

Making the Shift Toward Deeper Learning

By Urban Education Contributor on May 10, 2018 6:00 AM

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Today's post is the practitioner perspective on Monday's post: [Deeper Learning For Greater Equity](#).



A District-Wide Shift To Deeper Learning

[Jefferson County Public Schools](#) (JCPS) is embarking on a truly significant reframing of what we expect students to know and do. As a district serving a diverse, urban community with varied needs, JCPS is committed to a purpose that includes moving each student toward greater success no matter where they begin by offering opportunities and environments that promote caring, equity, excellence, respect, individuality, diversity, creativity, and collaboration. Starting in 2016, the district started exploring deeper learning as the best approach to realize its vision of "all Jefferson County Public School students [graduating] prepared, empowered, and inspired to reach

their full potential and [contributing] as thoughtful, responsible citizens of our diverse, shared world."

The district's initial work around deeper learning as an approach to advance equity and around the development of definitions and measures for the capacities and dispositions necessary for success in life, as outlined in greater detail in [Monday's post](#), will form the basis for building a plan to adjust curricula, teaching practice, professional development, assessments, and other aspects of the way teaching and learning occurs in our schools. JCPS is engaging in a deep, focused, collaborative process to place deeper learning for students, including progress toward mastery of academic standards and the development of the capacities necessary for success in life, at the center of its work.

Developing the concept of "deeper learning" into actionable components will be the work of many months, and will require continued intensive, collaborative effort by JCPS leadership, district departments, teachers, principals, and others.

Using Research to Inform Strategies and Implementation

This work also needs to be informed by an in-depth analysis of national research and best practices and done in consultation with recognized experts. The [University of Louisville-Jefferson County Public Schools](#) (UL-JCPS) partnership will provide the district with an independent analysis of the various entry points that schools have chosen to advance deeper learning in their classrooms. While some schools have chosen to focus on project-based learning, others have focused on technology integration, and others on creating experiences to support their graduate profile. These various approaches provide an opportunity for the partnership to form and implement a research plan that can provide data-informed decisions for other

schools that may be considering one or more of these deeper learning strategies.

The partnership's initial study, as outlined in [Monday's post](#), will examine the initial launch of the district's Deeper Learning Initiative, including an examination of conditions that best support significant shifts in practice towards implementing deeper learning strategies and goals.

Future Work

By strengthening our partnership with the University of Louisville, one of our primary sources for educator recruitment and hiring, we believe we can mutually benefit from the lessons learned from the research. The research will inform our system-wide implementation of deeper learning and deeper learning strategies and illuminate the benefits and potential challenges of deeper learning as an approach towards promoting excellence, equity, and personalized learning for all students.