



PASSION + AGENCY = IMPACT

Introduction

In order to reimagine school, we had to start at a very high level. We wanted high school to be more than just a place for career or academic preparation. In fact, we don't think of school as a place at all; We think of it as an idea. Our idea of school can best be explained as a robust network of learning opportunities that extends outside the physical building of a school that enables personalized pathways for students. The purpose of this network of learning opportunities is to immerse students in a process through which they actively seek their passion and develop the capacities and mindsets to shape their own future.

Instead of saying, "We are preparing you for [the real world, college, your career]," we want school to be an experience where students are having impact on their world now. Students have the capacity already. We want to transform that capacity into action by providing a system of opportunities and support to students so they can find their own pathway.

Our theory of action is simply stated as Passion + Agency = Impact.

In order for people to find and actively seek their passion, three conditions within this process need to be met. For students, we believe that the school model must enable these conditions:

- **Feeling valued** - Finding passion is often very difficult and full of failure and setbacks. Knowing that there are people in our lives that support us and care about us is necessary to sustain the motivation to find passion. Strong meaningful relationships between students and adults must exist in order for students to feel safe and cared for during their journey to find passion.
- **Exposure** - Students should be consistently exposed to new people, places, ideas, experiences, ways of thinking, and ways of working. Many students rarely leave their neighborhoods and rarely get more than an academic perspective in school. People need as much exposure as possible in order to increase their chances at finding their passion.

- **Autonomy** - Finding your passion is often a winding road with forks, obstacles, and intersections, each of which require a decision to be made. Motivation to continue to seek passion requires that the seeker owns these decisions. Students' autonomy in their school experience should be maximized at all times.

We define agency as having the skills, capacities, and mindsets to enable success. For students, we want to help them develop a growth mindset within a rigorous school experience.

- **Skills and Capacity** - To increase students skills and capacity, we must ensure that all learning experiences are rigorous. We define rigor as not only high performance expectations but also as a gradual increase in workload in order to build stamina.
- **Mindsets** - We know that successful people have a number of skills that fall outside the traditional academic experience. We want to identify those skills and help students develop them. We call these skills the Habits of Success.

We believe that if we get very good at each of these components of our Theory of Action, we will help students become agents of meaningful positive impact on their world. We will also know that we, ourselves, have had a meaningful positive impact on our students.