



**Overview** The Lighthouse Grant provides support for three schools to implement personalized learning school-wide. This report summarizes the results of focus groups conducted in February 2019 as part of an evaluation of the implementation of the Lighthouse Grant, which began in the 2017-18 school year. Focus groups were conducted with administrators and educators directly involved in the grant's implementation, including the assistant superintendent, principal, and several teachers. The evaluation will study the grant implementation through its conclusion in summer 2019.

### Definitions of personalized learning

Definitions of personalized learning (PL) differ across the three schools, yet each reflects components outlined in the state's white paper on PL. Definitions include:

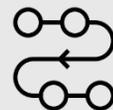
- BMS**
- A focus on **deeper learning, project-based learning, and experiential learning;**
  - Student ownership of learning;
  - Student voice and choice;
  - Engaging deeply in projects of interest;
  - Authentic, applied learning.



- CIP**
- Educating the **whole student;**
  - Student voice and choice;
  - Personalized pathways;
  - Allowing teachers to personalize their PL implementation.



- 360**
- Personalized **pathways;**
  - Tailored curriculum;
  - Multiple entry points for students to access material;
  - Responsive to students' learning preferences;
  - Differentiated instruction.



“It is about knowing kids academically, personally, socially, [as well as] knowing their current interests...It's having that whole picture, and then building learning experiences that are individualized.” - Administrator

### Implementation of personalized learning

Key changes in implementation from last year include:

- Interdisciplinary project-based learning activities (BMS);
- Engaging in two design thinking challenges (CIP);
- Expansion into additional content areas (360).



Schools continue to make **strong progress** toward their PL goals, though still struggled with specific challenges, such as:

- Having an interdisciplinary rubric to deeply assess competencies (BMS);
- Reliably measuring PL implementation using observation data (CIP).



“I wouldn't make the claim that we have 100% implementation for personalized learning, nor do I ever think we'll be at that place, because I think as you learn more, you get more sophisticated, and then you drill down in a different place.”

- Administrator



Schools' implementation of PL continues to be **mostly to fully implemented** school-wide.

# Implementation successes and outcomes

In most schools, the grant and the implementation of PL helped to:



- Provide opportunities (including funding) for teacher collaboration;
- Create an interdisciplinary culture;
- Facilitate the purchase of technology.



Schools have observed increases in:<sup>1</sup>

- student **engagement**;
- students' **communication** with their families about their learning;
- **independence** for students through more voice and choice;
- teacher buy-in and **collaboration** on PL;
- teacher **confidence** to implement PL.

“It's amazing to see how many of our students are engaging in reflective practice on a daily basis...it's no longer about just getting the answer, it's really more about the process of how they get to that answer.” Teacher



Schools have created **sustainability plans** to continue PL implementation after the grant ends. Plans include continuous improvement processes, utilizing teacher leaders as PL coaches, and using federal funds to sustain their efforts.

1. Note: these results are based on focus group participant testimonies and have not been validated by the evaluation.

## Advice for school wide personalized learning implementation

Implementing PL school-wide has been a tremendous learning experience for the Lighthouse Schools. Advice from their experiences include:



- Prior to implementation **define** the specific academic or other competencies that will be the focus of the initiative;



- Utilize **experienced teachers** to support new teachers in implementing PL;



- **Prioritize** PL implementation;
- Plan and provide **support** for inter-disciplinary teacher collaboration;



- Carefully plan and **develop metrics** to measure PL competencies;

- Understand that the **impact of PL** on student test scores may not be immediate;

“Share the discovery of what you're doing, not just the successes, with others.” - Teacher

- Trust the faculty.

Barrington Middle: Grades 6-8, 830 students, 73 teachers, Barrington, RI

Captain Isaac Paine: Grades K-5, 272 students, 26 teachers, Foster, RI

360 High School: Grades 9-12, 234 students, 27 teachers, Providence, RI

Icon references from the Noun Project: voice by Adrien Coquet, Five Parts by Eliricon, process by Becris, Quotes by Rohith M S, change by Robert Bjurshagen, Business Implementation by Vectors Point, Progress by ProSymbols, collaborative by Nithinan Tatak, Sustainability by Made by Made, Collaborative Writing by Parallel Digital Studio, Sustainability by Diego Naive, Teacher by Mello, dial by Robert William Mayers