

# PERSONALIZED LEARNING FAQs

## PIONEER RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL

### 1. What is Personalized Learning?

Learning is a personal experience. By co-designing meaningful learning opportunities with teachers and mentors, the individual is at the center of her/his learning. Instruction is something we do with, rather than to learners, to promote growth, achievement, and lifelong success.

### 2. How is Personalized Learning being delivered for all learners?

Effective educational practices guide the instruction of all teachers in both Adventures and Explorers.

<b>ADVENTURES</b>	<b>EXPLORERS</b>
<b>Flexible learning environment, schedule and pacing of standards</b>	<b>Flexible and structured learning environment, schedule and pacing of standards</b>
<b>Learner choice of how to demonstrate learning</b>	
<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century skills: Creativity, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, and Communication</b>	
<b>Blended instruction: Seminars, Coaching Workshops, Conferences, and Personal and Group flex</b>	
<b>Standards-based learning and reporting</b>	
<b>Formative and Summative Assessments inform instruction</b>	
<b>Multiple opportunities to show evidence of learning</b>	

### 3. Why do we personalize learning?

Not all learners need to—or are able to—learn in the same way and at the same pace. We live in a world where everything is personalized. (i.e. Amazon: *If you liked this, you may also like...*) Educational practices that worked just ten years ago may not work for today's learners. Today, most learners have a mini computer at their fingertips and are able to access information quickly. Learning is no longer about teaching facts, but rather about how to apply information, how to solve problems, and how to create new ideas and products. Businesses are looking for individuals who can learn, unlearn and relearn processes, collaborate with their peers (in the next cubicle or across the world) and can create, innovate, and find solutions for a variety of problems. They are not looking for someone who is trained in a specific skill, but rather, they are focused on finding individuals who know how to learn and can be trained for a specific job within their environment.

#### 4. How does Standards Based Learning fit into Personalized Learning?

Learners must meet the same standards regardless of structure; however, the way learners choose to meet the standard may look different. Standards Based Learning (SBL) is really about experiencing learning, not completing tasks. SBL allows learners to move through standards at a personalized pace. Learners who are not on pace in learning standards will *not* be left behind, because instruction and support are responsive to learners' needs.

As learners demonstrate their learning, it will be documented—not in a traditional A, B, C scale, but at the learner's level of understanding: *Approaching Level* (does not yet have a full understanding of a concept), *Basic Level* (has a basic understanding of the target and may need assistance to demonstrate learning), *Meets Level* (can demonstrate the learning completely and independently), or *Extends Level* (can demonstrate learning at a level beyond the standard requirement). Parents and learners will be able to see progress 24/7. Remember, SBL is about the learning, not about completing an assignment or earning a grade. All teachers are in the process of transitioning to this reporting system.

#### 5. How has the role of the teacher changed?

Teachers have never been more important than they are today. Learners are not just placed in a room and told to *learn*; they need guidance along their journey. In order to meet the needs of each learner, teachers have moved from a *stand and deliver/sit and get* model to a model that involves the learner in their learning. Teachers are constantly monitoring and adjusting for learning needs. Direct instruction no longer needs to take the entire class period, but may be offered in ten to twenty minute segments. Learners may choose to retake a seminar more than once in order to be sure they have a clear understanding of the content. If they still have questions, they may attend a coaching workshop or a conference with the teacher.

##### **Instruction and Support Available to Learners:**

**Seminars:** Direct instruction (introduction to a unit, topic, learning target, simulations, etc.), some direct instruction is vital for the success of learners

**Coaching Workshops:** A small group needing additional assistance (Learner or teacher determined ... based on the personal needs of the learners)

**Conferences:** Individual meetings (Learner or teacher determined for assistance, assessment, check-in, or other individual needs)

**Critical Thinking Circles:** Small group discussions based on a concept, theme, or question

**Personal Flex:** Individual/independent time for learning or work

**Group Flex:** Group collaboration and discussion

**Learner-Led Workshop:** Learner proposed or teacher encouraged session on standards, learning targets, or topics of interest – led by student(s)

#### 6. What will homework look like?

Our common language for homework is *learning opportunities*. Learning opportunities may look different for each child and may be assigned by the teacher or may be self-assigned based on the learner's needs. All work the learner does is to show evidence (s)he understands the target and/or standard and can demonstrate his/her learning. *Learning experiences* (not tasks or checklists) engage the child in practice that will help create a deeper understanding of a concept.

**7. Do due dates still exist?**

Due dates are somewhat flexible based on each course's pace as set by the teacher. Negative consequences will not be given for falling behind pace. Supports and feedback help ensure learner success.

**8. How will progress be communicated?**

Parents will access Campus Portal for all encore classes. For core classes, parents and learners will access progress through Empower. Empower is a student management system that allows teachers to post learning playlists, personalize learning opportunities and provide feedback on learning. It also allows learners to choose their best evidence of learning.

**9. How do parents support their child's educational journey?**

When asking a learner about his/her school day, it is important to ask the right questions. *What did you learn today?* or *Tell me one way you demonstrated your learning.* Asking these types of questions will help parents understand what a child's school experience was like far better than *Do you have homework?* It is important for learners and parents to stay in contact with the teachers. Learners, parents and teachers are all important in this educational journey.

**10. How does personalization meet the needs of the gifted learners?**

Personalized learning allows the needs of our gifted learners to be met no matter where they are on their journey. Because there is no cap on learning, and because learners can move at a pace that works for them, gifted learners are able to focus more in depth in areas of interest—working with resources and mentors from within the building, across town or across the world.

**11. How will the needs of special education learners be met?**

The needs of all learners can be met through personalized instruction. Standards-based learning provides a clear vision of what Special Education learners need. Special Education teachers assist core teachers to help learners meet the standards in a variety of ways. (i.e. coaching workshops, conferences, during class time, during personal flex time, or in pull-out instruction during Advisory.)

**12. What happens if learners do not meet all standards at a Basic Level or above by the end of the school year?**

The goal is to personalize learning so learners meet standards when they are ready. Because education is about the learning, not about the grade, learners will be held accountable for all standards. If a learner does not meet all of their standards by summer break, they will have the opportunity to continue their learning through a summer school plan. Standards not met over the summer will continue into the next school year.