



Learning 2025
**LEARNER-CENTERED
FUTURE-DRIVEN
EDUCATION**



LEARNING 2025 LIGHTHOUSE DEMONSTRATION SYSTEM

AASA Learning 2025

Lighthouse Demonstration System Vignette

Burrell School District (Pa.)

Recognized Fall 2024

Focus Area: Future-Ready Learners

The mission, goal, and hope articulated by the Burrell School District reinforce its commitment to preparing future-ready learners.

Its mission, for example, focuses on defining readiness for college, career, and life-long learners, creating active engagement in experiences that stretch students toward their futures.

Its long-range goal is to connect students with real-world career experiences through community involvement and awareness.

Its hope is that learners will thrive both inside and outside of school through engagement in meaningful and relevant learning experiences, improved relationships, and an enhanced sense of self-awareness, efficacy, and agency in their learning



Focus on
College,
Career and
Life-
Readiness



Connects
Students with
Real-World
Experiences

Indicators of District Commitment to Future-Ready Learners

Burrell School District acknowledges that education needs to be redesigned so that students are prepared to contribute to an ever-changing world. Also, the educational system involves the community in the redesign process. Learner profiles, for example, look at what motivates students, how they learn best, their relative strengths, supports that can improve their learning, and the career pathways that may be a good fit based upon that information. As a result, Burrell students develop self-awareness, agency, and enhanced well-being. This information is used to connect students to relevant industry and future-focused learning experiences as well as apprenticeships.

This commitment to future-ready learning actively includes parents and guardians, including multiple meetings to discuss the purpose of school, the needs of the community, and ways to re-imagine the school experience for students to make it more relevant and engaging. Annual Family-School-Community engagement events include Fall Fireside Chats, Spring Community Connection events, and a range of partnerships with organizations such as the Northern Westmoreland Career and Technology Center to start an Aspiring Educators Program (using Educators Rising curriculum) at Burrell High School.

Changes in the Curriculum

Burrell School District emphasizes different disciplines being taught in an integrated way with staffing processes changed to support this integrated approach. For example, the district now offers several cross-curricular courses connecting learning to what students are doing to job-embedded and community-based experiences.

The district offers courses that reinforce experiential learning, real-world problem solving, and authentic learning contexts. These course offerings include Environmental Literature that encourages students to partner with local organizations and universities for fieldwork and research experience.

Investigative Sciences and Literature involves a range of exciting and student-centered experiences, including opportunities to work with the Community Police Academy, Mock Trial, field experiences and tours, and opportunities to earn industry credentials via the WCCC Forensic Science Certificate Program, First Aid/CPR, and Basic Self-Defense.

A Senior Seminar offers personalized experience for each student. Learners are supported in solving real-world problems related to industry. Additionally, major emphasis is given to future-focused and personal connections to the preferred career pathway.

District-Level Focus on Personalized Learning

In addition to the Senior Seminar's focus on personalized learning, the entire district focuses on making education personal and aligned with student interests and priorities. The system now has K-12 Personalized Learning Coaches who work closely with learners as well as providing ongoing professional development. These coaches work with students and teachers in grades K-12 to make learning personal and relevant—by name and by need—with detailed Learner Profiles generated in grades 9-12.

Technology plays a major role in personalization, including personalized technology programs for reading and math, grades K-12. Also, intervention and extension time is offered at each building, K-12.

Research and Collaboration with Regional Workforce Partners

Collaborative research and partnerships with regional workforce partners inform landscape changes and analysis of trends, reinforcing decision-making processes in the district. As a result, discussions about future skills, knowledge, needs, and readiness inform strategic actions.

A range of cross-institutional partnerships has evolved as a result. These include partnerships with:

- Penn State (ABC Create and Digital Foundry)
- PNC Partner Up
- Arts Education Collaborative
- BotsIQ
- Forum for Workforce Development
- Catalyst Connections Industry 4.0 Teacher Academy (Apprenticeship Program)
- Writing Lab at Carnegie Mellon University
- Teacher in the Workplace
- University of Pittsburgh/Tri-State Re-Imagine High School Cohort



and multiple conference presentations.

The result is that the district sustains rich and varied partnerships that ensure that teachers are up to date with the latest trends in field-based education, the power of renewal through new educational experiences and professional development, and the value of understanding the changing and evolving workplace in the 21st century.

Capitalizing on the Power of a Future-Driven Mindset

Burrell ensures that staff members create and sustain a culture that embraces a future-driven mindset. This culture helps educators change instructional practice. The staff, for example, continue to participate in intentional, personalized professional development with personalized learning coaches providing job-embedded support and co-teaching to help them put what they are learning into practice.

Similarly, a team of teachers works together to re-imagine the high school experience, co-piloting cross-curricular course options that allow students to use their learner profile data to learn about themselves, research a problem they wish to solve or explore a career pathway of interest. In turn, they participate in site visits, internships, and field experiences.

Addressing Gaps Between the Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Skills Learners Will Need for Their Future Success

Burrell teachers have been working with Dr. Susan Trasevich to create a more trauma-informed, sensitive, and responsive environment for students and families. A major outcome is the development of a common understanding of the impact of trauma on learning.

During the 2023-24 academic year, staff is focusing on specific strategies and habits to integrate into the system to make the learning environment more trauma-sensitive through pro-active and responsive strategies to meet student needs.

Additionally, the system uses the Jessie Lewis Choose Love resources (K-12) to integrate social-emotional learning into daily instruction and practice. The district is committed to strengthening relationships with students and families through community engagement events and continued support and networking. Residual effects have led to decreased disciplinary and mental health referrals.

Encouraging New Ideas, Engaging Students Differently, and Demonstrating How This Transformation Can Help All Students to Learn and Improve

Burrell supports those who are willing to try new ideas, engage students differently, and demonstrate this information's impact on all students so that everyone can learn and improve.

A major part of the system's work during 2023-24 has been on celebrating the work it is doing. The district has been using its "Burrell Buzz" platform to highlight some of the positive work of staff members, reinforcing a global spotlight (HundrED) and local showcasing of positive events (TribLive articles).

Creating Multiple Pathways for Student Learning to Provide Access to Post-Secondary Opportunities, Career Experiences, and the Skills, Knowledge, and Understanding Necessary in a Rapidly Changing World

Finally, Burrell creates multiple pathways for student learning. These pathways provide access to post-secondary opportunities, career experiences and skills, knowledge and understanding necessary in a rapidly changing world. For example, its Learner Profile is the foundation at the high school level to reach every student, increase their self-awareness of strengths, growth areas, and interests—and build durable skills needed for the workplace.

Learner Profiles increase students' self-awareness. They take the profile within the first week of school with multiple forms of access (i.e., email, Google Classroom, link written on board) and dedicate one social-emotional learning class period for students to complete the survey.

The system uses a Google Data Warehouse to compile the data sheets that connect the profile data to other learning data (e.g., PSSA, Keystone, etc.) into a PDF for each student. This information provides the system with a view of the whole child that teachers can use to build relationships, plan instruction, and connect students with relevant learning experiences. These profiles are shared with students, their teachers, and parents/guardians.

The district's personalized learning coach shares data snapshots and works with teachers to plan personalized and relevant learning experiences. Students are encouraged to use the data in a project in which the learner increases their self-awareness and agency.

Finally, at the macro-level, a team of teachers is working to re-imagine the high school experience. They are piloting cross-curricular course options that allow students to use their learner profile data as part of an iterative cycle in which they can learn about themselves, research a problem they want to solve or explore a career pathway of interest to them, and then participate in site visits, internships, and field experiences.

