



Focus on School, District, and Regional

Transformation

2017-2018 Education Elements Annual Report
September 2018



Table of Contents

Introduction	01
Our Mission	02
Our Impact	05
Our Work	09
Our Stories	15
+ Developing Responsive Teams	17
+ Benchmarking Personalized Learning	19
+ Supporting Regional Learning Networks	21
+ Creating a Culture of Innovation	23
+ Enabling Competency-Based Education through Personalized Learning	25
Our Next Steps	27



A photograph of several students in a classroom setting, focused on a complex robotics project. One student in the foreground wears a blue and teal hoodie and safety glasses, reaching towards the robot. Other students are visible in the background, also working on the project. The robot is a white, wheeled platform with various sensors and wires attached. The classroom has blue walls and a whiteboard in the background.

Horry County Schools (SC)



Introduction

We are excited to share with you our 2017-2018 Annual Report. This report marks eight years since Education Elements was founded, and our fifth such report. The goal of this report is to highlight the incredible work of our district partners, and to share how our work is evolving to continue to build and support dynamic school systems that meet the needs of every learner, today and tomorrow.

We help schools, districts, regional service centers, and state education departments across all areas of strategic planning and leadership development. We have built a reputation in relation to school redesign, focused on helping schools and districts to design and implement student-centered instructional models and change how schools operate to better meet the needs of students. We are experts in school redesign. We focus on helping schools and districts design and implement student-centered instructional models. We also focus on organizational redesign by helping school and district leaders rethink and restructure how their academic, operational, and technical teams work together to support students and teachers.

To give a sense of the breadth and depth of this work, this report shares five stories of how we are supporting diverse organizations to change their instruction and their cultures to better meet student needs.

These stories represent our work with organizations large and small, in places where we are just starting out and in places where we are building on years of work. We hope that the stories we share in this report give you a sense of how we work with schools, districts, and state and regional organizations to help them realize their visions.



Loudoun County Public Schools (VA)

Our Mission

We partner with districts to build and support dynamic school systems that meet the needs of every learner, today and tomorrow.

- + We take the time to understand the unique challenges that school and district leaders face, and then customize the Education Elements approach for each district.
- + We build capacity in the districts we work with and achieve sustainable results.



“

Thank you for all of the support and encouragement we receive from Education Elements! It is hard to describe the impact this has had on me as a professional, our schools, and the district as a whole. We have learned so much about how to implement change in our district. This understanding has made us more effective in our support of schools and our ability to implement other initiatives with success.

Linda Mulvey, Chief Academic Officer (ret. 2018),
Syracuse City Schools, NY

“

We have always had excellent support, encouragement, and honest conversations. This is a company that believes in their clients. Their goal is truly improvement oriented. They help us build sustainability within our own organization. I have, and will continue, to recommend Ed Elements to other districts.

Rosalie Daca, Chief Academic Officer,
Racine Unified School District, WI

“

I have had the opportunity to work with many systems partners over my 30 years in education. The partnership with Education Elements has been by far the most positive experience that I have had working with a consulting group. EE is a first-class organization with amazing staff.

James E. Dallas, Director of Teaching and Learning,
Loudoun County Public Schools, VA

“

The Education Elements team has provided our district with the most relevant, practical strategies for organizational efficiency and student success. Our long-standing partnership has truly changed the way we work as a team. Education Elements is as vested in our district's success as we are - #bettertogether.

Amy Creeden, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction,
Enlarged City School District of Middletown, NY



Uinta County School District One (WY)



Our Impact



Our Work Matters

Our partner districts believe in our work just as much as we do.

Reflecting on this school year they said:

97%

Our support is **effective**

100%

We are **trusted partners**

94%

Our work has had a **positive impact** on teaching and learning

We change how districts work together.

Our partners say that since partnering with us:

95%

They see teachers **innovate** more often

86%

Team meetings and collaboration are **more effective**

85%

Roles and accountabilities within their organization are **more clear**

These results come from our annual client survey, shared with district leaders across our current clients. 70 district leaders across 30 districts and consortia completed the survey.



We're reaching leaders

750 school and district leaders attended the 4th annual PL Summit.



We're creating bestsellers

We released The NEW School Rules and it hit **#1 on Corwin's bestseller list.**

Since 2010, we've reached:

140
Districts

750
Schools

630K
Students



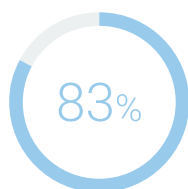
We're a trusted partner

100% of district leaders consider Education Elements to be a trusted partner.

When districts realize their vision for learning, the student and teacher experience is transformed:

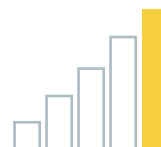
Increased student engagement

83% of school leaders report increased student engagement in Rochester, NH.



Sustained academic growth

Middletown, NY has seen 5 years of sustained academic growth.



Fewer failures

In District 197, MN, teachers have seen class failures fall by 50%.



&

Increased morale

90% of teachers feel more effective.



+17 ELA proficiency grew by 17 points.

+18 Math proficiency grew by 18 points.

Learning networks

The W-FL Region has established a learning network that reaches 25 districts and 40,000 students in western NY.





Yuma Elementary School District One (AZ)



Our Work

Our Reach

We've been redesigning education since 2010.

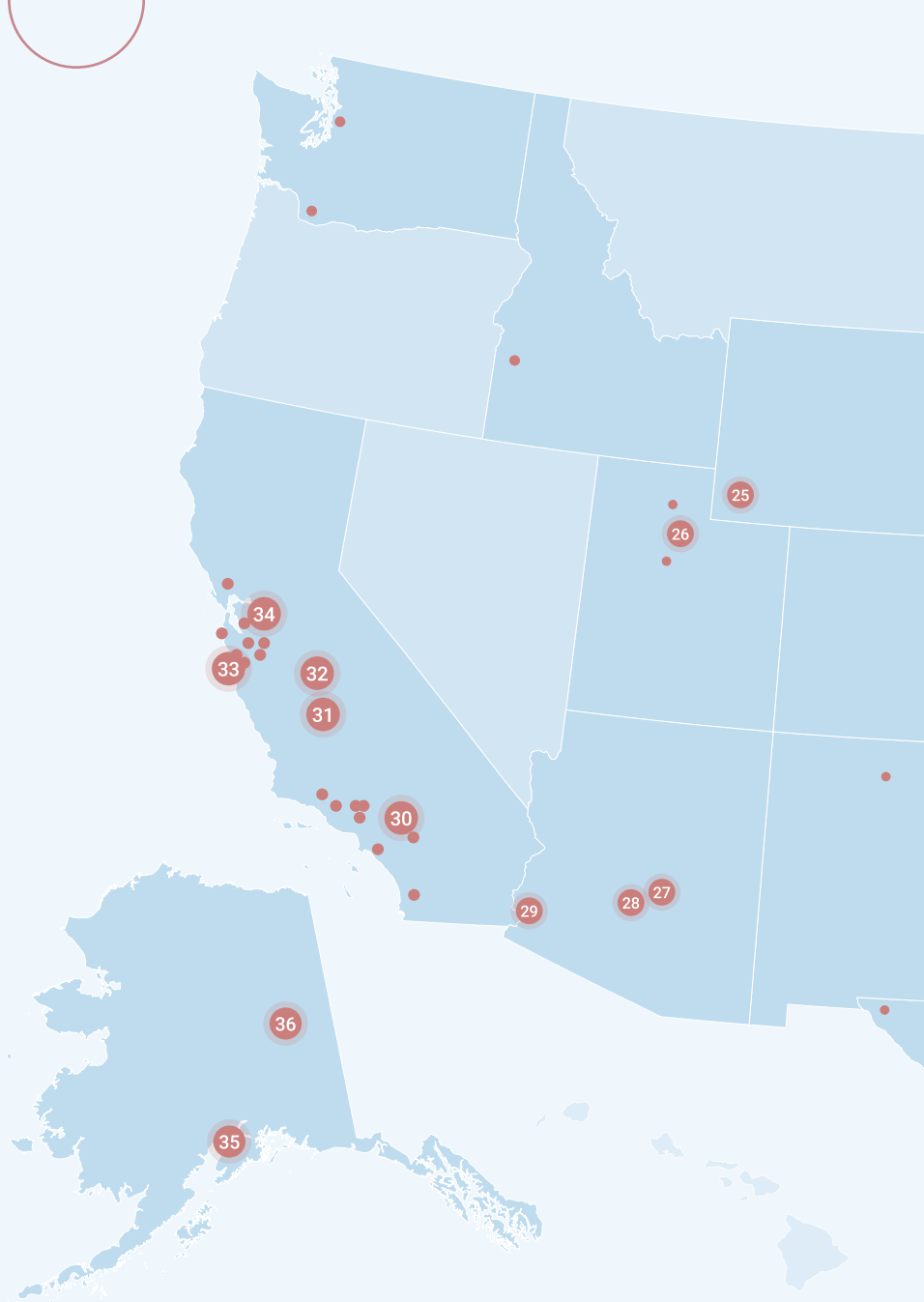
We've reached:

140 Districts

750 Schools

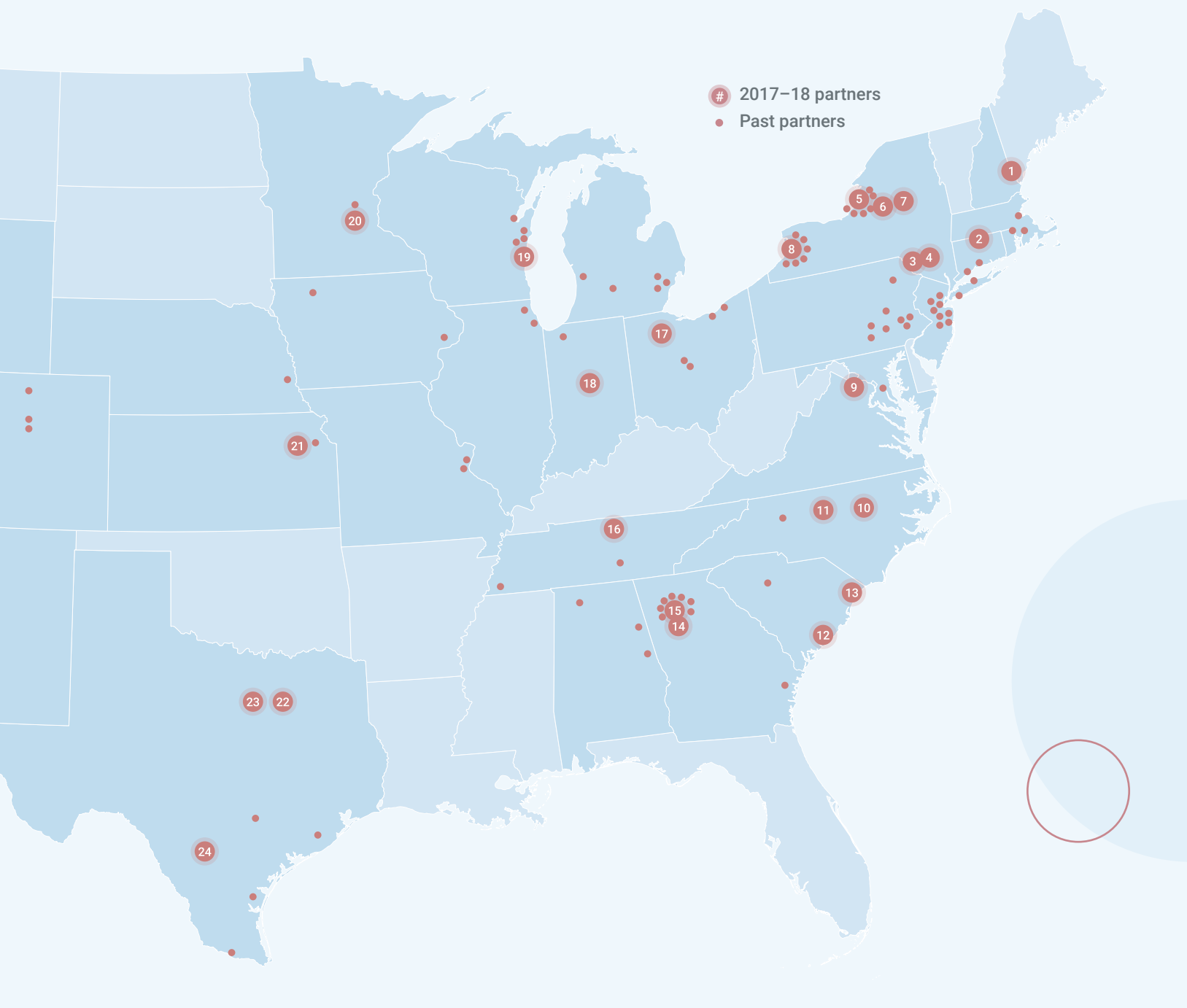
40K Teachers

630K Students



Our 2017–2018 partners:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Rochester School Department (NH) | WFL BOCES Instructional Programs | 8. Erie 2 Consortium (NY) |
| 2. Hartford Public Schools (CT) | Penn Yan Central School District | Erie 2 BOCES Instructional Programs |
| 3. Enlarged City School District of Middletown (NY) | Romulus Central School District | Eden Central School District |
| 4. Newburgh Enlarged City School District (NY) | Sodus Central School District | Pine Valley Central School District |
| 5. Wayne-Fingerlakes Consortium | Gananda Central School District | Frewsburg Central School District |
| Waterloo Central School District | Williamson Central School District | 9. Loudoun County Public Schools (VA) |
| Clyde-Savannah Central School District | North Rose-Wolcott Central School District | 10. Wake County Public School System (NC) |
| Geneva City School District | Dundee Central School District | 11. Rowan-Salisbury School System (NC) |
| Marion Central School District | 6. Syracuse City School District (NY) | 12. Charleston County School District (SC) |
| Red Creek Central School District (NY) | 7. Central Valley School District (NY) | 13. Horry County Schools (SC) |
| | | 14. Fulton County School System (GA) |



- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 15. Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) T3 Grant (GA) | 19. Racine Unified School District (WI) | 29. Yuma Elementary School District One (AZ) |
| Bibb County School District | 20. Independent School District No 197 (MN) | 30. Riverside Unified School District (CA) |
| Savannah-Chatham County Public School System | 21. Kansas State Dept. of Education (KS) | 31. Corcoran Unified School District (CA) |
| Dougherty County School System | 22. Dallas ISD (TX) | 32. Fresno Unified School District (CA) |
| Muscogee County School District | 23. Temple Independent School District (TX) | 33. Google for Education (CA) |
| 16. Putnam County School System (TN) | 24. San Antonio Independent School District (TX) | 34. New Haven Unified School District (CA) |
| 17. Lakota Local School District (OH) | 25. Uinta County School District One (WY) | 35. Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (AK) |
| 18. Metropolitan School District of Warren Township (IN) | 26. Utah State Board of Education (UT) | 36. Fairbanks Northstar Borough School District (AK) |
| | 27. Cave Creek Unified School District (AZ) | |
| | 28. Peoria Unified School District (AZ) | |

Our Work

One of the most common questions we answer is, “So what do you do?”

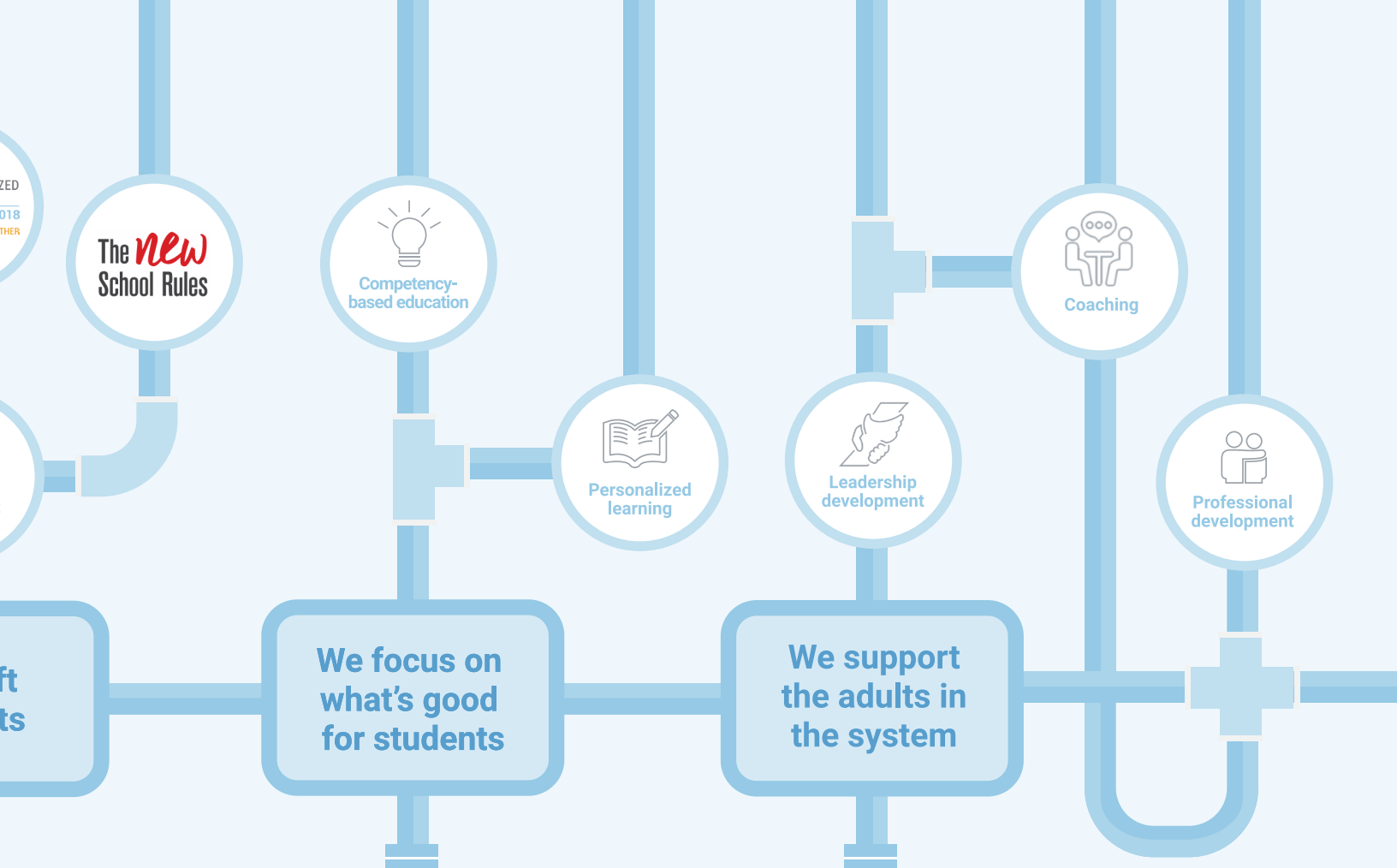
We know there is a tendency to want to put us in a box by title or role (PD Provider, Trainer, Consultant, etc.) or by category (Personalized Learning, Finance, IT, Strategic Planning, etc.)—but to do that defines us too narrowly.

Instead, think of us as good listeners and diagnosticians, great collaborators and advisors, and passionate problem solvers.

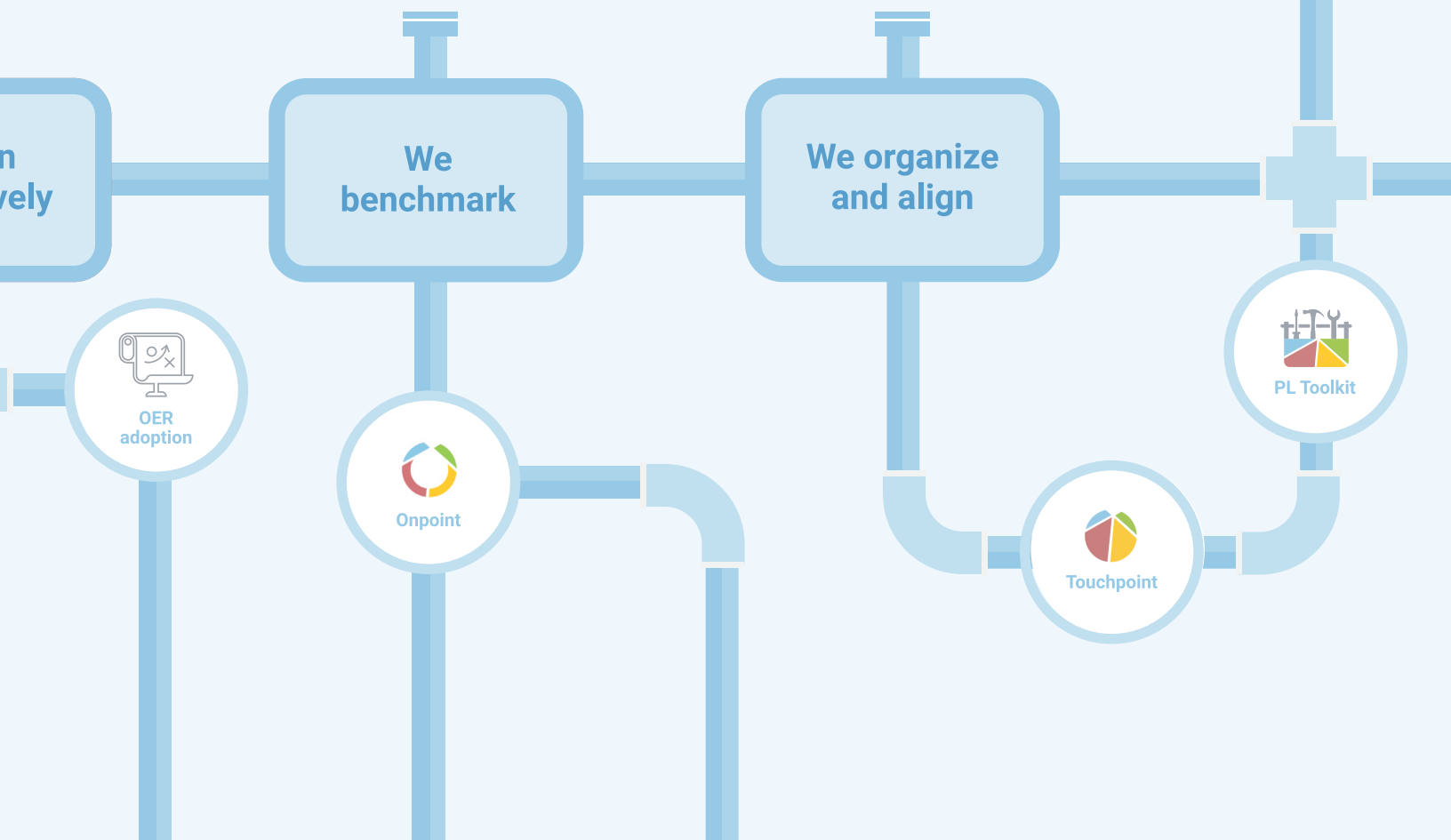
We are the people you call when you need help. We are ready to help you solve your challenges.

[Click the icons to learn more](#)





districts solve their biggest challenges





Horry County Schools (SC)



Our Stories



Developing Responsive Teams: New

New School Rules

In our years of partnership with hundreds of districts across the country, we've noticed patterns in how the way we work often holds us back, rather than moves us forward. In order to make lasting change, we believe we need to shift how individuals and teams work together. This year, our CEO Anthony Kim teamed up with Alexis Gonzalez-Black, an expert in organizational design, to write *The NEW School Rules: 6 Vital Practices for Thriving and Responsive Schools*. The book is the culmination of Education Elements' work over the last eight years studying and implementing the practices that have the biggest impact on organizational culture and effectiveness.

[Learn more about The NEW School Rules Leadership Course](#)

“

Super practical rules on school change with all stated problems, lessons, and experiments you can try tomorrow. The NEW School Rules provides guidance on defining the work, encouraging experimentation, sharing leadership, accepting ambiguity, and turning schools into learning organizations. The NEW School Rules is a must read for teacher, school, and system leaders.

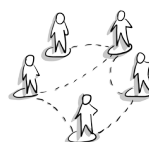
Tom Vander Ark, CEO,
Getting Smart



Plan for change,
not perfection



Build trust and allow
authority to spread



Define the work before
you define the people



Aim for “safe enough to
try” over “consensus



Harness the flow and
let information go



Schools grow when
people grow

The six rules

The book shares six critical practices around: planning, teaming, managing roles, decision-making, sharing information, and learning organizations. The six practices are supported by experiments and workouts, in the book and on the [The NEW School Rules website](#), for educators to try the rules on their own and with their teams.

[Click the icons to learn more](#)

NEW School Rules & Middletown, NY

Middletown, NY

Middletown reimagines how work gets done to support schools and students.



Over the past five years, the Enlarged City School District of Middletown, NY has successfully transformed the student experience through personalized learning. Now, they are looking to *The NEW School Rules* to shift how school and district teams work together to ensure that they can continue to innovate and improve.

Education Elements' partnership with Middletown started in 2013 with an ambitious plan to support the district rollout of personalized learning to all teachers. As Middletown teachers implemented [The Core Four Elements of Personalized Learning](#) and learning became increasingly student-centered, Middletown saw sustained academic growth year after year. This year 57% of Middletown students in grades K-8 tested proficient in ELA, up from 40% five years ago and 62% tested proficient in math, up from 44% five years ago.

While Middletown's sustained growth over the last five years is tremendous, they don't want to stop there. Richard Del Moro, who became Middletown's Superintendent in 2018, wants to ensure that the district continues to improve how they support schools and students. Del Moro and his leadership team believe that *The NEW School Rules* will help their district and school teams find better ways to meet, function, and make decisions.

Education Elements is leading twenty Middletown district and school leaders through a leadership seminar that will continue over the 2018-19 school year. The seminar includes a series of ten sessions to deepen knowledge, practice new ways of working, and plan how to implement *The NEW School Rules* with their own teams. Through ongoing in-person, virtual, and job-embedded work together, these leaders will be able to use the six new school rules to make visible changes with their schools and teams that drive more effective teamwork and improve outcomes for teachers and students.

“

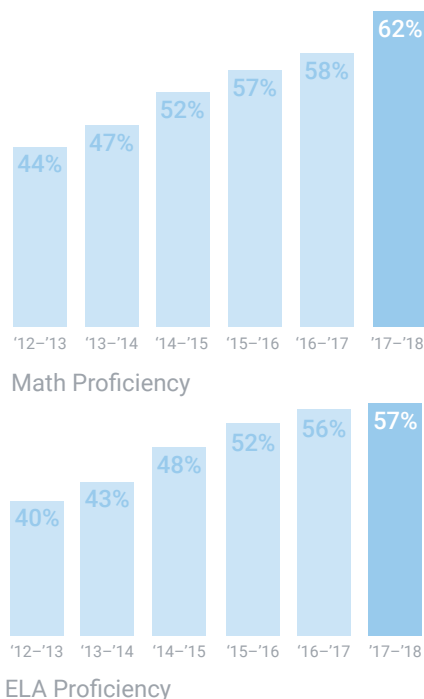
As Superintendent, I know that in order for our team to function efficiently, we need to balance stability, risk, and growth. To do this, I'm working to ground my team in responsiveness. Working with Anthony Kim and his team at Education Elements as part of The NEW School Rules Leadership Seminar has provided us with opportunities to practice key skills like offering purposeful praise and critical feedback supporting our areas of growth. As a result, our meetings have become more responsive, with roles and responsibilities shifting as needed.

Richard Del Moro, Superintendent

“

This training was exactly what I needed as a leader. I feel inspired and ready to work collaboratively with my district and building teams.

Kathy Jensen, Principal



Benchmarking Personalized Learning

A Single Number Score that Tracks the Big Picture

In our work to help districts personalize learning, we are often asked, “You’ve worked with districts across the country - how does my district compare?” No matter how successful a district is, they still want to know how they compare to other districts and whether they are spending time and resources in the right areas. This year we launched [Onpoint](#) to help answer these questions for schools or districts at any stage of implementation.

Onpoint is a single number score aligned to the [Education Elements Personalized Learning Framework](#) that benchmarks a school or district’s implementation of personalized learning against a growing dataset of more than 10,000 teacher and leader survey responses. Onpoint tracks the progress of your personalized learning implementation over time by displaying year-over-year progress and compares your progress to others at different phases of their own personalized learning implementation.

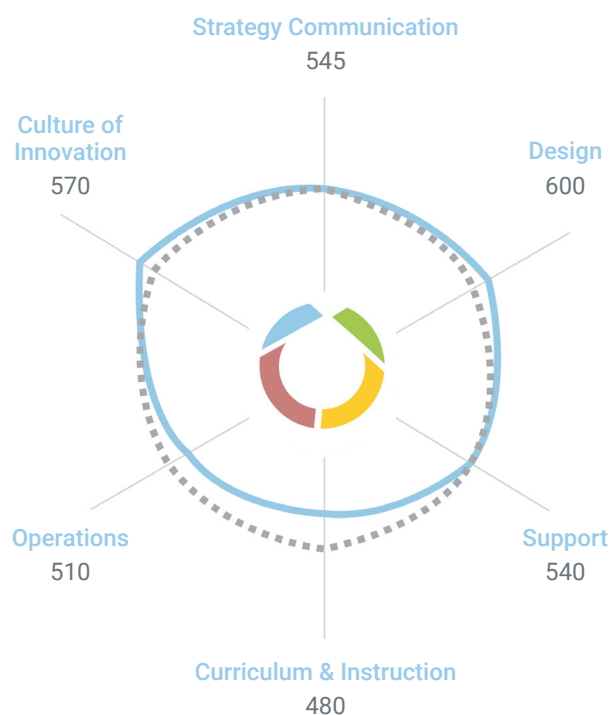
Onpoint helps you know where to start or continue your work by focusing your personalized learning efforts on the most important areas of your work. It captures what is or isn’t working and helps to communicate progress to your staff, board, students, and community.

Onpoint

“

The data districts get is invaluable - I’ve watched district teams review the report and move from ‘aha!’ to ‘here’s what we should do next’ far faster than they could without Onpoint.

Amy Jenkins, COO, Education Elements



Onpoint Score: 541

What is Onpoint?

Onpoint is a single number score that gauges school and district implementation of personalized learning.

Onpoint:

- + Compares against benchmarks
- + Tracks progress over time
- + Identifies strengths and focus areas

The Onpoint report includes feedback on multiple components of personalized learning, alongside a set of recommendations so that school and district leaders can focus their efforts to improve individualized instruction.

College Community School District, IA



- + 6,000 students
- + 5+ years of standards-based learning, planning their shift to personalized learning

College Community is planning a district-wide personalized learning initiative, so they needed a way to understand their current state and inform strategy and tactics for deeper student-centered learning. Onpoint validated that they already have strong practices for differentiated instruction and student reflection in place, but they need to develop a district-wide vision and support plan to support a wider implementation of personalized learning.



Onpoint has been helpful in identifying early celebrations on our journey to create a personalized learning system. We are in the process of using the report to identify and communicate our most immediate priorities and action steps.

Tracy Schipper, PK-12 Director of Education and Innovation, College Community School District, IA

Charleston County School District, SC



- + 2nd-largest school district in South Carolina
- + 78 district and 11 charter schools serve 45,000 students; 17 schools form a cohort of "PL Innovation Schools" across K-12

Charleston's Fall and Spring Onpoint scores validated that their implementation is on track for a district in their first year of personalized learning, and highlighted incredible progress the PL Innovation Schools made this year in defining and communicating their vision and rollout plan for personalized learning to all teachers.

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, AK



- + 14,000 students over more than 7,000 square miles of central Alaska
- + 28 schools have launched personalized learning in three waves

Onpoint showed Fairbanks how their first wave of schools progressed from pre-launch through the end of year one. From spring of 2017 to spring of 2018, their score rose from below the pre-launch benchmark to above the year one benchmark. Because of the organizational shifts that were made to support wave one, Fairbanks' second and third waves launched with critical supports already in place, as reflected by their higher initial Onpoint scores.



Onpoint provided an important reality check for Fairbanks. Based on our work at various levels of the district, each of us had different perceptions of where the successes and challenges were occurring. The data was eye-opening. We were able to use the Onpoint score to shift resource allocation, target professional development, and position ourselves to better support teachers as we moved into the second half of our district-wide implementation.

Karen Gaborik, Superintendent, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, AK

Supporting Regional Learning Networks

W-FL Region and Implementing Change at Scale



When we work with groups of school districts we are able to support transformational change on a regional level. We are especially proud of our impact in the Wayne-Finger Lakes region of New York, where our work with the BOCES (Board of Cooperative Education Services) and several pioneering districts contributed to collaboration and innovation that impacts all 25 districts and 40,000 students in the region.

The Wayne-Finger Lakes (W-FL) area is made up of small districts, each serving anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand students. Our work in the region has grown over time and includes direct support to individual districts and group support through a consortium model. Dundee CSD was the first district to partner with us, with five more pioneering districts (Geneva CSD, Marion CSD, Romulus CSD, Waterloo CSD, and North-Rose Wolcott CSD) partnering with us the following year. Additionally, the W-FL BOCES saw that there was region-wide interest in this work. We worked with the BOCES to devise the consortium model to give more districts the opportunity to design and implement personalized learning. In the consortium approach, we support leaders from several districts in a central location, who then return to their districts to lead training. Currently, Education Elements supports 12 districts in the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES region, as well as the BOCES instructional programs.

[Learn more about our work with consortia and state and regional education organizations](#)

“

I have heard from many of the districts that we work with that without the impact of Education Elements they would not be where they are right now. The most important way that partnering with EE has proved effective is the impact on developing teams within each of the districts and beyond. The resources that EE brings to the table have been extremely helpful in developing long-term success.

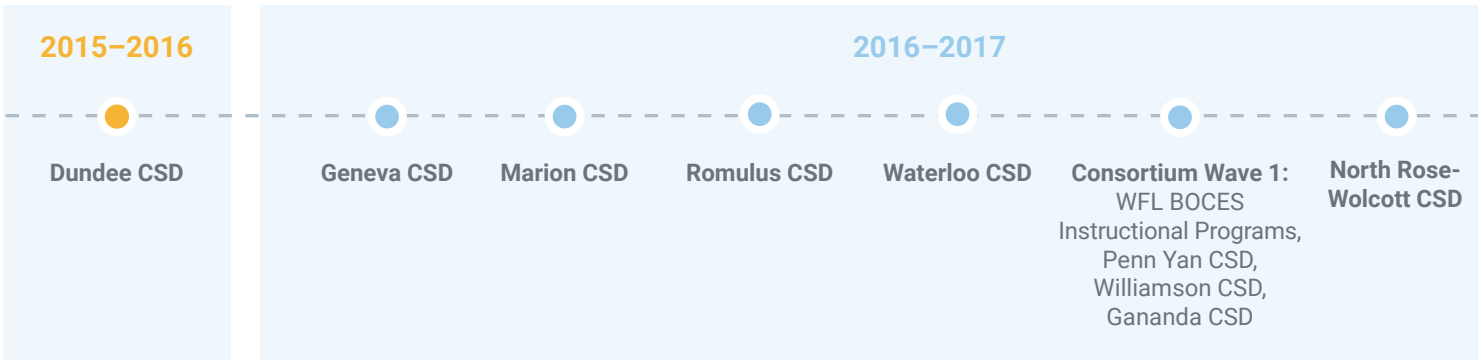
Scott Bischoff, Deputy Superintendent,
Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES



Districts include: Dundee CSD, Geneva CSD, Marion CSD, Romulus CSD, North Rose-Wolcott CSD, WFL BOCES Instructional Programs, Penn Yan CSD, Williamson CSD, Gananda CSD, Waterloo CSD, Clyde-Savannah CSD, Sodus CSD, and Red Creek CSD

Regional Milestones

Regional collaboration and district partnerships with Education Elements



orks: Wayne-Finger Lakes Region, NY

Each of the districts in the W-FL region is continually working to make instruction more student-centered. What is unique about the work in this region is the way that these districts are innovating beyond the classroom to establish a collaborative learning network of thought leadership.

Here, we've included three examples of the many ways that leaders in this region are working together:

Cross-District Learning:

Sharing a common language for personalized learning and utilizing many of the same tools and frameworks facilitates collaboration. In Fall of 2017, W-FL districts launched cross-district learning walks, with 307 teachers and school leaders visiting other schools to see personalized learning in action. Four districts - Dundee CSD, Marion CSD, Penn Yan CSD, and Geneva CSD - also embarked on a year-long collaborative learning experience. Over 200 staff gathered for 9 sessions over the course of the year.

Building Capacity in the BOCES:

The W-FL BOCES is growing their capacity to support districts with personalized learning on their own. BOCES coaches shadow our consortium workshops to learn how they can train districts in the same manner. Now, much of their professional learning is personalized: trainers serve as facilitators and incorporate elements such as station rotation and flex playlists. As of fall 2017, BOCES trainers are independently training two more districts in our methodology.

Regional Conference:

In May, the Wayne-Finger Lakes region planned and hosted their first regional conference. Over 260 participants from 41 districts and 2 local colleges attended 42 sessions and 2 district visits during this two-day conference. The conference also featured 5 student speakers from Marion, Palmyra-Macedon, Seneca Falls, Dundee, and Penn Yan, and keynotes from AJ Juliani and Education Elements Board Member Michael Horn. The Conference was planned by a committee of volunteers from the BOCES and 8 of the component districts - a true regional effort!

“

The school districts within the Wayne-Finger Lakes region believe that we are stronger together than apart. Our regional focus on student-centered learning has allowed us to maximize on this belief by providing educators a common goal to tackle together. Sharing ideas, visiting each other's classrooms to see personalized learning in action, and providing purposeful professional development has afforded us the chance to positively impact a greater number of students than if we were to work on this pedagogical transformation alone.

Jessica Sheridan, Director of Staff Development, Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES

2017–2018

Cross-district learning walks begin

Regional Summit draws 41 districts and 2 local colleges

Consortium Wave 2:
Clyde-Savannah CSD,
Sodus CSD,
Red Creek CSD

2018–2019

W-FL Regional Fellowship:
4 districts and the BOCES

Enabling Competency-Based Education Personalized Learning: Rochester Schools

Personalized Learning Sets the Stage for Competency-Based Education



In 2013, the state of New Hampshire adopted a competency-based education (CBE) model and Rochester School Department (RSD) took important steps to move their district toward CBE. They established course competencies and adjusted report cards and grading policies to support the vision of students demonstrating mastery of content and skills before moving on to the next chapter. However, they found themselves blocked from a true 'move on when ready' experience as traditional instructional models did not naturally support the flexible pace of a competency-based classroom. The concept of mastering material before moving on was appealing, but in practice teachers found that students simply took (and retook) assessments. Students placed less importance on summative assessments knowing that they could retake them until a passing score was earned.

RSD engaged with Education Elements to overcome these hurdles in their CBE implementation. Together we theorized that by implementing personalized learning, students would take ownership of their academic journey and be better prepared for the individualized pace of a 'move on when ready' classroom experience. We started with a one school implementation of personalized learning in 2016-17, and in 2017-18, we helped RSD launch personalized learning in six of the eleven schools in the district. RSD schools went through Foundations and Design in fall of 2017, and teachers officially launched PL in spring of 2018.

“

The implementation of PL has not only changed the learning process in our building, but has become part of our culture. Students are becoming more responsible for themselves and their learning. It is so exciting!

RSD Teacher

RSD's implementation of personalized learning is still in its early stages, but survey and learning walk data already show changes in teacher practice and student behavior that support competency-based education.

Data from May, just one semester since the launch in December, showed:

Decrease in Whole-Group Instruction:

Learning walk data shows that from March to May, observed instances of whole-group instruction dropped from 26% of observed classrooms to just 9%.



Moving on when ready:

38% of teachers report that student re-assessment has decreased. In CBE, a decrease in student re-assessment means that students are mastering content and passing assessments to progress, instead of taking and re-taking assessments before they are ready.

38% 

Increased Student Engagement:

83% of school leaders report that students are more engaged since starting personalized learning.

83% 

tion through School Department, NH

Students are Ready to Try Out Competency-Based Education

This fall, the RSD team will manage the rollout of personalized learning to the five remaining schools in the district and Education Elements will support RSD's district coaches, provide leadership development, and help launch a true pilot of competency-based education in select high school classes.

The CBE pilot will offer students the chance to self-direct through course content with personalized support from their teacher. Students have experienced some aspects of CBE through PL, but this will be the first time that they have autonomy to decide for themselves when they have mastered content and are ready to take a summative assessment and move on. Students are looking forward to the change. In focus groups, one student said, "This is really important to me. I want to be able to know when I'm ready to take a summative and then be able to take it right away."

“

Personalized learning has become a part of what we do everyday. Personalized learning engages all learners in their own learning and supports their reflection and ownership, providing a strong foundation for the 'move on when ready' approach that is fundamental to competency-based education.

Mike Hopkins, Superintendent, Rochester School Department, NH

Competency-Based Education Toolkit:

Now that RSD is ready to pilot a true "move on when ready" approach, they are turning to our CBE Toolkit for practical resources on everything from assessment practices to network infrastructure.

The toolkit was created through a partnership with Digital Promise and Education Elements, based on the [Education Elements CBE Implementation Framework](#). It shares lessons learned from the CBE implementation journeys of ten League of Innovation districts.

You'll find:

- + A video series about the power of competency-based education
- + Input from the different stakeholders - from students to the community
- + Ideas on curriculum and instruction
- + Standards & assessment in CBE
- + What infrastructure and policy look like
- + How to support your staff with professional learning and scheduling

[Access the CBE Toolkit](#)

Creating a Culture of Innovation: Dis

Scaling Best Practices Through a Culture of Innovation



In 2015, Education Elements began our work with District 197 to define their PL vision and pilot PL with a dedicated group of 25 “Vanguard” teachers from across the district. In 2017-18, we helped District 197 launch their second wave of 50 additional teachers and create the right conditions to scale as they prepare to expand to all 200 teachers over the next two years.

District 197’s pilot of personalized learning with the Vanguard teachers was very successful. Survey results show that 90% of Vanguard teachers feel more effective since implementing personalized learning and Vanguard teachers also report higher student engagement and more students passing their classes. Social studies teacher Mary Beth Townsend says, “I had almost no failures in all of my classes this year. None in one class, and 1-2 in any other class. Because students had choices, they rarely chose to do nothing and usually chose not to distract others.” Science teacher Jen Clem says personalized learning helped her “reflect on each day’s teaching and ask myself how I could increase student engagement with this lesson.” Like Townsend, Clem says that fewer students are failing her classes since she implemented personalized learning. “This last semester, 7 students failed out of 120. In years past, it was closer to 15.”

District 197 recognized that the success of the Vanguard pilot was due, at least in part, to the fact that the pilot gave teachers freedom and support to collaborate with each other and innovate with their instruction. At launch, 92% of Vanguard teachers said they felt comfortable innovating and taking risks with their instruction in order to personalize learning, 30-40% higher than we usually see among teachers preparing to launch personalized learning. Clem says of the pilot, “I appreciate the ability to take a risk and ‘fail forward’ with the support of the district.”

This year, in order to launch the second wave of teachers and create the right conditions to scale personalized learning to the whole district, District 197 has worked to create a culture of innovation that will support all teachers to experiment and collaborate like the Vanguard teachers.

At Education Elements, we believe that there are [five ingredients to creating a culture of innovation](#) in any district: deep trust, shared purpose, constant curiosity, networked teams, and agents of change. In their efforts to scale personalized learning across their district, District 197 is incorporating all five.

“

We knew the pilot with the Vanguard teachers was a success because they were willing to continue to take risks. They were willing to have an experiment fail and then try again. We were able to cultivate this idea of “try and iterate.”

Cari Jo Drewitz, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Five Ingredients to Create a Culture of Innovation

Some of the strategies that District 197 has adopted to support a culture of innovation include:



Create 'Deep Trust' with freedom to fail forward:

Administrators visit classrooms through 'learning walks' so frequently that teachers are comfortable having school or district leaders present when they are trying something that might not be successful, yet. After every visit, teachers receive a postcard that includes a note of encouragement and cites specific observations and feedback.



Build a sense of 'Shared Purpose' by connecting PL to organizational goals:

In the visioning stage, the district had a graphic artist capture conversations involving teachers, school leaders, and district administrators that connected personalized learning to the district's existing strategic framework. Each teacher received a poster or sticker as a daily visual reminder of their collective purpose to personalize learning.



Support 'Constant Curiosity' by exposing teachers to one another's classrooms:

To allow teachers to see the potential for personalized learning in their own classroom and cross-pollinate ideas without feeling judged or evaluated, the district created virtual classroom models as well as "co-learning walks" that allow teachers to visit one another's classrooms and debrief as a team.



Create 'Networked Teams' by mixing up learning opportunities:

Initially, teachers attended PL professional development days grouped by grade level and length of experience with PL. But like a great PL teacher, the district experimented with different groupings over time, finding ways to mix up teachers to create unique learning opportunities. In one session, the district paired K-2nd and 9-12th teachers to share ideas on everything from developing student playlists to ideas on flexible seating.



Develop 'Agents of Change' through peer-to-peer support:

Teachers who have taken the lead with personalized learning can serve as peer instructional coaches and digital learning coaches. As trusted peers, they allow other teachers to feel safe in risk-taking and other teachers often cite their support as the single biggest help to their work to personalize learning for their students.



BOOK ROCKET

Wake County Public School System (NC)



Our Next Steps



Letter from our CEO

I hope you have enjoyed reading our 2017-18 Annual Report. It is always a pleasure to reflect on the accomplishments of our district partners, and we are continually grateful that these extraordinary educators trust us in this work. The stories in this report illustrate where we have been, how our work has evolved, and point to the future of how we will continue building and supporting dynamic school systems.

To conclude this report, I would like to share two emerging themes that I see in our work with education leaders, and how they relate to our next steps supporting school and district leaders.

First, it's time to **level up personalized learning**. Just a few years ago, personalized learning was a new term for many of the districts that we support. Now that many districts are familiar with what personalized learning is, if not already implementing personalized learning in their classrooms, our next challenge is to support districts to think about personalized learning as a path toward instructional excellence. Our goal is to help districts understand how to align their initiatives to achieve their strategic goals. Whether they are focused on project-based learning, competency-based education, social-emotional learning, multi-tiered system of supports, or something else, personalized learning should contribute to the work, instead of competing with it. This is why our support for districts has expanded beyond personalized learning to include everything from leadership development and coaching to full school or district redesign: we know that achieving better outcomes for students means aligning this work.

Second, **how we work is as important as what we work on**. We think we can help districts get even better results if we can help shape how teams work in schools, in districts, and across regions. This understanding was the foundation for my book, *The NEW School Rules*, and the principles in that book guide our work as an organization and with our districts. Our goal is that every district should have a culture of innovation and function as a responsive team, and we look forward to spending the next year putting these principles to work in districts across the country.

Thank you for reading our report. As we begin this new school year, I am grateful to work alongside the incredible team at Education Elements and dedicated educators across the country to transform education. I am excited about what the future holds.



Anthony Kim, Founder and CEO of Education Elements

PL Summit 2018



info@edelements.com



(650) 440-7860



[@edelements](https://twitter.com/edelements)

www.edelements.com