Pathways to Community, Joy & Fulfillment for SDP Students

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A Theory of Change for Enrichment Programming

What is the origin of this project?

In the Summer of 2023, The Office of Strategic Partnerships and ImpactED were awarded a planning grant from the William Penn Foundation to develop a theory of change for the District's student enrichment experiences. Partners, educators, community members, and coaches — in collaboration with District and school staff — deliver high-quality and deeply impactful enrichment experiences across the district every day that lead to meaningful outcomes for students. This theory of change helps our district articulate why enrichment programming matters and the impact it can have on students during their K12- experience and beyond.

Why does enrichment programming matter?

Enrichment programs, when aligned with best practices, can be a powerful lever for impacting students' experiences in school and their overall development and growth. When asked to reflect on why enrichment programming is important to them, one District student shared that enrichment programs, **"Give students the space to be creative and different in everything they do,"** while another shared, **"They give the power to block out distractions and find something true to you."** And when reflecting on how they view the long-term impact of enrichment programs, one student shared that the skills he gains from enrichment can help **"put me or my family in a better situation."** Another remarked, **"They help me know the type of person I can become."**

How will this theory of change be used?

This theory of change will be used to drive impact for young people in the region. More specifically, the plan is to:

- Map existing partnerships and categorizing them using the terminology from the Theory of Change

- Develop program quality and outcome measurement tools to test the theory of change and begin measuring standardized student impacts for all enrichment programs

- Build out supports to help partners align their work to the theory of change

What were the goals of the theory of change process?

This Enrichment Theory of Change focuses the collective work of the District, City agencies, and partners to coordinate and maximize the impact of investments in enrichment programming. It will allow key stakeholders to identify and elevate programming that is already occurring in our schools, identify gaps in programming, and direct additional resources to address historical inequities in the distribution of these programs. More specifically, the goals for this theory of change are to:

- **Develop a common language:** Clearly define and distinguish terms and concepts that we use to talk about "enriching and well-rounded school experiences" (Board of Education Guardrail 2).

- **Define success:** Clarify in detail why these experiences matter for students and how they connect to the broader goals of the Board and District.

- **Provide guidance for external partners and vendors:** Communicate with partners so they understand our expectations for program characteristics and outcomes and how their work aligns with the district strategy.

- **Increase internal collaboration**: Provide opportunities for district offices to strategically work together.

How was the theory of change developed?

The theory of change was developed using a highly collaborative and stakeholder-driven approach to ensure that the final product is reflective of the goals, experiences and perspectives of the people most connected to and impacted by enrichment programming. The project team engaged four key stakeholder groups throughout the process - a project core team, district staff, enrichment partners, and two student work groups.

Project Core Team: The core team included 13 central office leaders representing a diverse mix of departments, including athletics, arts, diversity, equity and inclusion, research and evaluation, social-emotional learning, and curriculum.

District Staff: The District staff group included a diverse mix of 18 school-based and district staff members, including assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals and partnership coordinators. This group met virtually and provided feedback at each of the three stages of the project.

Enrichment Partners: The enrichment partner group included 19 representatives from nonprofits, networks and government agencies that provide enrichment programming to students in the district This group met in-person and provided feedback at each of the three stages of the project.

Students: The project team engaged two groups of students through in-person workshops during each of the three phases of the project:

1) The Roxborough High school student advisory council — included 25 students, all of whom have varying interests and experiences with enrichment programming.

2) The Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP) Student Voice Advisory Board — included 6 students from across the district who are actively involved in enrichment programming and familiar with the work of the OSP.

What does high quality enrichment programming look like in action?

Enrichment programming is defined as activities that complement the District's core curriculum and/or build student skills and interests beyond the core curriculum. These programs provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate skills and reinforce social and emotional competencies. Generally, but not always, enrichment programs and activities:

- Maintain clear developmentally based expectations for students
- Align with student interest
- Make connections to what students learn and experience in the classroom
- Convene regularly
- Involve several participants
- Are guided or supported by an adult
- Are organized around developing and demonstrating skills

What are the outcomes of enrichment programming?

Enrichment programming leads to positive outcomes for students in both the short and long term.

Conversations with District students, staff and partners led to the development of three distinct but related "pathways" of outcomes — **joy, community, and fulfillment**. These pathways are perhaps best captured in the feedback that District students shared about the impact of enrichment programs.

JOY	COMMUNITY	FULFILLMENT
On joy, one student shared that during enrichment programs, "Students' mood about school changes…and they have a more positive attitude.." Another student shared that enrichment can help students gain "positive thoughts and positive living."	**Reflecting on community,** students shared, "Students feel more valued within the community," through enrichment programming, and they "Feel a sense of belonging with people they can trust." Another student shared that enrichment helps students "find their people."	**And for fulfillment,** a student commented that enrichment programs can give "Power to block out all distractions and find something that's true to you." Another student offered, "Students gain passion and opportunities for their life goals" through enrichment.

Taken all together, the outcome pathways of joy, community and fulfillment lead to the ultimate impact of lifelong wellbeing, which is captured in the evidence-based PERMA wellbeing framework developed by positive psychologist Dr. Martin Seligman from the University of Pennsylvania.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Through participation in enrichment programming, each student in the SDP will develop a sense of who they are and what matters to them, improving their overall wellbeing by helping them find community, joy and fulfillment.