



# Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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**To:** District 97 Board of Education  
Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent

**From:** Dr. Amy Warke, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer  
April Capuder, Interim Principal, Brooks Middle School

**Re:** **Leap Innovations Board Report**

**Date:** January 18, 2018

**Type of Report:** Informational

**Purpose of the Report:** The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Education with an update on the partnership between Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School and LEAP Innovations.

## Introduction

District 97's vision is to create a positive learning environment for all students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child. The LEAP Pilot assists Brooks students and staff with fulfilling the vision and attaining our goals for our students of being:

- Known, nurtured, and celebrated LEARNER
- Empowered and passionate SCHOLAR
- Confident and persistent ACHIEVER
- Creative CRITICAL THINKER & GLOBAL CITIZEN

LEAP Innovations, a Chicago based non-profit organization, connects education and innovation to exponentially improve teaching and learning through building teacher capacity, piloting the designed innovations, and scaling what works within schools. LEAP helps classrooms adopt personalized learning and incorporate edtech solutions linked to key learning gaps, that have been fully evaluated.

Additionally, LEAP has developed the country's first personalized learning framework with over 60 teaching and learning practices aligned to the Danielson Framework. LEAP's Learning Framework anchors their evaluations and provides implementation context and evolution of classroom practice. The four foundational principles of the framework are:

**Learner Connected:** Learning transcends the classroom in relevant and accredited ways, connected to families and communities

**Learner Focused:** Understanding each individual learners' needs, strengths, interest and approaches to learning

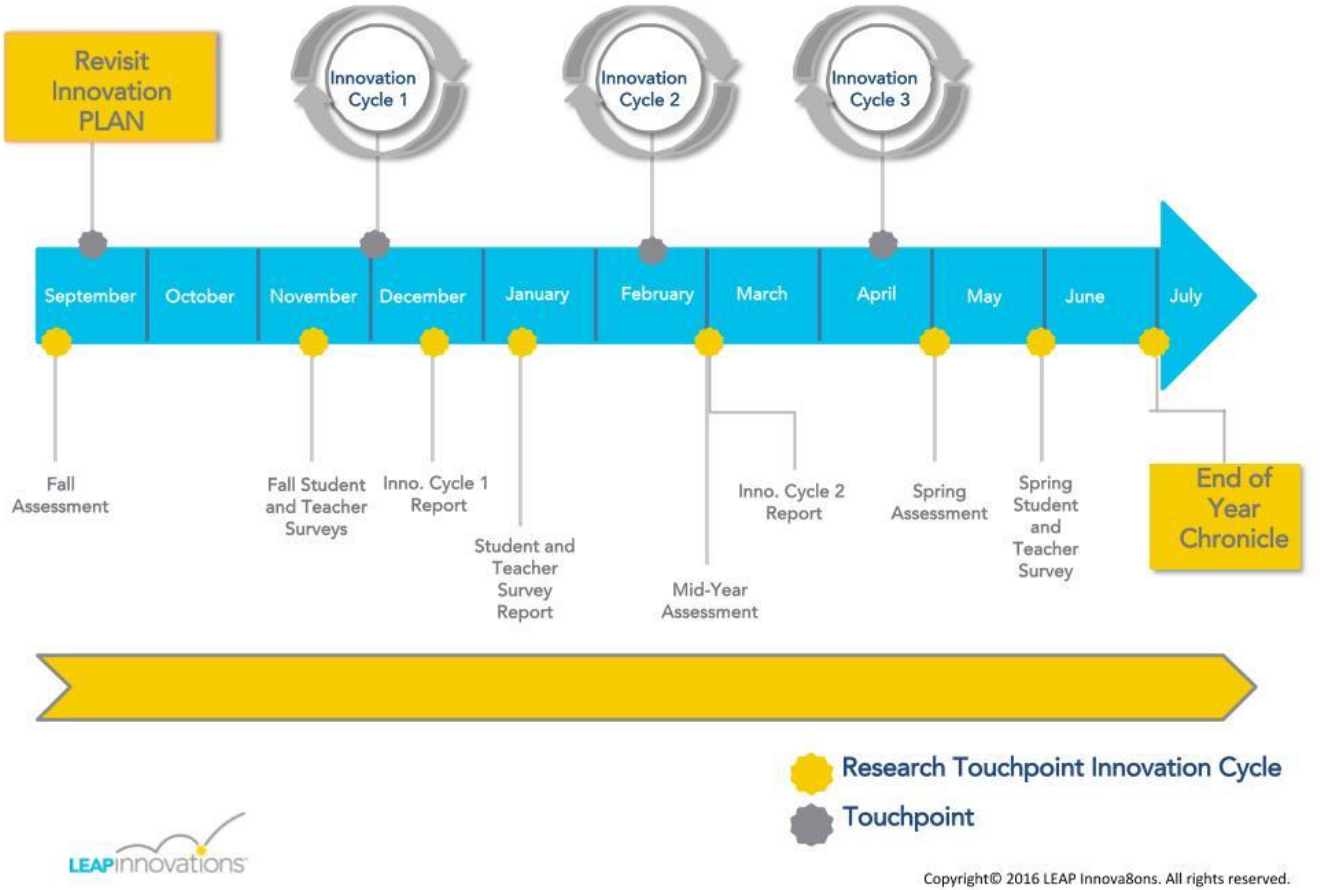
**Learner Demonstrated:** Allowing learners to progress at their own pace based on demonstrated competencies

**Learner Led:** Enabling learners to take ownership of their learning so that it can dynamically adjust to their skills, curiosity and goals.

## Sixth Grade Pilot

Our 6th Grade Team has been working through their pilot plan this school year, which was developed in Winter/Spring of 2017, and is continuing to modify through analysis of feedback provided by LEAP and the EdTech tools. LEAP has continued to support their efforts in personalized learning for the students on their 6th grade team. The team has received a variety of feedback from LEAP to help support the next steps in the innovation cycle. Teachers have completed surveys that measures teaching practices and classroom conditions that shows the teacher their evolution in personalized learning. Students have completed surveys that captures the student experience and aligns student experiences to teacher expectations. Additionally, our LEAP Innovations coach visits the teaching team about once every two weeks and provides observation feedback for teacher coaching and evolution of practice. The team also reviews the data gleaned from our selected piloted EdTech tools, myON and STMath. This team has been following this research and innovation roadmap this school year:

# Research and Innovation Cycle Roadmap



Working with LEAP Innovations has impacted and influenced the thinking and practices of our 6th grade students and our 6th grade teachers:

*“Being a part of the LEAP team for personalized learning has completely opened my mind as an educator. It has helped me to think about learning in such unique ways and has helped me to really put all of the pieces of the educational puzzle together. When designing lessons I think about all of the ways students can demonstrate their learning. I have learned how things looking very different in the classroom has become the new normal.”*

*~Tom Reising, 6th Grade Science Teacher*

*All of the professional development, collaboration with my team and extended learning experiences have provided me with so many tools and strategies to grow as an educator. Working with my team every step of the way has helped us to become more unified and in-sync than any team I've ever been a part of before. It has helped us to identify our core values and what supports and processes we need to put in place to help us reach our goals. It has given us a focus on student learning and student need. I believe that we are truly creating a place where students feel they belong, have a purpose, can take risks and learn from their mistakes, can put in effort to grow their brains, and deserve respect and can give respect. Their voices matter.”*

*~Rachel Youngberg, 6th Grade Special Education Teacher*

**Seventh Grade Pilot**

LEAP has invited us to expand our pilot for the 2018-2019 school year to a 7th grade team. Our next LEAP Team is comprised of the following team members:

- **Darren Haus** is a 7th grade math teacher and 7th grade team leader. He is in his 21st year of teaching and in his 15th year with D97. He has earned a Master's degree in School Leadership from Concordia University.
- **John McDowell** is a 7th grade science teacher and the science department co-chair. He is in his 10th year of teaching and in his 3rd year with D97. He earned his Master of Arts in Teaching from National Louis University. He holds endorsements to teach middle school science, math and social studies.
- **Patty Feierberg** is a 7th grade humanities teacher and former IB Coordinator. She is in her 14th year of teaching and in her 12th year with D97. She earned her Master of Arts in International Relations and Comparative Politics from Western Illinois University. She holds endorsements to teach middle school history, geography, political science and language arts.
- **Nefret Stringham** is a 7th grade Language Arts teacher. She is in her 7th year teaching and in her 2nd year with D97. She has a Bachelor's degree in English from William and Mary and a Master's degree in Teaching in Special Education, Elementary, and Middle grades Language Arts from University of Virginia.
- **Luke Scanlon** is a 7th grade special education teacher. This is his first year of teaching. He earned his Master's degree in Special Education from Northeastern Illinois University.
- **Doug Eichstaedt** is an 8th grade humanities teacher. He is in his 16th year of teaching, all within D97. He earned his Master's degree in Teaching and Learning from DePaul University. He holds endorsements in Civics/Political Science, US History and World History grades 9-12 and History and Social Science grades 6-8
- **Katie Dean** is our Instructional Coach and Pilot Lead for the team. She has been an educator for 17 years, 13 of which have been in D97. She earned a Master's degree in Elementary Education from Roosevelt University. She holds an Elementary Certificate with endorsements to teach Middle School Social Science, Language Arts, and Music.

Our next Brooks team of teachers working with LEAP will be attending a series of professional development workshops as follows:

**Session 1 Introduction to Personalized Learning** (Friday, January 19th from 9:00am to 3:00pm)

- Explore the need for personalized learning; what it is and is not
- Introduction to the LEAP Learning Framework
- Current "state of school" team analysis around curriculum, tools, and challenges

**Session 2 Leading Change** (Thursday, February 15th from 9:00am to 3:00pm) - Topics will include:

- Building and maintaining a vision
- Change management strategies and planning
- School structures for collaboration

**Session 3 Utilizing Key Components of LEAP Framework** (Thursday, March 8th from 9:00am to 3:00pm)

- Visioning and strategies for building learner agency
- Developing and utilizing learner profiles
- Competency-based progression at the classroom level

**Match Day** (Saturday, April 7th from 9:00am to 2:00pm)

- Individual team discussions with expert-vetted, school-selected companies to review potential edtech tools to be incorporated into the pilot plan in 2018-2019

**Session 4 Pilot Planning - Part 1** (Thursday, April 19th from 9:00am to 3:00pm)

- Pilot implementation planning
- Personalized learning instructional strategy development

**Session 5 Pilot Planning - Part 2** (Thursday, May 10th from 9:00am to 3:00pm)

- Space design that enhances personalized learning
- Connected learning principles for anytime, anywhere learning

In addition to the above sessions, over the course of late winter/early spring, each school team will visit another Chicago school that has already participated in LEAP programming, in order to see personalized learning in action.

**Conclusion**

LEAP will conduct an evaluation report, including the following data points:

- Rigorous quantitative study of the Ed Tech tools efficacy using survey data collected from students and teachers
- Qualitative information on the implementation of the Ed Tech tools
- Teacher Practices
- Analysis will control for other student and classroom factors as available

We will review the evaluation report in order to determine next steps with LEAP implementation.