



A Community of Learners

Informational Memo - Summer Institute Design Thinking Project Planning

TO: School Board
Superintendent Kocanda

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Overview & Background

Summer Institute Background

In June of 2015, all teachers and administrators participated in a two-day Institute facilitated by Grant Lichtman, author of *#EdJourney: A Roadmap to the Future of Education*. All present took a deep dive into the *Design Thinking* process (Stanford D-School Steps in a Design Thinking Process- <https://dschool.stanford.edu/groups/k12/wiki/17cff/>) and generated prototypes to answer the question, “How might we dramatically embed experiential learning as the core of our ‘classroom’ learning experience?”

After two days together, participants left for the summer with collaboratively generated plans for leading change,

Video overview of Summer Institute- <https://goo.gl/TUSMMm>

To capture and memorialize the prototypes generated, teams were recorded sharing their ideas. All prototype pitches are being housed in a “library” of ideas for future access. Ideas generated by one school, may be desirable and reproducible in another school, so the shared resources will be a valuable tool. Some examples included:

- peer buddies between middle schools and elementary schools
- cafeteria redesign in the middle schools

- better integration of the Crow Island Woods

Description of Initiative

At the 2015 Administrative Team retreat, the team was presented with a timeline for implementing their prototypes and a template for bringing their projects to reality. The provided template models the Design Thinking Process. When deciding on the project to implement in their schools, Administrators were asked to consider:

- budget
- impact
- estimated timeline
- feasibility of the goal

Timeline for D36 School Innovation Projects:

- November 19, 2015 - Identify Teams, Projects, and Research Summary
- December 7, 2015 - All School Projects announced at District Early Release
- December 10, 2015 - Administrative team Debrief & Share Out
- March 17, 2016 - Prototypes Complete
- May 19, 2016 - Reflections on Prototype

Currently, teams are in the “Understand” and “Observe” phase (see Figure 1 below) to determine which prototype will work best for this year’s work. Their target completion date is October 31, 2015, to finalize their project choice. Schools are being asked to prioritize just one project at this time.

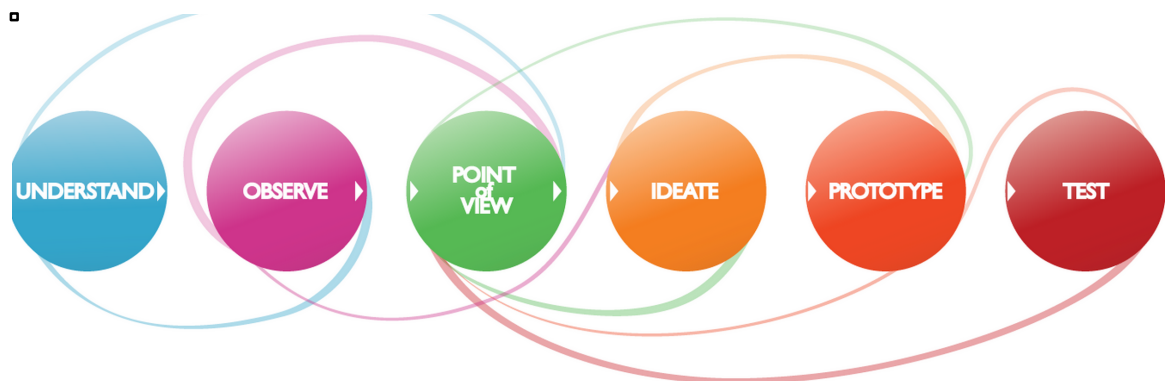


Figure 1. Design Thinking Process

UNDERSTAND

Team immerses themselves in learning. They talk to experts and conduct research. The goal is to develop background knowledge through these experiences. They use their developing understandings as a springboard as they begin to address design challenges.

OBSERVE

Team members become keen people watchers in the observation phase of the design thinking process. They watch how people behave and interact and they observe physical spaces and places. They talk to people about what they are doing, ask questions and reflect on what they see. The understanding and observation phases of design thinking helps team members develop a sense of empathy.

Once schools have determined the prototype they will be undertaking for this school year, they will continue with the “Define” phase of the Design Thinking Process. This phase is to be completed by November 30, 2015, and to be shared at the all-District Early Release on December 7, 2015.

DEFINE

In this phase of design thinking, the focus is on becoming aware of peoples’ needs and developing insights. The phrase “How might we....” is often used to define a point of view, which is a statement of the: **user + need + insight**. This statement ends with a suggestion about how to make changes that will have an impact on peoples’ experiences.

Next Steps

The prototypes are expected to be ready for testing by the end of February 2016; however, some schools may have prototypes ready for testing sooner and will be encouraged and supported to implement a compacted timeline.

Final steps will be to reflect, share out and revise. Our goal is for all schools to have implemented and tested at least one prototype by April 4, 2016. All prototypes will be shared at the May 2016 School Board meeting.

Design Thinking Project Planning Template