

Personalized Learning in Edina Public Schools

Background on Personalized Learning in Edina Public Schools –

As schools approached the 21st century, scholars turned their discussions to what core skills and literacies all students must have to be successful, not only for post-secondary educational experiences, but also for career readiness and life. However, the traditional, factory model of schools, especially in the early 21st century era of standardized testing, limits individual student growth, emphasizing content over comprehension. Achievement and opportunity gaps persist, and the perception of U.S. schools “falling behind” their global peers remains common in the public rhetoric.

In recent years, a common theme has emerged that stresses the need to individualize instruction for each student such that learning is the constant, and all other factors – including time, space, talent and funding – are variables to support learning.

Edina Public Schools (EPS) has long subscribed to the importance of ensuring every learner has the opportunity to succeed.

- **DISTRICT MISSION** - *The mission of the Edina Public Schools, working in partnership with the family and the community, is to educate all individuals and be responsible, lifelong learners who possess the skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of self-worth, and ethical values necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society.*
 - The District’s Mission Statement, developed in 1989, articulates a commitment to ensuring every learner has the skills needed to be successful in a global society. In 2013, that mission statement was summarized by three key words that drive the district’s strategic work – *All for All*. That is, ALL staff, families and community members must work together to ensure success for ALL learners.
- **CHOICE** – Edina Public Schools has a tradition of providing choice for families to identify educational programs that best meet the needs of individual learners (e.g. Continuous Progress, Language Immersion, middle school exploratory options, depth and variety of high school course offerings, and numerous extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities). With the advancement of personalized learning, the district continues to evaluate not only additional programs and services that can be implemented, but also individual pathways that will further serve to promote choice for students and families.

As part of its strategic planning process for many years, the district has held at its core the importance of personalizing the learning experience for each student.

- **2007-12 STRATEGIC PLAN** – Several initiatives were implemented to help advance an understanding of personalizing education for students (e.g. literacy and math interventions, expanded student support services, Response to Intervention (RtI), data coaches to help teachers better use student data to influence their instructions, technologies to help monitor student data).
 - In the spring of 2010, the district’s articulated a working definition of personalized learning focused on the use of data to drive instruction, cultivation of relationships between home and school, and flexibly responding to student needs.
 - Success was seen with such initiatives, and pilot programs began to be systemically implemented across the district
- **2012-15 STRATEGIC PLAN** – With the update of the district’s strategic plan to develop the Next Generation of Edina Public Schools, additional emphasis on the need to individualize learning for all students was identified as a core strategy. Like many districts in the U.S., Edina Public Schools is attempting to shift the focus from a curriculum/instruction-centered mindset to one that is student focused, centering all resources on learning as the constant.
 - In the spring of 2013, the district updated its definition of personalized learning to include an appreciation of students progressively taking more ownership of their learning and an understanding that learning can occur anywhere, anytime, at any pace.
 - As a result of the work of strategic initiatives of the Next Generation of Edina Public Schools plan, as well as ongoing research into personalized learning studies across the country and around the world, the district refined its definition of personalized learning as a core belief aligned with its All for All mission.