New Tech Network

NEW TECH NETWORK

IMPACT REPORT

2023

Network Snapshot

Working Across the Country

New Tech Network currently supports K-12 schools in rural, urban, and suburban communities in 24 states. With more than 25 years of experience, New Tech Network has worked with over 400 schools, 20,000 educators, and 100,000 graduates.

Preparing Every Student

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.[1]

New Tech Network students persist in college at a rate of 82 percent compared to 74 percent nationally.[1]

College and Career Ready Outcomes

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.[3]

148,998
Current Students

8,943
Current Teachers

215
Current Schools

Table of Contents

While 2023 might be the first full year in recent memory when school operations across the country are not significantly impacted by COVID-19, we still find ourselves challenged to make sense of the pandemic's impact on student well-being and student learning.

This report includes a comprehensive overview of New Tech Network's ongoing work and the ways in which we assess our organization's impact. You will also read about two communities we've highlighted, Hardin County Public Schools in Kentucky and New Tech West in Cleveland, Ohio. Our gratitude and admiration extend to both of these communities, and to all of the educators that comprise the New Tech Network. Our success is – and always will be – the product of passionate educators, forward-thinking partners, and engaged stakeholders who come together in community to pursue what school could be.

NTN has continued to grow in its reach and impact, serving an estimated 100,000 high school graduates and over 400 school communities over the last 25 years. Throughout this 25 year period NTN has been committed to investing in a strong research program to support college and career readiness for all students. Highlighted in this report is new research that defines warm demander profiles for educators. NTN's continued commitment to informing and advancing practice through compelling research has been critical to our sustained quality over the last 25 years.

In the past year, we have continued our commitment to fostering innovation, equity, and excellence in K-12 education by directly supporting communities to leverage the NTN School Model to craft inclusive and equitable schools of their own that prepare students to pursue college and career. And while our belief in the power of a whole school model is unwavering, we also heard from our network, and the field, that there is additional need for more focused change efforts in the wake of the pandemic, given that resources are tightening and so many new educators have joined schools. In response, we are engaged with many of you about how to better support you in this post-pandemic reality. Please accept this report as an invitation to join this dialogue. A dialogue where we think collaboratively, communally, and creatively about how to make progress on the journey, no matter how challenging the circumstances we all face.

Our commitment to questioning the status quo and our dream of a future when every student goes to a school that is socially inclusive, emotionally supportive, intentionally equitable, and intellectually demanding is at the core of all we do. As we reflect on the milestones achieved this past year, we are energized and inspired to continue our collective journey, confident in the belief that education is critical to unlocking a future where every young person thrives.

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to the mission of New Tech Network.

Onward,

Lydia Dobyns
New Tech Network Co-CEO

Jim May
New Tech Network Co-CEO

New Tech Network Overview

New Tech Network (NTN) is a national nonprofit dedicated to systemic change in education. We center K-12 schools as the units of change, working closely with district leaders, school principals, and classroom educators to co-design an approach to change that is specific to their context. With more than 25 years of supporting schools and districts in change-making, NTN has the ability to recognize common patterns across systems and what is unique about each school and district community.

The NTN Mission

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

We support individual schools and 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.

About Our Work

New Tech Network schools — currently over 200 strong with more than 400 schools cumulatively — are committed to these key focus areas: college and career ready outcomes, supportive and inclusive culture, meaningful and equitable instruction, and purposeful assessment. By developing expertise in each of these four domains, schools benefit from discovering the ways each distinct area reinforces the other three. 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 voices in ways that prepare them for life beyond school.

Project-based learning allows students to engage with material in creative, culturally relevant ways, experience it in context, and share their learning with peers. Teachers, administrators, and district leaders undertake this work because it produces critical thinkers, problem solvers, and collaborators who are vital to the long-term health and well-being of our communities. Students embrace

this approach 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 and supported 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 approach to change provides teachers, administrators, and district leaders with clear roles in adopting and adapting student-centered learning. NTN's experienced staff lead professional development activities that enable educators to adapt to student needs and strengths, and amplify those strengths while adjusting what is needed to address 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.

The NTN Map

NTN works with districts and schools in the United States and Australia, creating a network where collaboration is made easy and encouraged.

For NTN, encouraging and facilitating this spirit of collaboration stem 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 nationwide network create a formidable force for change.
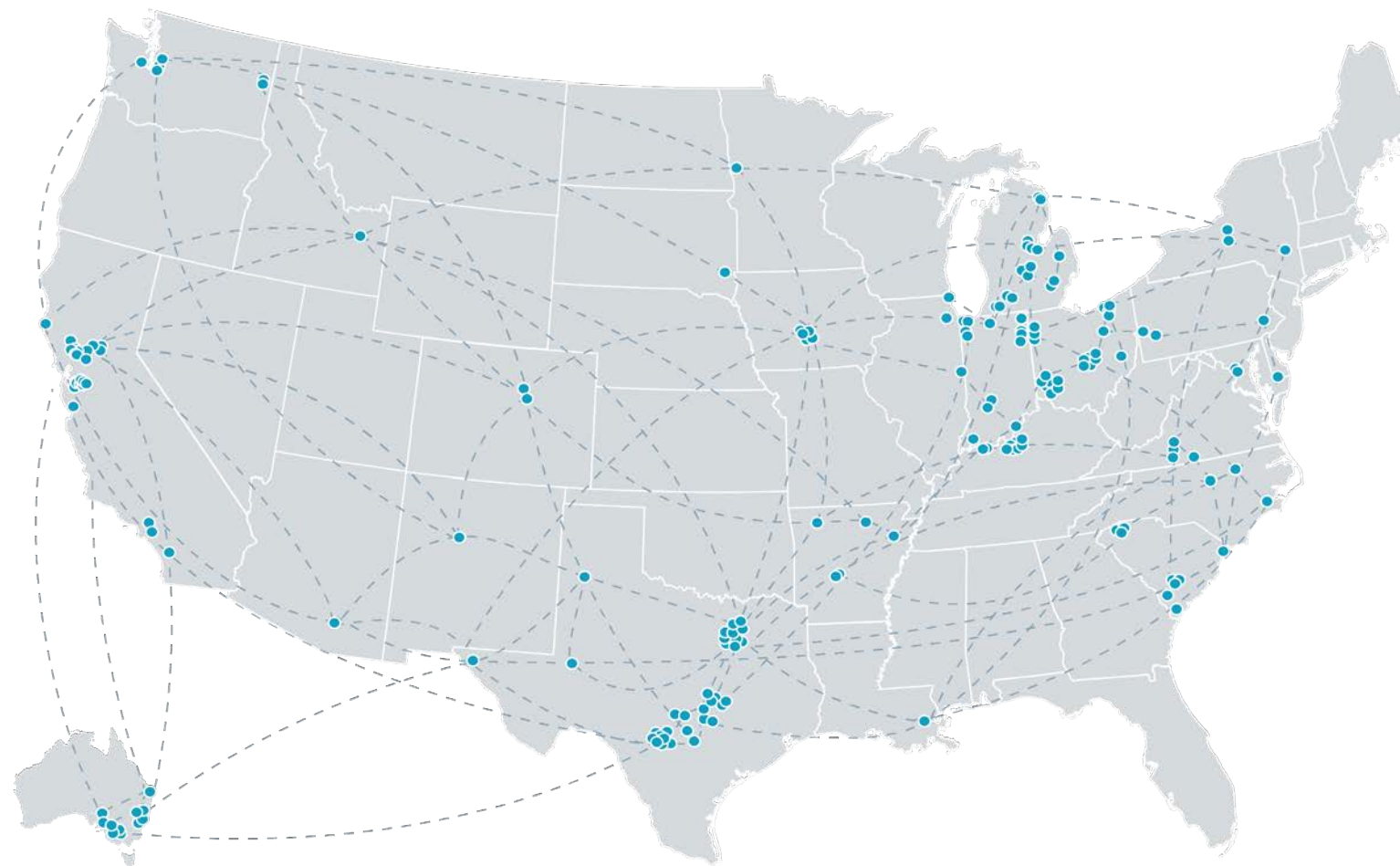
A Diverse Network

20% Rural

48% Urban

32% Suburban

Australia

24
⬤⬤⬤⬤
Elementary Schools

04
⬤⬤⬤⬤
Combined Elementary
and Middle Schools

06
⬤⬤⬤⬤
K-12 Schools

42
⬤⬤⬤⬤
Middle Schools

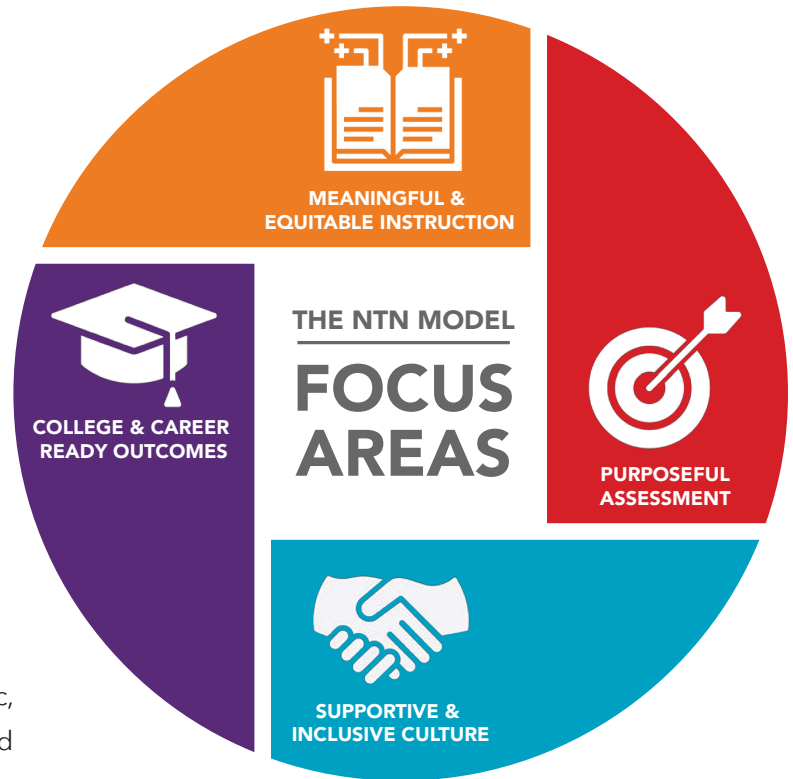**06**
⬤⬤⬤⬤
Combined Middle
and High Schools

132
⬤⬤⬤⬤
High Schools

NTN Model Focus Areas

New Tech Network's decades of experience partnering with schools to implement comprehensive transformation is guided by these four Focus Areas. NTN 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.

THE NTN MODEL
FOCUS AREAS

MEANINGFUL & EQUITABLE INSTRUCTION

PURPOSEFUL ASSESSMENT

SUPPORTIVE & INCLUSIVE CULTURE

COLLEGE & CAREER READY OUTCOMES

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

All data in percentage. Demographic categories are aligned with National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reporting to enable comparisons.

Demographics	Total NTN Students	Elementary Schools	Elementary & Middle Schools	K-12	Middle Schools	Middle and High Schools	High School	NTN School Range
African American/Black	16	21	10	25	17	10	15	0-98
American Indian/Alaska	<1	<1	1	1	<1	2	<1	0-9
Asian	5	13	6	<1	8	3	3	0-72
Hispanic/Latino/a/e/x	41	27	59	41	24	42	47	0-99
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<1	<1	3	<1	<1	<1	<1	0-7
Two or More	5	9	7	6	6	6	4	0-24
White	33	30	14	26	45	37	31	0-97
Male	52	53	52	54	3	51	52	21-72
Female	48	47	49	46	47	49	48	28-79
English Learner Students	11	16	30	29	9	11	9	0-60
Special Education	12	14	10	8	15	11	11	0-37

Our Services

New Tech Network (NTN) is a national nonprofit dedicated to systemic change in education. We center K-12 schools as the units of change, working closely with district leaders, school principals, and classroom educators, to co-design an approach to change that is specific to their context.

With more than 25 years of supporting schools and districts in change-making, NTN has the ability to recognize common patterns across systems and what is unique about each school and district community.

The NTN Model:

New Tech Network believes 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. The New Tech Network Model is a whole school approach built around these key focus areas: college and career ready outcomes, supportive and inclusive culture, meaningful and equitable instruction, and purposeful assessment. By developing expertise in each of these four domains, schools benefit from discovering the ways each distinct area reinforces the other three.

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.

The student experience is tied directly to deeper learning outcomes. Students gain skills and use their voices in ways that prepare them for life beyond school. The NTN instructional approach leverages project-based learning which allows students to engage with material in creative, culturally relevant ways, experience it in context, and share their learning with peers.

Additional Paths to Impact:

New Tech Network is committed to supporting schools and districts to achieve their vision of student success. In addition to the whole school model approach, we also offer professional development services to build educator capacity and develop leadership skills that enable schools to adopt deeper learning instructional practices.

- Building Leadership Capacity

- School Design & Ideation

- Teacher Capacity & Student-Centered Learning

- Student Centered Learning at Scale

How NTN Supports Architects of Shared Leadership

Hardin County Schools began working with New Tech Network in 2020 with an overall goal to support middle and high schools in project-based learning, establish teacher collaboration both in individual schools and across the district, and support school leaders in the change management process. As part of Hardin County's innovation efforts, district leaders opted to send school leadership teams to NTN's Leadership Summit, a three-day national gathering that provides opportunities to collaborate and learn to respond effectively to adult learning needs within their own school context.

"Fostering shared leadership is an area of focused growth in our district," said Brandy New, Hardin County Schools Director of Innovation. "One of the reasons we decided to partner with New Tech Network is that they work with leaders as much as they do teachers, especially in the beginning of the partnership, and we knew our goal for attending Leadership Summit was to push further on what shared leadership means for our district."

Hardin County Schools sent six school teams that each included a principal and school educators. "We've been focused on opening the lines of communication and amplifying the teacher voice in all of this work, and making sure our educators are being valued and heard," said New.

Incorporating classroom educator voices is also a priority for Tanya Jury, Principal at Bluegrass Middle School. In addition to leading Bluegrass Middle School, Jury has also served as a middle school teacher, assistant principal, and principal at other schools throughout the state.

"We have approximately 46 teachers and classified staff, and we have a very transient student population, due to our proximity to Fort Knox Army base, with more than 60% free-and-reduced lunch," said Jury. "I think our diversity of students and staff is what makes Bluegrass Middle so special."

Bluegrass Middle School also ensures that each student actively participates in activities such as clubs hosted by the staff, and advisory groups involving community service projects. "Our vision is all about providing opportunities and experiences for kids. I don't ever want a student to leave Bluegrass Middle school and say 'I can't do' or 'I can't be' because I went to Bluegrass," said Jury.

Following participation in New Tech Network's Leadership Summit, Hardin County district leadership observed significant changes in leadership practices. "We saw a mindset shift in our principals," said New. "They were empowered to lean on their teachers, and shared the ongoing respect they have for their teachers' contributions - they're leveraging their teachers for their skills, and we saw this change in just those two days."

The theme for the Leadership Summit the year Hardin County teams attended was "Charting Your Course for Powerful Adult Learning," which was designed to provide leaders with an opportunity to reflect on their previous and current management of adult learning.

"The reality is that leaders, no matter how skilled they are, will never be able to directly instruct every child in their schools," explained Jim May, New Tech Network Co-CEO. "Thus, producing meaningful improvements in the quality of student learning and the quality of the student experience requires leaders to work in partnership with their adult colleagues to achieve those ends. This is no less true for district leaders who support school leaders across their systems. The only way to do this is to intentionally and methodically cultivate a culture of the soul and a culture of the mind that constantly tends to the learning and growth of the adults."

Bluegrass Middle School was the first district school to adopt the NTN Model, which has served as a beacon of change and prompted other Hardin County schools to partner with NTN to support deeper learning practices. "At first, I didn't know what to expect or what it was going to look like when we implemented the model," said Jury, "but we had a phenomenal coach, and we wouldn't be where we are today without her exceptionally strong coaching and the support from NTN's leadership services."

NTN's Leadership Summit is one of many professional development opportunities available to schools and districts. Other services include individual school coaching, implementation support, leadership development and national events that support all aspects of project-based learning and school change.

"I think there's so much value in attending NTN's Leadership Summit, not just for the connections you make with other leaders facing the same challenges," said Jury, "but also because you receive that validation, that confidence, that you're on the right path to provide a better experience for your school and students."

New Tech West turns to NTN for Coaching for Collaboration

New Tech West High School • Cleveland, Ohio • Total Students: 300+ • Grades 9 - 12

New Tech West High School students are learning through the New Tech Network Model at the Cleveland, Ohio high school, part of the Cleveland Metropolitian School District. "Our goal is for our scholars to thrive and become their most authentic selves, and mature into agents of change," says Shaunamichelle Leonard, Principal at New Tech West. "It takes a lot of work on our part for the staff to be in tune with the students, in tune with the Model and work collaboratively together."

New Tech West High School has worked with a number of NTN coaches over the past six years, and credits these coaches as a major contributor to the school's success. "The positivity they share with us, and the passion for the Model allows us to continue to grow and thrive as leaders," says Leonard. At New Tech West, the staff recognizes that school change is not a "one size fits all" approach, and notes how the NTN coaches serve as thought partners to evaluate what elements of the Model fit best for the school, and how they can work together in the future with a focus on continuous improvement.

Emily Wobser, the assistant principal at New Tech

West, shares how their experience with their current coach has inspired the school leaders and teachers to think differently. "Our coach Gaylen [Brannon] always impresses us with her planning and preparation, but also how quick she is on her feet, and the passion she shows because she believes in the Model so fully," says Wobser.

Opting to incorporate additional coaching support in other areas has helped the school's improvement journey. "It's been really effective to have the meetings to evaluate the professional development at the beginning of our work, and I think that's been really effective to have an understanding of the culminating PD at the end of the year," says Wobser. "It's so nice to see from the last session what staff have remembered or been able to apply." Wobser states that the coaching has been even more meaningful because it's not standalone, it's continuously and intentionally building.

"The administrative and instructional leadership of Shaunamichelle Leonard and Emily Wobser, continues to be a highlight of the work at New Tech West," said Gaylen Brannon, NTN School Development Coach "They have established, and continue to nurture, a strong adult culture which is fundamental to building a foundation for student learning. In addition, they have leveraged this culture to enhance professional learning to deepen implementation of PBL/PrBL across the school."

One of the goals that New Tech West is working on for the upcoming school year is to create a systemic way to teach writing in the curriculum, so that by 12th grade, students will be able to independently create an argumentative or expository writing piece. "We want scholars to leave us post-high school with the skill set in place for this writing level, with a process that's systematically and intentionally done by building up

with scaffolds along the way as they matriculate through high school," says Leonard.

In addition to coaching days, New Tech West leadership leverages NTN's other events throughout the year to build their instructional and leadership capacities, like NTN's annual Leadership Summit. "Every year, I'm excited to go," says Leonard. "I love it because it allows me the opportunity to put everything else aside, and come together with a group of school leaders who serve as thought partners."

The staff at New Tech West recognize the significance of modeling the connections they make between each other and other educators for the students. "Some of the modeling Gaylen has done for us, such as work with the NTN Practices Cards, are simple but can make a big impact in terms of building connections and comfort levels between learners," said Wobser. "Gaylen helps more seasoned staff get a refresher, too, of all the options we have to pick from as far as implementing instructional practices in our classroom, which staff are very familiar with because they just learned it in the professional development sessions."

Incorporating the voices of teachers is critical to the success of the culture at New Tech West, states Leonard. **"By having these options, our teachers can make sense of what's aligned to their curriculum, and have lots of choices for how to share that experience in the classroom. It's not just an activity, but the foundations of where you want to go for your students. The teachers felt heard and included."**

New Tech West moves into the 2023-2024 school year with a mindset of reflection, revision and planning, with NTN as a thought partner and support to meet their vision for continuous improvement.

Evidence of How PBL Supports a Warm Demander Stance

Exploring Teacher Characteristics, Student Responses, and the Role of PBL.
Highlights from Emily E. Virtue, PhD. and Brandi Hinnant-Crawford, PhD.[2]

The aim of the study conducted in April 2023 was to deepen our understanding of the 'warm demander' stance in project-based learning (PBL). Warm demanders are teachers who earn the right to hold high expectations from their students through building relationships and demonstrating care and warmth. Data collection involved 16 classroom observations, 5 student focus groups, 4 teacher focus groups, and 68 responses to a student survey.

The findings of the study revealed that students perceived their learning environments as both warm and demanding, leading to positive perceptions of their school and a low dissonance between home and school cultures. The presence of a warm and demanding environment was significantly associated with indicators of good teaching, critical thinking skills, culturally relevant teaching practices, academic press, academic self-concept, academic self-efficacy, and perceived grades in English, Science, Math, and Social Studies (note Math and Social Studies were not statistically significant). Although the correlation with grades in Math and Social Studies was not significant, a positive trend was observed.

The study highlighted that warmth and demand can be expressed in various ways, yielding positive outcomes for students. This suggests that warm and demanding pedagogical practices can be learned and implemented through diverse approaches, rather than adhering to a specific profile of a warm demander teacher.

The results of this study shed light on the significant role of project-based learning in supporting the warm demander stance in the classroom. By engaging students in meaningful projects, PBL provides an opportunity for teachers to cultivate both warmth and academic rigor. Ultimately, these findings contribute to our understanding of effective teaching practices and highlight the potential of project-based learning as a means to create supportive and challenging learning environments.

Research tied to the effectiveness of the NTN Model is critical to understanding the paths to improve student success and the instrumental roles educators play in that success. Research conducted across five NTN schools documents characteristics of teachers who are considered warm demanders and the extent to which project-based learning supports a warm demander stance. This research informs the development of the NTN Model and shapes the larger field by deepening understanding of effective teaching practices and the potential of project-based learning to create supportive and challenging learning environments.

Warm Demander Profiles

The teacher profiles provided here are meant to show the various ways Warm Demanders present themselves and interact with students. While these profiles demonstrate myriad ways to be a warm demander rather than one definition or approach, striving towards the balanced warm demander is important.

1
The Balanced Warm Demander: This teacher is balanced in warmth and demand—they describe themselves as "firm but fun." Demand comes in various forms in the classroom: both academic and behavioral. Because students are able to learn from their mistakes without fear of retribution or shame, they remain on task and encourage one another to keep trying. The teacher knows students by name, moves about the classroom with ease and and maintains a strong relationship with each student.

2
Team Teachers: Teaching pairs work effectively when they are balanced and engaged throughout the class meeting period. Team teachers who effectively employ warm demander pedagogy set student expectations together and hold students to those academic and behavioral guides in equal measure. Warmth is noted not only in their relationships with students, but also the relationships the teachers have (built on respect) for one another—this allows for laughter and fun as well as serious work to occur.

3
High Demand, Unobtrusive Warmth: This teacher believes there is a "right" way to behave in class but is willing to listen to students and understand differences. The teacher provides multiple ways for students to learn that include giving them many attempts to complete an assignment or engage in and around the classroom. This helps students build and sustain cultural assets and project/problem-based learning.

4
High Warmth, Low Academic Demand: High warmth teachers are considered familiar and fun, and may be trusted to know personal details of the student's life, but classroom expectations are not always high, rigorous, or set high enough to meet challenges. High warmth profiles are often seen in first- or second-year teachers who are navigating their own learning about their profession as they enter the classroom. Students will often feel comfortable in the class, but perhaps too much so—for instance, students may not feel a pressing urge to work on projects or stay focused on class material when the teacher is not in close proximity.

5
Human-First Approach: A human-first teacher is one who recognizes the humanity of students, their physical and emotional needs, and how such needs supersede academic expectations. This teacher recognizes and celebrates differences in students and their culture as is evident from various artifacts around the classroom. When students struggle academically, this teacher "supports them emotionally first" because they know "extenuating circumstances" affect academics. This teacher has clear academic and behavioral expectations but knows how to differentiate for their students.

New Tech Network Resources

Curious to discover how NTN can support you and your school's innovation and improvement path? The New Tech Network website (newtechnetwork.org) can accelerate your redesign journey through highly effective resources, courses, workshops, and customized support.

RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Access resources and tools designed specifically for district and school leaders and teachers to support school transformation.

SCHOOL SUCCESS STORIES

Learn about schools implementing the New Tech Network Model to further students' access to meaningful learning environments.

DISTRICT SPOTLIGHTS

Learn about how districts partnering with New Tech Network are creating scalable and sustainable school transformation for every student.

TAKE A COURSE

Explore our free, self-paced courses to explore deeper learning through the NTN Model.

SERVICES

Learn how New Tech Network provides differentiated products and services to guide schools and districts to achieve lasting change and ongoing improvement.

References

1. 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/) and NCES (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/)

2. Emily Virtue, E.E., & Hinnant-Crawford, B.N. (2023) Warm Demander Pedagogy Study, Western Carolina University.
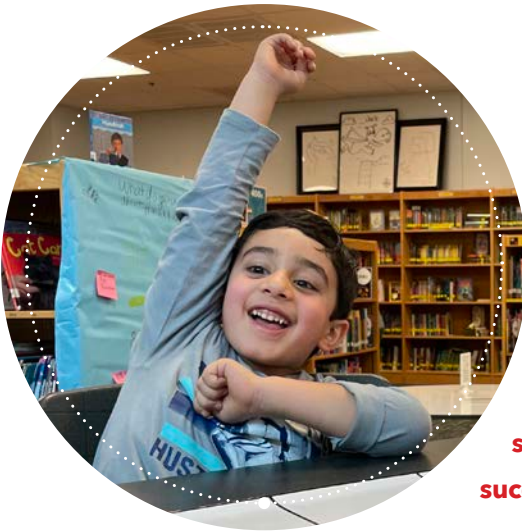
Photography

Special thanks to:

New Tech West High School, Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Bluegrass Middle School, Hardin County Schools

New Tech High School at BF Darrell, Dallas Independent School District

Emerson High School, Frisco Independent School District

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 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. Working closely with leadership teams and classroom educators makes change scalable and sustainable.

New Tech Network