

Pathways to
**COMMUNITY, JOY,
AND FULFILLMENT**

for School District of Philadelphia Students



A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMING

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This project was made possible thanks to support from the William Penn Foundation. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the William Penn Foundation.

Introduction to the Enrichment Theory of Change

Creating environments where students can experience joy, build community, and achieve a sense of fulfillment is essential to the School District of Philadelphia’s goal of becoming the fastest-improving large urban school district in the nation. The strategies in this Enrichment Theory of Change are designed to motivate our students to attend school, stay engaged, and recognize the connections between their passions and academic success. By prioritizing these long-term indicators of well-being, we equip our students with the tools they need to succeed in school and thrive in life.

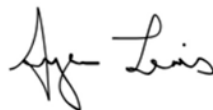
This Theory of Change marks a pivotal step in realizing our vision to prepare students to imagine and create any future they desire. It responds directly to the recommendations made by Dr. Watlington’s Transition Team, a diverse group of over 80 local community leaders who provided both short and long-term strategies for accelerating our progress. The Enriching and Well-Rounded School Experiences Subcommittee, comprising educators, District staff, community partners, and representatives from philanthropic foundations, highlighted the urgent need to “systematize equitable access to co-curricular and enrichment programming for all District students.” They stressed the importance of developing a clear, measurable definition of enriching and well-rounded experiences to ensure consistent and equitable implementation across our schools.

This document is our response to that call to action.

Imagine a school where classrooms pulse with curiosity, hallways buzz with the energy of engaged students, and every corner reflects their passions. In this school, educators and partners inspire exploration, and enrichment opportunities are woven into the fabric of the school day, creating an environment where learning transcends the classroom. Here, students feel a deep sense of belonging, their strengths are celebrated, and they are eager to come to school each day.

We are committed to building a district where every student can achieve academically while experiencing joy in an environment that celebrates their uniqueness and supports their growth. This ambitious work is made possible through the dedication of our community partners, educators, and everyone involved in bringing these programs to life. Together, we are making enriching experiences a cornerstone of our students’ journey to lifelong success.

Looking ahead, we see this document as a catalyst for action. We plan to pilot the Enrichment Theory of Change with partner organizations, focusing on programs that serve children from kindergarten through high school graduation. This approach will allow us to bring the theories and strategies to life, test their effectiveness, and refine our efforts based on real-world feedback. Moreover, this document is poised to strengthen and inspire collaborative work across systems and stakeholder groups, driving us toward true collective impact.



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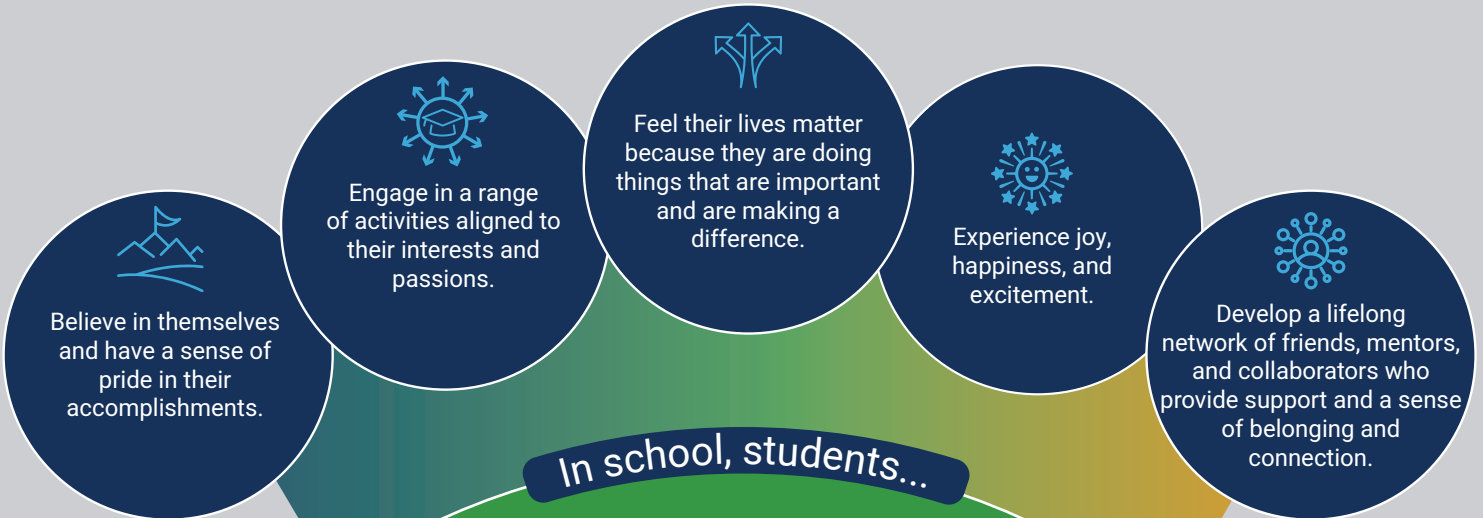


IMPACT STATEMENT:

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.

SDP Enrichment Theory of Change: Outcomes and Impact

In life, students...



In school, students...

View learning and new experiences as sources of joy

In programming, students...

Have spaces where they are free to be their full selves

Safe, Supportive, Interactive and Engaging Enrichment Programs



Acknowledgments

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the students, District staff, and partners who participated in the months-long process to produce this Theory of Change. Each of our workgroup sessions with you left us feeling energized and inspired. This document is stronger because of your input, and we hope it represents what you know to be true about the importance and impact of enrichment programming as well as the unbounded potential of young people across Philadelphia.

To the individuals listed below, thank you all for your dedication, time, and effort.

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Introduction

What comes to mind when you reflect on the most impactful experiences you had in school? Maybe it was an after-school club that sparked a new interest for you that you're still pursuing today. Or maybe it was your time competing for a championship with your teammates on the field or in the gym. Perhaps it was on the stage as you played an instrument, performed in a play, or sang with the rest of the chorus. At the end of the day, we all know from our own experiences just how important enrichment programs can be in shaping our time in school and impacting our lives well beyond graduation.

“Students and teachers want **more** opportunities to participate in programming before and after the traditional school day and highlight the benefits of spending structured time with their peers beyond the hours of the current school day.”

— *Accelerate Philly* Listening and Learning Session

Students today in the School District of Philadelphia are no different. 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.”**

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. However, inequities that exist in the distribution of programs across and within schools have limited the impact of this work. As shared during *Accelerate Philly* Listening and Learning sessions, “students and teachers want more opportunities to participate in programming before and after the traditional school day and highlight the benefits of spending structured time with their peers beyond the hours of the current school day.”

Adding to this challenge is the lack of a clear definition of high-quality enrichment programming or a set of measures for understanding the impact of enrichment programming on students.

This Theory of Change helps to address these challenges by providing both a roadmap for delivering excellent enrichment programming and a “north star” that reflects the dreams and aspirations of our young people across the city.

Alignment with District Goals

The Board of Education has identified well-rounded and enriching experiences as one of its key strategies for improving schools (Guardrail 2). In *Accelerate Philly*, the District's five-year strategic plan, the District includes joy as one of its 5 fundamental core values, recognizing its power to drive active engagement and belonging for students. It also lists identifying, auditing, and improving school climate programs as a key priority (Strategic Action 1.7) for elevating students' sense of joy and excitement for learning. **Together, the complementary visions of the Board and Superintendent for our collective work point to the importance of enriching experiences that help our students to experience joy, develop a sense of belonging, and identify the connections between their interests and academic achievement.**

District staff, community members, and partners play pivotal roles in supporting the *Accelerate Philly* goals. *Accelerate Philly* highlights the importance of partners and the crucial role they play in ensuring that our students have access to enrichment programming. Partners collectively secure millions of dollars of funding through grants and philanthropic donations and channel this funding into school-based enrichment programming. *Accelerate Philly* establishes a key priority of creating a database of all District partnerships, their alignment to the strategic plan, and impact (Strategic Action 2.8) so that partners can continue to be essential collaborators in the District's future work.

This Theory of Change will focus the collective work of the District, City agencies, and partners to coordinate and maximize the impact of investments in enrichment programming. It will allow these 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 such as enrichment, extracurricular, and co-curricular, that we use to talk about Guardrail 2 experiences.
- **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.

Ultimately, the Theory of Change is both a “north star” that captures the District’s highest aspirations for the impact of enrichment programming and a “roadmap” that reflects how to get there over time.

Benefits of Well-Rounded and Enriching Student Experiences

Enrichment programs, when aligned with best practices, can be a powerful lever for impacting students' experiences in school and their overall development and growth.

Foundational Skills

Research demonstrates that providing well-rounded and enriching educational experiences can help students gain the foundational skills necessary for success in school and life after graduation. Enrichment programming fosters students' executive functioning and non-cognitive skill development, encouraging working memory, cognitive flexibility, attentiveness, organization, and task persistence.^{1,2} These activities also support positive social and behavioral skills.³ Together, all these skills serve as the necessary precursors for school achievement as they help students follow instructions, problem-solve, and manage long-term goals and assignments. After school completion, these skills continue to allow students to prosper as innovative members of the workforce.⁴

Social and Emotional Development

The benefits of well-rounded and enriching experiences extend beyond academics and employment and can lead to other holistic student-level benefits. These programs provide students the opportunity to develop quality relationships with caring adults that can improve youth social and emotional well-being.⁵ District students report that these programs expose them to new opportunities, inspiring creativity and helping them to think differently about their future possibilities and the world around them. Altogether, students find that enrichment programs empower them with a sense of purpose, confidence, and community that aids them in defining and achieving their life goals.⁶

Student Engagement

The [2023/2024 Philly School Experience Survey](#) suggests that many students do not feel motivated to attend school or see the connection between learning and their goals in life. Fewer than half of student respondents indicated that they feel like they belong at school (36%), feel welcome at school (45%), and enjoy being at school (31%). During District [Listening and Learning sessions](#), students cited lack of classroom engagement as one of the top five challenges to consistent attendance.⁷

Enrichment activities can help increase student engagement and raise attendance rates by providing new and exciting ways for students to engage in their school experience.⁸ District staff members describe the increased fulfillment and buy-in they witness from students as a result of enrichment activities.⁹ Similarly, students state that enrichment activities significantly add to their school day and make classes more entertaining, giving them a reason to get up and attend school each day.¹⁰

School Climate

At the school level, the impact of well-rounded and enriching experiences can fuel a school culture of inclusion and excitement. Enrichment activities have the ability to improve social inclusion among students, building peer relationships and increasing students' school affiliation.¹¹

Community Connections

Enrichment programming is one of the most prominent ways that community-based organizations and partners connect with schools. By outlining how they can be most helpful, the District can invite these community members and partners into schools to collaborate in making our schools feel vibrant and welcoming and helping our students grow.



Roles and Limitations of Community Partners

Community partners are essential to providing District students with well-rounded and enriching experiences. In the 2019 - 2020 school year, District schools reported 1,646 external support programs provided by 1,050 different organizations.¹² In the years since, schools have continued to express the need for community partners, with 75% of schools in the District's 2023 Student Programming Needs Assessment (SPNA) strongly agreeing that "leveraging partnerships is integral to the vision for their school."¹³ Despite the importance of community partnerships for schools, there are challenges that can deter the establishment of partnerships or limit their impact.

School Capacity

There are differences in school capacity to receive and support partnerships that can lead to issues with partner coordination and significant differences in programming across schools. Only 35% of schools in the SPNA stated that they strongly agreed that "their school has the capacity needed to coordinate their portfolio of partners and seek out additional partners when appropriate."¹⁴ This lack of capacity in some schools results in programmatic deserts across the District, with data on partnership programs from the 2019 - 2020 school year revealing that school partnerships are not equitably distributed among schools.¹⁵

Partner Capacity and Funder Focus

Many partner programs are funded through grants awarded by outside foundations and agencies. In these cases, the District may have limited influence in directing programs to certain schools and must work within the criteria for schools specified by these funders. Partner organizations may also have limitations on regions of the city that they can serve, which can mean that schools outside of that geographic region cannot access that programming.

Partnership Coordination

Community partners have also reported challenges coordinating partnerships with schools. They reference difficulties navigating the District system, particularly as staff turnover leads to transitions in the original points of contact. Communication channels vary across schools, and partners are often unsure who has decision-making authority over different aspects of programming.¹⁶ While partnership coordinators play a critical role in managing partnerships at schools, only 59 schools have some type of partnership coordinator on staff – 23 of those coordinators are purchased by the school and the remaining 36 are funded and deployed by external organizations that partner with the District.



Goal Misalignment

These challenges in coordinating partnerships reflect the fact that the District does not have a clear definition of or desired outcomes for quality enrichment programming. Community partners set their own standards and outcomes, often without guidance from schools and without the data needed to assess the long-term impacts of their programs.¹⁷ As a result, partners are often unsure of what the District expects from their programming, and partnerships end up failing to meet the critical needs of schools.¹⁸

Districts such as Los Angeles Unified School District have addressed similar challenges by centralizing the management of their enrichment programming in an office that coordinates partners and opportunities across departments. This office operates as an intermediary with community partners, ensuring selected partners align to local needs and assets and are evaluated according to core measures prioritized by the District.¹⁹ LAUSD allocates funding directly to community partners to help ensure the District prioritizes partners that are addressing the most pressing community needs.²⁰ This coordination and evaluation approach is aligned with The Coalition for Community Schools and the National Association of School Psychologists' nine key elements needed for sustaining effective partnerships.²¹

This Theory of Change directly addresses this issue by creating a framework to align enrichment programming with the District's strategic vision as laid out in *Guardrail 2* and *Accelerate Philly*.

Through this Theory of Change, we can realize the vision that through participation in enrichment programming, each student in the School District of Philadelphia will develop a sense of who they are and what matters to them; cultivating their overall wellbeing by helping them find community, joy and fulfillment.

Methodology

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:

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. This team met in-person and provided in-depth feedback at the beginning and end of each project stage, helping the project team make critical decisions about content and design and ensuring that the Theory of Change is informed by and aligned to other critical District initiatives.

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. The project team also administered a survey for District partners who were not directly engaged in the workshops to gather their feedback on the Theory of Change outcomes and strategies. Data collected from this survey helped to inform the final Theory of Change visual and narrative and generated several examples to help illustrate enrichment strategies in action.

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.

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.



| Project Phases

The Theory of Change was developed through three phases of work. The goals of each phase are outlined below.

PHASE 1:

Identifying the Problem and Clarifying Key Goals:

The goal of this phase was to define the overall intended impact of enrichment programming, as well as the needs various programs are designed to engage and benefit.

PHASE 2:

Generating the Solutions and Developing a Blueprint:

This phase focused on defining the inputs (i.e. core enrichment strategies), and the outputs (short and long-term outcomes) that will help the District achieve the intended impact for enrichment programming.

PHASE 3:

Pulling It Together:

This phase focused on developing a designed version of the Theory of Change visual and the Theory of Change narrative that can be shared with external and internal audiences.

Ultimately, this stakeholder-driven process helped ensure that the final product is inclusive of as many voices, perspectives, and experiences as possible.





What Does High Quality Enrichment Programming Look Like in Action?

| Overview

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

ENRICHMENT EXAMPLES

- Robotics Club
- Athletic Team
- Student Government

NON EXAMPLES

- Tutoring Program
- Unstructured playtime
- Just one-on-one mentoring (without other program dimensions)

Enrichment programs fall into a wide range of categories and structures and can vary from school to school (note: see [glossary](#) for more detailed information about enrichment definitions, categories and structures).

Partners and District staff deliver high-quality enrichment programming each day across the District. These are the programs that students actively seek out, consistently attend, and talk about enthusiastically when asked about their best enrichment experiences. For example, one District student, when asked why she continues to participate in her favorite enrichment program, shared that, “It’s unique — it’s something I couldn’t experience anywhere else.” So what are the essential strategies and characteristics that make these programs high quality, impactful, and in demand for students? This section of the Theory of Change provides an overview of these strategies, along with examples and supporting research.



Safe, Supportive, Interactive and Engaging Enrichment Programs

| Enrichment Strategies & Examples

In addition to gathering feedback from stakeholder groups to identify the strategies that comprise high-quality enrichment programs, the project team referenced the Youth Program Quality Assessment (PQA), a widely used resource for evaluating the quality of youth programs, to ensure the strategies represented in the Theory of Change align with core characteristics and categories of the PQA framework. In alignment with the PQA's enrichment strategy categorization, the District's goal is for all enrichment programs to be safe, supportive, interactive, and engaging.

The categories, strategies and definitions for each strategy are listed below:

STRATEGY CATEGORY 1: SAFE & SUPPORTIVE

Strategies in this category focus on the context and culture of the program. Research finds that students from disadvantaged backgrounds face increased barriers to accessing enrichment programs, making it important to understand student needs and preferences to foster inclusive enrichment opportunities.²² These strategies help ensure that programs are designed and delivered with intention and support in mind — ensuring that there are clear goals and direction for the program as well as the peer and adult connections necessary for students to engage fully and grow.

Clear and consistent communication of expectations and goals:

The program consistently communicates student expectations and program goals, and provides clear direction and communication in each session.

Intentional focus on inclusivity and community building:

The program affirms and uplifts students in expressing their authentic selves, and supports relationship-building and a sense of belonging among participants.

Opportunities for personalized and small group interactions:

The program provides opportunities for deeper adult-to-student and peer-to-peer interactions.

Development of skills:

The program builds and reinforces skills that students can use to imagine and realize the future they desire.

STRATEGY CATEGORY 2: INTERACTIVE & ENGAGING

Strategies in this category prioritize equity as an essential component of enrichment programs. Research demonstrates that program quality affects the degree to which students are motivated to engage with a program and take lessons from the program into other areas of their lives.²³ Each of these strategies centers student needs and interests, ensuring that students are reflected in the ultimate design and delivery of the program. The strategies also help ensure that students take an active role throughout the program.

Accessibility:

The program has inclusive recruitment, onboarding and activity design practices that address common barriers to participation and engagement and are responsive to student needs.

Student leadership and voice:

The program includes intentional opportunities for students to provide input, influence program direction, and lead aspects of the program.

Fun and enjoyment:

The program prioritizes student enjoyment and activities that students find interesting.

Student demonstration and reflection:

The program offers opportunities for students to reflect on progress, showcase their skills and experience pride and a sense of achievement.

The table below includes examples aligned to each strategy. These examples were provided by existing partners to demonstrate how these strategies were operationalized in their programs. While these examples are not exhaustive or reflective of every enrichment program, they are intended to help illustrate what these strategies look like in action and generate ideas for how they could be more fully integrated into programs in the future.



**CATEGORY 1:
Safe & Supportive**

STRATEGIES	EXAMPLES
<p>Clear and consistent communication of expectations and goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an objective for each session and ask participants to reflect pre- and post-session about their understanding of that objective • Review the schedule and outline of activities at the beginning of every session • Facilitate opening and closing rituals each day
<p>Intentional focus on inclusivity and community building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the adults leading programs represent diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences • Engage in self-awareness activities and community-building exercises to connect with each other • Provide participants with an opportunity to create a list of agreements to uphold during sessions that help create a safe, comfortable space for everyone who attends
<p>Opportunities for personalized and small group interactions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for students to work in project teams so they learn to collaborate with each other to get things done • Give individualized feedback to every student on their work • Provide opportunities for peer-to-peer review and feedback
<p>Development of skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw connections between skills used in activities and skills used in life • Provide space and time to debrief and reflect on skills used to manage emotion and show empathy for others when conflict arises • Offer leadership and life skills workshops that support students with effective communication, conflict resolution, mindfulness, financial empowerment, and college and career planning, among other topics



CATEGORY 2: Interactive & Engaging

STRATEGIES	EXAMPLES
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower the barriers for student engagement (e.g., by offering programs with no fees or by going into classrooms to bring the program to students directly) • Ensure all materials are translated into different languages • Focus on inclusivity and equitable activity design practices (e.g., by removing gendered language from materials or by designing activities that allow all students to participate despite learning challenges or language barriers such as illustrated story cards for verbal storytelling)
Student leadership and voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create student advisory boards to inform program development and improvement • Provide students with opportunities to identify focus areas/topics to explore in the program • Provide students with opportunities for choice/options within program activities (e.g., song/music choices, game choices)
Fun and enjoyment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expose students to new opportunities and diverse perspectives aligned to their interests and what they find exciting • Incorporate celebrations into daily program activities • Design interactive and dynamic activities and games to bring the content to life
Student demonstration and reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills during public presentations • End programs with a festival of student work as a chance to celebrate and reflect on learning • Create an anthology of student work that contains each students' story alongside their classmates' stories in published form

| Other Considerations

SEL Alignment

The School District of Philadelphia recognizes the pivotal role of social-emotional learning (SEL) in fostering positive learning environments. The Office of Climate and Culture works with schools to implement strategies for intentionally developing students' SEL skills and facilitating school-wide cultures of SEL so that all students have access to meaningful relationships and spaces of belonging. We are highlighting the work of the Office of Climate and Culture in building school and partner capacity because Enrichment programs are a key venue for building and reinforcing SEL skills.

Social-emotional learning is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to:

- develop healthy identities
- manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals
- feel and show empathy for others
- establish and maintain supportive relationships
- make responsible and caring decisions

These SEL skills are woven into the strategies and outcomes outlined in the Theory of Change. While some enrichment programs may have goals specifically focused on developing SEL skills, all enrichment programs are in a position to reinforce these skills. In particular, enrichment instructors should model and demonstrate these skills as they are key to establishing and sustaining safe and welcoming environments for our students.

Acknowledging Barriers

It is important to acknowledge the limitations that exist for many enrichment program partners to fully implement some of the enrichment strategies listed in this document. As noted in an earlier section, challenges with partnership coordination and communication at the school level can lead to misalignment in goals, expectations and program implementation between the school and enrichment partners. For example, the enrichment strategy of "Accessibility" requires coordination and collaboration between program partners and school-based staff to ensure that programs are advertised and open to all students. This strategy is challenging for partners to implement on their own if a collaborative and open relationship does not exist with school staff. The District is committed to continuing to address issues of equity in both the availability of enrichment programming across schools as well as the level of support, coordination and collaboration that exists between schools and enrichment partners.





What is the Impact of Enrichment Programming on Students?

| Overview

As described in the opening section, 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.

- **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.**”
- **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.**”
- **And for fulfillment**, a student commented that through enrichment programs, “**students gain passion and opportunities for their life goals.**” Another student shared that enrichment opportunities “**help me know the type person I can become.**”

Taken all together, the outcome pathways of joy, community and fulfillment lead to the ultimate impact of lifelong wellbeing, which is captured in the PERMA (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment) wellbeing framework developed by positive psychologist Dr. Martin Seligman from the University of Pennsylvania. PERMA is an evidence-based framework for wellbeing that includes five “building blocks” that contribute to human flourishing. These building blocks include positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment.

The PERMA framework is recognized and used globally to support the development of wellbeing in people of all ages, including young people in K-12 settings. It serves as an overarching framework to support the Theory of Change and reinforces the experiences and perspectives that students, staff and partners shared throughout the process.

| Outcome Categories

The Theory of Change outcomes are categorized across three dimensions of the student experience – in programming, in school, and in life. These categories reflect when and where the outcomes are expected to occur and represent both the immediate impact of enrichment programs and the longer term influence on students’ school and life experiences. Each category is summarized below, along with the corresponding outcomes.

IN PROGRAMMING

These outcomes occur as part of students’ engagement in enrichment programs, during the time they are participating. They are intended to be attainable in a given year and should strengthen over time as students continue to engage in enrichment programs.

Research confirms the importance of these outcomes for young people. Having the opportunity to explore new interests and learn about themselves increases young people’s learning engagement and excitement for the future.²⁴ Experiencing positive emotions such as joy and a sense of freedom widens the range of actions young people see as available to themselves, fostering curiosity and willingness to try new things.²⁴

The outcomes in this category are as follows:

In programming, students...

- develop social and interpersonal skills
- make new friends and deepen existing friendships
- build positive and supportive relationships with adults

COMMUNITY

- have fun and enjoy activities
- have spaces where they are free to be their full selves

JOY

- explore and discover new interests
- learn about themselves
- build new skills
- develop and employ creative problem solving skills
- take risks and learn through mistakes

FULFILLMENT



IN SCHOOL

These outcomes are part of students' school and community experiences outside of enrichment. They occur in the same timeframe and as a result of participation in enrichment activities.

Research confirms the importance of these outcomes for young people. Finding joy in school and learning is a foundation from which young people build confidence and motivation to persist through difficult tasks.²⁶ Furthermore, feeling a sense of belonging in school or other communities promotes higher levels of self-esteem, positive classroom behavior, and academic achievement, as well as lower levels of absenteeism.²⁷

The outcomes in this category are as follows:

In school, students...

- feel welcome and like they belong in school and their communities outside school

COMMUNITY

- get connected to/participate in other programs and opportunities

- view learning and new experiences as sources of joy

JOY

- increase their level of engagement in school
- have an increased sense of agency to identify what matters to them and pursue it
- navigate and persist through challenges
- have improved confidence

FULFILLMENT





IN LIFE

These are the enduring outcomes that extend beyond students' enrichment and school experiences. They capture the overarching notion of wellbeing and align to the PERMA framework outlined in this document.

Research confirms the importance of these outcomes as young people transition to adulthood. Believing in oneself and having a network of community support is essential to helping young people avoid the hardships of employment instability, housing instability, and poverty as they enter young adulthood.²⁸ A young person's ability to avoid these hardships in young adulthood is in part dependent on their experiences growing up. It is crucial for youth to experience enrichment opportunities that equip them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for positive development.²⁹

The outcomes in this category are as follows:

In life, students...



experience joy, happiness, and excitement



develop a lifelong network of friends, mentors, and collaborators who provide them with support and a sense of belonging/connection



engage in a range of activities that are aligned to their interests and passions



feel their lives matter and have a sense of direction because they are doing things that are important to them and are making a difference



believe in themselves and have a sense of pride in their accomplishments and reflect on their growth

Closing

This Theory of Change reflects the best of enrichment programming across our District. It centers the voices and perspectives of students, staff and District partners to ensure that it is truly Philadelphia by design. At the same time, it is backed by rigorous, globally-recognized research as well as widely-regarded frameworks for enrichment program quality and wellbeing.

This Theory of Change has the potential to support the ongoing development and growth of high-quality enrichment programs across all District schools. It is both a north star that reflects the District's highest aspirations for student impact, as well as a roadmap that connects cross-cutting, student-centered strategies to outcomes in multiple domains of students' experiences.

Ultimately, this Theory of Change can help everyone who has a hand in supporting the growth and development of our students work together more cohesively and collaboratively toward shared goals. One student perhaps put it best when reflecting on why enrichment programming matters. He reflected,

“It’s about being able to have self-love. It’s about changing the way you think – including about yourself.”

Here’s to students discovering the best of themselves through the highest-quality, most enriching experiences we have to offer.





Additional Background Information

| Glossary

Enrichment programming can have different structures, characteristics and delivery methods. This section defines some commonly used terminology to help clarify how these terms intersect with our definition of enrichment programming.

Enrichment:

Activities that complement academic subjects and/or build skills and interests beyond the core curriculum. These programs provide opportunities to develop and demonstrate skills and reinforce social and emotional competencies.

ENRICHMENT EXAMPLES

- Robotics Club
- Athletic Team
- Student Government

NON EXAMPLES

- Tutoring Program
- Unstructured playtime
- Just one-on-one mentoring (without other program dimensions)

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/during the school day
- Convene regularly
- Involve several participants
- Are guided or supported by an adult
- Are organized around developing and demonstrating skills

Enrichment programs are organized into the following topic and structure categories:

TOPIC CATEGORIES		
Domain	Subdomains	Definitions
Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Language Arts Math Social Studies Science World Languages STEAM Digital Literacy and Computer Science 	Programs related to an academic core subject area. These programs may be considered co-curricular if they have been designed in alignment to curricula or SDP frameworks.
Hobbies/Interests		Programs that allow students to explore interests that enrich their lives beyond the realms of academics and professional pursuits (i.e. knitting).
Health and Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Physical Education Sports-based Youth Development Nutrition/Food Mindfulness/Wellness 	Programs that promote physical, mental, and/or emotional well-being among students.
Competitive Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athletics teams Chess Debate 	Programs that focus on developing skills and testing them in competition.
Civic Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Stewardship 	Programs that promote addressing issues of public concern.
Cultural/Affinity/Identity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs that offer opportunities for students to explore different aspects of their identity and find community among peers. Programs with the central goal of supporting students in enhancing their self-awareness, emotional intelligence, resilience, and overall well-being.
Student Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Government Ambassador Programs 	Programs aimed at nurturing students' leadership abilities.
Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music Visual Art Dance Theater/Drama Media Arts 	Programs related to musical, visual, and performing arts.
Student Publications and Media		Programs related to student-run media and publication outlets including print, radio, broadcast, video, or web-based.

STRUCTURE CATEGORIES	
Structure Type	Categories
Time of Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before School After School During School (in class) During School (outside of class)
Lead/Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Partner Led Internal Staff Led Internal/External Co-Facilitation

| Glossary (continued)

Expanded Learning:

Educational programs and activities that extend learning opportunities beyond the traditional school day and year. These programs are designed to provide additional academic support, enrichment activities, and other developmental opportunities. They often include afterschool programs, summer learning initiatives, and other out-of-school time activities that help students enhance their skills, knowledge, and interests.

Co-Curricular:

Enrichment activities intentionally designed to complement and enrich the curriculum or framework of District courses. Co-curricular activities are directly aligned to the frameworks/scopes of District curricula.

Extra-Curricular:

Enrichment activities that occur outside of the classroom and which are not directly aligned with District curricular frameworks/scopes.

Out-of-School Time/After-School:

Out-of-School Time (OST) refers to the broader concept of time outside of regular school hours, encompassing not only after-school hours but also before school, weekends, holidays, and summer vacation. Afterschool specifically refers to the time immediately following the regular school day, typically in the late afternoon or early evening.

In Philadelphia, "OST" is often used to describe programs that operate after school five days a week during the school year and provide six-week summer programs.

Extended Day/Year:

Extended Day/Full Day and Extended Year/Full Year is a comprehensive initiative to offer additional programmatic opportunities for SDP students and their families that include services before and after school, winter break, spring break, and during the summer months.

Academic Intervention:

Targeted support and instructional strategies designed to help students who are struggling academically. These interventions aim to address specific learning gaps, provide additional practice and reinforcement, and improve overall academic performance. They can be implemented during the school day, after school, or through specialized programs and often involve small group or one-on-one instruction.

Post Secondary Readiness:

The preparation of students for success in education and training beyond high school. This includes ensuring that students have the necessary academic skills, knowledge, and behaviors to succeed in college, vocational training, or other postsecondary programs. It also involves career readiness, financial literacy, and understanding the pathways to various postsecondary options.

Mentoring:

A supportive relationship where a more experienced or knowledgeable person (the mentor) provides guidance, advice, and support to a less experienced person (the mentee). In an educational context, mentoring programs can help students navigate academic challenges, set goals, build confidence, and develop important life skills. Mentors can be teachers, older students, community members, or professionals who volunteer their time to support the mentees' personal and academic growth.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

Social-emotional learning is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to:

- develop healthy identities
- manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals
- feel and show empathy for others
- establish and maintain supportive relationships
- make responsible and caring decisions

| Detailed Stakeholder Engagement Process

Phase 1: Identifying the Problem and Clarifying Key Goals

The goal of this phase was to define the overall intended impact of enrichment programming, as well as the needs various programs are designed to engage and benefit. During this phase:

- **Students** engaged in an interactive workshop that centered around three prompts:
 - *Think about the enrichment activities you participate in. Why are these activities important to you?*
 - *Why do you think some students do not participate in enrichment activities?*
 - *How do you think enrichment activities will help you in the future (e.g. important skills, experiences, etc. that you will need beyond high school)?*
- **Enrichment partners** shared stories of impact from their own programs and discussed the prompt, *How do you currently define the ultimate intended impact of your work?* They also lifted up barriers to enrichment programming and shared feedback on draft intended impact statements.
- **District staff** reflected on the prompt, *What would be different in the long-term if all SDP students were provided with enriching and well-rounded experiences?* They also shared feedback on draft intended impact statements.

Students also shared feedback on draft intended impact statements that the project team developed based on initial insights from the core team.

Phase 2: Generating the Solutions and Developing a Blueprint

This phase focused on defining the inputs (i.e. core enrichment strategies), and the outputs (short and long-term outcomes) that will help the District achieve the intended impact for enrichment programming. During this phase:

- **Students** participated in a gallery walk activity centered around four enrichment outcome categories and shared insights on short, medium and long-term outcomes related to each category. They also reflected on two prompts related to enrichment strategies:
 - 1) *What are the characteristics of enrichment programs that would make you want to keep coming back to them?*
 - 2) *What makes these activities different from other experiences that you have/have had?*
- **Enrichment partners** reflected on short and long-term outcomes that are important in their own programs and engaged in an interactive activity focused on four enrichment outcome categories. They also provided in-depth feedback on enrichment terms, definitions and hierarchy.
- **District staff** reviewed and shared feedback on four enrichment outcome categories and reflected on the prompt, *Consider an enrichment program at your school that is particularly strong. What characteristics of this program help lead to the outcomes we just reviewed?*

Phase 3: Pulling It Together

This phase focused on developing a designed version of the Theory of Change visual and the Theory of Change narrative that can be shared with external and internal audiences. During this phase:

- **Students** worked in small, facilitated groups to review a draft set of enrichment programming strategies and strategy categories. They pulled from their own experiences and perspectives related to high-quality enrichment experiences to help refine the strategies and rank them in order of importance. Specifically, they reflected on the following prompts:
 - 1) *Which strategies and examples resonate with you? Which ones do not?*
 - 2) *How could the language used to describe these strategies be clearer?*
 - 3) *What's missing that we could consider adding in?*
- **Enrichment partners** reflected on essential strategies that they use in their own programs and worked in small, facilitated groups to provide feedback on a draft set of enrichment programming strategies and strategy categories. Partners also generated specific examples of each enrichment strategy from their own programs.
- **District staff** reviewed a draft set of enrichment programming strategies and shared feedback to help clarify and refine language. Staff also shared feedback on which strategies are most important for achieving short and long-term outcomes in enrichment programs.



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