



New Tech Network



NEW TECH NETWORK

# IMPACT REPORT

2022





Welcome to DLA

219  
Schools

25 Years of Impact

400+

Schools Supported

1,000+

Graduating Classes

20,000+

Educators Trained

## Network Snapshot

### Partnering Across the Country<sup>1</sup>

New Tech Network partners with K-12 schools in rural, urban, and suburban communities in over 23 states.

### Preparing Every Student

New Tech Network students persist in college at a rate of 82 percent compared to 74 percent nationally.<sup>2</sup>

New Tech Network high school students graduate at a rate of 95 percent compared to the national average high school graduation rate of 85 percent.<sup>2</sup>

### A Whole School Approach

NTN students gained the academic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills necessary for success in post-secondary life and beyond. NTN students had higher rates of graduating from high school, and were more likely to enroll in 4-year colleges than similar students who attended comparison schools.<sup>3</sup>



95,000+  
Current Students



5,700+  
Current Teachers



90,000+  
NTN graduates over  
the past 25 years



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The past few years have brought a steady stream of disruptions to America’s schools along with a growing clamor to examine what school is-or more importantly- what school should be in all of its dimensions. These calls to re-imagine schools, through the learner and educator experience, point to the power of an effective school model in leading transformation efforts.

For 25 years we have helped local communities create hundreds of successful schools by partnering with districts in more than 30 states. Each partnership shares a common vision: to create schools that provide a supportive and inclusive culture, meaningful and equitable instruction, purposeful assessment, and college and career ready outcomes for all students.

Each of the more than 200 schools that are members of New Tech Network benefit from our decades of experience driven by research-based best practices. The deep repository of resources and powerful professional development NTN offers serve to empower classroom educators, school administrators, and instructional coaches to work together to create relevant and rigorous learning for each student. Our network of tens of thousands of educators also provides essential peer-to-peer learning opportunities to address common challenges and share their learning.

Through several multi-year grants we are developing new resources and methodologies to support schools. Now entering our sixth year of learning alongside districts we are focused on strengthening district capacity to lead and sustain transformation and leverage network effects to expand and sustain deeper learning. We are in the third year of learning from continuous improvement activities to ensure students are on-track for high school graduation and postsecondary success. By leveraging data on student and educator experiences, we recently released a major revision of the NTN School Success Rubric, a developmental guide that allows elementary and secondary schools to reflect on their implementation of the New Tech Network Model and to move towards a more meaningful, equitable, and inclusive learning environment for their students.

This impact report is dedicated to all of the passionate educators who are engaged in a school transformation journey. Too often in the debate about America’s schools, the quintessential questions of how teachers teach and how students learn are lost. Our work together makes deeper learning possible for each student, paving the way for students to grapple with challenging curricula, gain critical skills and use their voices in ways that prepare them for life beyond school.

Onward,

**Lydia Dobyns**  
President & CEO



# New Tech Network Overview

New Tech Network (NTN) is a national nonprofit dedicated to systemic and equitable change in education. We center schools as the units of change, and teachers and school leaders as the agents of that change. These educators model a participatory change process for their students, demonstrating the benefits of shared leadership and collective action. Partnering with districts and working closely with their leadership teams make change scalable and sustainable. After 25 years of change making, we have learned what works and can adapt quickly.

New Tech Network schools – now over 200 strong – are committed to college and career ready outcomes, supportive and inclusive culture, meaningful and equitable instruction, and purposeful assessment. Like the strands of a rope, when woven together, they strengthen the whole. Teachers and school leaders operate in an environment built on a vision and collective action, where educators are the architects of the learning environment. The student experience is tied directly to deeper learning outcomes. Students gain skills and use their voice in ways that prepare them for life beyond school. Project-based learning in NTN schools allows students to engage with their learning in creative, culturally relevant ways, experience it in context, and share their learning with peers.

Teachers, administrators, and district leaders adopt this school model because it produces critical thinkers and problem-solvers, vital to the long-term health and wellbeing of our communities. Students embrace it because they feel a sense of belonging. They are challenged to learn in relevant, meaningful ways that shape the way they interact with the world.

When change is collectively held rather than siloed, and all stakeholders are engaged rather than alienated, schools and districts build their own capacity to sustain innovation and continuously improve.

New Tech Network’s whole school approach provides teachers, administrators, and district leaders with complementary yet distinct roles in implementation, and relies on shared leadership. NTN’s experienced support staff do much more than train stakeholders. They support professional educators to lead, adapt to student needs and strengths, and amplify those strengths while adjusting what is needed to address challenges.



## The NTN Mission

New Tech Network supports change agents at the school and district levels by shifting the way educational change happens.

We transform individual schools and support vibrant district learning communities by:

Providing NTN’s structured, responsive, research-based

whole school approach to help our district partners and their stakeholders transform both individual schools and groups of schools into equitable, supportive, and meaningful learning environments.

Sharing field-leading knowledge, research, and resources to drive awareness and uptake of leading approaches to educational change that center on college and career ready outcomes, supportive and inclusive culture, meaningful and equitable instruction, and purposeful assessment.

Connecting teachers, administrators, and district leaders as part of a supportive, committed, forward-looking network to learn, share knowledge, and work together to create change and solve entrenched challenges.



## We Believe

- Access to joyful, meaningful, and relevant educational experiences is a fundamental human right.
- Education shapes society and helps create critical thinkers, problem solvers, and informed citizens.
- Deeper learning approaches, such as project-based learning, are essential to equip all learners for the future.
- Although education systems generally aim for college and career readiness, they often don’t equip young people with the skills they need to succeed. Systems can, and must, transform so that all learners can thrive.
- A collaborative, whole school culture is critical to meaningful, sustainable change.



## Reaching Higher

NTN students outperform non-NTN students and demonstrate workforce readiness skills<sup>4</sup>. New Tech Network students:

- outperformed on SAT/ACT<sup>5</sup> and state exams<sup>6</sup> in English, Math, Biology, English Language Arts, and Algebra
- made statistically significant gains in critical thinking<sup>7</sup>
- report stronger instructional methods<sup>8</sup> than non-NTN students

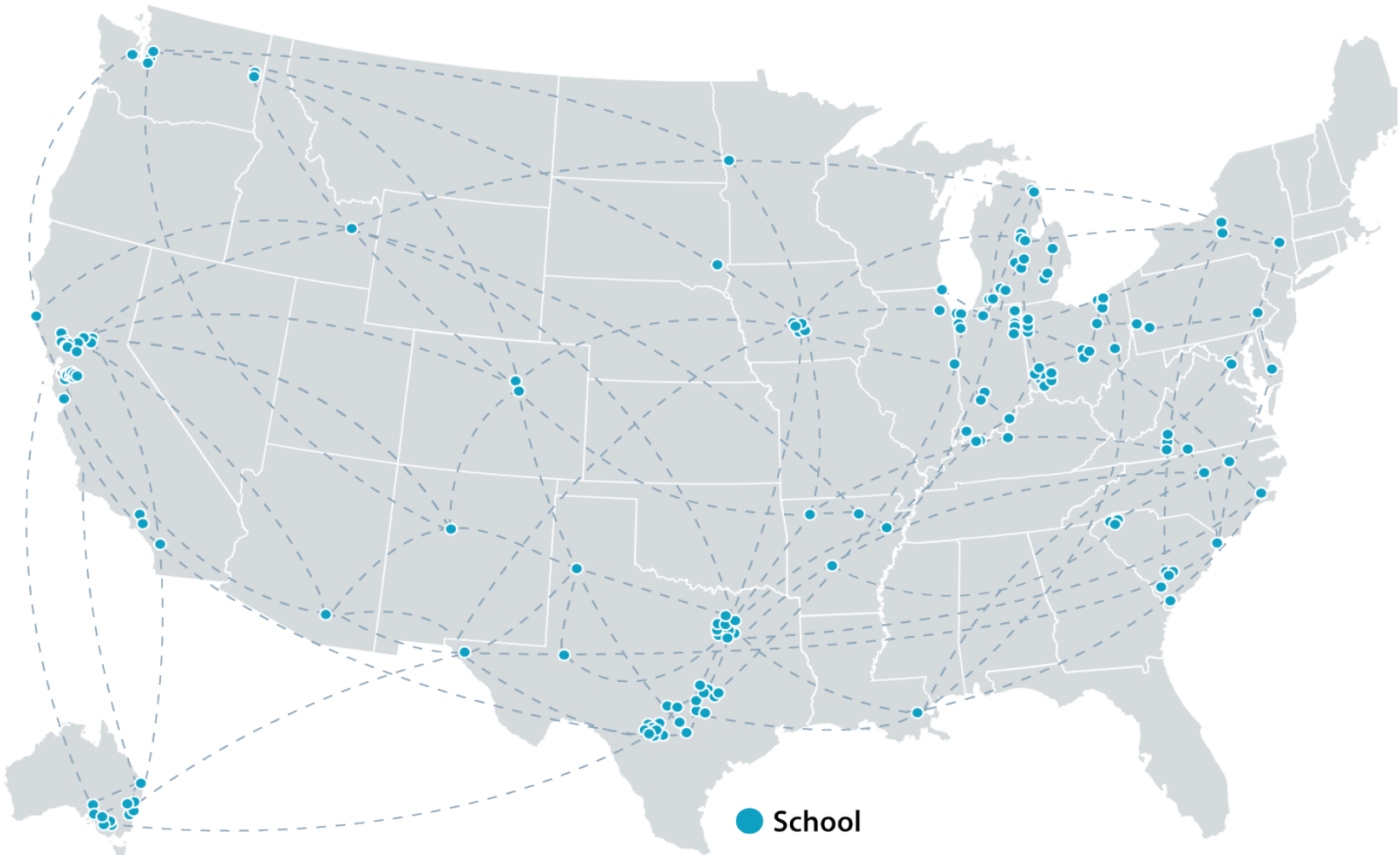
# The NTN Map

NTN partners with district, charter, and private schools creating a network where collaboration is made easy and encouraged. Classroom educators and school leaders regularly share ideas and best practices with other Network schools.

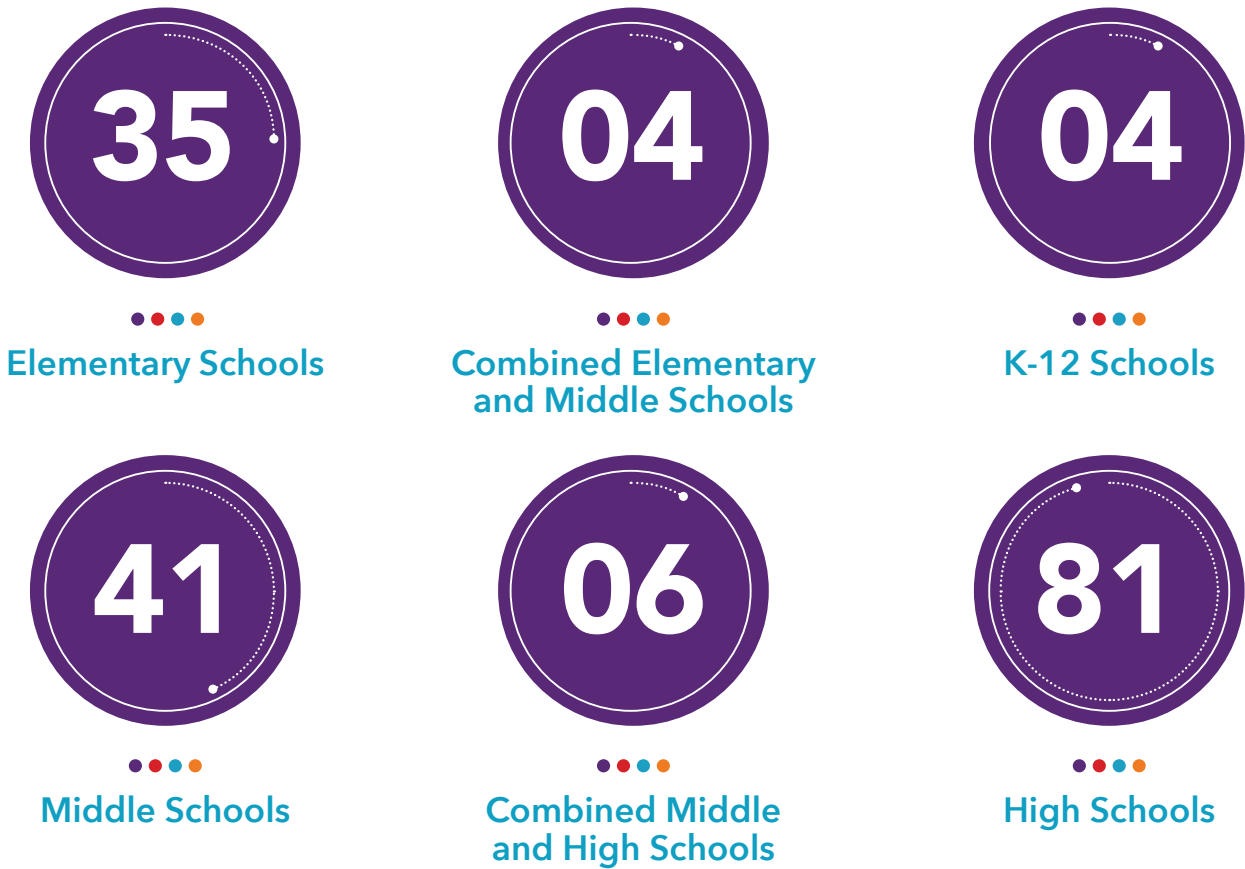


For New Tech Network, encouraging and facilitating this spirit of collaboration stems from schools sharing a common vision for how students are educated so they are prepared for an ever-evolving world. The Network enables educators at all levels to collaborate, like teachers sharing project ideas or district leaders convening to discuss predictable challenges and best practices. When an active network of people work together, they produce better ideas and improve the quality of resources. Implementing comprehensive school change brings both predictable and unexpected challenges. Facing these challenges in isolation is often ineffective and frequently difficult to sustain. To build a more effective local educational system, schools benefit most by working together. The NTN School Model combined with the power of a nation-wide network create a formidable force for change.

## A Diverse Network



Australia





# Our Whole School Approach is a Model for School Transformation

**Liz Bergeron**, Managing Director of Research and Strategy  
**Alix Horton**, Chief Learning Officer  
**Alexis Morgan**, Chief Schools Officer

As educators, we know that effective change is inherent to our work. Addressing staff turnover, responding to state education initiatives, and implementing best instructional practices while creating enabling learning environments can feel overwhelming. Oftentimes in school systems, change processes are born as the vision of one dynamic leader who tries to tackle a major, but siloed component of schooling (academic achievement, professional development for staff, parent involvement and more). While well-intentioned, we’ve seen many such initiatives fail due to the change process being in conflict with other district initiatives or being tied to the specific success of that leader. In our more-than 25 years of school transformation, we have identified effective and sustainable ways to approach school redesign with a focus on equitable practices,

improved outcomes, and lasting change.

## A Whole School Approach to Transformation

We believe when transformation is adopted by a school, its stakeholders and its community, everyone is more engaged, and schools build their own unique capacity to sustain the innovation and continuously improve. Our vision of school transformation reflects a comprehensive, culturally relevant, and equitable approach to educational systemic change – involving culture, professional development, data analysis, instruction, and policies. We call this vision a Whole School Approach. We define a whole school approach as the kind of transformation needed to ensure a learning environment where every component of the student experience is



aligned to this work. Students experience this innovative way of learning in their classrooms, with their interactions with teachers, peers and school leadership, how they’re assessed in their learning, and college and career opportunities. The NTN Model aligns all components of schooling, empowers the entire system to lead a change process, invites the community in, and adapts to the needs and strengths of the learning community.

Whole school transformation for each and every student isn’t just our belief - research suggests<sup>9</sup> that effective schools are those that embrace change at a comprehensive level, rather than the adoption of programs that focus on addressing single components of a school system.

Research also identifies<sup>10</sup> that whole school change efforts are more likely to be effective than “tacked-on” or otherwise targeted programs. Strategies designed to affect all elements of a student’s learning typically result in higher levels of interactive instruction.

The decision to engage in systemic change can be challenging, and the work of school transformation is often hard. The work can be messy, non-linear and requires commitment and collaboration from all stakeholders. That’s why at NTN, we approach school transformation the same way we approach classroom instruction: as a developmental process. School and district leaders engage in the same types of inquiry, reflection, data analysis and collaboration during the school transformation process as their students will in their project-based learning classrooms. By its very design, our approach to school transformation enables schools and districts to grow, adapt and sustain over time. We do this by centering our model around four Focus Areas: college and career ready outcomes, supportive and inclusive culture, meaningful and equitable instruction, and purposeful assessment.

## The Path to Whole School Transformation

The NTN redesign process begins with comprehensive planning resources and the NTN Model Commitments, which are designed to prepare schools for a successful implementation of the NTN Model. The NTN Model Commitments lay the foundation for the work of school transformation, and our planning resources ensure the district or school is ready to take the necessary steps towards powerful project-based learning, building adult culture, and aligning the district’s vision to learning outcomes.

Once a school and district are ready to make that commitment, it adopts the NTN School Success Rubric, a developmental rubric organized around the four Focus Areas. The NTN School Success Rubric is intended to help both elementary and secondary school teachers and leaders reflect on their implementation of the NTN Model and move towards a more meaningful, equitable, and inclusive learning environment for all students.

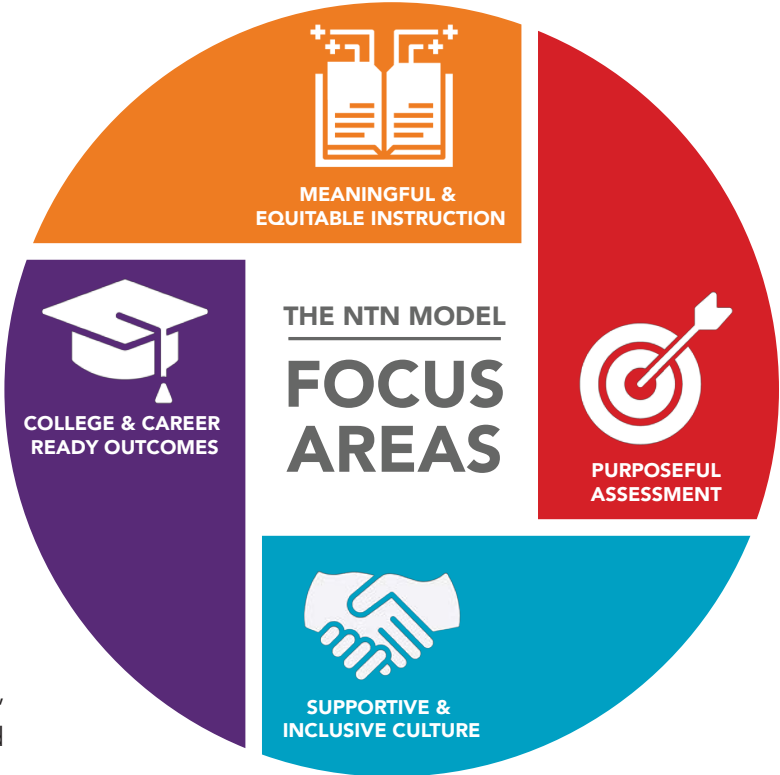
As schools progress in their practice around the elements of the NTN School Success Rubric, the focus shifts from implementation to sustainability – and that’s our goal. At NTN, we work to help school systems build and maintain their own capacity to create the equitable, deeper learning environments that are right for their community. We understand how staff turnover, funding shifts, enrollment changes and other challenges affect a school system, and we’ve designed our model to support schools to adapt to their local context so they can sustain and grow to help students ultimately thrive. We join fellow educators in a shared vision to work together to advance deeper learning approaches so that students participate in joyful, meaningful, and relevant educational experiences – leading to improved learning outcomes and college and career readiness for each and every student.

## DEVELOPMENTAL PHASES OF THE NTN SCHOOL SUCCESS RUBRIC



# NTN Model Focus Areas

New Tech Network’s decades of experience guiding schools through comprehensive transformation is guided by these four Focus Areas. We developed the focus areas to align the work of whole school transformation and to help school communities understand the overarching goals that impact the work through all phases of our school development process.



## MEANINGFUL & EQUITABLE INSTRUCTION

Center the instructional approach on authentic, complex thinking, and problem-solving. Based on our experience, high-quality, relevant project-based learning (PBL) is the best way for students to experience deep, contextual, and shared learning and acquire and demonstrate proficiency in college and career ready outcomes.

## PURPOSEFUL ASSESSMENT

Cultivate shared, school-wide understandings of equitable, purposeful assessment and grading practices that inform teacher instruction, emphasize individual student growth, and demonstrate progress towards college and career readiness. These include performance assessments for students to demonstrate their learning in age-appropriate ways.

## SUPPORTIVE & INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Foster a school-wide culture of belonging, care, community, and growth for adults and students. This type of culture helps ensure that students and teachers alike have ownership over the learning experience and school environment.

## COLLEGE & CAREER READY OUTCOMES

Prepare each student for postsecondary success with the knowledge, skills, and mindsets to be ready for college and career: Collaboration, Knowledge and Thinking, Written Communication, Oral Communication, and Agency.

# Demographic Composition

	Total NTN Students	Total Elementary School	Total Middle School	Total High School	NTN School Range
African American /Black	17%	19%	15%	19%	0-98
American Indian /Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0-10
Asian Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0-7
Hispanic/Latino/a/x	31%	38%	35%	26%	0-99
White	35%	26%	39%	38%	0-97
Two or More	5%	6%	5%	4%	0-24
Male	48%	52%	51%	47%	0-68
Female	45%	48%	47%	43%	0-100
English Learner Students	14%	24%	16%	11%	0-79
Special Education	12%	13%	13%	12%	0-100

\* Demographic categories are aligned with National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reporting to enable comparisons.

	Total NTN Schools	Total ES	Total MS	Total HS
Schoolwide Title 1 Eligible	57%	33%	35%	43%



# The Benefits of Joining New Tech Network



- Partnering with New Tech Network enables school leaders and classroom educators to create high-quality, equitable, supportive, and meaningful learning opportunities for each and every student. Benefits include access to:
- ✓ A structured, responsive, research-based, and effective whole school approach designed to meet your needs and provide ongoing, comprehensive support from a team of experienced professionals. This is centered on developing an instructional approach and aligned school culture in order to disrupt inequities and close opportunity gaps through deeper learning practices.
  - ✓ Extensive support and collaboration for schools and teachers as they engage learners, create relevant, meaningful PBL content, and support the social and emotional needs of each student.
  - ✓ Existing resources to change all aspects of schooling, including approaches to teaching and learning, leadership, culture, and supports – now and over time.
  - ✓ NTN’s robust coaching and training solutions and tools, including leading PBL tools, instructional, cultural, and assessment practices, and Echo, NTN’s learning management system.
  - ✓ Relevant expertise and information that can be easily re-applied to your unique context, including comprehensive, customized, evidence-based solutions to meet your unique context and needs no matter where you are on your transformation journey.
  - ✓ A deep partnership that encompasses both launch and long-term, sustaining support to achieve ongoing improvement and lasting change.
  - ✓ The NTN network of peers and education professionals, including the opportunity to connect directly with other, similar schools to access unfiltered relevant information and advice, build relationships, and gain peer-to-peer learning.



# NTN Partnership Stages

New Tech Network provides differentiated products and services at each partnership stage designed to guide schools and districts to achieve lasting change and ongoing improvement. Each stage is customized based on the unique needs and context of each of our partners and where they are in their transformation journey:

## Planning

We use the year prior to a school system implementing the NTN Model to prepare. During the Planning Year, NTN implements a set of events, virtual check-ins, and administrative tasks for school leadership teams, school teams, and teachers who are focused on readiness for project-based learning, building adult culture, and aligning district structures to learning outcomes across their system.

## Implementation

In the Implementation Stage, school leaders and teachers develop best practices in the NTN Model and identify areas of growth around the NTN Focus Areas: college and career ready outcomes, meaningful and equitable instruction, purposeful assessment, and supportive and inclusive culture. Schools in the Implementation Stage are offered a standard base of services to help support their growth and differentiated services as needed.

## Sustainability

As NTN schools transition from a focus on implementation into one of sustainability, NTN’s overarching goal is to support them in building and maintaining the local capacity necessary for equitable, deeper learning environments as defined by the NTN School Success Rubric. NTN’s Sustainability Services aimed at supporting schools in achieving these goals are primarily oriented toward the support of school leadership teams. Based on the services that schools select, this support may be provided by a School Development Coach, through direct access to leadership-specific resources, or by attending NTN’s national and regional events.

NTN serves three groups at your school or district during each stage of a New Tech Network partnership:

<b>Leadership Team</b> This small group, including the school leader and teacher leaders, keeps the instructional vision and direction in focus. Leadership Teams help ensure sustainability and shared leadership.	<b>School Team</b> A diverse mix of teachers, leaders, and school staff who implement the New Tech Network Model. They address challenges and develop a strong culture of student and adult learning.	<b>Teachers Team</b> Teachers make PBL in the classroom happen. To ensure their success, NTN provides on-demand, personalized and differentiated support to meet each teacher at their level of need.
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# Mobilizing for Change: Handy Middle School

## Bay City, Michigan

When district leaders in Bay City Public Schools (Michigan) began reopening their doors post-pandemic shutdown, they realized that they needed to critically analyze the impact of school closures on their children. In response, Bay City Public Schools leaders established the Learning Recovery Task Force, a task force of teachers and school administrators to evaluate how to best serve its students once schools reopened. “School closures and remote learning impacted our students in dramatically different ways in regards to inequities,” shared Bay City Public Schools Chief Academic Officer Patrick Malley. “We wanted to be really intentional with how the task force analyzed these impacts, and we looked at what other communities were doing in terms of best practices. That’s where the conversation about Handy Middle School surfaced.”

Handy Middle School is a 6-8 grade school with an annual enrollment of approximately 700-800 students. According to Malley, the school’s students experienced a more profound impact from the pandemic and had historically suffered challenges

in the past, including frequent changes in school leadership.

Beginning August of 2022, Handy Middle School will have officially implemented the New Tech Network Model with its 6th grade students, with whole-school implementation (all grade levels) planned by year three.

The district’s process for evaluating a school redesign was exceptionally efficient, thanks to a number of distinct structures.

### Create Transparent Goals and Communication

The district’s sense of urgency made it critical to establish a stringent timeline and structure, and district leaders leveraged this momentum to propel the task force towards change. During the task force meetings in the redesign analysis for Handy Middle School, the group created a Key Takeaways document as a tool to communicate to the community what they learned in each meeting. “It was encouraging how involved our community was during this process,” said Jake

Voisine, task force member for the school redesign. “It helped us establish the question around what it means to be practicing 21st-century education, and how we align with that in regards to the future of learning.” The Key Takeaways document started as a resource that the task force shared with the school community, but the task force members quickly recognized it for the learning tool it was – a record of key learnings from the group and a roadmap for how they planned to address their findings.

### Involve the Critics

Malley shares that the task force group was created very intentionally, since the group’s ability to make timely decisions was paramount – but they made sure to incorporate their community’s critics, as well as their champions, to understand the process and recommendations. “I knew we couldn’t pick people to go on school tours that would just support our vision outright,” said Malley. “We invited some of our more historically skeptical community members, including teachers and business leaders on our trips.” Malley shared that by incorporating them in the process, their concerns were heard and questions answered, and were represented in the redesign. The task force included initially tentative teachers who throughout the process became confident in the impact of the NTN Model. These teachers presented to the board alongside the group on their findings after a school tour, which helped showcase how the district’s vision for Handy Middle School might be achieved. “There’s no ‘magic fix’ when it comes to this work,” shared Voisine.

“It’s reasonable to be a little skeptical about a big change – change is scary. But this is the right move for our school and community, and I think the experience will speak for itself, and change a lot of minds.”

## Find a School Design Partner

Malley’s team conducted a landscape analysis of different school models that focused on deeper learning, and created a checklist for the specific needs in Bay City that a partner needed to fulfill. “New Tech Network (NTN) was selected as the partner for this work because of the depth in expertise in not just the instructional practices, but in the classroom culture, and that’s what we really wanted to address,” said Malley. After connecting with NTN’s School and District Development team, Handy Middle School was on track to implement the project-based learning classroom model in the Fall of 2022. “Handy Middle School leaders are eager and committed to making a change for their students,” said NTN School Development Coach Missy Saldana, who conducted the leaders’ NTN Residency training in May of 2022. “These leaders are determined advocates for their students and are ‘all in’ moving forward in implementing change.”

### A Fresh Outlook for the Future

**“Joining New Tech Network provides us an opportunity to reframe many things about the school, not just project-based learning,” said Malley.** “Eliminating the deficit mindset about kids is the first step to establishing a culture that makes sure everyone in that school is focused on next-level readiness for these kids.” As the sixth-graders at Handy Middle School start a new learning experience

this year, they’ll have the opportunity to take these deeper learning methods with them when they enter an implementation in seventh and eighth grades and beyond.

*Contributors to this profile include Patrick Malley, Chief Academic Officer, Bay City Public Schools, Jake Voisine, Task Force Member, Handy Middle School, and Missy Saldana, New Tech Network School Development Coach.*

262

6th Grade Students

220

7th Grade Students

263

8th Grade Students

745

Total Students

### The Handy Middle School community took action for change by:

- Mobilizing a small and focused task force to evaluate transformation opportunities
- Creating transparent goals and communicating progress to the community
- Incorporating the voices of critics to understand concerns
- Engaging New Tech Network as a school design partner to make the vision a reality



# Creating Future Ready Learners: Frisco ISD

## Frisco, Texas

**Total Students: 66,451 • Elementary School: 29,072 • Middle School: 16,084 • High School: 21,295**

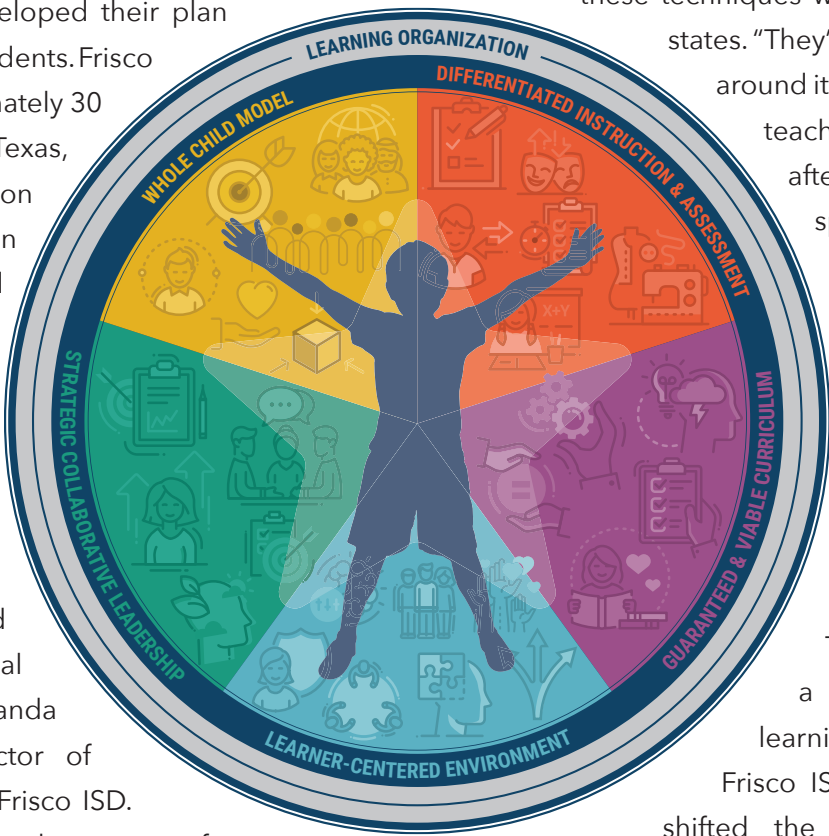
A district is ready for change. The transformation plan has been approved, the core values have been drafted, and the vision is secure. But how can the district ensure widespread adoption?

That’s the question Frisco ISD district leaders sought to answer when they developed their plan around Future Ready students. Frisco ISD, which sits approximately 30 miles north of Dallas, Texas, designed a transformation plan which centers on student outcomes and goal setting at every level; a plan founded around a profile of a Future Ready Learner.

“We realized pretty quickly we couldn’t do it by ourselves, and we needed additional support,” said Amanda Ziaer, Managing Director of Strategic Initiatives for Frisco ISD.

“New Tech Network is a huge part of how we’re planning on sustaining and building out our Future Ready plan.”

NTN partnered with Frisco ISD to provide structures and support on different levels of the journey. Leadership started by focusing on the outcomes identified in the Learner Profile and working to incorporate each outcome into instruction. Through NTN Deeper



Learning Practices workshops, leadership teams set clear goals on connecting instructional practices to the outcomes. Now, the district uses these practices to implement the same processes when working with teachers and instructional coaches. “We’ve modeled

these techniques with our teachers,” Ziaer states. “They’re wrapping their minds around it and saying, ‘wow, I can’t teach like I’ve always taught’ after learning this, so we’re spending a lot of time on mindset and shifting skills and how you think about classroom instruction. We’ve started changing our conversations from curriculum to instruction.”

Through this approach, a culture of deeper learning has spread across Frisco ISD, and district leaders shifted the focus to a student-centered authentic learning approach.

“Frisco ISD leadership took the first step in this complex work by clearly defining what they want the future of learning to look like for their students,” said Steffany Batik, New Tech Network Director, District and School Development (Texas). “Our role as a school design partner has been to share our process of ensuring

they achieve the desired outcomes for their students outlined in their district plan.” Dr. Wes Cunningham, Chief Academic Officer at Frisco ISD, shares how setting conditions for deeper learning establishes an outcomes-based student culture, something leaders in Frisco ISD are working hard to build. “We had to be very clear about the outcomes,” said Cunningham. “We need to see students learning things, yes, but we need to see them learning things through these outcomes-based lenses. Students have to be comfortable with taking risks and trying new things, and they learn that by seeing their teachers and other educators modeling that behavior.”

NTN research tactics are another element the district cites as helping to establish more student-centered learning practices at the Frisco ISD schools. “The information we received back from our NTN surveys about our kids’ experiences was so powerful,” said Ziaer. “It’s so helpful to be reminded about these types of tactics when you’re trying to develop an authentic student-centered learning experience. It’s just simple things you might skip because we live in such a traditional

adult-centered world.” This model is already increasing student engagement in the classroom.

“The proof of concept is watching those students show passion, excitement and genuine curiosity about what they’re learning,” explained Cunningham. “It’s different for them than they’ve ever experienced.”

Frisco ISD leadership is adamant about the sustainability of this work, and the belief that a model like New Tech Network’s works for all students. “There’s this belief that you can’t pull this off at a comprehensive high school campus,” shared Cunningham. “It might not be all PBL all the time, but it’s about setting conditions and the mindset about how powerful instruction is, and that’s something we’ve learned from the support and coaching from NTN.”



Contributors to this profile include Wes Cunningham, ED.D. Chief Academic Officer, Frisco ISD,

Amanda Ziaer, Managing Director of Strategic Initiative, Frisco ISD, and Steffany Batik, New Tech Network Director, District and School Development



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**Frisco ISD  
Elementary  
Schools**



● ● ● ● ●  
**Frisco ISD  
Middle  
Schools**



● ● ● ● ●  
**Frisco ISD  
High  
Schools**



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**Frisco ISD  
Special Program  
Centers**



# A Culture of Community Support: Owensboro Innovation Academy

Owensboro, Kentucky • Total Students: 355

A key benefit of the New Tech Network Model is that it grows with the unique needs of a school ecosystem. Owensboro Innovation Academy (OIA), a public high school academy in the Owensboro Public Schools district in Owensboro, Kentucky, and alumni NTN school, has done just that. OIA implemented the NTN Model in 2015, and has since developed a customized school culture and robust community partnership program that benefits its students and the community.

“It’s almost like a triangle,” said OIA Principal Beth Benjamin. “We have our community, who are very supportive. We have our teachers, who are thinking outside the box and are willing to take risks, and we have the Network.” Benjamin cites a culture of improvement – failing, modifying, and trying again—as the way in which the school perfects learning techniques and processes for success. **“We rely heavily on the NTN systems and protocols,” she shared. “You learn things you can tweak, and do things differently to be successful. It’s like a playbook.”**

Since the implementation in 2015, OIA leaders regularly attend NTN professional development trainings and workshops to continually improve their classroom instructional practices and receive coaching services and ongoing support.

The community partnerships program at OIA has created opportunities for students and community members to connect over shared projects – so much so, that OIA was recognized in early 2022 by the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce and named Education & Workforce Development Institution of the Year. “OIA creates a love for knowledge and intellectual curiosity, and creates learners that contribute back to the local economy,” said Chamber President Candance Brake. “The community partnerships with OIA also help many people in these companies rediscover their passion. Working with young people is where you find relevance in your work for the next generation. They spark a passion that always ignited us, and help businesses reconnect with that.”

Brake also states that the students benefit from the networking aspect inherent in community partnerships. “Students will develop pathways to careers locally, and get people to become their champions – people that will help them access college, internships and eventually, a career, if they build and maintain those connections.”

At OIA, those partnerships are an essential piece to students’ college and career readiness skills, valued so highly that school leadership lobbied the district to provide a part-time staff position to manage and grow community partnerships.

“I was handling the curriculum and the duties that come with being principal, but I knew this piece was so important. We needed dedicated resources.” The school’s community partnerships liaison splits time between teaching special education and managing community relationships for OIA; many, who Benjamin cites, return each year to collaborate on projects. “We were fortunate to have a community that bought in from the very beginning, and now, they have someone they can contact, and say, ‘we want to get on board.’”

OIA’s successful community partnerships program includes the local headquarters of businesses like Southern Star Pipeline (who provide volunteer judges and help with the school’s robotics tournaments), Puzzle Pieces, a nonprofit dedicated to helping children and adults with disabilities (where students have donated 3D puzzles they’ve created for clients) and the Chamber of Commerce that connects students with business leaders in the area.

The sustainable structure of OIA’s project-based learning academy is a result of years of hard work, dedicated leaders and community partners, and a commitment to working through a process that provides the best outcomes for its students. “You can’t just copy [a model] and think it’s going to work,” said Benjamin. “You have to work through the process. And we wouldn’t be where we are today without our community, and those relationships, along with our curriculum and the rigor that’s part of that. New Tech Network is definitely the one to credit for that.”

*Contributors to this profile include Candance Castlen Brake, President and CEO of the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce, and Beth Benjamin, Director, Owensboro Innovation Academy*

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## Positive Impact

“Students will develop pathways to careers locally, and get people to become their champions – people that will help them access college, internships and eventually, a career, if they build and maintain those connections.”

Candance Brake  
President, Owensboro Chamber of Commerce





# Positive Impact of Interdisciplinary Learning

Research conducted at an NTN school within a school documented the positive impact of interdisciplinary courses on the learning environment and academic outcomes. NTN students consistently out-performed their main campus peers on high school graduation rates.

Graduation Year	Graduation Rates	
	New Tech Network	Main Campus
2015	99%	81%
2016	100%	86%
2017	99%	94%
2018	100%	76%
2019	99%	96%
2020	100%	96%
2021	95%	90%

## Learning to work effectively in groups prepares students for college and the world of work



*"Sometimes I have a tunnel vision and it expands that. I started to like group work. I always liked to take leadership roles and now I can take on other roles. I try to fill in what qualities are needed in the groups."*  
Student, NTN Partner School

## Interdisciplinary classes enable student agency and autonomy



*"In a business project, I was with my friend and we had a really good hook, and it worked on the first try but not in the second. We had to learn how to adapt by crunching the numbers [data gathered in the project]."*  
Student, NTN Partner School

## Trust and respect are shared among staff and students



*"If you are going to be successful [as a teacher], you have to give the students the responsibility to learn, a productive struggle. I'm going to give away my power in the room and let the students learn. Leadership models the same thing."*  
Administrator, NTN Partner School



● ● ● ● Interdisciplinary courses are a key component of the New Tech Network Model. Interdisciplinary courses use learning from different subjects and disciplines to explore a theme or an issue, meet a challenge, solve a problem or complete a final project. We work with schools to support implementation of authentic and interdisciplinary project- and problem-based learning.<sup>11</sup>



# NTN's School Design Studio Resources

Are you curious to discover how NTN resources can support you and your school transformation journey? The NTN School Design Studio is a digital hub that accelerates your redesign journey through highly effective resources, courses, workshops, and customized support.



### WHAT IS NTN?

Resources and tools for district and school leaders.



### WATCH VIDEOS

A curated video library offering a glimpse into the impact of the NTN Model - a great place to start your learning journey!



### GET TO KNOW NTN SCHOOLS

Learn about schools and districts using the NTN Model to improve learning and teaching.



### TALK TO NTN

Schedule a call with an NTN District and School Development Director.



### ENROLL IN A COURSE

Free, self-paced courses to explore deeper learning through the NTN Model.



### VISIT AN NTN SCHOOL

Join us for an in-person guided tour at an NTN school. Spend a day visiting classrooms and talking with teachers, students, and school and district leaders.

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# Citations

1. Total number of schools reflects Network schools and College Access Network schools

2. School-level information on student enrollment, demographics, and graduation rates is sourced from the schools and publicly available sources such as the U.S. Department of Education databases. College outcomes are sourced from National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). Comparison data is sourced from NSC ([https://nscresearchcenter.org tag/persistence/](https://nscresearchcenter.org/tag/persistence/)) and NCES (<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>).

3. Rickles, Zeiser, Yang, O'Day, & Garet, 2019

4. Stocks, Odell, and Culclasure, 2019

5. Gordon and Bergeron, 2018; Stocks, Odell, and Culclasure, 2019

6. Bergeron, 2019; Gordon and Bergeron, 2018; Lynch et al., 2018; Bergeron, 2019; Bergeron and Bogdan, 2019a; Stocks, Odell, and Culclasure, 2019; Hinnant- Crawford, 2020

7. Bergeron and Bogdan, 2019b; Bergeron, et al, 2019

8. Bergeron, Boesche-Taylor, Gehrke, Dugan-Knight, Kamdar, Vorse Wilka, and Gittens, 2019

9. Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll & Mackay, 2014; Slavin, 2007; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000

10. Teddlie & Stringfield, 2007

11. Peters-Burton. & Holincheck, 2022

# Photography

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Dan Vermillion, Vermillion Photo





**The first New Tech Network (NTN) school was founded in 1996, in Napa, California, as a collaboration between local entrepreneurs, teachers, and district leadership. There was a shared desire to reimagine the high school experience so that students developed the skills and experience necessary to pursue and achieve success after graduation.**

Napa New Technology High School (NNTHS) was founded with a reimagined school experience that was the genesis of a new school model: an attention to student and adult culture, and college and career readiness through the pervasive use of project-based learning.

This innovative, whole school approach to teaching and learning attracted national philanthropic support resulting in the organization today. New Tech Network is a nonprofit organization dedicated to systemic and equitable change in education. We center NTN schools – now more than 200 strong – as the units of change, and teachers and school leaders as the agents of that change. Partnering with district leaders makes change scalable and sustainable.



New Tech Network