New Tech Network

NTN LEADERSHIP QUICK GUIDE

2024

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Introduction

CREDIT: **NTN DALLAS**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This toolkit aims to help you understand all of the considerations, shifts, and tasks for a successful transformation to a New Tech Network (NTN) school. We include research, tools, templates, rubrics, and other information to help you be successful. This guide is aimed to be a "one-stop shop" for leaders to access information, and the first resource leaders go to for support.

We want you to save time and energy. As such, the guiding principles of this toolkit are:

- Equity: to foster meaningful and inclusive environments and address inequitable learning patterns
- Evidence: to use research-based best practices for school transformation
- Excellence: to share information and key lessons learned throughout more than 25 years of transformation
- Effectiveness: to help schools, districts, and CMOs transform successfully
- Learning: to continually improve our systems, practices, and tools
- Innovation: to use cutting-edge strategies to transform schools
- Purpose: to transform with intention and measure success along the way

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The purpose of this quick guide is to provide a clear stance on the role that leadership plays in the implementation of the NTN model. That stance is reflected in the organizational structure of the guide, by starting with a focus on the goals of the NTN model, then moves into frameworks and resources to support systemic change and sustainability, and then into specific resources designed to support implementation across teaching, culture, and technology in service of the NTN learning outcomes.

We have gathered information that we think will be useful for leaders during the three phases of implementation. It is used at any time during the process. The toolkit is organized by:

- Planning for Change: what you need to consider and complete before you begin to implement

- Implementing for Success: what you need to complete during the first years of implementation

- Sustaining Progress: what is needed for success in the long term

Each section contains:

- Existing NTN Tools and guidance

- Additional Considerations for each phase

- Methods and tools to measure success

When applicable, we have also included checklists, templates, research, or visuals.

PHASES OF WORK

- If you are starting your work, begin with the planning phase

- If you are working with your NTN coach on implementing, begin with the implementation phase

- You can also use this toolkit by the topics listed in the table of contents

- We have included a calendar of each topic to consider at specific times in the year.

We encourage you to make this actionable by starting with what is most important to you and with the highest priority right now.

ESTABLISHING IN AND/OR REGROUNDING IN THE PURPOSE

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS WORK?

The partnership with your district/school and New Tech Network began with a shared view of our journey together. Think back and remember why you applied to become a New Tech Network school, and why you are embarking on this journey of transformation.

Questions to consider around why you are doing this work:

- Are you looking to improve academic outcomes?

- Are you looking to improve college and career outcomes?

- Are you looking to improve school culture and create a more supportive and inclusive environment?

- Do you want your school to be innovative and prepare students for a 21st century global world?

- Do you want your school to be relevant to students and increase engagement?

Before you begin, take a moment to remind yourself and the leadership team of the purpose of your school's transformation work.

Is it possible there has been a change in leadership since you submitted your application to NTN? Or, perhaps you submitted the application and some time has passed.

It is also useful to speak to the leadership team (current and prior) to see what planning or work may have been completed, or is in progress.

WHAT IS THE NEW TECH NETWORK?

New Tech Network (NTN) is a national nonprofit dedicated to systemic change in education. We center K-12 schools as the units of change, working closely with district leaders, school principals, and classroom educators, to co-design an approach to change that is specific to their context. With more than 25 years of change-making, NTN has the ability to recognize common patterns across systems and what is unique about each school and district community.

New Tech Network schools – now over 200 strong – are committed to these key focus areas: college and career ready outcomes, supportive and inclusive culture, meaningful and equitable instruction, and purposeful assessment. The student experience is tied directly to deeper learning outcomes. Students gain skills and use their voices in ways that prepare them for life beyond school. Project-based learning in NTN schools allows students to engage with material in creative, culturally relevant ways, experience it in context, and share their learning with peers.

Our mission is to support change agents at the school and district levels by shifting the way educational change happens. We support individual schools and district learning communities by:

- Providing NTN's structured, responsive, research-based whole school approach to help educators and their stakeholders transform both individual schools and groups of district schools into equitable, supportive, and meaningful learning environments.

- Sharing field-leading knowledge, research, and resources to drive awareness and uptake of leading approaches to educational change that center on college and career ready outcomes, supportive and inclusive culture, meaningful and equitable instruction, and purposeful assessment.

- Connecting teachers, administrators, and district leaders as part of a supportive, committed, forward-looking network to learn, share knowledge, and work together to create change and solve entrenched challenges.

NTN is a model provider and partner, and not an operator of schools. We provide coaching, support, resources, and professional development.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING THE NTN MODEL

NTN is a research based organization that uses proven best practices for student success. Our Impact Report is published each year and shares the success of our schools.

Our website houses our latest research and findings as well as insights and resources that include various articles and sample case studies of schools in the network.

All our tools work together to support successful transformation, as measured by the School Success Rubric (SSR). The rubric is the measurement of success and list goals; it will give you the big picture of what you are striving for. The Key Frameworks and Resources document lists the key resources supporting the SSR by category and shows how all of the resources work together.

DATA COLLECTION/
REFLECTION TOOLS

LEADERSHIP TEAM RESOURCES

SCHOOL SUCCESS RUBRIC
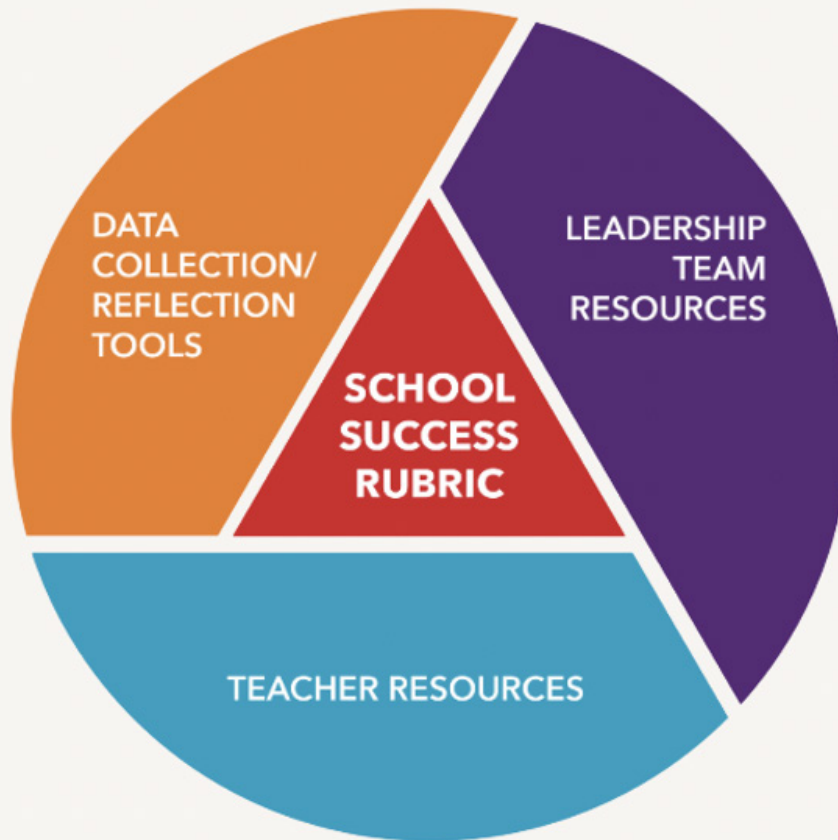
TEACHER RESOURCES

TEACHER RESOURCES

Resources to measure and reflect on the outcomes of implementing the New Tech Network Model and creating a meaningful, equitable, and inclusive learning environment in a school.

▶ TEACHER LEARNING TARGETS
▶ LEARNING OUTCOME RUBRICS
▶ PRACTICES CARDS
▶ WRITTEN PERFORMANCE
  TASK TEMPLATES
▶ CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS AND
  PROJECT/UNIT TOOLKITS

DATA COLLECTION AND REFLECTION TOOLS

Resources to measure and reflect on the outcomes of implementing the New Tech Network Model and creating a meaningful, equitable, and inclusive learning environment in a school.

▶ COLLEGE AND CAREER SURVEY
▶ EDUCATOR CULTURE SURVEY
▶ STUDENT CULTURE SURVEY
▶ MODEL COMMITMENT
▶ SCHOOL SUCCESS RUBRIC
  REFLECTION TOOL
▶ LEARNING WALK TOOL

LEADERSHIP TEAM RESOURCES

Resources to support school and district leaders in their implementation of the New Tech Network Model and creating a meaningful, equitable, and inclusive learning environment in a school.

▶ HIERARCHY OF CHANGE
▶ LEARNING ORGANIZATION
  FRAMEWORK
▶ JOURNEY MAP

Part I: Planning For Change

The year prior to orientation is considered a planning year. In this year, you complete preparation, make key decisions and ensure you are ready for transformation. If you are in this stage of implementation, your NTN Director of School and District Development will support you throughout this year.

- Before You Plan

- Managing Change

- Planning Calendar

- Operations

- Alignment with Policies & Structures

- Communications

BEFORE YOU PLAN

The first step in the transformation process is planning.

Each document below is described in detail and referred to throughout this Quick Guide, but here is a step-by-step process to planning.

- Review Why you are doing this work to ensure you have the background information for the purpose of transformation.
- Review the NTN Learning Outcomes to ensure you are familiar with what students should know and demonstrate to be successful.
- Review the School Success Rubric to ensure you know what successful school transformation looks like.
- To begin planning, complete the NTN Focus Areas Self Assessment and review the NTN Model Commitments.
- Review the Leadership Team Guidelines to plan any leadership shifts.

OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS

The NTN Learning Organization Framework is a guide to help you think about this work. In order to be successful, you must have a shared purpose. At NTN, we firmly believe that school and district leaders must lead the work of closing opportunity gaps by cultivating learning-centered conditions that directly disrupt systemic inequities.

These conditions are

- Learning Centered Structures
- Learning Centered Leadership
- Learning Centered Culture

These all work together in tandem, using data, focus, strategy and analysis for school transformation to a learner centered model.

The ultimate goal of successful transformation can be seen in the School Success Rubric. The NTN School Success Rubric is intended to help both elementary and secondary schools reflect on their implementation of the New Tech Network model and to move towards a more meaningful, equitable, and inclusive learning environment for all students. The four focus areas for this transformation are:

- Meaningful and Equitable Instruction
- Purposeful Assessment
- Supportive and Inclusive Culture
- College and Career Ready Outcomes

We recommend you use this rubric early and often and with the support of your Director of School and District Development/school coach to plan, gauge progress, and ensure you are transforming and implementing successfully
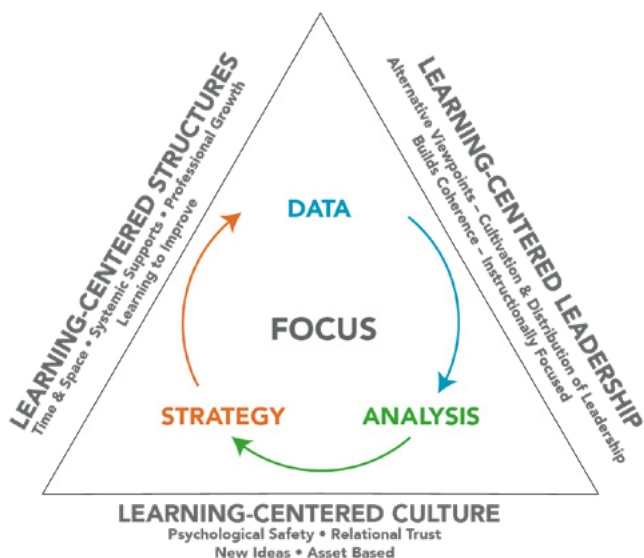
The framework is intended to illustrate how adult learning is organized for sustained improvement in pursuit of a shared purpose.
- The interior represents an ongoing process for improvement structured as a cycle of inquiry.
- In the center, a schools focus is always rooted in the school's larger purpose.
- The sides of the triangle represent the key components, and their indicators, that enable ongoing imrpovmeent and alignment with purpose.

After reviewing the rubric you should complete the NTN Focus Areas Self Assessment. This will enable you to determine your first areas of priority.

Your Director of Growth and District Success will also review with you the NTN Model Commitments. This is a list of tasks you agreed to do in order to make transformation possible, and includes technology and facilities requirements, staffing, and other "readiness" requirements.

Finally, we have included a set of Leadership Team Guidelines, which is a set of guiding questions to ensure that the needs associated with the implementation of the New Tech model are being met. It is important to review the structures, purpose, process, and responsibilities of the school leadership team. For example, do you have enough leadership staff and capacity? In what areas might you need more capacity or support? Reviewing these guidelines will set the leadership team up for success in both the planning and implementation years.

MANAGING CHANGE

Model transformation requires significant change management, which will happen on an ongoing basis, during planning, implementation, and sustaining. It is essential that all stakeholders are "bought in'' for the transformation work to be successful. We have created several tools and resources to support you in this process.

MINDSET SHIFTS

Successful school transformation requires mindset shifts. The School Success Rubric (SSR) pinpoints specific beliefs around school culture and curriculum and instruction that will need to shift for successful transformation, including how we interact with students and build community. The SSR focus areas are all grounded in a foundational belief in asset based mindsets. NTN asks districts and schools to shift from a deficit based mindset and adopt an asset based mindset by asking adults and learners to examine their deeply held beliefs, behaviors and practices that influence their perspectives, work and interactions with others.

As educators, we run the risk of thinking about our students in a deficit-based way, focusing on what they can't do vs. what they can and seeing student differences as evidence of something lacking rather than something to celebrate. Especially concerning is the fact that stereotypes in media and society promote deficit thinking about racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse students. What we'd like to encourage you to do instead, is build on and sustain the assets our students bring, while supporting them in building their college and career readiness skills.

An asset-based mindset doesn't mean we can't or shouldn't identify places where students have gaps in their skills or understanding. Instead, asset-based thinking asks us not to attribute that gap as the student's fault but instead to a lack of opportunity provided to that student. Instead, we want to look for and value skills and assets that students do have while we support and scaffold the broadening and growth of their skills and assets.

We want to help ensure that our PBL units build on and sustain those assets. Something to be mindful of- our students' identities are complicated! Different students will exhibit different combinations of assets.

SHARED LEADERSHIP

Whole school transformation also requires a shift from a "top down" model to a more distributed, shared leadership model that involves the whole school. Please see the interdependent leadership principles above. The School Success Rubric outlines this, but in your planning year you should consider all of the roles and responsibilities of leadership and how these will be delegated across the school.

The National School Climate Center and ASCD also has resources on this.

IDENTIFY SHIFTS TO CURRENT PRACTICES

Whole school transformation not only involves mindset shifts but also involves shifts to current practices, policies and procedures. Before you begin, consider the following guiding questions to help you think at a high level about

change and transformation. Each question aligns to a separate section below.

- Meaningful and Equitable Curriculum and Instruction: how might the shift to school culture impact curriculum and instruction?

- Purposeful Assessments: how might the shift to curriculum and instruction impact and change assessment, both formative and summative?

- Adult Learning and Professional Development: how might the changes to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school culture impact PD? What PD needs to be added? Changed?

- Supportive and Inclusive School Culture: how might the shifts to curriculum and instruction impact school culture? And vice-versa?

- Student Supports: how might the shifts to curriculum and instruction and school culture impact student supports, especially for the most marginalized students such as Multilingual Learners and Special Education students?

- Scheduling: how might the shifts to curriculum and instruction impact the schedule?

- Calendars: how might the shifts to curriculum and instruction, assessment and PD impact the school calendar?

- Staffing: how might the shifts to curriculum and instruction and the schedule impact staffing?

- How might curriculum and instruction, assessments, staffing, and school culture impact the budget? Are there other budget implications?

- How will you involve, gather input and communicate to all stakeholders?

- What documents or other policies need to shift?

Use the School Success Rubric and the NTN Learning Outcome Rubrics and Templates as guides to what needs to shift. The sections below review these shifts in detail.

MEASURING SUCCESS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Using the School Success Rubric, you should create a dashboard of 5-6 key performance indicators that will let you know whether or not your school transformation is successful. In general, you should include:

- Academic outcomes, particularly on projects and college and career readiness outcomes; see the NTN Learning Outcome Rubrics and Templates and the Teacher Learning Targets.

- School Culture outcomes, usually measured by surveys

- Other Operations outcomes such as budgets, staffing, etc.

You should also check your state's school report card for other key performance indicators, specifically relating to academics, school culture/behavior, and operations.

PLANNING CALENDAR (ARC OF THE YEAR)

Linked here is a sample calendar to help you think about which tasks need to be completed during your planning year.

We also recommend that you create a project plan for both planning and implementation with your coach, that is updated regularly with the planning team.

OPERATIONS

With a school transformation, and particularly with a shift to project based learning and shifts to school culture, there are many shifts to operations. Please note these shifts require significant periods of time and a long "runway," so they should be considered as soon as possible during your planning and implementation.

Detailed below are shifts that need to be considered for operations. Although you may not be the decision maker for these changes, you should ensure these shifts are on the radar for the decision makers at your district.

COURSE OFFERINGS

As you transform your model, your course offerings might shift. This may include:

• Interdisciplinary courses

• Additional electives

Your NTN Director of School and District Development can help you design these course offerings.

As your graduation requirements shift, this may change the course offerings.

At the high school level, course offerings might include internships/apprenticeships, dual enrollment or early college.

Please see the Appendix for additional examples of course offerings.

SCHEDULES

The schedule will need to shift to accommodate school transformation and PBL.

Research based best practices for project based learning includes the following requirements for scheduling:

• Longer periods, preferably between 80 and 100 minutes. These are block schedules.

• Opportunities for cross-curricular and interdisciplinary work. Students can be in teams or cohorts. Alternatively, classes can be blocked together, such as ELA and History or Math and Science.

• Embedded time for teachers to co-plan units and assessments.

• Time for students to work collaboratively, preferably across subject areas.

NTN has an article to support creating schedules: Scheduling for Meaningful, Equitable, and Inclusive Environments Overview. An approach to systemic school change is to redesign this system by regrounding on purpose - one that puts equitable deeper learning outcomes for all students. When schools center the needs of students as they think about the strategic use of time, they are able to align all school systems and structures to create equitable deeper learning outcomes for all learners. This resource shares a number of key shifts a school might make to support the cultivation of meaningful, equitable, and inclusive learning environments. We encourage you to focus on one or two shifts relevant to your school or district goals and dig into the included resources, links, and examples as you begin to make incremental changes to your system.

CALENDARS

Along with schedules, school calendars will also need to shift to accommodate transformation and project based learning.   This includes both internal (leadership and staff) as well as external (families and students) calendars.

Specifically, this includes:

• Adding days for professional development at the start of the year as well as throughout the year

• Data "step back" days

• Parent-Teacher or Parent-Advisor conferences to track and check-in on student progress

• Capstone, exhibition or student project presentation days at the end of the year and/or at the end of the semester

Most stakeholders (teachers, staff, families, the district or CMO central office, union) will also want input into the school calendar.

Finally, calendars will need to ensure that you meet the required number of instructional minutes or days for your state.

STAFFING

School transformation will require changes and addition to staffing. A review of the School Success Rubric and the

[NTN Model Commitments](#) should guide your staffing decisions.

At a minimum, this will include:

- Designated leadership team member for school transformation
- Instructional coaches
- Literacy support
- Additional staff for project based learning
- Co-teaching model
- Partnership or community coordinator
- Staffing for professional development
- Advisory/SEL coordinator

Staffing should also align to any additional courses you might be providing.

HIRING

Due to the amount of time and leeway you need for hiring, this planning should begin during the planning year.

We recommend you begin hiring new staff in November for the following school year. This includes creating hiring plans and processes, writing job descriptions, and posting job descriptions, as well as any approval from or coordination with the district office or CMOs.

It is also important that when hiring new staff, you hire specifically for people who are interested and/or trained in project based learning and whose beliefs, mindsets, and philosophies align with your model transformation, including advisory and SEL. We recommend explicitly stating and describing the New Tech Model and project based learning in the job descriptions, along with any other model components that might be applicable such as co-teaching, use of technology, or additional professional development. We also recommend that you ask about model alignment in the interview and in any other supporting materials or tasks. During the hiring process, you should use the [Teacher Learning Targets](#) as a guide.

[Here are some sample interview questions](#) from our network schools.

BUDGET

A shift to project based learning and school transformation has budget implications. As you begin to transform your model, there are several implications to budget. Specifically:

- Additional staff
- Professional Development
- Materials and Supplies, including technology
- Partnerships
- Additional teaching days
- Any potential changes to the facility

You should begin planning for this in your planning year and the budget outlook should be 2-3 years out.

Every school and district has different budget and policy processes. Be prepared to have conversations about alignment with NTN Transformation and other district priorities and initiatives, and with district and school goals.

ALIGN POLICIES AND STRUCTURES

As with any transformation, you will need to update any documentation or policies. NTN Model Commitments and the School Success Rubric detail these, but you should also consider:

- Handbooks or other school culture documents
- Graduation requirements
- College and career planning documents
- Grading documentation, including rubrics
- School metrics and goals
- Technology guidebooks
- Union contracts
- Other school policies

COMMUNICATING WITH INTENTION AND PURPOSE

Clear, concise, frequent and informative communications are key to successful change management.

Stakeholders need information throughout the change process and included in the why, how, and when for school transformation.

Here are general resources on communication for school transformation:

NTN's Branding and Communications Kit

ASCD

Glossary of Education Reform (Great Schools Partnership)

Harvard Business Review: "How to Communicate Clearly During Change Management"

The Learning Accelerator also has a "how to" guide for communications for innovation in education.

AUDIENCES FOR COMMUNICATION

During the planning and implementation years, you should be in communication with all stakeholders often - this includes both sharing information and including key audiences in your planning for change. This includes:

- Leadership
- Teachers
- Other staff
- Families
- Students
- If applicable, other community members such as partners

You should communicate frequently with teachers and staff.

FORMATS FOR COMMUNICATION

Communication can take many formats, depending on the type of communication, the time of year, the audience, and the topics. It may also depend on whether or not you want to give opportunities for feedback or to ask questions.

We recommend being intentional and thoughtful about the format of communication and using a variety of formats, including:

- Email or newsletters
- Text notifications
- Presentations

- Updating the school website
- Social Media
- Press Releases
- More informal updates and opportunities for question such as office hours or coffee hours

NTN's Branding and Communications Kit

Here are examples of effective communication for school transformation from the Aurora Institute.

TOPICS FOR COMMUNICATION

You should communicate early and often about the following topics:

- Why you are doing the transformation work
- What is the NTN and what the partnership entails
- Shifts in pedagogy and assessment
- Shifts in professional development
- Shifts in school culture
- Shifts in measuring success of the school
- Changes to coursework
- Changes to grading
- Changes to schedules and calendars
- New uses of technology
- Changes to staffing or hiring

KEY ITEMS TO HIGHLIGHT DURING COMMUNICATION

There are core messages that are key to highlight during every communication. These are:

- As a NTN school, we are using research based, proven best practices
- An emphasis on learning and iteration: this is "a work in progress"
- As a NTN school, we listen, take feedback, and implement feedback regularly, via:
  - Meetings with school leaders
  - Surveys
- We will give frequent updates at least quarterly
- We are here to answer questions and address concerns

COMMUNICATING DURING PLANNING YEAR

We recommend you communicate early and often during the planning process, at least quarterly.

We also recommend that as part of planning, you create a communication plan with calendar, audiences, and topics.

SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE PLANNING YEAR

NTN has compiled several examples for communication.

- Here is a Slide deck for explaining NTN and the partnership, best for use at Back to School Night or the start of the planning or implementation year.
- These are the NTN Social Media Guidelines and assistance.
- Here is a NTN Sample Press Release to use for news outlets.
- NTN's Branding and Communications Kit
- Sample Communication topics and calendar
- Sample Quarterly Communication Update to school community

CREDIT: **NTN DALLAS**

Part II: Implementing for Success

Now that you have completed your planning, it's time to implement! This section details the considerations and the tasks needed during the implementation year.

PLANNING AND OVERVIEW

SHIFTING TO IMPLEMENTATION

At the end of the planning process you and your school team will participate in the NTN Induction Events to support implementing the various changes needed for Meaningful and Equitable Instruction, Inclusive and Supportive School Culture, Purposeful Assessment and College and Career Ready Outcomes.

These events are the NTN Leadership Institute, NTN Residency and NTN New Schools Training. Descriptions of each of these events can be found below.

DEVELOPING YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

In your implementation year, your NTN support will also shift from the NTN Director of Growth and District Success to the NTN School Development Coach.   During the spring and summer induction events, and before your NTN School Development Coach is assigned right before the school year, you will receive support through the Leadership Institute experience and with your Leadership Institute Facilitator.

With the support of your New Tech Network School Coach, you will start the work in Three Areas of Leadership support, using the tools in the Journey Map.   The Journey Map helps you set goals, includes planning for workshops and adult learning on your campus, and supports aligning the work you do with NTN with other existing initiatives.

While you work with your coach regularly to support implementation, the work continues with your leadership team between visits. We recommend meeting weekly with your leadership team to discuss implementation and to problem solve. As teachers will also be part of implementing this work, and you are shifting to a whole school, shared leadership model, you may consider ways to reorganize this team on your campus to reflect these shifts.

ONGOING SUPPORT

The Year 1 Learning Path also gives good insight into what you should be measuring and doing in the first year of implementation, as well as the support and training you will have.

You will be provided with professional development and coaching as leaders, and also with professional development for staff. Leaders are also provided with a high level summary, or preview of what teachers are doing in professional development workshops, so that you can ensure you are providing the best instructional support possible.

The New Tech Network core contract for implementation begins with Leadership Institute, Residency, and New School Training. Following these onboarding events, schools receive five total days of onsite service Year 1, which includes a total of two days of leadership team focused coaching and three days of school coaching (primarily focused on teachers) as well as ongoing virtual support.

MEASURING SUCCESS AND SETTING GOALS

To know that your school transformation is making progress and is successful, we have several methods of measurement.

We recommend that you set goals along the School Success Rubric with your coach.   Additionally, with your leadership team, create regular times to check in on progress.

We also recommend that as part of your project plan with your coach, you create a "dashboard" of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which include student outcomes such as internal and external assessments, survey results, walkthrough results, and any other methods of measurement.

You should also have a look at how you will be measuring progress throughout implementation. There are several surveys we use to gauge progress and obtain feedback. They are all contained in the Culture Surveys, which are surveys for:

- Students
- Teachers
- Leadership
- Families

In one of your leadership workshops, you will learn how to administer the surveys, analyze the results, and create action steps.

You will also measure implementation of the instructional model through the Learning Walks Tool, which is a guide for observations. Below is a visual of the learning walk experience.

DATA ANALYSIS

You should collect data aligned to the School Success Rubric and the Culture Surveys.

In your workshops you will also learn how to analyze data and design instruction or school culture programming in response to data. The quick guide also provides resources on survey analysis.

We recommend the following tools and protocols, which help you disaggregate data by subgroup, look for trends, and plan re-teaching or support.

Atlas Protocol.

MEANINGFUL AND EQUITABLE INSTRUCTION

When planning for implementing a new curriculum and instruction, we recommend you review several documents. You are shifting to a student centered model, which requires several shifts. These shifts require significant professional development and time to implement, so you should plan for a long runway.

Here is a step-by-step process for shifting instruction.

1. Review the research and best practices. Our website contains the latest research and an article explaining Project Based Learning (PBL): The Comprehensive Guide to Project Based Learning and How Project-Based Learning is Effective in Education.

2. Start with the School Success Rubric and review the section on Meaningful and Equitable Instruction.

3. Review the NTN Learning Outcome Rubrics and Template for student outcomes.

4. Review the implementation documents for Meaningful and Equitable Instruction and project development, including the Practice Cards. These will give you a good idea of how to best support and coach teachers, design PD and any other curriculum, instruction and assessment needs. Be sure to review the Teacher Learning Targets.

5. There is also a quick guide in the help center to support teachers with answers to common questions they have when it comes to problem and project based learning.

SHIFTING TO LEARNER CENTERED PRACTICES

When transforming to NTN school, many of the shifts in instruction, assessment and school culture have to do with shifting to learner centered, rather than adult or teacher centered learning. This means that students are leading the work, and the teacher becomes less of a "sage on the stage" and more of a "guide on the side" or a facilitator of

learning. Students are playing an active role in guiding their learning-- planning and leading their work, and most often using technology as a key component for pacing and materials. They have more of a choice and a say in how, when and what they learn.   It means less teacher instruction and more student talk.

Here is an article from ITSE on Learner Centered Schools And another from Edutopia. San Diego State also lists pros and cons of both types of learning. This shift requires a shift in school culture, mindsets, curriculum and instruction.

We have written an article on Learning Centered Leadership as well, which should be helpful in the shift.

One of the largest shifts during school transformation implementation is to center the instructional approach on authentic, complex thinking, and problem-solving. Based on our experience, high-quality, relevant project based learning (PBL) is the best way for students to experience deep, contextual, and shared learning and acquire and demonstrate proficiency in college and career ready outcomes.

PROJECT BASED LEARNING (PBL)

This The Comprehensive Guide to Project-Based Learning: Empowering Student Choice through an Effective Teaching Method is useful for an overview of PBL for teachers and parents.

The NTN Curriculum Frameworks detail the Project Based and Problem Based Learning scope and sequence for each subject area for each grade level.   The frameworks include:

- Year at a Glance
- Project Snapshots
- Project or Problem Planning Toolkits and Problem Planning Forms
  - Embedded NTN and PrBL Practices Cards
  - Embedded NTN Project Rubrics

Please also see additional materials for math below.

One of the first things you should do as a school is to map the standards for each content area in order to plan projects. Please see the mapping standards article.

> Teaching Strategies and Practices

The NTN and PrBL Practices Cards teaching strategies and best practice for teaching PBL. These are the 23 learner centered teaching strategies you will see in the classroom. This card set articulates practices that disrupt opportunity gaps by promoting agency and emphasizing academic discourse, inquiry, and collaboration.

Each card contains the: what, why and how, a go deeper section, a reflection section, a research section and each practice aligns to one of the student outcomes.

Students of color, students in poverty, and other marginalized students are more likely to experience rote, low level instruction that emphasizes memorization rather than authentic, complex thinking and problem-solving. To disrupt an instruction gap, learner-centered instruction must:

- Emphasize higher order thinking/be contextualized
- Emphasize collaboration & discourse
- Support the development of academic mindsets
- Support all learners

> Team Teaching

The NTN model uses a team teaching model (as in more than one teacher per classroom). This can be the same subject or interdisciplinary. This Team Teaching Article has great tips on how to make this successful, including how to train and support teachers for team teaching as well as scheduling implications.

> Culminating Student Products

The Culminating Products document is an article giving examples of final student products from PBL such as newspaper articles or apps.

> Other Protocols for Instruction

The appendix also contains several protocols for best practices for instruction, such as think-pair-share.

CREATING PROJECTS

The basis for PBL is creating rigorous, meaningful projects. We have detailed how to do this in the documents below and will support you and teachers through professional development and coaching. We use a "backwards planning" process.

1. Begin by mapping standards.

2. Review the Project Design Tool. This is a checklist for all of the components in a successful project.

3. Use the Project or Problem Planning Toolkits and Problem Planning Forms which will help you plan your projects. This resource can be used to help plan projects from ideation to scaffolding and beyond. Use the toolkit as a teaching tool for how to plan a project and to create a solid project plan, ready to implement in the classroom. These are organized by subject area and grade level. There is also an article for getting ideas for projects.

4. Create Visual Benchmarks, which are road maps that are publicly displayed to show the steps of and progress on projects. Several examples are contained in this document.

5. Once you create the task, use the Task Quality Checklist to ensure that you have created a rigorous, engaging project.

6. Ensure that your project is authentic by using the Spectrum of Authenticity tool.

7. Plan how you will scaffold your project by using Quality Scaffolding Characteristics and Ideas. The Visual Benchmarks are also part of the scaffolding.

MATH/PROBLEM BASED LEARNING (PRBL)

With math (and selective science courses), NTN uses a problem based learning approach, which is a more conceptual and much less procedural approach, and requires deeper understanding.

Like project-based learning (PBL), problem-based learning (PrBL) engages students in complex tasks, employs student centered instruction and small group work, and positions the teacher as a facilitator of learning. In addition, it accurately reflects the types of explorations, discussions, questions, and interactions that are authentic to mathematics as a discipline. Launch-Explore-Discuss is a key PrBL structure that allows students to engage in inquiry, build their self-regard, and have discourse in small and large groups. PrBL also uses formative and performance-based assessments to give feedback and check student progress.

Problem-Based Learning	Similarities	Project-Based Learning
What makes PrBL Unique	**Between Problem-based Learning and Project-based Learning**	**What makes PBL Unique**
Standards: 1-2 Standards	+ Engages students in complex tasks	Standards: 4+ Standards
Time: 1-4 Days	+ Student-centered small-group work	Time: 4-6 Weeks
Main Activity: Inquiry and Discourse	+ Reflects the work of the discipline	Main Activity: Applying Learning
Emphasis: Problem-solving Process	+ Teacher as facilitator of learning	Emphasis: Product
	+ Formative and performance-based assessment	

The key differences between Project-based learning and PrBL are that PrBL focuses on 1 or 2 standards at a time and each problem takes place over a shorter time period (roughly 1-4 days). In PrBL, students are mainly exploring and discussing mathematical ideas, with an emphasis on the problem solving process and productive struggle, whereas in PBL there is a greater emphasis on creating a culminating product that answers a Driving Question.

For more information on PrBL and NTN Math, visit *Project-Based vs. Problem-Based Learning: Which is Right for Your Classroom? Article on the NTN Website.*

We also have several practices for PrBL in the PrBL practices cards. There are 13 strategies included here, organized by the following topics:

• Preparing for Problem Based Learning

• Launching the Problem

• Explore, Collaboration and Group Work

• Meaningful Discussion

Teachers can learn more about how to adapt math problems in the Resources for Finding Math Problems to Adapt document.

Finally, we have a Sample Unit Calendar for an example of math planning using the Launch-Explore-Discuss PrBL framework as well as the Learner-Centered Practices, Culture Practices, and Assessment Practices.

> Special Education

When you're new to Project-Based Learning, a need-to-know often comes up: How can we support Special Education students while doing PBL? The short answer is: keep doing what you were doing before you started doing PBL. The longer answer is: ensure that what you were doing (specifically those modifications and accommodations) are included in your project plan.

Project based learning can also support special education students as you embed IEP goals into projects which are interdisciplinary, cross curricular and collaborative, and projects incorporate both skills and content. Shifting to a more inclusive culture also supports special education students. Learner Centered practices also support special education students.

It can also be helpful to start with a list of necessary accommodations and modifications to keep in mind as you begin designing your project. Even better is if the project planning is a joint endeavor between you and the Special Education teacher. It can also be helpful to have a particular student in mind as you think about the scaffolding necessary for the project. Some guiding questions are:

• What would that student need to be successful at every stage?

• How will you support that student during the entry event? Will they need any additional support with the reading materials, content, or process?

• How will you support that student throughout the project, as you scaffold based on students' need-to-knows? When you are planning activities, workshops, readings, labs, etc., what scaffolding, accommodations or modifications will be necessary?

• How will you support that student as they work with their group?

• What additional supports, accommodations, or modifications might be needed for assessments and the final product, including the presentation?

• Are my students being successful in project based learning? How do I know (what evidence is there of this)?

• Am I providing a culture of equitable access and inclusion? Do my students feel a sense of connectedness and belonging?

• Are we working from an asset based mindset?

• Where do my special education students need additional support?

> Strategies

Here are specific strategies for special education students.

- Have students preview the entry event with the Special Education teacher so they can receive extra support with the reading and content

- Plan to do an extra workshop with particular students based on their need

- Provide extra scaffolding a student needs to complete their part of the group work

- Provide your usual accommodations and modifications on individual assessments.

- Differentiate and personalize projects

- Incorporate social and emotional skills into projects

Here are more resources and research on project based learning and special education from PBL Works.

> Other programs, policies and practices

There are a few other shifts that may need to take place for Special Education Students when transforming the school model. These are:

- Scheduling services and supports required in IEPs

- Staffing for special education

- Considering other special education support models (push in, pull out)

- Technology or online programs you are using specifically for special education

- Aligning MTSS or RTI structures and data driven instruction

> Multilingual Learners

When you're new to Project Based Learning, a need-to-know often comes up: how can we support multilingual learners (or English Language Learners) while doing PBL? Just like with Special Education students, the short answer is: keep doing what you were doing before you started doing PBL. The longer answer is: ensure that what you were doing (like visuals, vocabulary support, sentence stems, etc.) are included in your project plan.

It can be helpful to start with a list of the kinds of support you usually provide multilingual learners so you have those in mind as you begin designing your project. Even better is if the project planning is a joint endeavor between you and the ELL specialist.

It can also be helpful to have a particular student in mind as you think about the scaffolding necessary for the project. A few considerations are:

- What would that student need to be successful at every stage?

- How will you support that student during the entry event? Will they need any additional support with the reading materials or vocabulary?

- How will you support that student throughout the project, as you scaffold based on students' need-to-knows? When you're planning activities, workshops, readings, labs, etc., what scaffolding will be necessary?

- How will you support that student as they work with their group so that they can participate fully in discussion? What additional supports, accommodations, or modifications might be needed for assessments and the final product, including the presentation?

- Are my materials culturally responsive and affirming? Personalized and differentiated?

- Are my students being successful in project based learning? How do I know (what evidence is there of this)?

- Am I providing a culture of equitable access and inclusion?

- Are we working from an asset based mindset?

- Do my students feel a sense of connectedness and belonging?

- Where do my multilingual learners need additional support?

> Strategies

Project based and problem based learning works quite well for MLLs, as it is relevant, provides choices, is more engaging, and asks students to read, write and speak. Additional MLL strategies to consider are:

- Preteaching vocabulary

- Additional scaffolding

- Bridging, or making connections to the home language or country

- Adding in explicit English language instruction

- Adding additional visuals

Here is an article in the NTN Help and Learning Center about adapting projects for MLLs. The School Success Rubric also outlines relevant Culturally Sustaining Practices.

PBL Works and Colorin Colorado are great resources on project based learning with MLLs.

> Assessment

For MLLs, it is important that you are explicitly assessing English language development as well as content and skills of the cross-curricular or interdisciplinary subjects. It is also important to gauge progress along the way using formative assessments.

> Other programs, policies and practices

There are a few other shifts that may need to take place for MLLs when transforming the school model.

These are:

- Considering other English Language Development support (push in, pull out)

- Technology or online programs you are using specifically for MLLs

- Aligning MTSS or RTI structures and data driven instruction

- Ensuring interpreter/translation services are available to families at events; and all materials are translated

PURPOSEFUL ASSESSMENT

Like instruction, assessment will also shift when you transform to a NTN model school. PBL requires the use of frequent formative assessment, different types of summative assessments, and more analysis of student progress and data.

We recommend you start with the School Success Rubric and review the section on Purposeful Assessment.

Here is a helpful blog post that will help you think about how assessment is different in PBL: How does assessment differ in PBL classrooms?

Shifts will need to happen for BOTH formative and summative assessments. You can use the School Success Rubric and the Journey Map to guide your implementation, and the assessment changes and roll out plan should be on your implementation project plan. Your coach will also work with you to help you implement these new assessments.

PBL requires much more formative assessment to gauge progress during projects. Summative assessments are less traditional, and are completed products.

Formative assessments include:

- Exit Tickets

- Quizzes

- A completed step in a project

- Giving feedback to students along the way

This article from Edutopia has more information about Formative Assessment in PBL.

Summative Assessments include:

- Tests

- Papers or written products

- Presentations

- Products such as applications, models, or art pieces

- Performances

- Assessing collaboration and teamwork

- A combination of above

Assessment Practices Cards also detail best practices for assessment. This card set will provide a variety of assessments (performance-based, summative, formative) to assess students' mastery of knowledge and skills and foster student agency. The card set also includes various feedback protocols to provide constructive peer critique. Its purpose is to optimize critique and feedback in preparation for revision of work. It should be used after a draft of what will become a finished product is complete. The focus is on offering feedback that is beneficial to the author.

In order to be meaningful and purposeful, assessment must:

- Inform teacher instruction based on student needs

- Incorporate a variety of assessments of knowledge and skills that go beyond state accountability systems

- Allow for prompt and helpful feedback for students

The cards contain 20 strategies organized into the following topics:

- Focus on Feedback

- Assess for Learning

- Make Grading Equitable and Manageable

- Prioritize Performance Assessment

The Guide to Written Performance Assessments is a step-by-step guide to creating written assessments, including writing prompts, assessing skills, scaffolding, and checking for quality.

ADULT LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Several shifts in professional development need to occur when you are transforming your model.

First, project based learning requires specific professional development for teachers when planning curriculum, instruction and assessments. We recommend you start with the Teacher Learning Targets, which is built around the four focus areas and is meant to help you plan and reflect on the progress. All NTN facilitated team learning experiences are built around these learning targets, and they are meant to move towards more meaningful and equitable learning experiences.   It is important to view this during the planning year in order to "preview" what's to come for adult learning. Coaches during the implementation year will set specific and actionable goals and identify areas for improvement aligned to these learning targets.

Also, consider the following factors when planning PD:

- What supports will teachers need to shift to the new model, both in terms of PD and ongoing support or coaching?
- When will this support occur? Is this built into my calendar?
- How will I differentiate support for teachers, given that they may not all start in the same place?
- What PD and supports are we providing as a school vs NTN?
- Are there any constraints to consider, such as union contracts?
- How will support differ in the planning year, vs Year 1, 2, 3 of implementation?
- How and when will I measure success against the Teacher Learning Targets?

NTN provides support for both teachers and leaders. As you transform your model, professional development is ongoing. The first few training sessions are considered "induction." Below are descriptions of each set of training sessions.

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In addition to the training, we have also put together an Adult Learning Toolbox to guide you. This includes sample agendas, research based best practices, introductions to key documents, and simulations of practices for use with teachers and staff.

The NTN Practice Cards are also powerful tools for adult learning. Teachers have the opportunity to experience (and practice) these learning strategies themselves, and this connects to NTN's larger leadership principle of having adult learning reflect the nature of the learning we hope for in the classroom.

The leadership resources in the help center also has several articles on supporting teachers, including:

- Cultivating and Maintaining a Learner Centered Culture
- NTN Deep Dive Workshops

FEEDBACK

One of the other shifts in a project based learning model is how we give feedback to BOTH students and teachers. Throughout projects, teachers will be giving formative assessments and giving feedback to students. Students will then "iterate on" and revise their work.

Similarly, adults will receive constant feedback on teaching through Learning Walks, Culture Surveys, and instructional coaching.

As feedback is an essential component of PBL and of disrupting opportunity gaps, the Assessment Practices Cards also contains a section on feedback, including asset based feedback, conferencing, and peer feedback.

Here are additional best practices on giving feedback to teachers. In general, feedback should be specific, evidence or data based, and timely.

Edutopia: "How to Give Teachers Better Feedback"

ASCD: "What Teachers Really Want When It comes to Feedback"

Network For Educator Effectiveness: "Three Golden Rules and Five Step Guide to Giving Effective Feedback"

SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

In order to allow all learners to learn, grow, and tackle the difficult work of Project-Based Learning, we need to create a safe and healthy school culture. When we are responsive to their needs and support both adults' and students' social and emotional well-being, we build a healthy and safe school culture that directly improves academic and equitable outcomes. Students of color, students in poverty and other marginalized students are more likely to experience a school environment that isn't safe, welcoming, or supportive. In order to disrupt these culture gaps, culture practices must:

• Support social, academic, physical,and emotional well-being

• Be inclusive of all students

• Cultivate a healthy and safe environment

School transformation and shifting to project based learning also requires changes to school culture. The School Success Rubric is the best place to start when you think about shifting school culture. It covers:

• Connectedness and Belonging

• Culturally Affirming

• Learning Community

• Social and Emotional Well Being

• Asset Based Mindsets

• Supportive Environment

• Professional Growth

• Shared Leadership

Here is an overview article on how to create and maintain an inclusive culture, which includes warm and demanding, high expectations, and opportunities for improvement.

APPROACH: WARM AND DEMANDING

NTN schools approach school culture using a "warm and demanding" approach. This means we have high expectations for students, but we will support them to be able to reach these expectations and to participate in rigorous work. Here is a helpful chart on what this looks like: Warm Demander Chart.

Leaders, too, should use a warm and demanding approach with teachers and other school staff. Here is what that looks like.

According to Shane Safir, a warm and demanding approach looks like:

- **Build trust.** Warm demanders understand that all growth and learning is rooted in relational capital, the resource that leaders accrue when they take time to listen to and convey authentic care and curiosity toward others

- **Listen and affirm.** When we practice deep listening, we tune into the message beneath the words, paying close attention to the speaker's nonverbal signals and affirming his or her capacity to grow and change.

- **Show strength.** This requires us to cultivate an orientation to vision—a leadership stance in which we define, coach toward, and message a vivid picture of success

- **Challenge and offer a choice.** When a person feels seen and heard, something magical happens

> Strategies

The Culture Cards will detail strategies for school culture that should be implemented. In order to allow all learners to learn, grow, and tackle the difficult work of Project Based Learning, we need to create a safe and healthy school culture. When we are responsive to their needs and support both adults and students' social and emotional wellbeing, we build a healthy and safe school culture that directly improves academic and equitable outcomes.

The Culture Cards detail 27 practices. Each of the Culture Practices reflect an underlying shift in the way students and teachers cultivate their learning environment. They are organized into four categories:

- **Build Internal-Awareness and Empathy:** These self-reflective practices help shift from a deficit-based mindset to an equity-and asset-based mindset where educators examine and recognize the deeply held beliefs, behaviors, and practices that influence their instructional design and interactions with others.

- **Cultivate a Learning Community:** These practices help shift from a teacher-centered learning environment to a learner-centered environment where student voices are empowered to nurture safe, inclusive, and emotionally supportive environments.

- **Engage in Restorative Discipline:** These practices help shift toward discipline that encourages active reflection and open dialogue to support students' social, academic, physical, and emotional well-being.

- **Support Social-Emotional Well-Being:** These practices help shift toward processes that empower learners to self-regulate their emotions and manage their thoughts and feelings to return to an integrated brain state.

The Empathy Map is a key tool used to analyze what your users, or stakeholders (students, families, teachers, staff, leaders) need and want. This can help you implement, improve and measure progress on school culture.

Finally, the Culture Surveys will help you measure success and progress on whether or not you are implementing an inclusive and supportive school culture.

When planning for implementation, leaders should identify any key shifts that need to be made to align to the Culture Practices and any resources or professional development needs.   For example,

- What strategies will you use to build a supportive and inclusive culture, both in and outside the classroom?

- What supports and professional development will staff need?

- Does your schedule allow for these shifts to school culture?

- What systems or structures need adjustments?

- What policies need adjustments?

- Do you need additional staffing?

- Do you need other resources such as materials, curriculum?

- Are there any budget constraints?

Student behavior plans and handbooks will need to be updated to reflect the culture shifts.

SCHOOL CULTURE PLANS

During the planning year, it is important to create a plan for implementing school culture.

Leaders can use the NTN School Team Culture Plan tool, which includes how to "roll out" the culture cards. Teachers can also use the NTN Classroom Culture Planning Tool to plan lessons and to teach culture strategies.

Finally, before you begin your implementation year, it is important to plan **student orientation** for the first few days and weeks of school. We have created a guide for this.

CLASSROOM CULTURE PLANS

Establishing and maintaining a strong classroom culture is vital to the health of your PBL/PrBL practice and your school. This should include designing proactive student supports for social and emotional development; building relational trust; being improvement-oriented and learning-focused; and developing agency.

It is important that teachers develop a long term culture plan for their classroom for the year. Use the Culture Cards to help plan what practices will be built into the daily and weekly routine of your classroom. Additionally, some project designers may feel more comfortable embedding the classroom culture practices directly into their Project or Problem Planning Toolkit.

ADVISORY

The New Tech Network model includes an emphasis on Connectedness and Belonging, Learning Community, and Social and Emotional Well Being.

Please see the NTN Model Commitments and School Success Rubric specifically for school culture and social-emotional learning. We see this in the Connectedness and Belonging, Learning Community, and the Social and Emotional Well Being (SEL) sections. Having an advisory is key to creating a supportive and inclusive school culture, as well as for specifically teaching SEL skills.

In order for advisory to be successful, there are a few key considerations:

- Be clear as to the purpose of advisory
- Is it for social-emotional learning?
- Is it for executive functioning and study skills?
- Is it for community building?
- Is it to set goals and track progress?
- Some combination of above?

Be clear as to your philosophy and approach to advisory.

- Will you be using any specific frameworks?

You should hire people that are "bought in" to the idea of advisory and social-emotional learning as a key part of what makes students successful and what makes up the role of the teacher

- Teachers needs significant professional development on advisory; including working on and addressing their own social-emotional learning
- Leaders also need social-emotional learning and support

Here are general best practices for advisory:

- Students should be in small groups of 10-15
- Each teacher, leader and staff member at the school is an advisor
- When possible, students should stay in the same advisory group with the same teacher throughout their tenure at the school (for example, from 9th-12th grades).
- The advisory group should be viewed as your "family" or "crew" at school

The Culture Cards also have specific strategies that should be taught in advisory.

Here are proven models for advisory (including resources):

- EL Education: Crew (Nationwide)
- Valor Collegiate: Compass (TN)
- Summit Public Schools: Habits of Success (CA and WA)
- Intrinsic Schools (IL)
- East Bay Innovation Academy (CA)
- Realm School (CA)
- Lindsay Unified School District (CA)
- Vista High School (CA)

Curriculum and Additional Resources:

- Transforming Education
- Whole Human Project
- Mind Up Curriculum
- Second Step
- Facing History and Ourselves
- The Advisory Book

For a successful advisory, you should create the following during the planning year:

- Purpose and approach
- Scope and Sequence (with annual calendar) per grade level
- Lesson plans
- Professional Development for teacher

Here are additional considerations for advisory in the implementation year:

- Are we implementing advisory as we planned? Is it being used purposefully?
- Are we measuring the success of advisory through the school culture surveys?
- Are there aspects of advisory that we need to roll out in future years?
- What strategies on the culture cards can be implemented?
- How can I support teachers to be better advisors?
- What support do I need from my coach?

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY OUTCOMES

As with all implementations, the shifts to college and career ready outcomes should be outlined on your project plan and the Journey Map. You can also use the School Success Rubric as a guide.

With your coach, you should be regularly assessing progress towards outcomes on the Key Performance Indicators and the NTN Learning Outcome Rubrics and Template.

Several of our NTN Learning Outcomes on the NTN Learning Outcome Rubrics and Templates are related to college and career ready outcomes.

Students should also be familiar with the Learning Outcome Rubrics and should use them to self-assess and gauge progress in the older grades.

There are several things you will need to plan prior to your implementation year for college and career ready outcomes. This includes: community partnerships, family engagement, and special populations.

This is work you should do as a school, however, NTN does not provide support during the planning phase for this work.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Several parts of the model, including college and career ready outcomes, as well as meaningful and equitable instruction, require partnerships with local organizations in the community. You can see these outlined in the School Success Rubric.

Specifically, you may need partnerships for:

• Project based learning, especially for experiential learning and opportunities for community involvement

• College and Career ready outcomes, such as dual enrollment and early college

• Opportunities for career based learning, including apprenticeships and internships

These partnerships take time, thought, and resources to create, so we recommend you start early, by:

• Identifying needs (dual enrollment, project based learning, internships/apprenticeships)

• Identifying potential partners in the community and surrounding areas; as well as any connections to potential partners

• Prioritizing these partnerships

• Assigning a member of the leadership team and/or hiring someone to head up partnerships and begin to create the partnerships

In the article, "Where can I get ideas for projects and PrBL units" NTN details how to use community partners in projects. Places you may want to start for community partnerships are:

• **Utilities and City Connections:** Consider connecting with urban planners, the parks department, public transportation, or public works departments to hear about local questions and concerns. Is it election time? Local politicians provide insight and perspective on many local issues from adding bike lanes and traffic lights to building codes and homelessness. These are also potential spots for internships and apprenticeships.

• **Museums, Aquariums, and other Cultural Centers:** these spots provide a wealth of opportunities for experiential learning as well as apprenticeships and internship opportunities.

• **Local Businesses:** Who contributes to employment in the area? What businesses drive or support your local economy? Consider looking to local businesses for driving questions or for authentic audience. Even if the business does not have a problem that is looking for a solution, members of the business may want to provide authentic feedback and adult connection to enhance presentations and final projects.

• **Non-Governmental Organizations:** NGOs are often created to generate and implement potential solutions to a problem. How do they use resources and establish a business to try and resolve the problem?

• **Higher Education:** local colleges and universities, as well as trade and vocational schools, can provide opportunities for internships as well as additional courses and/or dual enrollment.

In the implementation years, you should be rolling out and adding community partnerships to help with dual enrollment, apprenticeships/internships and project based learning. Culture Surveys will also show evidence of progress and areas of improvement.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Shifting school models also requires shifting how we engage with families. You may need to engage with families in the following new and different ways:

• Communicating with families about the academics and curriculum model transformation, particularly around course work, graduation requirements, grades and moving to student centered

• Inviting families to participate in exhibitions or presentations of work

• Ensuring the school culture is inclusive and supportive and focused on connectedness and belonging

• Seeing families as connections to and providers of potential community partners

• Asking families to engage in student goal setting and conferences as well as progress monitoring for students

• Editing or creating any documentation you send out to families or you put on the school website

• Asking families for feedback by using annual surveys to families on school culture and academics

When planning, the family engagement staff should be aware of the shifts and should plan for them.

EQUITABLE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

The New Tech Network model is centered on a PBL instructional core. PBL as an instructional method overlaps with key features of equitable pedagogical approaches including student voice, student choice, and authentic contexts. The New Tech Network model extends the power of PBL as a tool for creating more equitable learning by building asset-based equity pedagogical practices into the the design using key practices drawn from the literature on culturally sustaining teaching methods so that PBL instruction leverages the assets of diverse students, supports teachers as warm demanders, and develops critically conscious students in PBL classrooms (see Good teaching, warm and demanding classrooms, and critically conscious students: Measuring student perceptions of asset-based equity pedagogy in the classroom).

This includes:

• Detracking

• Rethinking support systems, including RTI or MTSS

• Scheduling

• Monitoring progress

• Purposeful Assessments

• Meaningful Curriculum and Instruction

In transforming a school model, we want to make sure our most vulnerable students are supported and are making progress. The School Success Rubric, the NTN Learning Outcome Rubrics and Templates and the meaningful and equitable instruction are a good place to start here.   The Culture Surveys should show progress and areas of improvement, as well as the Learning Walks.

OPERATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

By this time, you will have implemented a new budget, schedule, and calendar. You may have also made shifts to staffing.

The implementation year will let you know whether or not these shifts are working or if you need to make adjustments. You can use the Culture Surveys. Questions to ask are:

• How is the calendar working? How do we know?

• How is the schedule working? How do we know?

• Do we need to make any additional changes in staffing?

• Do we need to make any additional changes in budget?

• Where else do teachers, staff, students and families need support?

COMMUNICATING DURING IMPLEMENTATION

As changes are being implemented, it is important to communicate any updates--what changes have been implemented, how things are going, successes, issues that come up, etc.

Here is a sample communications timeline as a guide and a sample communication update.

OTHER TEMPLATES AND RESOURCES

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CREDIT: **NTN DALLAS**

Part III: Sustaining Progress

INTRODUCTION: NOW WHAT?

So, you have successfully completed your school transformation. Now, what? We encourage you to keep gathering data and input from all stakeholders, giving feedback, and to engage in continuous improvement. Perhaps you learned valuable lessons during your implementation journey that you want to implement now. We also recommend you take time to step back and reflect on what went well, and what could be improved.

You should continue to do Learning Walks and Culture Surveys to gauge progress and to identify areas for improvement. We also recommend that you keep track of your Key Performance Indicators (and perhaps update or add to them) and check in with them at least quarterly.

It is always a good idea to look at the [School Success Rubric](#), the [NTN Learning Outcome Rubrics and Templates](#) and/or the [NTN Focus Areas Self Assessment](#) to set goals and look for areas of improvement.

PILOTING AND ITERATING

Perhaps you want to make a change to your schedule, or try a new way of presenting projects. We recommend you pilot this first, with a small group of students (perhaps 1-2 classes or a grade level). Here are best practices from the [Learning Accelerator](#) on piloting new initiatives and an article from [Getting Smart](#).

ONGOING SUPPORT

NTN provides sustainability suites to school leaders looking for support, including a Refresh and Building Capacity. The [Sustainability Suites](#) is a list of those supports.

CASE STUDIES

To view lessons learned and additional tips, see our [School Spotlights](#) for our in depth case studies of NTN Schools.

MEANINGFUL AND EQUITABLE INSTRUCTION: SUSTAINING

You may want to add in new projects, or update old projects. Perhaps you want to "audit" your curriculum to ensure it's culturally engaging.

It is always a good idea to look at the [School Success Rubric](#), the [NTN Learning Outcome Rubrics and Templates](#), and/or the [NTN Focus Areas Self Assessment](#) to see where you can improve instruction.

ADULT LEARNING

After implementation is also a good time to "audit" your professional development and see where faculty might need more or different support.   This includes coaching as well. Teachers may be at different places in their PBL journey and might need more personalized support.

SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE: SUSTAINING

You should continue to complete culture surveys and iterate on programs that build community and belonging.

After implementation is also a good time to go back and connect with students about student-led initiatives, and consider how you can continue to shift to a more learner centered environment.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY OUTCOMES: SUSTAINING

Once you have been implementing for a few years, you can begin to track your progress on college and career ready outcomes in earnest. You will have several years of data for this. Here are steps to take:

- Review and/or update your [Key Performance Indicators](#).
- Review the [NTN Learning Outcome Rubrics and Templates](#)
- Complete the College and Career Survey, to see how on track you are to meet your goals.

PURPOSEFUL ASSESSMENT

As you are updating and reflecting on projects, this is a good time to consider any edits to assessments.

TRACKING ALUMNI

We recommend that you create a system for tracking alumni. This could include the [National Student Clearinghouse](#), surveys, or keeping in touch via social media. This is the best way to see the long term impacts of students' experience at your school as well as the success of the model transformation.

CREDIT: **NTN DALLAS**

Part IV: Appendix

Here are additional materials that we think might be useful.

School Success Rubric (Print Version)

Teacher Learning Targets (Print Version)

Praise, Question, Suggestion: Lower School

Praise, Question, Suggestion: Upper School

Continuum of Protocols for Student and Adult Learning

Additional Examples from NTN Schools (Schedules, Courses, etc).

NTN GLOSSARY

Agency A set of metacognitive skills that includes the development of academic mindsets and taking ownership for one's own learning.

Agreements Mutually agreed upon standards for interaction, outlining how group members should treat each other.

Authentic Typically requires students to take on a role beyond that of 'student' or 'learner,' either by placing students in a scenario where they simulate tasks performed by adults and/or by requiring learners to address a challenge or problem facing a particular community group.

Benchmark Concrete step towards completion of final product. Used as formative assessment of learners' knowledge & skills and progress towards project completion.

Breadcrumbs Clues, hints, or instructions for completing a project. Designed to elicit learners' need to knows. Typically found in entry event.

Driving Question The core question learners are answering in the project. Should be engaging, open-ended and align with key content and ideas.

Entry Event How projects are launched in the NTN model of PBL. The event should pique students' interests and lay the breadcrumbs for need to knows. May include an entry document.

Equity Every child gets what he or she needs everyday in order to have the knowledge and skills needed for college or a career. (Adapted from Elena Aguilar.)

Knows The knowledge learners bring to a project or problem, either from the entry event or background knowledge.

Learning Targets Short term goals derived from a set of student learning standards or adult competencies. Used to assess growth and progress towards a set of competencies/standards.

New Tech Learning Outcomes College, career, and life readiness skills that go beyond so-called traditional content standards. Through research and input from schools, NTN determined the following essential learning outcomes: agency, collaboration, oral communication, and written communication.

Need-to-Knows Skills, content, and logistical information required to complete a project. These skills, etc. are identified by learners as unknown, or requiring facilitator support in acquiring and mastering.

Next Steps Concrete, prioritized, action items identified by learners as ways to address need-to-knows.

Power Standards Because it's not possible to teach all standards, focus on standards that have endurance (value beyond a single test date) leverage (value in the discipline, other disciplines and external assessments), and support readiness (are necessary for success at the next level of instruction).

Problem Statement Statement learners complete that expresses their role in the project, the task they will complete, and the reason why the project matters. Written as, "We are... (who) who will create/present... (what) so that... (why).

Productive Struggle Struggle refers to the challenge learners face when tackling a problem they do not immediately know how to solve. Productive means that despite being challenged, learners are able to make progress, typically with the support of a group of peers. Productive struggle has been shown to build lasting understanding of new ideas that connects them to prior knowledge.

Products Something a student will accomplish, typically in student-facing language. Performance assessments which drive projects and, when completed, are the culminating tasks for a particular project.

Rubric A set of leveled criteria for assessing a learners' product or performance. Rubrics include dimensions (rows), indicators (bullets) and score levels (column titles).

Scaffolding The temporary structures that assist learners in doing something they're not able to do on their own-yet. Quality scaffolding is purposeful, interactive, collaborative, supports academic discourse, and is either differentiated or has access points for learners at a variety of levels.

Social and Emotional Skills (SEL) The skills necessary to regulate one's emotions and interact socially, including collaborating with others.

Written Performance Task An individual, written performance assessment. Assesses written communication and knowledge and thinking. Project embedded, usually as a benchmark or an individual final product. At the early elementary level, may include drawing/dictating.

About New Tech Network

New Tech Network (NTN) is a national nonprofit dedicated to systemic change in education. We center K-12 schools as the units of change, working closely with district leaders, school principals, and classroom educators, to co-design an approach to change that is specific to their context. With more than 25 years of supporting schools and districts in change-making, NTN has the ability to recognize common patterns across systems and what is unique about each school and district community. New Tech Network has worked with over 350 schools committed to these key focus areas: college and career ready outcomes, supportive and inclusive culture, meaningful and equitable instruction, and purposeful assessment. The student experience is tied directly to deeper learning outcomes. Students gain skills and use their voices in ways that prepare them for life beyond school. Project-based learning in NTN schools allows students to engage with material in creative, culturally relevant ways, experience it in context, and share their learning with peers.