

Ohio Personalized Learning Network Case Study

Noble Local School District

WHAT IS PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

Personalized learning is a learner driven approach to education that empowers students to take ownership of their learning.

HOW ARE SCHOOLS ENGAGED WITH PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

Schools across Ohio engaged in the LAUNCH pathway — a professional learning cohort that introduced teams of educators to personalized learning strategies. Schools received ongoing support from regional educational service centers (ESCs) and KnowledgeWorks.

LAUNCH PATHWAY ACTIVITIES:

- Regular coaching
- In-person and virtual convenings
- Optional personalized learning implementation surveys with continuous quality improvement supports
- Collaborative engagements with a national and state network of personalized learning practitioners

RESOURCES:

Ohio Department of Education and Workforce
<http://education.ohio.gov/Personalized-Learning>

PERSONALIZED LEARNING TIMELINE

2022/23

Exploring Opportunities

Noble Local was named a Ohio Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) Designated K-12 School District.

There was interest in expanding personalized learning opportunities.

The district learned about the LAUNCH pathway from their regional educational service center.

2023/24

Noble Local School District schools Joined LAUNCH

Shenandoah Elementary School (PK - 8) and Shenandoah High School joined the second cohort of the LAUNCH pathway.

Shenandoah High School implemented *Try It Thursdays* where staff shared implementation ideas.

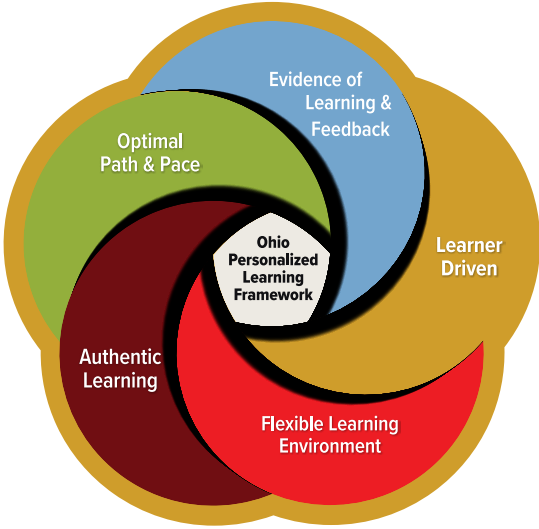


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 Kennedy, K., Zweig, J., & Atkinson, C. A. (2024). Ohio Personalized Learning Network Case Study: Noble Local School District. Retrieved from <http://education.ohio.gov/Personalized-Learning>.

Noble Local School District



District Spotlight

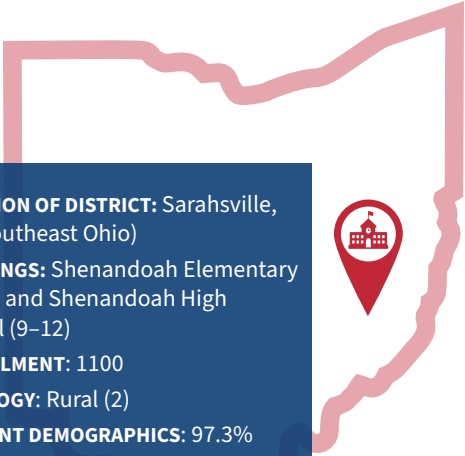
Getting Started with Personalized Learning

Noble Local School District, recently named an Ohio Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) Designated K-12 School District, is no stranger to personalized learning. As the principal of the district's sole high school said, "Personalized learning is a natural fit with our STEM designation. We focus on [the question] 'How do we engage kids differently and on a level that is meaningful for them?'" Before coming to the school district in 2023, the high school principal knew about the Ohio Personalized Learning Network and had worked with the regional educational service centers (ESCs). He thought that joining the LAUNCH pathway was an essential move for his school and an impactful step for the district as a whole. He shared, "It's really important as a district as a whole that we all support the initiative to see the results that we're looking for in our students, where it's not a one-size-fits-all model and [try to] reach that level of personalization and engagement for each of our students."

The importance of personalized learning across the district is reflected in their 2024 Ohio Personalized Learning Implementation Survey results. Approximately 71% of educators who responded to the survey indicated they understand their school's vision for serving all students through personalized learning, and 76% agreed there is a plan and goals to advance personalized learning. Further, approximately 76% of educators agreed that implementing personalized learning made them want to stay in their schools.

Educators also report many personalized learning practices in the Ohio Personalized Learning Framework occur in their classrooms. For example, educators report having specific learning targets for students (90%), taking students' interest into account when designing lessons (98%), offering choices to students about working individually or in groups (93%), and consistently offering different ways for learners to demonstrate their understanding (83%).

The Shenandoah Elementary (PK-8) principal shared how at Noble Local School District, their focus is on motivating students to learn, "In southeastern Ohio, our students may come from homes where education is not a priority, and that's not necessarily a criticism but a harsh reality. Our families and our students are very hardworking. Everybody wants the best for their child. At the same time, they have a lot of problems that they're up against, so sometimes education may not be as prominent a priority as we'd hope in the home," she continued, "This is where personalized learning and STEM education come into play. If we can engage students, we can give them hope. It's a big motivator." Personalized learning and STEM education are aligned in their approach to **authentic learning** where academic concepts



LOCATION OF DISTRICT: Sarahsville, OH (southeast Ohio)
BUILDINGS: Shenandoah Elementary (PK-8) and Shenandoah High School (9-12)
ENROLLMENT: 1100
TYOLOGY: Rural (2)
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS: 97.3% White, 2.0% Two or more races, 0.6% Hispanic, 0.1% Black
EDUCATORS: 78 teachers, 100% certified, 95.7% have 3 or more years of experience

“This is where personalized learning and STEM education come into play. If we can engage students, we can give them hope. It's a big motivator.”

- Principal, elementary school

are learned through “real-world, problem-based experiences.” The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce website (n.d.) describes STEM education as a “learner-centered approach to teaching providing students with a problem-based, transdisciplinary, and personalized learning experience.”

Students’ survey responses suggest that Noble Local School District has created an environment where students feel connected to their learning community and where they have opportunities to prepare for life after graduation. Approximately 98% of students in grades 4–6 think that their teacher expects them to do their best work most or all of the time, and 93% of students in grades 8–12 agree they have an adult who looks after them. Students in grades 8–12 also report seeing the connection between their school and their futures. More than 80% of students who responded to the survey reported that the school has clearly communicated what learners should know and be able to do after graduating, that they have help figuring out what to do after graduation, and they spend time in school talking about the type of education needed for the careers they want to pursue.

Building and Maintaining Momentum

Noble Local School District is up for re-designation for STEM, and they are ramping up their personalized learning efforts. They incorporated a *Try It Thursday* where the staff members come together to share new ideas for personalized learning they have implemented in their classrooms. The high school principal described how some teachers have shared how they are using artificial intelligence to personalize their pathways for students and how they are using individual pacing on assessments.

The school leaders see this as a way to “help support a growing movement we’re seeing within and across our campuses.” Educators confirm this culture of innovation in their responses to the 2024 Ohio Personalized Learning Implementation Survey. Approximately 98% of educators agreed they are encouraged to experiment with new instructional approaches and that they feel safe doing so. More than 80% of educators report having informal leadership opportunities.

The survey results also suggest that educators continue to want more time and opportunities for support. For example, approximately 60% agreed they get the support they need to implement personalized learning, and 45% agreed they had time to collaborate with their colleagues. These surveys were implemented during the district’s first year of participation in the LAUNCH pathway, and are a jumping off point for deepening the work.

School Spotlights

Shenandoah Elementary School

As a building, the elementary school, which includes PK–8, is making advances to follow the personalized learning practices at the high school. The principal of the elementary school noted that every teacher is implementing some form of personalized learning. She emphasized, “Our goal in participating in the [LAUNCH pathway] cohort is to look at personalized learning from an objective standpoint to reflect on how we are implementing personalized learning already and refining that process to make what we are doing even better.” She shared that “not every teacher is involved in the cohort” and that is by design. There’s an intentional collaborative approach where select teachers choose to participate in the cohort, reflect on how to bring their learnings into their own classrooms, and then intentionally help their colleagues implement where appropriate. She applies the personalized learning lens to her own staff as she leans in on the idea of helping her teachers establish healthy boundaries when asked to change their instructional practices. The principal acknowledged that “teaching is difficult work...There’s no finish line, so you’re always running the race.”

Personalized Learning in Seventh Grade: Authentic Learning and Evidence of Learning & Feedback in English Language Arts

When entering the class, the teacher has students engaged in an inner circle, outer circle feedback and reflection activity based on their reading of Elie Weisel's *Night*. The students reflect on their perspectives — changing position on rays of hope — with their partners as they shift every few minutes. In between partner shifts, the teacher engages the whole class in larger reflections where misconceptions are cleared up and ideas are highlighted. Additionally, students engage in **authentic learning** as they relate what is happening in the work to their own lives. After participating in this activity, the teacher has students turn to writing. The purpose of the writing activity is to help them develop and practice summarization skills to include enough detail to connect their reading back to historical events. This type of authentic lesson allows the teacher multiple touch points with students as they provide **evidence of learning**. The teacher shared, “It’s nice to be able to [meet the kids where they are, especially those] who might otherwise fall back and not want to be addressed.” The teacher also emphasized that it allows students the opportunity to discuss social issues and how they matter to them culturally.

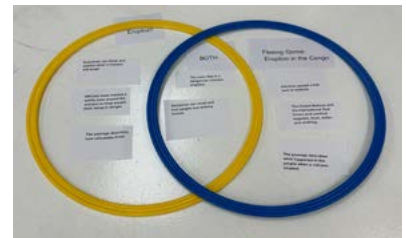
Personalized Learning in Third Grade: Learner Driven Approaches in a Flexible Learning Environment



Two teachers and an intervention specialist support a classroom of more than 35 students. The teachers walk around and support students in the areas where they would benefit from additional instruction or practice. The classroom exemplifies a **flexible learning environment**, where students can choose where they want to work (see pictures of the learning space) and how they want to work, whether individually, in pairs, or in small groups.



Both teachers in the third grade classroom are also trained intervention specialists. Their class tends to have the students who need additional support, and currently, their class has several students with individualized education plans (IEPs). The teachers have students work together on comparing and contrasting two articles on volcanoes to identify what is the same and what is different between them. They create venn diagrams with small hoops (see picture).



In this **learner driven** classroom, students negotiate with each other, revisiting the articles when they have questions, and explaining their perspectives when they do not agree with each other. When students share they have completed the work, one teacher responds, “What?! That’s awesome!” Some students who finish early automatically help other students who are working on their diagram. A teacher acknowledges these moments, “Thanks for choosing to help a friend!”

The teachers come around to check the students’ work, and once approved, the students can choose what they do next out of a “Must Do” column and then a “May Do” column. Taking a **learner driven** approach, students set goals with their software to reach 80% completion and reflect on what they need to do to reach that goal. The students ask for support from teachers as they need it. The teacher said to the students, “Sometimes when things are new, they may feel scary, but they’re really not once you start working on it.” She exclaims, “Your score is great! Keep it up!” And other students cheer each other on to meet their goals.

Shenandoah High School

In 2022–2023, six out of 27 teachers were engaged in implementing personalized learning. In 2023–2024, 18 out of 27 teachers were engaged in implementing personalized learning. Based on their work to expand implementation across the district, they expect to have all 27 of their teachers engaged in implementing personalized learning in the 2024–2025 school year. At the high school, the principal shares that the personalized learning initiative is a way to “enhance what you’re already doing, not asking you to do one more thing.” He acknowledges that there are some places where his teachers are still working to implement, “We’re still growing. The places where strategies are being put into place are only going to grow and connect the other pockets.” The high school has two students on their LAUNCH school design team to help truly keep the students at the center of their decision-making process. “Having both students and teachers at the table and going through this process with them is a really powerful learning experience,” he emphasized. He also stated the importance of student involvement and its positive connection to school culture.

Personalized Learning in Ninth Grade: Evidence of Learning & Feedback and Optimal Path & Pace in Advanced Geometry

There are four rows of students, all of whom are seated at long tables. To track growth through **evidence of learning and feedback**, the teacher asks students to document their completion status on the interactive white board. Students individually note their progress in the online practice tests and congratulate each other based on where they are in their progress toward completion.

The teacher encourages students to work at their own **optimal path and pace** based on what they need to finish. The teacher uses SmartBoard to do whole group instruction focused on “finding angle measures.” She asks students to reflect on where they are and the support they need from both her and the assistant teacher. Students are also encouraged to help each other as well if they do not understand the content. The teacher encourages students to “work ahead if you know what you’re doing.”

The teacher explains, “Students are working on goal setting in their *Flex Class*, which they have every day (see picture of the Goal Setting Form). They self-reflect at the end of every week about what they’ve accomplished, what they didn’t finish, and what they need to do to improve.” They set goals each week based on feedback received and personal reflections. Currently, the rest of the school is working toward applying the goal setting sheet in their *Flex Class*. The goals students are working toward are not only academic in nature, they also align with social emotional learning.

Week of: _____		Name: _____		Period: _____	
My Main Objective: I must complete... <input type="checkbox"/>		This Week's Goal: By the end of this week I will... <input type="checkbox"/>		My Future Goal: This week I will focus on... <input type="checkbox"/>	
Day	Goal, Objective: Today I intend to learn, improve on, and complete... (Specific, Measurable)	Action: Today I will... in order to achieve this goal	Learned: Today I completed / learned...	Goal Achieved	Self-Reflect Assess
W/Tu		<input type="checkbox"/> Stay focused and on task. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid distractions. <input type="checkbox"/> Work with my partner / learn		Y / N	Basic 0 1 2 3
W/Th		<input type="checkbox"/> Stay focused and on task. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid distractions. <input type="checkbox"/> Work with my partner / learn		Y / N	Intermediate 0 1 2 3
F		<input type="checkbox"/> Stay focused and on task. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid distractions. <input type="checkbox"/> Work with my partner / learn		Y / N	Advanced 0 1 2 3
Reflections: • What did I accomplish this week? • What am I proud of myself for this week?		This week I was able to accomplish: <input type="checkbox"/>		**Highlight evidence for SR score on back**	
Lessons Learned: • What could I do differently in the future based on the reflection?		I was not able to accomplish: (SR missing) <input type="checkbox"/>		Next Steps - To improve I need to...	

Personalized Learning in 11th and 12th Grades: Authentic Learning and Learner Driven Approaches in a Forensics Class

The forensic science teacher incorporates **authentic learning** experiences in class, along with opportunities for students to retake assessments while they work toward proficiency (see Reassessment Form, next page). On this day, the teacher designed an inquiry-based lab to facilitate engagement and a **learner driven** approach using student agency for her high school students. These complex and challenging labs also help her students build confidence as they work in groups.

Reassessment Form

1. Name: _____

2. Learning Target I am reassessing: _____

a. Original score on test: _____

b. Retake the google forms practice quiz for this section. My score is: _____

c. Complete test corrections

d. _____

This form must be turned into me at least 1 day before you take your reassessment

Question Number	My Answer	Justification (why you chose the answer you did)	Correct Answer	Verification (the evidence that proves this answer is correct)

The teacher is available as needed to support groups and individual students as questions arise. Students engage in **authentic learning** as their classroom is transformed into a Drug Analysis Lab and functions as a Forensic Toxicology lab to “identify the presence of toxins in unknown substances” and “create a toxicology report to showcase their findings.” The teacher asks the students to test the reactions of their substance with water, a universal indicator, acid in the form of hydrogen chloride, and iron chloride. Students discuss the results and what they are seeing while also negotiating to come to an agreement about what the results are and what to include in their toxicology report.

Reflecting on Progress and What the Future Holds

The district’s approach is to empower instructional leaders in their learning spaces and communicate clearly about what personalized learning is and the potential it has to transform their students’ learning experiences. To continue their efforts moving forward, school and district leaders think it will be important to highlight for teachers how closely their STEM Designation is intertwined with the personalized learning initiative. The Shenandoah Elementary School principal added:

We like to use STEM education to engage and motivate students. It is the premier way to help students continue to be interested in school, engage in the content, and continually advance. A high priority for our community is for our students to obtain employment and build our community. Career education is community education. So that’s kind of the main motivator in our district.

METHODOLOGY: This case study highlights the experiences of one school district that includes two schools that participated in the LAUNCH pathway in Ohio. The information shared in this case study is based on seven interviews (two school leaders and five teachers), four classroom observations, and student and staff responses to the Ohio Personalized Learning Implementation Surveys. In 2024, there were 172 survey responses from students in grades 4–6 and 139 responses from students in grades 8–12. There were no responses from students in grade 7. There were 42 survey responses from educators in 2024: 23 from Shenandoah Elementary School and 19 from Shenandoah High School. The term educators in this survey includes classroom educators, special education educators, subject matter educators, specialist educators, and paraprofessionals.

To learn more about Ohio’s personalized learning efforts, visit: <http://education.ohio.gov/Personalized-Learning>.

