

Cheshire Public Schools Strategic Planning Initiative Definitions

Blended Learning is a formal education program in which students learn at least part of the curriculum through digital and online media with some element of student control over time, place, path, or pace. Teachers mediate and facilitate student learning using a combination of direct instruction, coaching, formative assessment, and feedback.

Differentiated Instruction addresses the natural variations in students' prior knowledge, readiness levels, motivation, mindsets, and interests. All differentiation decisions are based on agreed upon learning standards. Differentiation can be achieved by altering the content some students learn, the process by which some students learn this content, or the products some students create to demonstrate their learning. The goal of differentiation is to increase achievement and develop a growth mindset among all students.

Mastery-Based Learning is an instructional model that incorporates standards-based pre assessments that measure individual student's prior knowledge; direct and explicit standards-based instruction to individuals, small groups or the large group based on need; need-based learning tasks; and standards-based feedback. Differentiated learning tasks, reteaching, extended time, flexible grouping, and intervention/acceleration/enrichment groups are additional instructional strategies used to support mastery-based learning.

Personalized Learning transforms schooling by providing student voice and choice regarding what, where, and how students learn in relation to a standards-based curriculum. Within a personalized learning system, students and teachers collaboratively establish goals to pursue investigations, research, independent studies, and projects to learn and apply new concepts and skills, and regularly evaluate their own progress in relation to the learning standards and their own goals.

Standards-Based Grading measures, records, and reports each student's progress toward the mastery of learning standards aligned to specific grade levels and subject areas. Teachers use valid, common, standards-based assessments, performance tasks, rubrics, and checklists to assess student learning and report current proficiency levels using a numerical scale.

Problem based learning (PBL) simultaneously develops students' problem solving strategies and their mastery of disciplinary concepts and skills by placing them in the role of problem-solvers confronted with an ill-structured situation that simulates an authentic world issue, need, or problem. Students and teachers become co-learners, co-planners, co-producers, and co-evaluators as they design, implement, and continually refine their solutions and responses. Students individually and collectively assume major responsibility for their own learning and instruction.