and purchasing guidelines

RECESS EXPECTATIONS Point person: Staff in charge of supervision		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Be kind and respectful -Stay within the boundaries of MESA recess -Follow expectations set by MESA community -Keep hands to self- **NO** touch tag, tackle football, groundies, etc. -Keep food and drinks off the playground -Have fun and enjoy time with friends	-Remind students to use the bathroom BEFORE going outside -Positively narrate expectations -Wear orange high visibility vest -Actively supervise (not being on phone/computer, checking blindspots, walking around) -Use the tiered behavior support system to guide conflict resolution -Send 1 student in at a time for the bathroom (emergencies ONLY) and/or office (when sending to the office, communicate with the office who is coming and why) -Designate ONE staff member to be responsible for monitoring students going in and out of the building -Line students up on time -Staff picking up classrooms will arrive on time for pick up	-Follow school culture commitments of MESA -Sign in with the office before going to the playground

RECESS EQUIPMENT EXPECTATIONS Point person: Staff Name Here	
Students will…	Staff will…
-Take ONE piece of equipment per person -Treat the cart with and equipment kindness and ask for help to reach something -Return the equipment YOU borrowed- you borrow it, you bring it back -Let an adult know if you need a pump, etc for the equipment	-Remind students to bring in equipment -Monitor student use by active supervision -Support students with pump, reaching things, etc. -Positively narrate expectations

SNACKS Point person: Classroom teacher		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…

-Clean up area and put technology away -Quietly get snack from basket or backpack -Eat own snack (no sharing) and stay seated while eating and talking to friends -Clean up at the end of snack time -**NOT** bring hot chips/pop/candy as a snack	-Direct students to clean up area and put technology away -Create and enact a system for handing out snacks along with a consistent, scheduled time outside of core instruction -Provide wipes/paper towels for students to clean area after snack -Positively narrate expectations -Use Purell food safe spray to wipe down surfaces before and after eating -Food cannot be left out whenever or overnight	-Send students with a snack that is healthy and not messy -Label any/all snack containers with student's name -**NOT** send/give students hot chips/pop/candy as a snack

TARDY STUDENTS Point person: Staff Name Here		
Students will…	Staff will…	Community/ visitors will…
-Wish family well when they drop you off -Check in at main office to get a tardy slip -Take tardy slip, backpack to classroom -Put materials away, say hello to teacher and class, then join in on the learning happening	-Welcome students into the learning environment using the student's name. "Welcome, ___. I'm glad you're here today." -Continue with learning/instructing	-Remind student to go to main office -Provide documentation (i.e. doctor's note) for excusal -Ensure student has backpack and materials for day -Wish student well for the school day

TESTING (Interims, Unit Tests, CMAS, etc) Point person: Principal	
Students will…	Staff will…

-Wear headphones -Be respectful of self and others -Use their scratch paper -Go to the bathroom before the assessment begins	-Ensure all students have needed technology (Chromebook and headphones) -Provide scratch paper for students -Have lights on in classroom -Ensure a quiet and calm environment -Provide time for students to go to the bathroom prior to starting the assessment -Ensure accommodations are met for students with accommodations -Make testing arrangements 24 hrs in advance

WATER BOTTLE FILLER STATION Point person: Staff in charge of supervision	
Students will…	Staff will…
-Line up one at a time -Take lid off of water bottle and fill it to the top, not letting extra water overflow - Clean up or help clean up any spills -Let an adult know if you need help -Fill quickly and quietly then return to your learning area -Have their name on their water bottle	-Help students who need support opening/closing -Monitoring student use by reinforcing expectations -Alert facilities if a clean up or mechanical need arises -Positively narrate expectations

MESA MTSS Intervention Menu (Elementary)

Quick Implementation Tips (what makes this actually work)

- Use data every 6–8 weeks to move students between tiers
- Keep Tier 2 short-term + skill-focused (not permanent)
- Protect Tier 1 quality first (strong core reduces Tier 2/3 load dramatically)
- Tracking with tools (Google Sheet, MTSS tracker)
- Meet regularly (grade-level data meetings or Student Support Team)

Tier 1 – Universal (All Students) Core instruction + prevention. Designed for ~80–90% of students	Tier 2 – Targeted (Some Students) Short-term, small-group interventions for ~10–15% Academics	Tier 3 – Intensive (Few Students) Individualized, high-frequency supports for ~3–5% Academics
Academics • Standards-aligned core curriculum with explicit instruction • Differentiated small groups within core block • Universal screeners (3x/year: DIBELS, iReady, MAP, etc.) • Daily literacy & math workshop models • Formative assessment + reteach cycles • Vocabulary-rich, language scaffolds for all learners • Family learning resources/home practice supports Behavior	Academics • Small-group reading/math intervention (3–5x/week) • Targeted skill groups (phonics, fluency, fact fluency, problem solving) • Progress monitoring biweekly • Intervention programs (e.g., LLI, SPIRE, Do the Math) • Tutoring or after-school support • Check-in on independent work completion Behavior • Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) • Social skills groups	Academics • Daily 1:1 or very small group intervention • Individualized learning plans • Diagnostic assessments to target skill gaps • Specialized instruction (SPED/MTSS specialists) • Extended time/day supports • Assistive technology • Possible special education referral if warranted Behavior • Full Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) • Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

• Schoolwide PBIS/positive behavior expectations • Clear routines, procedures, and visuals • Behavior teaching lessons (model/practice/reteach) • Positive reinforcement systems (class points, recognition) • Restorative circles/class meetings • Active supervision + precorrections Attendance • Welcoming school climate & strong relationships • Family communication systems (texts, calls, newsletters) • Morning greeters/check-ins • Recognition for strong/improved attendance • Clear attendance expectations shared with families Social-Emotional Development • SEL curriculum (Second Step, RULER, Responsive Classroom, etc.) • Daily morning meetings • Explicit instruction in self-regulation & conflict resolution • Calm-down spaces in classrooms • Growth mindset language • Universal trauma-informed practices	• Behavior contracts • Structured break plans • Targeted reinforcement plans • Increased adult mentoring • Functional Behavior Assessment (brief) Attendance • Attendance check-ins with trusted adult • Family problem-solving meetings • Attendance goals with incentives • Home visits or counselor outreach • Morning “soft landing” or breakfast clubs Social-Emotional Development • Small-group counseling (friendship, anxiety, grief, self-regulation) • Mentoring programs (lunch bunch, buddy systems) • Coping skills instruction groups • Structured play groups • Short-term behavior coaching	• Intensive wraparound supports • Daily data tracking • Crisis/safety plans • Increased adult supervision or individualized schedule • Collaboration with outside providers Attendance • Individual attendance plan • Social worker/case manager support • Barrier removal (transportation, housing, health resources) • Intensive family engagement • Community agency partnerships • Truancy prevention processes (as required) Social-Emotional Development • Individual counseling/therapy • Wraparound or multi-agency supports • Safety planning • Mental health referrals • Trauma-informed individualized supports • Functional coping plans embedded in schedule

DRAFT MESA Professional Evaluation aligned to Professional Learning Calendar

Learning Cycle Focus Area →	Learning Cycle 1 Before students start (Weeks 00-0) **Strong Start**	Learning Cycle 2 (Weeks 1-6) **Learning Environment & School Culture** **(Motivation)**	Learning Cycle 3 (Weeks 7-14) **Rigor** **(Accountability)**	Learning Cycle 4 (Weeks 15-22) **Joy** **(Engagement)**	Learning Cycle 5 (Weeks 23-30) **Leadership** **(Service)**	Learning Cycle 6 End of Year Celebrations and Rites of Passage (Weeks 31-34) **Reflection**
Formal Evaluation	Week 00: review tool and system	Week 6	Week 13	Week 21	Week 29	End of Year Conversations Week 31
Observed Teaching Actions	Review/Intro rubric and tool	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3 ☐ Action 4	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3 ☐ Action 4	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3 ☐ Action 4	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3 ☐ Action 4	Total of 16
Observed Student Actions	Review/Intro rubric and tool	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3 ☐ Action 4	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3 ☐ Action 4	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3	Total of 14
Professionalism Agreements	☐ Set personal growth goals	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3 ☐ Action 4	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3 ☐ Action 4	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3 ☐ Action 4	☐ Action 1 ☐ Action 2 ☐ Action 3 ☐ Action 4	☐ Met personal growth goal Total of 20
Professional Practice Total						**Total of 50**

Student Achievement on Assessment of Major Standards of the Learning Cycle	☐ Names plugged into data tracker ☐ Calendared pre-work time for WDM ☐ PD completed for Major Standards deep dive ☐ Student portfolios prepped with self-tracking graphs and 4 goal/ reflection pages ☐ PD completed for school wide targets	☐ 1 point - 0-25% met ☐ 2 points 26-40% met ☐ 3 points - 41-69% met ☐ **4 points - 70-89% met** ☐ 5 points - 90%+ met	☐ 1 point - 0-25% met ☐ 2 points 26-40% met ☐ 3 points - 41-69% met ☐ **4 points - 70-89% met** ☐ 5 points - 90%+ met	☐ 1 point - 0-25% met ☐ 2 points 26-40% met ☐ 3 points - 41-69% met ☐ **4 points - 70-89% met** ☐ 5 points - 90%+ met	☐ 1 point - 0-25% met ☐ 2 points 26-40% met ☐ 3 points - 41-69% met ☐ **4 points - 70-89% met** ☐ 5 points - 90%+ met	Total of 25
Student Growth					Year Long Individual Student Growth Goals (Continuously enrolled since count day) ☐ **1 point -** 0-10.9% met ☐ **3 points -** 11-19.9% met ☐ **6 points -** 20-29.9% met ☐ **9 points -** 30-39.9% met ☐ **12 points-** 40-49.9% met ☐ **15 points -** 50-59.9% met ☐ **18 points -** 60-69.9% met ☐ **21 points -** 70-89.9% met ☐ **24 points -**	

			90- 98% met ☐ **25 points -** 98.1% -100% met	Total of 25
Student Achievement and Growth Total				**Total of 50**
Notes and Reflections:				**Total out of 100**

Footnote 55: EdWeek Article about a Coach's Role in Teacher Evaluation

Should Coaches Participate in Teacher Evaluation?

By Elena Aguilar — May 20, 2013

Elena Aguilar, an experienced K-12 educator, trains individuals and teams to build resilient, just communities. She is the author of The Art of Coaching, (2013) The Art of Coaching Teams, (2016) and Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators (2018). She is also the founder of Bright Morning Consulting (brightmorningteam.com) and is active on social media.

From a coach somewhere east of the Mississippi (that's all she said): I'm in an argument with my central office supervisors over the direction that our coaching program is going. They would like to link coaching with teacher evaluation and often talk about coaching as something to do to ineffective teachers. This isn't what I think it is but I'm a new coach and am not doing a very good job convincing them. Can you help? Do you think coaches can participate in teacher evaluation? How would you define coaching?

The deeper I get in learning about coaching and practicing this art, the harder I find it is to offer a definition. Coaching lies at some very powerful intersections--adult learning, emotional intelligence and resilience, beliefs and systems, and systemic oppression. This is what I love about coaching--it's murky and imprecise and can lead into many directions.

But I know that coaching is not a way to punish people. It's not something to apply to ineffective teachers. It's something people have to choose to participate in and it's a way to grow.

I also recognize that no one really knows what to do with ineffective teachers and all of us who work in schools might need to engage in that conversation because it's so volatile and scary and it keeps coming up.

It's How we Hold the Mirror

Lately I keep coming back to the idea that a coach is someone who holds up a mirror for another to look into. We can't force people to see what they don't want to see. Adults won't grow or change their practices if they feel judged or are worried they'll lose their jobs. A coach's art is the way she holds the mirror, the expressions she wears on her face when she holds the mirror, and the questions she asks her client when they look in the mirror together. It's the art of noticing something in the reflection and finding a skillful way of inviting the client to look at that thing.

"We don't see things the way they are, we see things the way we are," wrote the authors of the Talmud. Most of us look in a mirror and see the same thing all the time. An effective coach nudges the client to see things they way they are--or at least, to recognize that she's seeing things the way she is. What else might we see in this reflection?, we ask a client. Let's look together.

When the Reflection Points to an Exit

I've lost count of how many teachers and leaders I've "coached out" of the roles they were in. When we looked in the mirror together, we saw that the teacher or principal might not be in the right place, at the right time. Others had considered my client "ineffective." I played no role in evaluation and worked to withhold my judgment. Through our conversations, as I held up the mirror, my client saw that continuing in his/her role wasn't serving him/her. My clients who had been deemed "ineffective" were suffering--they really were. They were miserable, frustrated, angry and not feeling very efficacious. When we looked in the mirror, we saw the impact on their school communities. I helped them create a dignified exit plan.

Coaching doesn't exist without trust. There is no such thing as coaching without a trusting relationship. Whatever it is, it isn't coaching. Would you ever look into a mirror of truth with someone you didn't trust?

What Role Can we Play?

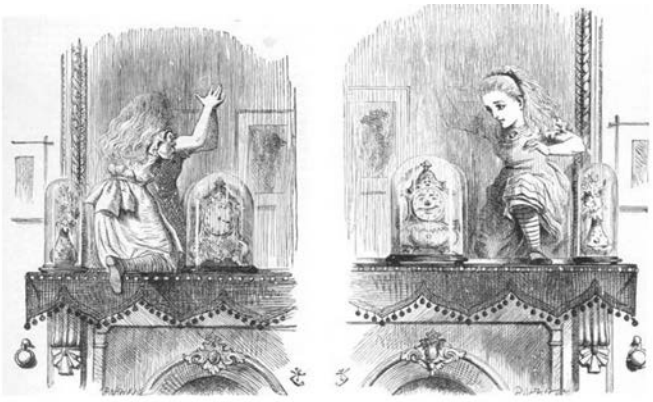
I don't know if there's a way for coaches to play a role in teacher evaluation that both honors what coaching is and honors evaluation. I don't know if the two things are compatible. Maybe. A number of supervisors whom I really trusted evaluated me. But the national context for teachers is so vicious and suspicious and unforgiving--it's hard to imagine how coaching and teacher evaluation can be tied together. But I won't rule it out.

Coaches can't be used as a lever to eject bad teachers, but we can play a role in helping people and systems heal and transform. Maybe we can find ways to care about those ineffective teachers and we can engage in authentic, trusting, compassionate relationships with them where we can hold up a mirror and look in together, and maybe we can help them find a different place to be in the world where children are not negatively impacted. If we can move beyond judgment and blame (whose fault is it that they're "bad" teachers?) and shame and humiliation (publicizing test scores won't motivate anyone to do anything positive) maybe coaches can participate in evaluating teaching.

We'll need to be very forceful in managing expectations, however. If we are "sent in" to help a teacher improve it could take years. I'm not saying that this is okay for the students who are involved--but this is all a coach can do.

More Mechanisms Needed

The system is flawed. There are many, many flaws. And holes. We need additional ways of dealing with ineffective teachers (I'll admit: I go through bouts of feeling very frustrated at the numbers of "ineffective teachers" I see). But if coaches are going to play a role, then we must define that role, manage expectations, and engage in transformational coaching where beliefs, behaviors and being are explored and shifted, and where a coach works from a place of compassion and kindness. That's the only kind of coaching I'd agree to see in conjunction with evaluation.



I'm sorry I'm not clearer about this issues. What I think needs to happen is for more of us to engage in conversations about coaching and evaluation, conversations where we really listen to each other and stay open to all possibilities, conversations where we're willing to topple into a looking-glass and explore alternate worlds together.

Appendix Section J: Insurance Coverage

Footnote 56: Minga Education Group Services



Our Services

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human resources services support your team with the following or as an Employer of Record.

Personnel Management: Job Descriptions, Recruiting, Employee Contracts, Payroll & Benefits, Employee Handbook, On-boarding Training.

Compliance: Filing Taxes & Quarterly Reports, Compensation Analysis, Leaves, Terminations, Policy Review, and HRIS Audits.

Performance Management: Design evaluation tools to align actions with UIP or Board strategies. Facilitate professional development plans.

FINANCES & ACCOUNTING

Financial and accounting services throughout the year include the following.

Annual: Budget preparation, Scenario modeling, Audit support, Tax filing, and Board financial policy reviews.

Quarterly: Financial reporting to Authorizers, CDE, and Grant agencies.

Monthly: Financial statements, Accounting reconciliations, and Finance Committee or Board support.

Weekly: Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and regular Financial documentation.

LEADERSHIP COACHING

School Boards and Leadership Teams can benefit from services that include:

Board Governance Training, Strategic Planning, System Implementation, Customized Coaching, Principal induction support, and Feedback processes.

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT RESOURCES

Our services can support your exceptional students in the following ways.

Comprehensive Needs Assessments, Individualized Student Plans, Stakeholder Collaboration, Professional Development, Monitoring & Evaluating, Scalable & Sustainable Systems, and Special Education Compliance Consultations.

GRANT MANAGEMENT

Grant services can provide a powerful tool for schools when aligned to the school's goals. Services range from:

Grant Research, Proposal Writing, Applications, Program Management, and Reporting.

ACADEMIC COACHING

Academic services can be customized to each school and include the following.

Annual Academic Reviews, Instructional Leadership Development, Authorizer Compliance & Expectations, and Consultation on Academic Changes.

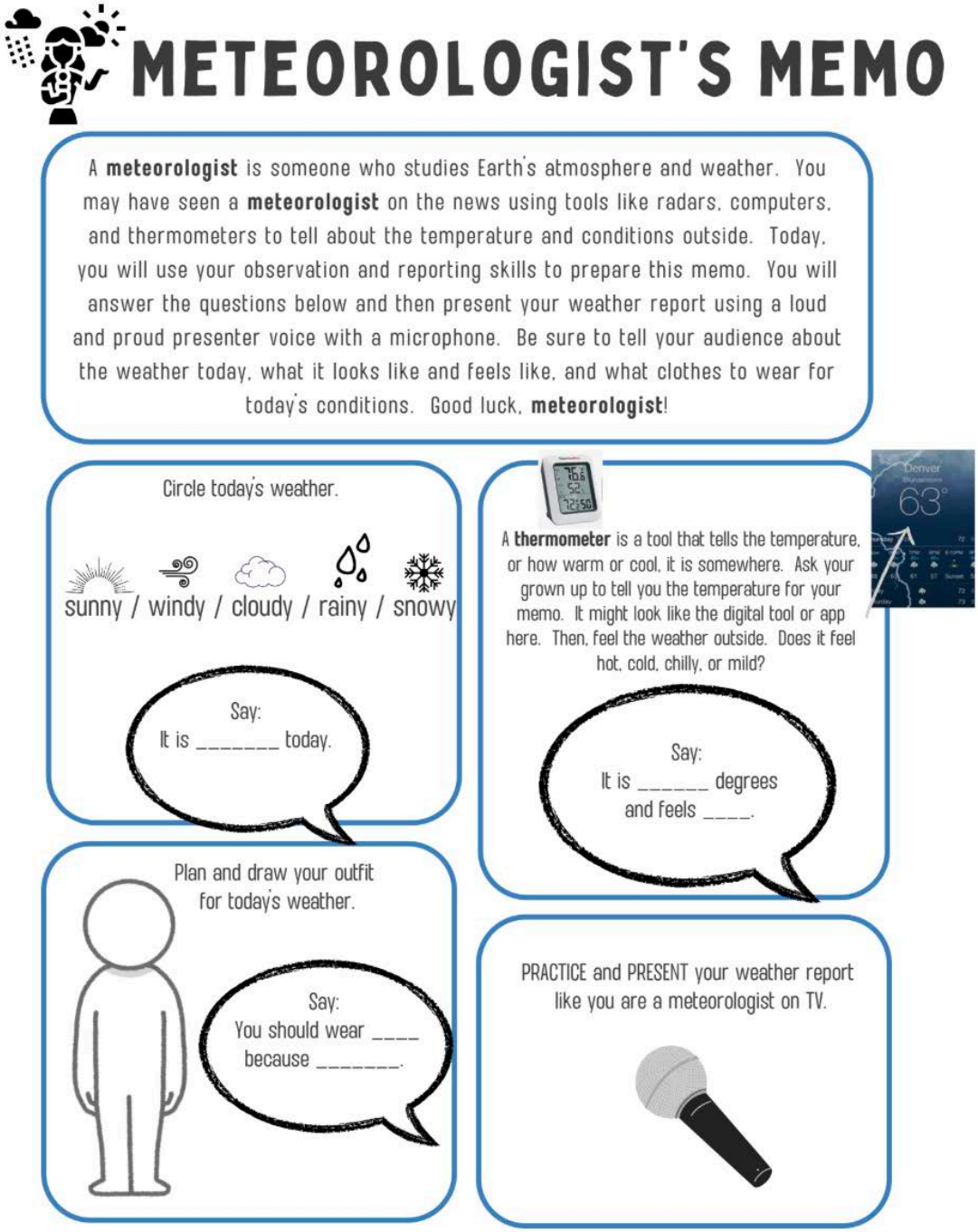
Appendix Section K: Parent and Community Involvement

MESA's Intended Community Partnerships

Entity	Nature of Partnership/ Description of Resources	Link and Further Information
Colorado Children's Academy (Rich Silvas, CEO)	Before/After school care with transportation, summer care options for K-5 students	About the K-5 programming
Explore and Discover Infant and Toddler Care (Cyden Porter, Past Board President)	Interest in being founding families for initial Kindergarten class	About the program
Archdiocese of Denver (St. Bernadette Parish property, Very Rev. Joe McLagan, VF)	Landlord for school building lease	In Place per Lease Agreement; support letter included in charter application appendix
Red Bus Coffee Company (Alice, manager)	Setting to host events for enrollment and recruitment	Website for the Red Bus Coffee Co
University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education (Dr. Erin Anderson, Professor)	Design Implementation work and coaching	Dr. Anderson's DU Profile Page
Little Rembrandts (Alanna Reynard, Franchise Owner)	After/during school art class enrichment	Classes offered through Little Rembrandts
Burn-In Mindset (Julia Pool, Founder and Owner)	Executive coaching for school leadership team	A little more about the Founder and company
Art Educators (Dr. Barth Quenzer, Heather Ashley)	Connections to and collaborations with organizations such as Meow Wolf, D3 Arts Collective, 40 West Arts for enrichment, exhibitions, and production classes	Dr. Barth Quenzer and the MESA founder created an art program together which was featured here on RMPBS Heather Ashley is an artist and art educator in Denver. Here is some of her work and a CEA spotlight about her,
Radical Self Care (Dr. Franita Ware)	Professional learning grounded Radical Self-Care and Warm Demander Teachers sessions designed to support educators and school leaders in strengthening practice and impact.	Planned to start with founding team July 2026; link to Dr. Ware's website
X-Treme Dance Force (Rachelle Nemec, Owner and Director)	Enrichment and/or specials dance classes	Rachelle is a studio owner in Jeffco and will contract to teach dance classes

Appendix Section L: Enrollment Policy

Example of Materials Given to Prospective Families



Created just for YOU by MESA Founder, Jenn Norris, to explore the Expeditionary Learning Kindergarten essential question: How does weather impact people?



MORE METEOROLOGY



Problem Solving Story

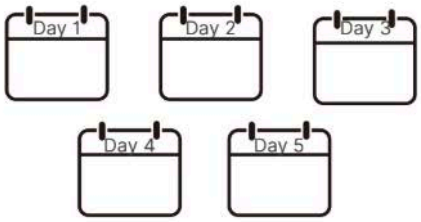
Reese is a Kindergarten student who loves to play! One Saturday morning at home, he ran to open the front door to go outside. Immediately, he felt chilly and saw water droplets. It was raining outside. It was not just a little sprinkle. It was raining cats and dogs! Reese really, really wanted to play, and searched in the closet for his rain jacket. It was way too small! It didn't fit at all.

Oh, no!

What could Reese do to solve this problem? Talk about it and draw your solution below.

Enrichment question: Why does the author say "It was raining cats and dogs" if animals aren't coming down from the sky?

Track the weather with your stickers for 5 days.



What do you notice? How many days could you play outside rather than inside? Why?



Want to learn more? Here are some of Ms. Jenn's favorite books with a weather theme:

Cloudette by Tom Lichtenheld
The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats
The Mitten by Jan Brett
The Wind Blew by Pat Hutchins
One Hot Summer Day by Nina Crews

Created just for YOU by MESA Founder, Jenn Norris, to explore the Expeditionary Learning Kindergarten essential question: How does weather impact people?

Appendix Section M: Transportation and Food Service

Footnote 57: School Meals Cost Data

Average Elementary School Lunch Price by District Size and Location

School Type	Average Lunch Price	Number of Schools Surveyed
District Size		
Small (Less than 1000 students)	$3.00	77
Medium (2,500 to 4,999 students)	$2.90	119
Large (25,000 or more students)	$2.75	67
School Location		
Midwest	$2.90	177
Northeast	$3.25	32
Western	$3.39	49

Average Elementary School Breakfast Price by District Size and Location

School Type	Average Breakfast Price	Number of Schools Surveyed
District Size		
Small (Less than 1000 students)	$1.78	56
Medium (2,500 to 4,999 students)	$1.85	88
Large (25,000 or more students)	$1.50	40
School Location		
Midwest	$1.75	141
Northeast	$2.00	29
Western	$2.25	40

Footnote 58: Healthy School Meals for All

What is Healthy School Meals for All?

In 2022, Colorado became a national leader in child nutrition through the passage of Proposition FF: Healthy School Meals for All (HSMA), with resounding support from voters. HSMA allows schools participating in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs to offer breakfast and lunch to students at no cost and invests in quality local food, technical assistance to support schools in providing more from-scratch meals, and higher wages for cafeteria workers.

Healthy School Meals for All has been a huge success in its first year. 100% of eligible districts opted in to the program, and meal participation is up more than 30% across the board, demonstrating both the need for this program and the excitement around it. Students, parents, educators, and other community partners are reporting that **Healthy School Meals for All has already made a measurable difference in reducing stigma and ensuring that students get their nutritional needs met**, while easing the financial burden on families throughout the state.

The Healthy School Meals for All program is supported by a **broad and diverse community-led coalition** of organizations and individuals across the state.

How Healthy School Meals for All helps Students and Families



Healthy School Meals for All is an investment in the health and public education of children. Students experiencing hunger tend to struggle academically and are more prone to behavioral problems and emotional, mental, and physical health issues. Research shows that access to school meals positively affects students' health and attendance, reduces disciplinary infractions, and increases test scores among marginalized groups of students. By ensuring students have access to healthy, nutritious meals during the school day, HSMA is contributing to the health, well-being, and academic success of more young Coloradans.

The program also **promotes inclusivity and dignity by eliminating the stigma and shame** associated with receiving free school meals or having meal debt.

"It's been incredibly personally healing to see how universal meals has really equalized school meals and allowed all students to access them without stigma. I would watch a whole class come down for breakfast together or a whole class line up for lunch, and it literally brought me to tears to see how universal meals changed the culture of school meals." – Colorado food service employee

So far, Healthy School Meals for all participation has been higher than expected, with a 36% increase in school breakfasts and 31% increase in school lunches, demonstrating the popularity and effectiveness of the program. **High participation demonstrates the need for this support** in the midst of a cost of living crisis in this state and shows the immense value the program brings to communities as they navigate higher food costs.

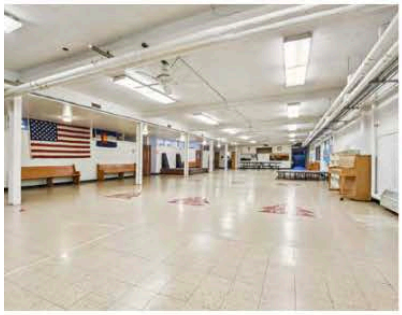
Healthy School Meals for All is making it more affordable to raise kids in Colorado. Based on current meal prices, the program will save Colorado families more than $1,250 per child each year. The program helps families struggling with the rising cost of living by eliminating the need for them to choose between buying school meals and covering other essential household expenses.

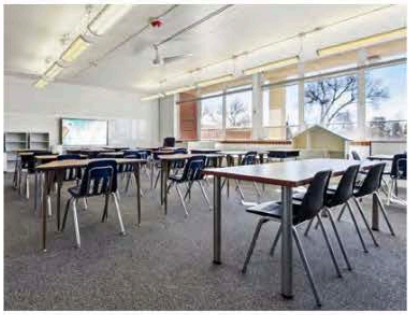
Appendix Section N: Facilities

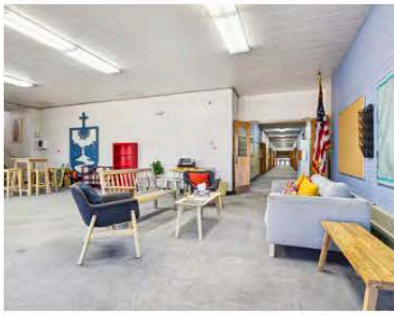
Brochure showing facility being leased



38,782 SF Education Facility for Lease in Lakewood







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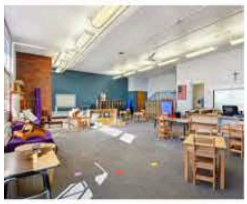
Tom Omdal
tom@kincommercial.com
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1100 Upham Street, Lakewood, CO 80214

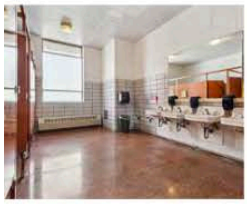
(Formerly Wellspring Catholic Academy of St. Bernadette)

- Turnkey for K-8 with "E" Occupancy and available now
- 18 classrooms, library with stage, gym, cafeteria, and offices
- 2 classrooms recently licensed for early childhood education
- Large outdoor play area with several basketball goals and playground area, also a separate baseball field
- Two blocks from 13th/Wadsworth Light Rail station
- Easy access from 6th Avenue

Contact Broker for Lease Rate







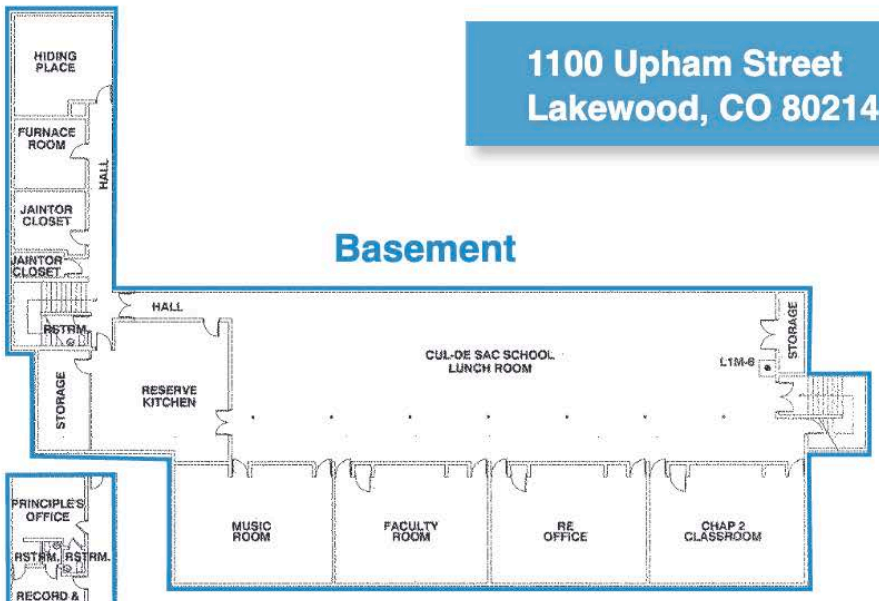




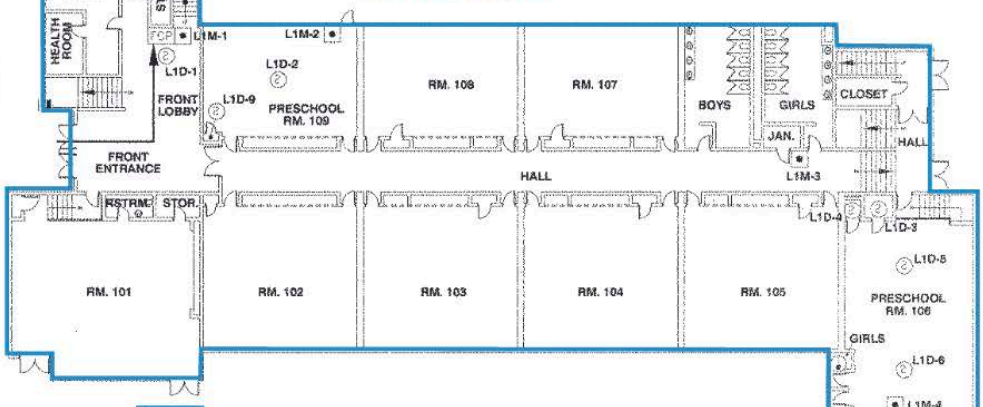


1100 Upham Street
Lakewood, CO 80214

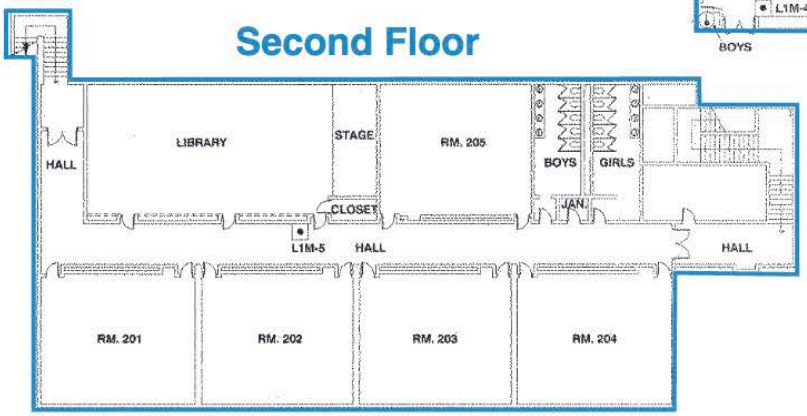
Basement



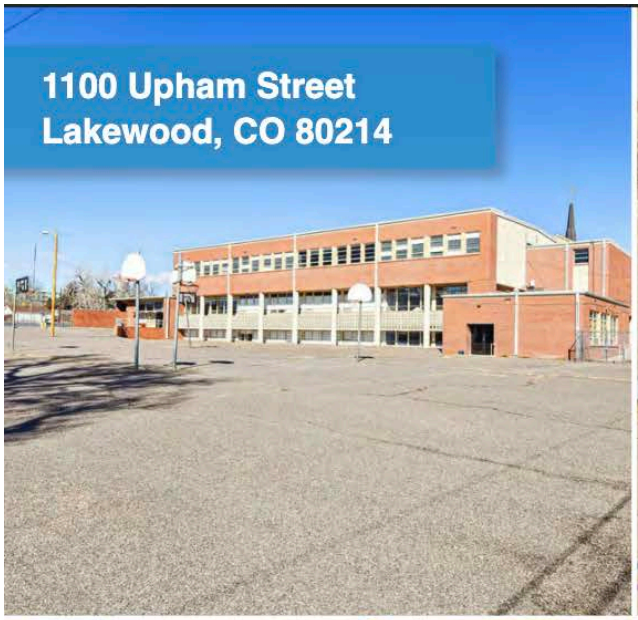
First Floor

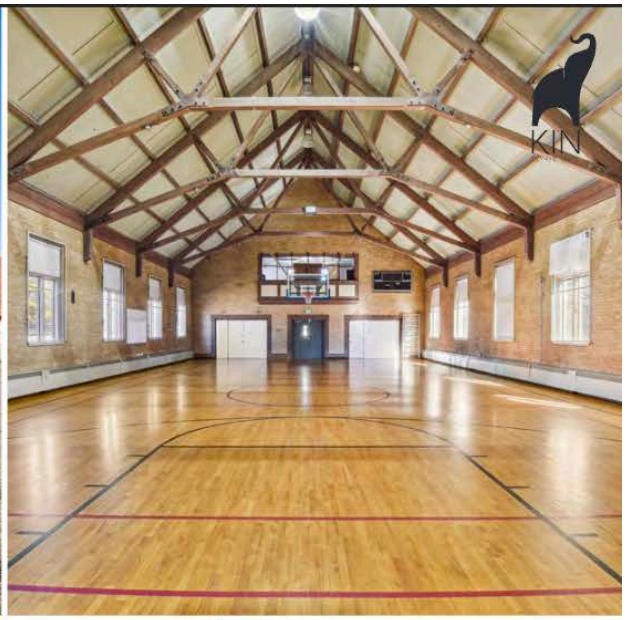


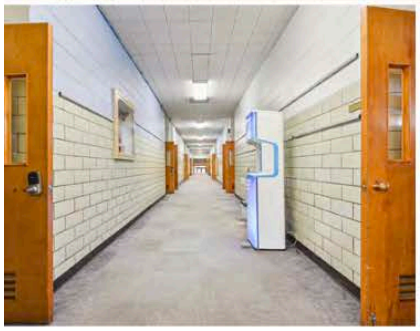
Second Floor

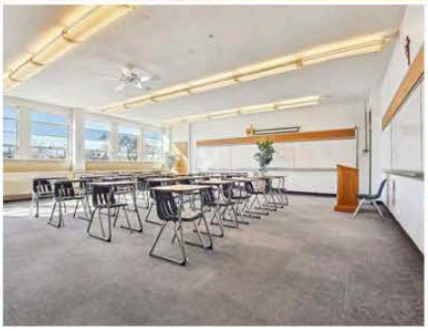


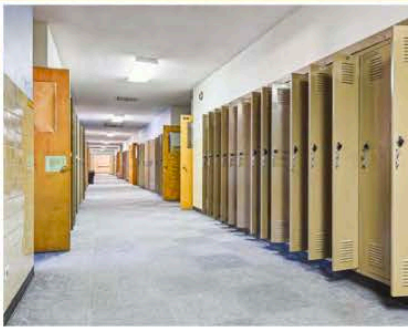
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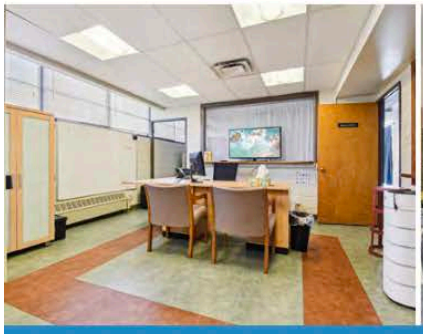




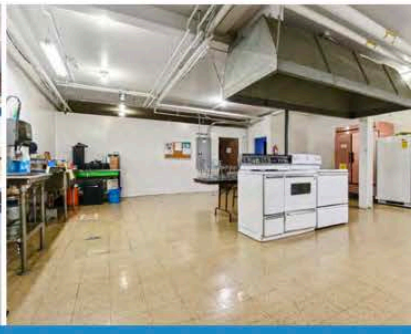


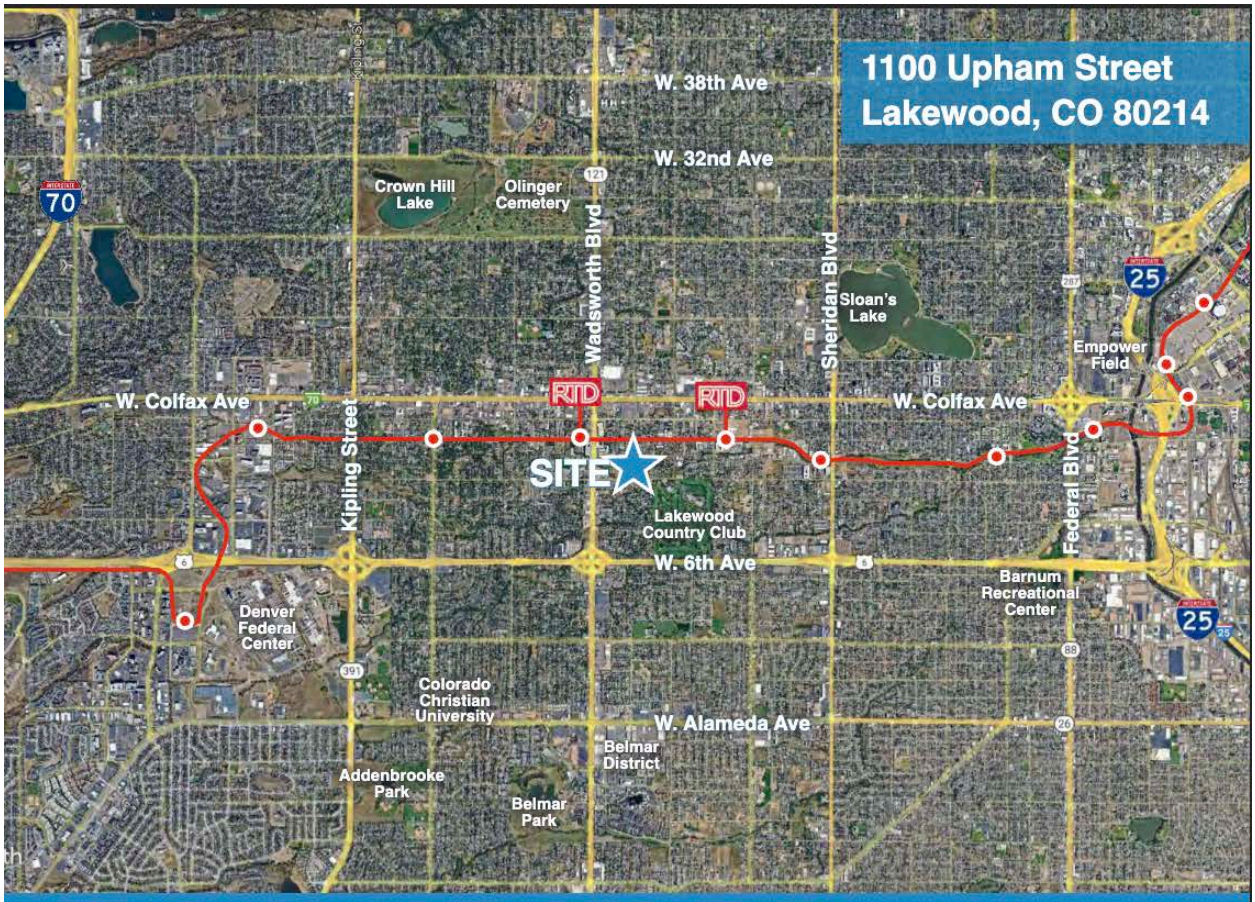
Total Usable Space	**38,782 SF**
Total Land Size	6.24 Acres
Year Built / Renov.	1953/ 1985
Zoning	M-R-U (w/ E Occupancy)
County	Jefferson
Parking	Surface Spaces

DEMOGRAPHICS	1 Mile	3 Mile	5 Mile
Population (2024)	15,862	144,711	404,422
Pop. Age 0-14 (2024)	23,277	61,462	184,753
Median Age	38.2	37.6	37.3
Total Households (2024)	7,431	62,525	179,834
Median HH Income	$53,480	$69,744	$78,973











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Information herein has been obtained from reputable industry sources. Kin Commercial and its representatives make no representation, warranty or guaranty that the information contained herein is factual or reliable. Kin Commercial recommends that each potential tenant or buyer conduct their own individual investigation of this site to determine its suitability.

Footnote 59: City of Lakewood Business Safety and Security Program



Home / City Hall / Departments / Economic Development / **Business Safety and Security Program**

Business Safety and Security Program

The Business Safety and Security Program provides grant funding to help business owners create or update safety features on the business property. Goals of this program are to create safe environments for business owners and their customers and to reduce calls for service.

Footnote 60: Connect Lakewood Program



Connect Lakewood

A new public safety partnership for Lakewood residents and businesses designed to keep Lakewood safe.

Connect Lakewood is an official extension of our city's public safety efforts and reflects a trusted partnership between law enforcement and the community. All content and services provided here are managed by the Lakewood Police Department and adhere to all applicable legal requirements.

Your participation will greatly support public safety professionals to better assess and rapidly respond to criminal activity and emergency situations. It will also enable investigators to easily gather evidence in case of an incident.



LEVEL 1: Register Your Cameras

Let's work together to fight crime! At no cost, register your security cameras with Connect Lakewood today to help identify area cameras in case of an incident. An investigator from the Lakewood Police Department **will contact you via email** if your assistance solving a crime near you is needed.

Camera registration takes less than one minute via the secure online portal. Registering your cameras does not allow the Lakewood Police Department access to your live video stream. It only enables investigators to know a camera is present at your location and can easily request video evidence should an incident occur.

Businesses and residents can take community security one step further by connecting with the Lakewood Police Department to register your camera to help solve crimes.

Appendix Section O: Waivers

Footnote 61: CDE Waivers and Policy Guidance

Automatic Waivers for Charter Schools

The General Assembly enacted the Colorado Charter Schools Act of 1993 (Act), C.R.S. 22-30.5-101 et seq., to encourage new and innovative methods of educating students by allowing for public charter schools which would have greater control over decisions related to educational programming in exchange for increased accountability for performance. C.R.S. 22-30.5-102. Consistent with this legislative intent, the Act allows charter schools to request waivers from certain state statutes and rules. There are two types of waivers: automatic and non-automatic waivers. Automatic waivers are automatically granted to charter schools upon the establishment and renewal of a charter contract, whereas non-automatic waivers require rationale and replacement plans.

Pursuant to C.R.S. 22-30.5-104(6)(b), the State Board of Education has promulgated rules that list the automatic waivers for all charter schools. 1 CCR 301-35, 2217-R-3.01. In promulgating the list of automatic waivers, the State Board of Education considers the overall impact and complexity of the requirements specified in the statute and the potential effects that waiving the statute may have on the practices of a charter school.

Pursuant to C.R.S. 22-44-305(2), the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI), working with the Colorado League of Charter Schools (CLCS), developed the following standardized description and rationale for each of the statutes included on the list of automatic waivers.

C.R.S. 22-1-112 School Year – National Holidays. This statute sets a state school year and national holiday schedule. A waiver of this statute authorizes a charter school to develop its own school calendar that fits its unique needs.

C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(f) Local Board Duties Concerning Selection of Staff and Pay. This statute authorizes each school district to employ and compensate all personnel required to maintain the operations and carry out the educational program of the district. A waiver of this statute allows a charter school to hire its own staff and set compensation structures independent from the district.

C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(t) Determine Educational Program and Prescribe Textbooks. This statute authorizes each school district to determine its educational programs and prescribe textbooks for such programs. A waiver of this statute enables a charter school to choose its own educational program and textbooks in accordance with its charter application as approved by its authorizer.

C.R.S. 22-32-110(1)(h) Local Board Powers – Terminate Employment of Personnel. This statute authorizes each school district to terminate the employment of personnel. A waiver of this statute permits a charter school to terminate its own personnel.

C.R.S. 22-32-110(1)(i) Local Board Duties – Reimburse Employees for Expenses. This statute authorizes each school district to reimburse employees for work-related expenses. A

waiver of this statute permits a charter school to adopt its own policies and procedures for employee expense reimbursement.

C.R.S. 22-32-110(1)(j) Local Board Powers – Procure Life, Health, and Accident Insurance. This statute authorizes each school district to obtain insurance coverage for its employees. A waiver of this statute permits a charter school to negotiate and procure its own group life, health, or accident insurance coverage for its employees.

C.R.S. 22-32-110(1)(k)(I) Local Board Powers – Policies Related to In-service Training and Official Conduct. This statute authorizes each school district to adopt written policies relating to employee efficiency, in-service training, professional growth, official conduct, and welfare of employees. A waiver of this statute permits a charter school to adopt its own policies in these areas.

C.R.S. 22-32-110(1)(ee) Local Board Powers- Employ Teachers' Aides and Other Non-certified Personnel. This statute authorizes each school district to employ teachers' aides and other non-licensed personnel. A waiver of this statute permits a charter school to employ its own teachers' aides and other non-licensed personnel.

C.R.S. 22-32-126 Employment and Authority of Principals. This statute authorizes each school district to employ licensed principals. A waiver of this statute permits a charter school to employ its own, possibly non-licensed, principals.

C.R.S. 22-33-104(4) Compulsory School Attendance. This statute requires each school district to adopt a written policy setting forth attendance requirements. A waiver of this statute permits a charter school to adopt its own attendance requirements in accordance with applicable laws and regulations (*e.g.*, C.R.S. 22-33-104; 1 CCR 301-78).

C.R.S. 22-63-301 Teacher Employment, Compensation, and Dismissal Act – Grounds for Dismissal. This statute sets forth the grounds under which a school district may dismiss a teacher. A waiver of this statute permits a charter school to exercise at-will employment and establish its own grounds for teacher dismissal, provided that employment decisions are made in accordance with applicable laws and regulations (*e.g.*, anti-discrimination laws).

C.R.S. 22-63-302 Teacher Employment, Compensation, and Dismissal Act – Procedures for Dismissal of Teachers. This statute sets forth the state procedures for teacher dismissal. A waiver of this statute permits a charter school to exercise at-will employment and determine its own procedures for teacher dismissal, provided that decisions are made in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

C.R.S. 22-63-401 Teacher Employment, Compensation, and Dismissal Act – Teachers Subject to Adopted Salary Schedule. This statute authorizes each school district to adopt a teacher salary schedule. A waiver of this statute permits a charter school to create its own salary schedule that fits its unique needs.

C.R.S. 22-63-402 Teacher Employment, Compensation, and Dismissal Act – Certificate Required to Pay Teachers. This statute authorizes each school district to pay only licensed teachers. A waiver of this statute permits a charter school to pay non-licensed teachers, provided that the school has a waiver from C.R.S. 22-63-201 (relating to the requirement to employ licensed teachers).

C.R.S. 22-63-403 Teacher Employment, Compensation, and Dismissal Act – Payment of Salaries upon Termination. This statute requires that upon the dismissal of a teacher and prior to the end of that teacher's employment contract, each school district must pay the pro rata share of salary installments due and payable under the employment contract for the period during which no services are required to be performed. Consistent with the at-will nature of charter school employment, a waiver of this statute enables a charter school to terminate a teacher's pay upon dismissal, provided that decisions are made in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Appendix Section P: Student Discipline, Suspension or Expulsion

Footnote 62: 10-Session Participant Workbook from Conscious Discipline for Parents and Educators **Note this document is over 100 pages, so a few excerpts are shown here.*

Conscious Discipline:
BUILDING RESILIENT SCHOOLS AND HOMES

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Welcome to Session 1

Introduction to Conscious Discipline®

SESSION OVERVIEW:

- Examine traditional discipline, reflecting on how we've disciplined in the past and why we have continued this pattern.
- Discover one value system that integrates the way we feel on the inside with the way we behave on the outside.
- Explore the mindset shift necessary to help remain conscious, even in the most challenging moments.

ConsciousDiscipline®

If you are in a group setting, choose a partner for Session 1:

_____

Session 1: Pre-Learning Survey

Let's begin with a little survey to help you measure your perceptual shift as you learn helpful, new information.

1. Connections with children lead to more cooperative behavior.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is possible to make others change if you use the right reward or punishment.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. All behavior is a form of communication.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. Rules govern behavior.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. Conflict is an opportunity for us to teach.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Introduction

You are in the perfect place, at the perfect time to discover the exact skills and perceptions you require to experience meaningful change.

We must be willing to make two vital shifts to ensure we experience and model healthy relationships with our children:

- Shift from trying to fix the child's problem to healing our relationships.
- Shift the way we attempt to teach values by flipping the practice of "do as I say, not as I do" to "be the change you want to see in the world."

Movement is essential. Standing up delivers 10 to 15 percent more blood and oxygen to the brain.

1. The brain is _____-seeking and _____ -oriented.

2. Intentional face-to-face moments create _____ juice that includes:

- Dopamine — "Yahoo!" Says, "Pay attention!"
- Oxytocin — Bonds with others and builds social trust (moral molecule)
- Opioids — Decrease pain

Connect

Enjoy the "Little Miss Muffet" *I Love You Ritual*™ with your partner or child. If you are using a partner, one of you will pretend to be the child and the other will be the adult.

The adult forms a tuffet (or footstool) by gently making a fist.

Little Miss Muffet, sat on a tuffet.
The child uses two fingers to sit on the tuffet.

Eating her oatmeal today.
The child pretends to eat oatmeal.

Along came a spider, that sat down beside her,
The adult uses the other hand to dramatize a spider crawling down to sit beside the child's Miss Muffet fingers.

And said, "Have a great day!"
Shake hands.



Reflect

What did you experience during this moment of connection?_____

_____

Is your mood:

____ Lifted

____ Lowered

____ The same

Is your focus:

____ Clearer

____ Scattered

____ The same

Transformational Change

Fear separates us into "us" and "them." Conscious Discipline unites us as "we."

3. Conscious Discipline is based on what type of change?

_____Traditional _____Transitional _____Transformational

- Traditional change means we're going to do the same thing, but do it better, cheaper and faster.
- Transitional change means we're going to stop doing Behavior A and start doing Behavior B.
- Transformational change requires us to change our mindset as well as our skill set.

**Conscious Discipline is an infinite journey into *transformational* change.
There is no end.**

Two Shifts

- 4. Conscious Discipline asks us to make a mindset shift from "Do as I say, not as I do" phrases, actions and intentions to "Be the change _____."
- Values are taught through interactions, not lectures.

Reflect

Which approach described above is most closely related to your upbringing? How was that for you and how does it impact you today?

_____

_____

Examining the Values We Teach and How We Teach Them

We learn our values through the human interactions we see, not the words we are told.

What human interactions do you see throughout your day? _____

What human interactions do your children see throughout the day? _____

Typically, our actions teach two value systems:

- When the world is going your way, behave politely and pleasantly.
- When the world is not going your way, it's okay to complain, name-call and behave in other unhelpful ways.

What are your thoughts about this?

_____

_____

How do you believe you teach values to your children?

_____

_____

What values do you teach when you are in an upset state?

_____

_____

We cannot teach values through lectures.

We cannot learn values through someone telling us about them.

We learn our values through personal experience and by watching the human interactions around us.

The interactions children see around them teach them what to value and how to build relationships. Humans possess a social brain; we cannot live without relationships.

Most of us teach one set of values when we are calm and another when we are upset. It's time to decide on one value system.

A Compassionate Culture of "We"

Conscious Discipline asks us to change our perception of conflict and how we respond to conflict in order to create a compassionate culture of "we," instead of "us" and "them." It is about setting a goal, self-motivating toward that goal, and becoming conscious of straying off-track so we can return to a path that leads toward our goal.

When I hear the word "discipline," I think of:

To discipline and to teach are the same act.

Traditional Discipline and Conscious Discipline

Traditional Discipline	Conscious Discipline
It's possible to make others change if you have the right reward or punishment.	Controlling yourself is possible and can profoundly impact others.
Rules govern behavior.	Connection governs behavior.
Conflict is a disruption and should be avoided.	All behaviors, including conflict and misbehavior, are a form of communication.

Do you believe you can make others change against their will? How has this belief impacted your life?

Change starts with me and extends to you.

Teaching is about giving. Control is about getting.

Do you tend to please others or try to control everything?

_____

If you are in a group setting, share an example of this with your partner. If not, write an example below.

_____

_____

Seeing all behavior as a form of communication sets us up to teach rather than ignore, punish, permit or distract.

If you try to direct children's behavior through control, fear and manipulation, these will become their core strategies and they will learn to use these same strategies with peers and with you.

Connection Governs Behavior

5. Connections on the _____ with other people build _____ on the inside.

6. These connections wire our brain for _____and _____.

7. What are the four ingredients necessary for connection?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Our interactions with children literally shape their brains.

The Seven Powers of Conscious Adults help us stay regulated enough to access the Seven Skills of Discipline.

Old job description:

My job is to make children behave and their job is to make my job hard.

New job description:

8. My job is to keep it _____and the children's job is to _____.

9. To do this job, I must shift from punishing children to _____children.

Are you willing to spend time becoming conscious of your intent in regard to discipline? YES NO

Describe what this will look like in your world. _____

_____

_____

3-2-1 Reflections

3 Things you learned… _____

_____

_____ …

2 Ways you were personally impacted… _____

_____

_____ …

1 Question you still have… _____

_____

_____ …

Implementation Plan: Make a Commitment

Think of the most valuable piece of information you heard during this session. What are you willing to begin implementing right away? Take out your **Reminder Mini-Poster for this session** (printed from the e-learning portal) and write your commitment in the space provided. If you are in a group setting, verbalize this plan to your Commitment Buddy.

Post-Session Survey

Complete this survey. Then take a moment to re-read your answers to the Pre-Session Survey on page 4. Reflect on the transformational changes you've already internalized.

1. Connections with children lead to more cooperative behavior.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. It is possible to make others change if you use the right reward or punishment.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. All behavior is a form of communication.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. Rules govern behavior.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. Conflict is an opportunity for us to teach.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

(odd numbered items with a "1" and even numbered items with "5" show the highest level of understanding)

Reflect

_____

_____

_____

Footnote 63: Link to Jeffco Public Schools Family Handbook

Footnote 64: Link to Jeffco Public Schools Restorative Practices

Footnote 65: Link to Jeffco Public Schools Public Discipline Matrix

Appendix Section Q: Serving Students With Special Needs

Footnote 66: Link to Jeffco Public Schools Information on the CogAT test

Footnote 67: White Paper “Common Core State Standards and Diverse Urban Students: Using Multi-Tiered Systems of Support”

Common Core State Standards and Diverse Urban Students:

Using Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Sue Gamm
Judy Elliott
Julie Wright Halbert
Ricki Price-Baugh
Robin Hall
Denise Walston
Gabriela Uro
Michael Casserly



2012



Common Core State Standards and Diverse Urban Students: Using Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

A Council of the Great City Schools White Paper

As America's Great City Schools implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), they have a unique opportunity to integrate strategies for teaching, intervening, and supporting the nation's urban students in a way that will ensure they have the literacy, numeracy, behavioral, and engagement skills necessary to be successful in college and careers.

Instituting the Common Core State Standards with fidelity means embracing and addressing the diverse needs of **ALL** students. This imperative reflects the reality that regardless of how effectively school district leaders develop and implement high-quality curricula aligned with the new standards, some students will need additional support and interventions to be successful. Implementing the Common Core State Standards within a framework of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) will help ensure that all students have an evidence-based system of instruction to assist them in achieving success.

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports is designed so that schools can provide the appropriate level of instruction and intervention for their students. Using performance data and monitoring learning rates through MTSS, educators can make important instructional decisions to meet the needs of students from different backgrounds, learning styles, and levels of attainment.

Also referred to as Response to Intervention (RtI) in some school districts, MTSS is the umbrella concept under which both academics and behavior fall. Some educators think of RtI as applying to academics only; others consider Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) as applying to behavior only. Still other educators use RtI in the context of both. The intentional shift in terminology to a multi-tiered system in this white paper is meant to integrate both academics and behavior as uniformly critical to student success in our educational system.

The paper outlines the key components of an integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, interventions, and academic and behavioral supports needed by school districts in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. It also underscores the importance of data-based decision making in implementing these standards while meeting the specialized

and diverse needs of urban students. In addition, the paper provides concrete examples using a model lesson based on the Common Core State Standards. The Council of the Great City Schools produced the paper for school board members, superintendents, chief academic officers, curriculum and instruction administrators, leading education administrators (general education, Title I, special education, English-language learner programs, and gifted programs), researchers, accountability officers, and others to help guide their thinking about how the Common Core State Standards can be implemented in a way that will ensure that the broadest array of urban students are college and career ready.

What Is MTSS?

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports is the term used to describe an evidence-based model of education that employs data-based problem-solving techniques to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention. This integrated instruction and intervention system is provided to students in varying levels of intensities—or tiers—based on student needs. This needs-driven decision-making model seeks to ensure that district resources reach the appropriate students (and schools) at suitable levels of quality and concentration to accelerate the performance of ALL students.

The MTSS framework is based on a continuum of increasingly intense, evidenced-based supports designed to meet the academic and behavioral needs of diverse learners. Three tiers define the levels and intensity of instruction and interventions available across the continuum (see exhibit below)—but none of these tiers are used to describe categories of students *per se* or specific instructional programs. Instead, the tiers refer to the types of instruction and intervention provided. The three tiers are illustrated and defined below—

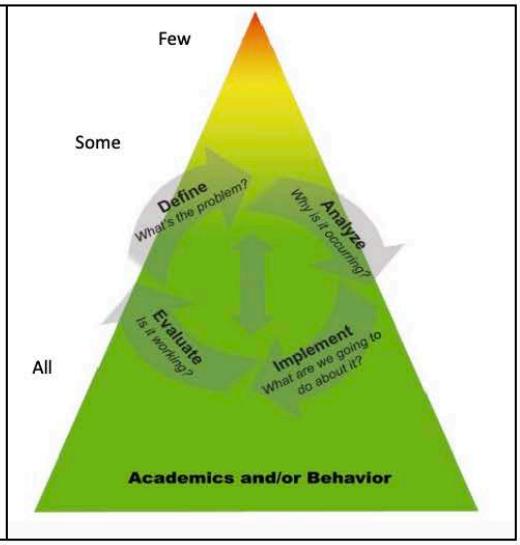
MTSS and the Problem Solving Process

ACADEMIC and BEHAVIOR SYSTEMS

Tier 3: Intensive Interventions & Supports.
The most intense (increased time, narrowed focus, reduced group size) instruction and intervention based upon individual and small group student needs provided in addition to and aligned with Tier 1 & 2 academic and behavior instruction and supports.

Tier 2: Targeted, Supplemental Interventions & Supports.
More targeted instruction/intervention and supplemental support in addition to and aligned with the core academic and behavior curriculum.

Tier 1: Core, Universal Instruction & Supports.
General academic and behavior instruction and support provided to all students in all settings.



Tier 1: Core Universal Instruction and Supports. Tier 1 (the green level in the exhibit above) involves general academic and behavioral instruction and support, including support for greater student engagement in learning, which is designed, provided, and differentiated for **all** students in regular instructional settings. This tier presumes that the core curriculum is rigorous, evidence-based, aligned with the Common Core State Standards, culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate, and is implemented with integrity for **all** students. Although the tier includes general instruction, it also refers to differentiation of core instruction to address diverse student classroom needs. This differentiation in Tier I instruction can be accomplished effectively by designing curriculum and classroom teaching around the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL removes or reduces barriers to learning by customizing and adjusting instruction and student supports to individual learning needs; and the use of technology can be particularly helpful in this effort. In the case of English-language learners, UDL refers both to the removal of barriers and the assurance that students have the English-language development supports that allow them full access to the core curriculum. And in the case of behavior, Tier I refers to the positive behaviors that are expected of all students.[1]

Meeting individual learning needs under UDL, however, should not be interpreted to mean that struggling students should be given below-grade-level work if they are behind. Instead, it means that teachers and administrators should plan and use lessons thoughtfully that build student knowledge and independence in their daily Tier I or general instruction, so that students learn how to handle the academic vocabulary, sophisticated language structures, and content present in the complex texts called for in the Common Core State Standards.

Tier 2: Targeted Supplemental Instruction and Intervention. Tier 2 instruction (the yellow level in the exhibit above) entails more focused, targeted instruction, interventions, and supplemental supports that are provided to **some** students who share common academic and/or behavioral needs. Tier 2 services are provided *in addition to*—not in lieu of—core instruction, are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and use, to a significant degree, core instructional materials and supplemental tools. But under Tier 2, students are assessed and their progress is monitored more frequently than are students receiving only Tier 1 instruction.

Tier 3: Intensive Individualized Instruction and Intervention. Tier 3 (the red level in the exhibit above) is the most intense instruction and intervention and is made available only to a **few** students based on their individual needs. Tier 3 is characterized by increased time and intensity

[1] When implemented appropriately, MTSS has the added potential benefit of addressing the discrepancy in disciplinary rates among African American students and others with IEPs. National suspension data indicate that 17 percent or 1 out of six African American students enrolled in grades k-12 were suspended at least once—a significantly higher rate than among Native American students, (8 percent), Latinos students (7 percent), white students (5 percent), or Asian American students 2 percent). Among all racial groups combined, more than 13 percent of students with disabilities were suspended, twice the rate of their non-disabled peers. And one out of four (25 percent) of African American students with disabilities were suspended at least once in 2009-10. Source: *Opportunities Suspended: The Disparate Impact of Disciplinary Exclusion from School*. Los Angeles: UCLA (2012).

spent on a narrowed and more focused curriculum for students who continue to struggle after receiving academic and behavioral support in Tiers 1 and 2. In Tier 3, instruction remains aligned with the Common Core State Standards and includes necessary supplemental academic and behavioral instruction, and supports.

In this tier, it is essential that students are taught skills and provided remediation in the context of the standards, and that teaching is targeted on the skills and concepts presenting students with the most difficulty. Thus, students receiving Tier 3 services should focus on and practice skills and concepts that are spelled out in the Common Core State Standards for the student's particular grade level. This is also the tier where the needs of students in say grade 6 and might not be able to decode are addressed. The instruction for these students may not be on grade level in this circumstance, but provides the instruction needed to get there. Finally, in this tier, students are assessed and progress is monitored more frequently than for students receiving Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 instruction. One should also note that when using intensive Tier 3 interventions with English-language learners (ELLs), in particular, it is important that the interventions have been validated on ELLs and are meant to address a literacy development issue.

MTSS and the Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards are designed to help students prepare for meeting rigorous college and career expectations. The standards require individuals to have a deep understanding of academic content and the ability to apply that academic knowledge and skills. To get students ready to meet these standards, school districts and schools will need to provide not only higher quality instruction, but also instruction that is more integrated across subject areas than ever before.

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports is completely consistent with the Common Core State Standards. However, MTSS builds on these standards to provide a framework and a set of critical tools and additional time to support teaching and learning at differing levels of intensity, depending on the academic needs of the students. In other words, the CCSS articulates the "what" in teaching; and MTSS provides a framework for "how and when" to provide it.[2]

In short, MTSS employs a problem-solving process that helps match instructional resources and focus to educational needs; makes the instructional adjustments necessary for continued improvement in both student academic performance and students' rates of progress; and assesses the effectiveness of instruction/interventions on student outcomes.

MTSS is also designed to be preventive in nature because it uses a variety of early warning signs to ensure that educators can work to accelerate student progress before it is too late. Furthermore, MTSS provides an earlier and more appropriate identification of students

[2] This reference to when to provide MTSS is not to be confused with any timing specified in school or district pacing guides, which provide information on "when" to teach a concept or skill.

who are not on track academically, and allows differentiated instruction and intervention as soon as a need is identified. So, students do not have to exhibit significant academic failure or behavioral difficulties before they receive support.

In addition, using a tiered, systematic, and schoolwide approach—which links socially appropriate behaviors and student engagement in academic work into a seamless system— has the great potential to increase student engagement in learning and reduce behavioral and disciplinary distractions. In this way, academically engaged time and behavior are connected strongly to student achievement. Best practices in MTSS thereby support appropriate and acceptable behavior and bolster student achievement, and can result in less reactive interventions and a greater concentration of scarce personnel and program resources onto students in greatest need.

In sum, MTSS leverages the full array of instructional resources strategically and purposefully in a systemic and cooperative fashion for the sole purpose of improving student achievement and behavior. When implemented with fidelity and used as a robust and data-driven decision making process, MTSS results in significantly greater percentages of students achieving on grade level and likely meeting the Common Core State Standards. Moreover, the system leads to greater student engagement and decreased discipline referrals, as well as fewer students requiring special education services. MTSS can also help reduce the disproportionate representation of students from various racial/ethnic groups and those with developing levels of English proficiency in the ranks of those requiring special education services. The reason for this potential outcome is that with MTSS, the needs of such students can be met at the outset of the instructional process rather than after they begin to slip behind.

Finally, this system of tiered instruction is particularly important because the new, higher academic standards will undoubtedly reveal deficits in current instructional practices, as well as weaknesses in academic achievement. The Common Core State Standards should improve educational outcomes over time, but they could also reveal a history of inadequate instruction and may exacerbate achievement gaps. To mitigate this possibility, MTSS can be used to ensure that all students, including those who are excelling and in need of enriched instruction and activities, have full access to effective instruction and supports from the start in order to achieve better outcomes.

Brief Description of MTSS Components

The components of an effective MTSS framework include:

1. A well-defined district- and school-based leadership and organizational structure;
2. District policies and practices that align with and support a multi-tiered system;
3. Technology sufficient to support instructional decision making (e.g., data) and implementation of instruction (e.g., UDL);
4. Robust and valid core instruction delivered to all students;

ZOO

5. The use of data-based decision making to match instructional resources to educational needs;

6. Assessment of expected rates of progress;

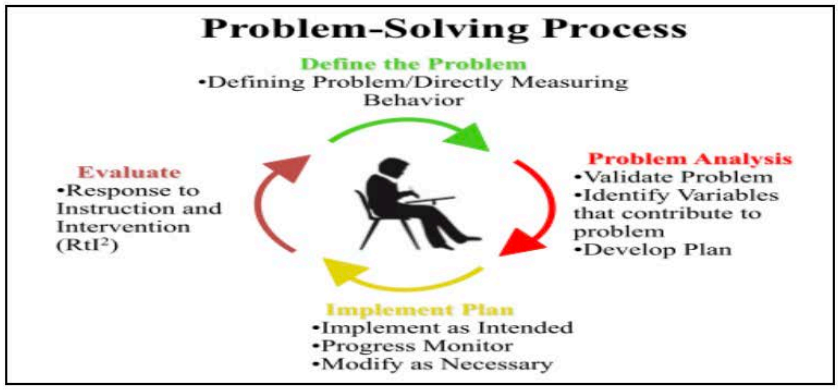
7. The use of three tiers of increasingly intensive (time and focus of instruction) instructional supports and strategies;

8. Professional development to ensure fidelity of implementation of the MTSS methodology and the Common Core State Standards;

9. An evaluation process that monitors both implementation and outcomes; and

10. The engagement of parents and caregivers.

Essentially, the problem-solving process in MTSS is a self-repeating, self-correcting, ongoing methodology for effective decision making at all levels of the system and across all three tiers. In fact, the logic and process of data-based decision making in education is embedded in a variety of instructional structures that educators already use, such as school improvement planning, student progressions, reading plans, positive-behavior supports, progress monitoring, continuous-improvement models, and district policies and procedures.



As seen in the figure above,[4] the four critical components of an ongoing problem-solving cycle are as follows--

✓ **Define the problem** by determining the differences between what is expected and what is occurring. Ask, "What specifically do we want students to know and be able to do?" compared with what they currently know and are able to do. In the area of academics, the "what we expect students to know and do" is driven by the Common Core Standards that guide instruction at each grade and subject area. In the area of behavior, what we expect students to know and do is guided by age-appropriate student engagement behaviors and the pro-social behaviors that support a positive school climate.

[4] Los Angeles Unified School District Problem-Solving Process based on Florida Problem-Solving/RtI statewide project.

- ✓ **Analyze the problem** using data to determine why an instructional gap is occurring. Generate hypotheses (reasons why students are not meeting performance goals) based on evidence-based content knowledge, alterable variables, and instructionally relevant areas. Gather and analyze assessment data to formulate hypotheses. Link hypotheses to instruction and interventions so that suppositions lead to evidence-based decisions. Ask, "Why is/are the desired goal(s) not being met? Is there reason to think that students, including English-language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, are not getting full access to the general curriculum? In the case of ELLs, is there reason to think that the district does not have an effective English-language development strategy in place? What are the barriers to student(s) doing and knowing what is expected?"

- ✓ **Develop and implement an intervention plan** based on an analysis of how well individual students or groups of students are meeting performance goals. Identify the rate of student progress necessary to achieve the goal within a specified time frame. Delineate how the progress of individual students or groups of students will be monitored; how program implementation will be supported; and how the plan will be readjusted based on the data. Ask, "What are we going to do and how do we know we have done it?"

- ✓ **Measure response-to-instruction and intervention** by using data gathered with progress-monitoring tools at agreed-upon intervals to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional and intervention plan. These data should be based on responses by individual students or groups of students to the intervention. Progress-monitoring data should directly reflect the targeted skill or skills. Ask, "Is the intervention working?" The *rate* of improvement is also a basis for judging response-to-instruction or intervention (see next section). Finally, for an approach to be responsive to ELLs, it is essential that the team understand what works with ELLs, what is a reasonable rate of language acquisition, as well as what is culturally and linguistically appropriate instruction.

When instruction within each of the three tiers is not effective for targeted students, the problem-solving process should be used to inform decision making about what to do next. For example, if 20 percent of students enrolled in a given course at the secondary level are failing, then problem-solving processes should be employed to formulate tiered instructional strategies that will improve success rates. Or, if a third-grade core math program results in only 50 percent of students meeting grade-level benchmarks, then the four-step problem-solving process should be implemented with a focus on Tier 1. The same process can also be applied at subsequent tiers if the measured level of effectiveness of services in the preceding tier does not meet expectations.



Footnote 68: Overview of Courses for MESA Staff from CDE



COLORADO
Department of Education

Online Free Professional Development Options for Colorado Educators

Supporting Special Education & Behavioral Health Re-Licensure Requirements and Paraprofessional Training

Introduction

Educators and paraprofessionals play a critical role in supporting students with disabilities. Recent legislation in Colorado established new professional development requirements for both groups—licensed educators must complete training in special education and behavioral health, and paraprofessionals must receive role-specific training to ensure they can effectively support students.

This document highlights a selection of free online professional development opportunities that may help meet these new requirements. The list is not comprehensive and does not represent an endorsement of any program or provider; it is intended as a starting point to explore available options.

Special Education/Behavior Health Re-Licensure Requirements

As a result of the passage of HB 20-1128 and HB 20-1312 during the 2020 legislative session, all licensed educators renewing a professional license must complete a minimum of 10 contact hours in special education and behavioral health. This is an ongoing requirement for every renewal cycle after that date.

Professional Development Opportunities (Click the Title to Access Training)	Audience (listed by license type)	Possible Contact Hours
CDE - Supporting Literacy in Individuals with Autism Through the Use of Assistive Technologies	Teachers, Special Service Providers	1 Hour
Classroom Well-Being Information and Strategies for Educators (WISE)	All Educators	10+ Hours
Colorado Behavioral Health Agency Learning Hub	All Educators	10+ Hours
Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM)	Teachers, Special Service Providers, Paraprofessional	10+ Hours
California Early Childhood Online	All Educators	10+ Hours
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Learning Libraries	All Educators	10+ Hours
CEC - Supporting Student Behavior as a Paraeducator	Teachers, Paraprofessionals	1 Hour
CEC - Effective & High-Leverage Practices for Paraeducators	Teachers, Paraprofessionals	9 Hours
Ed Web Professional Development	All Educators	10+ Hours
Foundations of Trauma-Informed School Mental Health & Trauma-Informed School, Classroom, and Counseling Supports	All Educators	9.5 Hours
IRIS Center	All Educators	10+ Hours
National Center on Intensive Intervention	Principals, Teachers, Special Service Providers, Paraprofessionals	10+ Hours
National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) Learning Center	All Educators	10+ Hours
Safe Spaces: Foundations of Trauma-Informed Practice for Educational Care Settings	All Educators	10+ Hours
Ultimate Behavior Toolkit: What Works	Teachers, Special Service Providers, Paraprofessionals	10+ Hours

Professional Development Opportunities (Click the Title to Access Training)	Audience (listed by license type)	Possible Contact Hours
CDE On-Demand Professional Development Library	All Educators	10+ Hours
Colorado Multi-tiered System of Supports Online Academy	All Educators	10+ Hours
CDE - Data Based Individualization	Principals, Teachers, Special Service Providers	3 Hours
CDE - Equipped for Reading Success	All Educators	9 Hours
CDE - Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties	All Educators	9 Hours
Colorado Educator Support	All Educators	10+ Hours
Colorado Office of School Safety Online Trainings	All Educators	10+ Hours
CDE - Expulsion Hearing Officer Training	Administrators, Principals, Special Service Providers	10+ Hours
CDE - Manifestation Determination Review	Administrators, Principals, Special Service Providers	2 Hours
CDE - Masking and Mental Health	All Educators	1 Hour
CDE - Mental Health 101	All Educators	1 Hour
CDE - Positive Behavior Reinforcement	Teachers, Special Service Providers, Paraprofessionals	1 Hour
CDE - Serving Students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing: A Professional Development Course for SLPs and other Service Providers	Teachers, Special Service Providers, Paraprofessionals	8.5 Hours
CDE - Culturally Responsive School-Based Family Interviewing: Engaging in Empathic Family Partnerships	Administrators, Principals, Teachers, Special Service Providers	5 Hours
CDE - Indigenous Students with Exceptionalities Course	Teachers, Special Service Providers	4 Hours

MTSS Reflection and Readjustment When Tier 1–3 Aren't Enough: Next Steps for School Teams

Think in 4 lanes: diagnose better → intensify support → expand partnerships → consider formal pathways

1. Re-diagnose the Need (before adding more). Sometimes the intervention failed because the *problem wasn't accurately identified.*

Actions

- Conduct deeper diagnostic assessments (skills-based, not just screeners)
- Review fidelity: Was the intervention delivered as designed?
- Increase progress monitoring (weekly)
- Observe across settings (classroom, recess, transitions)
- Gather student voice + family input
- Complete root cause analysis (skill gap? motivation? trauma? attendance barrier?)

Tools

- Error analysis of student work
- Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- Attendance barrier interview
- SEL/mental health screening

Often this step alone reveals a mismatch (wrong skill, wrong dosage, wrong time of day).

2. Intensify & Individualize Supports. If Tier 3 isn't working, go more individualized, not just longer.

Academics

- 1:1 daily tutoring
- Different intervention program or methodology
- Schedule redesign (double-dose literacy/math)
- Smaller instructional group (1–2 students)
- Assistive technology
- Modified pacing/standards
- Alternative pathways (project-based, hands-on learning)

Behavior

- Revised FBA + updated BIP
- 1:1 behavior aide or mentor
- Environmental redesign (sensory supports, flexible seating, reduced stimuli)
- Individual reinforcement systems
- Alternative schedules or break plans
- Restorative conferencing

Attendance

- Case management
- Transportation or childcare support
- Home visits
- Daily check-ins with trusted adult
- Incentive plans tied to family goals

Social-Emotional

- Individual counseling
- Daily regulation coaching
- Check-in/check-out with counselor
- Calm room access
- Personalized coping toolkit
- Structured adult mentor

3. Expand the Circle (Partner beyond the classroom). Some needs require more than school-based solutions — and that's okay.

School can coordinate:

- Family resource referrals (housing, food, healthcare)
- Community mental health agencies
- Wraparound services
- Social workers/case managers
- After-school programs
- Mentorship programs
- Cultural liaisons
- Pediatric or behavioral health providers

4. Consider Formal Pathways (when appropriate). Collaborate with District Partners for LRE/Next steps.If a student still shows limited response after documented, high-fidelity intervention:

Possible next steps

- Special Education evaluation (IDEA/Child Find)
- 504 plan
- Gifted/Talented services (for under-challenged learners)
- Alternative program placement
- Functional behavioral or therapeutic program
- McKinney-Vento supports (housing instability)
- Section 31/MTSS case review team decision-making

Systems Moves Schools Should Make (Prevents future non-response)

If multiple students aren't responding, it may be Tier 1 quality, not individual students.

Schools should:

- Strengthen core instruction
- Invest in teacher coaching
- Reduce group sizes
- Protect intervention time
- Increase SEL and climate work
- Improve family communication systems
- Audit fidelity of implementation

Because: Strong Tier 1 = fewer Tier 3 kids. Always.

When interventions fail, ask:

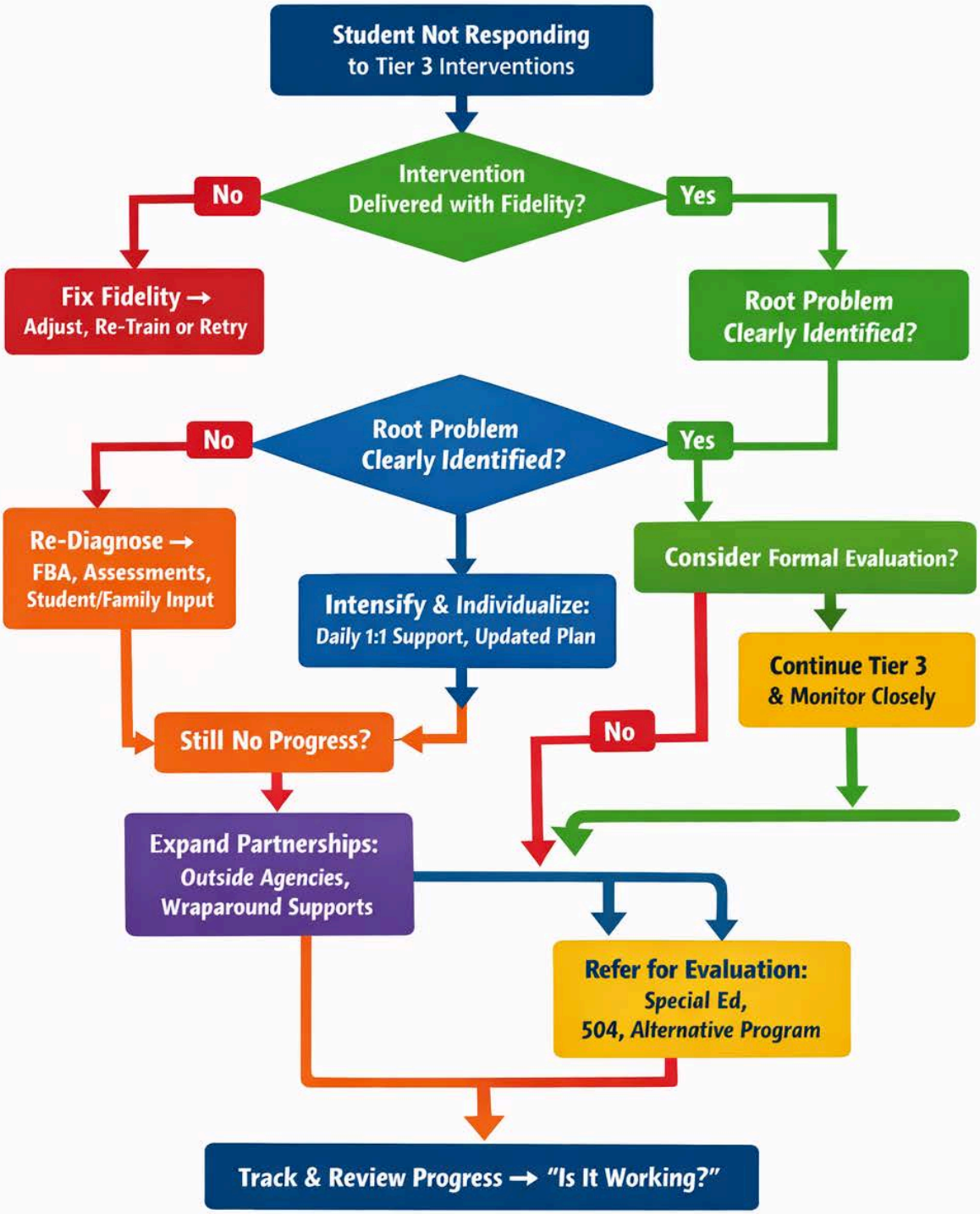
1. Did we implement with fidelity?
2. Did we diagnose the right problem?
3. Did we increase intensity enough?
4. Have we involved family and partners?
5. Is a formal plan needed?

If the answer to any is “no,” that’s your next move.

When MTSSS Interventions Aren't Working:

Decision Flowchart

When Tier 1–3 supports aren't working, follow this decision tree:



Appendix Section T: Additional Information

Safety and Preparedness Elements for MESA **assume staff training in each element per Professional Development Plan* This is not an exhaustive list and will be updated as needed.	
In Classrooms and On Campus	Parent and Community Communication and Collaboration
● Standard Response Protocol posted in each classroom (shown below) and followed for drills and real-time incidents ○ Practice drills scheduled ● "Go-bag" red backpack in each classroom to take in case of emergency (rosters, band aids, snacks, etc) ● Student dietary needs, allergies, and medical conditions list updated and reviewed with parents - made known to those adults who need to know ● Raptor sign in system which instantly checks and flags for criminal charges including crimes against children ● Set aside debrief time for scholars to ask questions and process after drills/incidents ● Full time Campus Safety Officer ● Adults have walkie talkies for quick line of communication ● School Operations Guidelines to systematized rituals and routines ● Participation in Safe2Tell ● Staff have parking decal on their car in school parking lot ● Staff wear ID badges ● Outside staff (recess, arrival) wear high visibility vests	● Standard Response Protocol parent guidance distributed (shown below) ● Campus cameras registered in Lakewood Police Department database for quicker response times if needed ● Multiple school/community safety experts consulted during school design process, as well as, the founder attended education sessions from Minga, Verkada, and the Operations Director from Atlas Schools ● Seeking a first responder to add to the MESA Board ● Founder is regularly attending community sessions for Alameda Connects, West Colfax, etc neighborhood groups to be up-to-date with local practices and happenings ● Daily communication through Class Dojo App ● Education in Safe2Tell and resources shared ● Visitors much check in through Raptor at main office and wear a visitor sticker for the entirety of their visit ● Volunteers background checked ● School surveys include safety questions

In addition to these elements, our Founder is QPR Gatekeeper certified and trained in the NASP PREPaRE School Safety and Crisis Preparedness.

STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Our school has adopted The "I Love U Guys" Foundation's Standard Response Protocol (SRP). Students and staff will be training, practicing, and drilling the protocol.

COMMON LANGUAGE

The Standard Response Protocol (SRP) is based on an all-hazards approach as opposed to individual scenarios. Like the Incident Command System (ICS), SRP utilizes clear common language while allowing for flexibility in protocol.

The premise is simple - there are five specific actions that can be performed during an incident. When communicating these, the action is labeled with a "Term of Art" and is then followed by a "Directive." Execution of the action is performed by active participants, including students, staff, teachers and first responders. The SRP is based on the following actions: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter.

HOLD

"In Your Classroom or Area"



Students are trained to:
- Clear the hallways and remain in their area or room until the "All Clear" is announced
- Do business as usual

Adults and staff are trained to:
- Close and lock the door
- Account for students and adults
- Do business as usual

SECURE

"Get Inside. Lock outside doors"



Students are trained to:
- Return to inside of building
- Do business as usual

Adults and staff are trained to:
- Bring everyone indoors
- Lock the outside doors
- Increase situational awareness
- Account for students and adults
- Do business as usual

LOCKDOWN

"Locks, Lights, Out of Sight"



Students are trained to:
- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Do not open the door

Adults and staff are trained to:
- Recover students from hallway if possible
- Lock the classroom door
- Turn out the lights
- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Do not open the door
- Prepare to evade or defend

EVACUATE

"To a Location"



Students are trained to:
- Leave stuff behind if required to
- If possible, bring their phone
- Follow instructions

Adults and staff are trained to:
- Bring roll sheet and Go Bag (unless instructed not to bring anything with them, dependent on reason for evacuation.)
- Lead students to Evacuation location
- Account for students and adults
- Report injuries or problems using Red Card/Green Card method.

SHELTER

"State Hazard and Safety Strategy"



Hazards might include:
- Tornado
- Hazmat
- Earthquake
- Tsunami

Safety Strategies might include:
- Evacuate to shelter area
- Seal the room
- Drop, cover and hold
- Get to high ground

Students are trained in:
- Appropriate Hazards and Safety Strategies

Adults and staff are trained in:
- Appropriate Hazards and Safety Strategies
- Accounting for students and adults
- Report injuries or problems using Red Card/Green Card method.