



Personalized Learning Program

The essence of education is not to transfer knowledge; it is to guide the learning process, to put responsibility for study into the students' own hands.

- Tsunesaburo Makiguchi



Mission Statement

The Mission of the Personalized Learning Program is to promote a positive and safe environment for learning emphasizing rigor, high expectations, and teamwork.

Goal

To meet the educational needs of each individual student and equip them with the knowledge and 21st century skills to be successful in their post high school endeavor.



Overview

The personalized learning program services students in grades 9-12, who are driven, eager to learn, who can work with a team of their peers, and who want to participate in their own learning. Parents work as true partners with the school to create a full, inviting, learning environment for their children.

Personalized Learning Program (PLP) is a teaching method that engages students in learning both knowledge and 21st century skills of communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and creativity.

Today's employers are searching for 'team players' and employees who can be given a task and deadline and use their creative abilities to solve problems.

PLP offers the flexibility to meet the needs of diverse learners through both group and individual projects. Students start at different places when they begin, however, each student brings something to the table. For instance, a new skill or perspective. Students who are used to waiting for directions may find this type of learning challenging. On the flip side, kids who prefer working independently may not enjoy working as a team, but collaboration is a critical skill and the 'real' world will be full of situations that require team work.

Structure

PLP does not resemble a traditional classroom. Instead of formal, subject-orientated classes, individuals and groups of students choose, plan, research, and complete academic study and hands-on projects that result in tangible, real life products. Learning experiences take place outside of the confines of the school building (in the 'real-world') whenever possible, include community experts as much as possible, and cover broad academic areas of study. The activities require students to develop skills in time management, team work, communication, planning, self assessment, problem solving, and meaningful applications of acquired knowledge.

Program Basics

- A small community of learners-low student/advisor ratio
- Personalized Learning Plan
- Curriculum is integrated, student-driven, project oriented and standards based
- Highly qualified instructors
- High expectations with positive support
- Laptop computer for each student
- Individual personal work station
- High expectation for parent and community involvement
- Opportunities for field experiences and internships

Advisories

The PLP consists of highly-qualified advisors and is the foundation of the program. Each advisory is composed of the instructor and a group of students whom the advisor will get to know very well. Every morning, for 20-45 minutes, each advisor meets with her/his students for a variety of purposes. Some meetings are devoted to academic skill improvement. Other meetings include "check-in," discussion of projects or sharing of ideas and needs. The chance to review research, discuss obstacles and progress, timelines, personal issues, and set goals for the future is essential to the success of the project process. Over time, each advisory group develops an individual chemistry and a special bond. It is a place where students are safe and free to share both the joys and concerns of their lives. Appreciation of and tolerance for differences is a natural outgrowth of the shared time. Advisors are aware of virtually every aspect of a student's life and personality through observation over an extended period of time. The chance for students to make real, substantial, and permanent changes is vastly improved by the collaborative relationship they share with their advisor.

Community

The people of the local and global community will provide us with expert resources for students. This allows for an expanded curriculum far beyond the capabilities of our teaching staff. Community experts can pass along knowledge and skills that they possess as well as share experiences of life that benefit students.

Employers have the opportunity to be involved in projects or having students complete internships at their businesses thereby allowing our students to acquire habits and skills that employers are wanting as well as skills needed for the global community.

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled."

Plutarch

Greek historian, biographer, and essayist



On-Campus Resources

Some of the resources available on the PLP campus:

- *Wireless internet access
- *Art/ceramic facility
- *Automotive shop
- *Science labs
- *Instrumental/vocal music
- *Fitness center/gym
- *Recording studio
- *Wood shop
- *Agricultural facility
- *Drama, theatre arts
- *Culinary art center
- *Natural habitat area

Project Possibilities

Students can receive core and elective credit in almost any area of their interest. Limits are set only by the imagination. A few elective possibilities are as follows:

- Water quality research
- Guitar I and II
- Business Management
- Taxidermy
- Advanced Biology
- Technical Writing
- Multimedia
- WW II
- Pharmacy Technician
- Intro to Education
- Intro to Wind Tech
- Google Sketch Up
- American Civil War
- Psychology
- Topics in Immigration
- Newspaper
- World Geography
- Digital Marketing
- Microbiology
- Bovine genetics
- Early Egyptian History
- Environmental Science
- Equine Massage Therapy
- Conversational foreign language
- Speech
- Community Service
- Computer Programming
- PC Repair
- Zoology
- Guitar making
- Health
- Dance/gymnastics
- Auto Restoration
- Photography
- European History
- Lifetime Fitness
- Entrepreneurship
- Research topics

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement begins with the development of the student's personal learning plan together with the student and his/her advisor. Parents will provide further support through the student evaluation process, school site council, organization of community events, and participation in mentoring/ internship programs. Additional parental interaction will include conferences, event nights, and special presentations.

There are many opportunities for parental involvement in the PLP. Depending upon the parent's talents, availability, and schedule, he/she may be able to participate in one or more of the following ways:

- Participate with your child on his/her projects.
- Participate in student/parent/advisor consultations for planning and evaluation.
- Learn the project-based process along with your child so you can support and assist him/her.
- Provide constructive feedback to teachers.
- Chaperone PLP student events.
- Offer yourself as a resource to PLP students in your area of expertise.
- Share knowledge of community resources with PLP students and teachers.
- Assist PLP students and teachers on site.
- Organize community events.
- Serve on PLP site council.
- Support your child's interests and efforts!

Credits

Credits are awarded and based on proficiency in a course area. Core standards in courses such as English, Social Science and Science are easily incorporated into the projects. Credits such as speech and multimedia technology are also prevalent in projects. There are virtually no limits to the elective credits a student can receive and only limited by the imagination. Students have the option of attending traditional courses for part of the day and are encouraged to consider this option for their upper-level math credits and group courses such as band or vocal. Seminars will also be available to provide specific skills or knowledge. The student's Personalized Learning Plan which is developed by both advisor and parents, will attend to the required and elective credits. Each project can contain either partial or full credits in all of the core and elective areas. Students will complete numerous projects throughout the year and their progress toward earning credits will be closely monitored. Students are expected to make satisfactory progress toward graduation and complete a minimum of seven credits per year.

Erie High School

Contact Information

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The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think—rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with thoughts of other men.

- Bill Beattie

American Manager & Coach

The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives.

-Robert Maynard Hutchins

Educational Philosopher

Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve.

-Roger Lewin

Anthropologist & author

Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.

- Malcolm S. Forbes

Publisher of Forbes Magazine

You must do the things you think you cannot do.

-Eleanor Roosevelt

First Lady 1933-1945