



## CASE STUDY

### Churchill County Middle School

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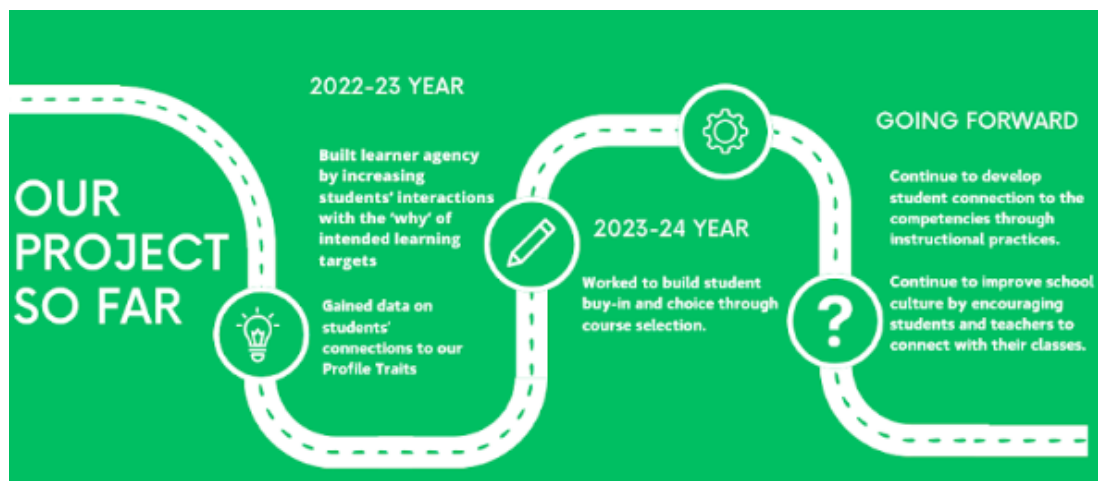
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### What is your Design Challenge?

For our group, one thing that emerged in the empathy process was that our students' interests were not represented within our currently offered electives/groups. We noticed students were uninterested in electives/groups, lacked motivation, and weren't connected to their school community. This led to the design of this case study.

Our Dream Idea: What if we could allow flexibility/choice into our school day to meet individual student's academic and social-emotional needs while making learning more meaningful?

How might we include student choice electives and flex time to include remediation and even "reward" time? Staff and students work together to meet the academic and emotional needs of as many students as possible.



## What did you do?

We developed surveys for staff and students to determine club and elective interests and teacher willingness to be involved in electives and clubs. Why do students want to come to school? Do they need help registering for classes? Etc.

We examined enrollment data from past years to determine the need and type of electives/clubs needed.

We developed a plan for helping students (including incoming students) register for classes. This is very important in helping students find the classes that interest them and making a connection between those students and teachers.

Met with teachers to discuss our portrait work and build buy-in for the new electives, clubs, and need for teacher-led registration time.

Our portrait aligns with more than one competency. EMPOWERING, THRIVING, and CONNECTING are all competencies that directly relate to the work we are doing. More specifically, the EMPOWERING attributes represented in our project include managing time by evaluating options and seeking peers who complement their strengths and challenges. Engaging with new concepts that impact school and community is a THRIVING attribute. Finally, CONNECTING attributes are shown through collaborating with peers to see the shared benefit of different viewpoints and communicating effectively in different situations.

**Artifact #2:** [Draft Comp Connections Google Doc](#) completed by group

The Task: How can we make a connection between these competencies above and our project?  
In order to really see how our project aligns with these competencies we all took some time to fill this out individually. Filling this out individually and then being able to see our teams responses really helped us to see where we all felt our project and these competencies aligned.

	Things I Noticed	Things That Connect To Our Project	How could we use the mini-grant of 5,000\$ for our project?
<b>Monica</b>	The language in this document is not very student friendly. It would be useful to have a student version with examples from their day to day schoolwork.	Empowering, Thriving, and Connecting competencies all apply to our project through elective and club activities. Impacting could also apply to most electives and clubs. I think the attributes of communication, curiosity, and balance are the ones that connect to our project the most.	Parent/community involvement with our clubs and electives. Supplies/curriculum for clubs and electives.

<p><b>Amy</b></p>	<p>I am drawn more to resilience, communication, and collaboration descriptors as an end goal for life.</p>	<p>Curiosity and self-advocacy attributes will build other skills and see the connection between interests to passions to self aptitudes that drive curiosity.</p>	<p>Supplies Training opportunities (staff and students) Experiences (transportation, subs, admission) to experiences that progress students interests and passions. (Work-based learning opportunities, field trips).</p>
<p><b>Torri</b></p>	<p>I agree with Monica about student-friendly language and examples.</p>	<p>Connecting &amp; Empowering attributes are a great fit with our goals for elective content and clubs. I would think that seeking peers with common interests and building relationships in those areas would fit into both. Different courses would also bring Thriving &amp; Impacting Attributes into play.</p>	<p>-supplies/curriculum for new electives/clubs -elective/club community project of some kind</p>
<p><b>Michele</b></p>	<p>I noticed that these skills are lacking in our school population.</p>	<p>Thriving and Connecting attributes apply to our goals. In electives or clubs they are seeking out students with common interests and building relationships. They are also being persistent in their learning and learning more about something they care about</p>	<p>Elective/club supplies, school wide agendas, community outreach projects</p>
<p><b>Courtney</b></p>	<p>-How do these align/compare to our SEL targets? -I love these and I think all of these skills are super important -I think many students all over are struggling in these specific elements and we need to be reteaching</p>	<p>I think many of these align with our profile of a learner but these are more in depth/organized and detailed. But I do feel that these all align with our POL. That alignment will help us introduce and implement these within our schools. I do think a better visual component is needed. At</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lot of students said things about PE. I wonder if we could buy something to help PE? CTE? STEAM?</li> <li>• Student agenda books? Life long learner emphasis on</li> </ul>

	<p>these important life skills</p> <p>-Could make great advisory curriculum</p>	<p>first glance these are very overwhelming, I think student would need a specific format/language</p>	<p>organization &amp; accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garden materials?</li> <li>• Community garden?</li> </ul> <p>*SEL Curriculum for advisory</p>
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**What was the biggest surprise/barrier in implementation?  
What was the impact?**

We faced several surprises/barriers over the course of our work this year. One of the barriers we face in this project is our staff numbers. This year we are short on teachers and have had a lot of turnover. This poses a problem for setting up specific electives because we don't know if anyone will be able and/or willing to teach specific electives. Many of the teachers who are willing and interested in teaching an elective are needed to teach content classes. Our school has 45 licensed teaching positions. There are currently 9 COSA (Classified On Special Assignment) teachers. These teachers are basically coming in with little more than substitute experience. This is a barrier that is nearly impossible to overcome.

In addition to teachers, we had two administrator changes throughout this process while prepping for next year. The impact of this barrier is that some of our work was not as streamlined as it would have been if we had constant admin this year into next.

Teacher buy-in is always a struggle. Not only finding teachers to embrace teaching new classes, but encouraging them to incorporate the different competencies into their regular classes and clubs, is an enormous challenge. It isn't necessarily that teachers don't believe in incorporating the different competencies. They may not know where to start or what exactly to change to make this happen. Thinking about how to address the value of what students are learning outside of the classroom, on a community or global scale, is a lot for many teachers to consider when planning content. Unfortunately, this often keeps us from moving beyond the "application of knowledge" stage of learning (as it pertains to completion of classwork only) in many classes.

Finally, one of our main priorities was making sure that the maximum number of students were able to register for their desired classes and clubs. This is important because it changes the club environment when students are attending clubs that interest them. We had hoped to push this to the incoming 5th graders in hopes that their teachers would help them sign up. Our principal arranged for a counselor to attend the welcome meeting for 5th-grade students. We had also hoped to maybe have a club open house event that detailed club activities. Unfortunately, scheduling this event was problematic, and it didn't happen. Counselors did visit classrooms to help students enroll for the upcoming year.

Linked Artifacts:  
[Student Interest Survey Results](#)  
[Interview with Stakeholders](#)

## What was the greatest success? How did this success impact young people or how might it impact young people on your campus? What are their perceptions?

Our greatest success was bringing in new electives/clubs for next year based on student/staff interest surveys. This success impacted our students by igniting their buy-in for school. Specifically, the 6th-grade showcase that we present to our current fifth graders allowed us to target this new group of young people to get them excited about enrolling into CCMS for their 6th-grade year. Their perceptions are that these clubs and electives are aligned to their interests, and unique, and get them excited for their first year of middle school.

[Survey Link](#) for 5th into 6th grade data

### **5th Grade Showcase**

During this showcase members of our school visited the fifth-grade class at Numa Elementary. At this meeting, our electives + clubs were highlighted and students received information on how to enroll. This helps student to transition to our middle school and streamline the enrollment process as well as increase student buy-in for next school year! They also tour our school after this initial meeting to help with that transition as well.



## What's next? How does your team plan to evolve this work? What are the most significant pieces of learning you see impacting adult work and young people's experiences? What school level, district level, state level policy may need to be addressed?

To evolve this work further we need to continuously change and increase electives and in-school clubs to ensure we keep up with student's interests and the world changes around us. One class's interests might differ from another's. These surveys and the areas for student input will need to continue and we must use this data in meaningful ways. Our team plans to evolve this work by staying with the portrait of a learner, being flexible, and continuing personal learning. The biggest piece that impacts adult work and student experiences is allowing teachers to have an input, an interest and to share something they are passionate about with students. Continuing to revamp and offer courses and clubs that are responsible to student choice and interest.

School level- We need to ensure our administrative team and teachers have the same level of buy-in in the electives/clubs they teach. Staff need to embrace a system of change that is responsible to students and ever-changing staff.

District level- Our district should partner with KnowledgeWorks to help further our work with personalized competency-based learning.

State level- At a district level, SEL learning targets would be helpful for states to push out and more guidelines/ wiggle room around what electives we can offer.

As adult learners, what is shifting in your mindset regarding empowering young people with voice, agency, and influence in your classroom?

As adult learners, our mindset is shifting in how we involve children in their learning. We want to give them voice, choice, and a safe space to share their ideas about their school experience. This will allow them to have that level of interest and buy-in to better align their school careers to their personal interests to make sure we are catering to their lifelong learning.

What insights do you have around assessment? How might it need to evolve locally to include a broader set of outcomes? What implications may exist around accountability?

Our insights around assessments is that students should have more choices on how they demonstrate their learning. For this to evolve, we would need to partner with someone like KnowledgeWorks, Getting Smart or other outside agencies to teach us how to implement it in our school. Implementation would include rigor, execution, and evaluation of assessment resources. The students would have more accountability because they have more choice in how they are assessed. This would also allow them to have a level of buy-in or motivation when it comes to all classes and their different learning modalities.

[Artifact 5 Doc](#)

## Research + Resources that inspired and informed our thinking

Participating in this has supported our learning by reinforcing the need for personalized competency-based learning. We have been a part of this for 2 years and each year we learn more about how important it is for students to have a choice and buy-in within their learning. We look forward to continuing this work and getting more people involved to continue to evolve our work.

<https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/students-should-help-shape-the-future-of-learning>

<https://learn.mindfulsead.org/about>