Building Capacity for a Blended Project-Based Learning Model in a Traditional School Settting

A Case Study on the Elementary School at KPIS International, Bangkok, Thailand

By Mari Eunice Simpson

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Abstract

This case study explores the process of building capacity for a blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) model within a traditional school setting at KPIS International School, Bangkok, Thailand. The research investigates how strategic leadership, professional development, and cultural shifts contributed to the successful implementation of PBL across the elementary division. Data were collected through teacher surveys, peer observations, stakeholder interviews, and six years of NWEA MAP results. The findings highlight significant shifts in teacher practice, with increased student-centered instruction, peer collaboration, and instructional innovation. Reading outcomes improved consistently across all grade levels, while Mathematics results were more variable, indicating the need for stronger integration of math standards into PBL units. Stakeholder reflections emphasize the importance of distributed leadership, aligned professional development, and sustained support structures in facilitating change. Limitations include the context-specific nature of the study, reliance on self-reported data, and disruptions caused by COVID-19. The study offers practical insights and a replicable framework for school leaders seeking to implement blended PBL in similar settings, with recommendations for ongoing assessment, community engagement, and future research on the impact of PBL on student well-being, engagement, and academic achievement.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Rational

This study investigates the process of building capacity for implementing a blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) model within a traditional school setting at KPIS International School in Bangkok. The research addresses the need to understand how innovative, student-centered frameworks can be effectively integrated into established, textbook-driven curricula while navigating cultural and organizational challenges.

The primary goal is to examine how a blended PBL approach influences academic outcomes, student engagement, staff and student retention, and overall school culture. By using a comparative mixed-methods case study, the research will analyze both pre- and post-implementation data, including MAP test scores, retention rates, and qualitative insights from stakeholders.

A significant focus is placed on the strategies and structures needed to build common understanding, shared language, and professional capacity among teachers, students, and parents during this shift. The study will also explore how Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) can be embedded within a PBL framework to strengthen community, well-being, and 21st-century competencies.

Ultimately, this research aims to provide practical guidance for school leaders and educators seeking to design, implement, and sustain a blended PBL model that aligns with rigorous academic standards while fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and global citizenship.

Research Questions

1. What motivated the transition to a blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) model at KPIS International School, and what were the key milestones in its implementation?
2. What were the main challenges encountered during PBL implementation, and how were they addressed through leadership strategies and professional development?
3. How has the blended PBL model influenced the learning culture, student engagement, and the development of 21st-century and SEL competencies?
4. What impact has the PBL model had on teacher and student retention and overall school climate?
5. How has the implementation of PBL influenced academic outcomes, particularly MAP data, and how was learning assessed?
6. What are the strategic recommendations for sustaining and scaling PBL in Years 4 and 5, and how can this model guide other schools?

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The evolution of pedagogical approaches has fundamentally reshaped modern education, with a growing shift from traditional, textbook-driven instruction to transdisciplinary and inquiry-based models such as Project-Based Learning (PBL). PBL is widely recognized for its emphasis on active, student-centered learning that integrates real-world problem-solving with the development of critical academic and life skills (Bell, 2010).

Educational Focus and Methods

Traditional education often prioritizes rote memorization and standardized testing, resulting in passive learning environments (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006). By contrast, PBL engages students through authentic, meaningful tasks that foster critical thinking, creativity, and deeper understanding (Edutopia, 2023). Research shows that well-structured PBL can promote higher academic achievement and equitable outcomes, especially when integrated carefully into existing curricular frameworks. In this case study, the comparative analysis of KPIS International School will explore how transitioning to a blended PBL model impacted students' academic growth and skills development. The study will use pre- and post-implementation MAP test data alongside qualitative feedback to assess these outcomes.

Teacher Roles

The shift to PBL fundamentally redefines the teacher's role from content deliverer to facilitator and coach (Thomas, 2000). This change demands a different skill set, including the ability to design interdisciplinary projects, manage complex group dynamics, and foster student agency. Research highlights the challenge of hiring and retaining educators who are well-suited for this pedagogical model (Penn GSE; Resilient Educator). This study will examine how KPIS adapted its recruitment, interview processes, and professional development plans to build teacher capacity for PBL. It will also discuss ongoing strategies for teacher growth, goal setting, and observation practices that support effective PBL delivery.

Learning Environment

Traditional classroom setups can limit collaboration and engagement (Doyle, 1986). PBL environments, by contrast, are flexible and dynamic, encouraging interaction and student ownership of learning (Barrett et al., 2015). Research suggests that learning spaces designed for active participation contribute to higher levels of student agency and a stronger sense of community. The case study will detail the changes made to classroom layouts and shared spaces at KPIS, highlighting how these adjustments supported the shift toward student-centered learning.

Student Engagement and Skill Development

PBL fosters a range of soft skills like communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and self-direction which are essential for success in the 21st century (Walker & Leary, 2009). Unlike traditional methods, which can lead to disengagement (Credé, Roch, & Kieszczynka, 2010), PBL encourages active, hands-on learning, resulting in greater motivation and deeper knowledge retention (Edutopia). This research will analyze how KPIS integrated Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) alongside PBL to promote inclusion, character building, and student well-being. The study will also explore the impact on students' sense of belonging and their readiness for real-world challenges.

Assessment Methods

Traditional assessments tend to focus on memorization and summative testing (Stiggins, 2002). In contrast, PBL emphasizes diverse assessment methods that evaluate not only academic content but also collaboration and critical thinking (Filippatou & Kaldi, 2010). Evidence suggests that when implemented effectively, PBL can enhance academic outcomes across different student demographics (Lucas Education Research; Edutopia). At KPIS, the blended model retained standardized MAP testing while integrating more formative, skills-based assessments to capture a holistic view of student learning. This study will compare data from both assessment types to evaluate the overall impact of the PBL approach.

In summary, the literature supports PBL as a transformative educational strategy that builds students' academic and soft skills, prepares them for real-world demands, and nurtures a supportive learning community. This chapter provides the theoretical and empirical grounding for understanding the implementation journey at KPIS, highlighting key considerations for capacity building and sustainable change in traditional school contexts.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Research Methodology: Mixed-Methods Case Study

This study adopts a mixed-methods case study approach to provide a comprehensive analysis of the transition to a blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) model at KPIS International School (Elementary), Bangkok. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods allows for a nuanced exploration of how a transdisciplinary, inquiry-based model can be effectively integrated into a traditional school context, capturing both measurable outcomes and lived experiences.

Research Design and Framework

The study is structured as a comparative longitudinal case study, examining the school's operations and educational practices during the three years before and three years after the blended PBL model's implementation. This timeframe allows for a robust comparison of trends in academic performance, staff and student retention, and cultural shifts, while also accounting for challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and hybrid learning periods. This design offers a rare lens into the resilience and adaptability of the blended PBL model under real-world conditions.

The research will map the year-by-year implementation of the blended PBL model, highlighting key initiatives, structural changes, and capacity-building efforts. Visual documentation of frameworks, workflows, and data collection processes will enhance the study's accessibility and practical value for school leaders and educators seeking to adopt similar innovations.

Data Collection and Sources

The research integrates multiple data sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the model's impact:

- Quantitative Data: Academic performance data (NWEA MAP test scores), staff and student retention statistics, and program participation rates.
- Qualitative Data: Interviews, surveys, focus groups, and observations to capture perceptions, challenges, and successes from multiple stakeholders.
- Document Analysis: Internal policy documents, training materials, and public communications related to PBL and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) initiatives.

This multifaceted strategy ensures triangulation, enhancing the credibility and depth of the findings.

Data Sources

- Academic Performance: MAP test results will provide standardized indicators of student growth before and after PBL integration.
- Human Resources: Analysis of staff hiring, retention, and turnover rates will help evaluate how PBL impacts teacher recruitment and satisfaction.

- Registrar Data: Student enrollment and retention trends will indicate the model's influence on student stability and parental confidence.
- Internal Documents: Policies, frameworks, and training guides will be reviewed to understand structural shifts and institutional support for PBL.
- Public Communications: Newsletters and reports will be analyzed for external messaging and community engagement.

Participants

To ensure diverse perspectives, the study will include:

- Elementary Students (Grades 1–5): Surveys and age-appropriate interviews will explore student engagement, agency, and perceptions of the learning environment.
- Parents of Grades 1–5 Students: Surveys will assess parental satisfaction, perceived value of PBL, and its impact on enrollment decisions.
- Elementary Teachers: Surveys and follow-up interviews will document professional growth, training effectiveness, and teacher retention linked to PBL.
- Human Resources Department: Institutional data will provide insights into staff turnover and recruitment trends.
- Registrar: Enrollment and retention records will be analyzed to assess stability and growth trends.
- Head of School: Interviews will provide strategic and administrative perspectives on the transition process.
- PBL Consultant: Insights from an external PBL expert will offer an objective assessment of the implementation's success, challenges, and lessons learned.

Objective and Contribution

By integrating diverse voices and robust data, this research aims to offer a practical, evidence-based roadmap for schools seeking to shift from traditional instruction to a blended, transdisciplinary PBL model. The findings will contribute to existing literature on capacity building, innovation adoption, and the integration of Social-Emotional Learning within PBL frameworks. Ultimately, this study aspires to guide other educational leaders in creating student-centered, future-ready learning communities.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis & Results

This chapter presents the analysis and findings from the mixed-methods case study examining the implementation and impact of the blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) model at KPIS International School. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data, the analysis provides a comprehensive view of how the transition to a blended PBL approach has influenced academic outcomes, school culture, and community engagement.

A comparative longitudinal approach was used to assess trends and changes across two periods: three years before and three years after PBL implementation. Quantitative data: including survey responses, staff and student retention records, and standardized MAP testing results were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to identify patterns and significant differences over time. Visual representations such as charts and graphs are used to enhance interpretation of key findings. Qualitative data, drawn from interviews, focus groups, and open-ended survey responses, were examined through thematic and content analysis. This allowed for the identification of recurring themes and deeper insights into stakeholder experiences, perceptions, and the practical realities of building capacity for a blended PBL model.

Together, these analyses aim to provide a holistic understanding of the initiative's outcomes, highlight successes and ongoing challenges, and generate actionable insights for schools pursuing similar transformative approaches.

4.1 Implementation Goal and Plan

Three Year Implementation Plan

When first proposing the transition to a blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) model at KPIS International School, the initial response from staff was cautious and uncertain. Common concerns included workload, grading practices, and the purpose of the shift, These are all familiar challenges documented in the literature when schools pursue instructional innovation (Fullan, 2007; Mergendoller et al., 2006). To address this, leadership prioritized building trust and clarity through a transparent strategic plan.

To secure buy-in, the principal (I) began by sharing a personal classroom story of PBL success, highlighting improvements in student engagement and achievement. This narrative approach helped staff connect theory to practice and see the relevance for their own teaching.

A clear three-year implementation framework was introduced, outlining goals, timelines, and benchmarks for teachers, students, and parents. This plan addressed how each stakeholder group would be supported and held accountable throughout the transition. Regular benchmark meetings, surveys, and revision cycles ensured ongoing reflection and adjustments.

Strategic Goals and Learning Pillars

The plan was anchored in the school's strategic goals, which focused on:

- Increasing authentic, relevant learning through local and global connections.

- Supporting individualized learning pathways.
- Nurturing students' social-emotional, academic, and physical well-being.
- Embedding best practices and current research in teaching and learning.
- Expanding collaboration through networks beyond the school.

These goals were mapped to the school's four Learning Pillars: Learning Professionals, Learning Experiences, Learning Community, and Learning Environment. The goals was also linked to the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs): Lifelong Learners, Global Citizens, Critical Thinkers, and Effective Communicators.

During initial vision meetings, teachers collaboratively defined what success would look like under each pillar. This participatory approach fostered ownership and alignment with the school's mission. Examples included:

- Learning Professionals: Confident facilitators engaging in reflective PBL practice.
- Learning Experiences: Student-driven, collaborative, meaningful projects.
- Learning Community: Visible student ownership and contributions.
- Learning Environment: Flexible spaces designed for inquiry and hands-on learning.

Teams also articulated a clear vision for what a PBL student and teacher should embody, balancing student voice and choice with purposeful guided inquiry.

Phased Rollout and Capacity Building

Year 1 focused on establishing a shared understanding of PBL and securing stakeholder commitment. Leadership built structures and systems to support teachers, including scheduling, planning guidelines, and clear communication of PBL outcomes.

Years 2 and 3 concentrated on capacity building through ongoing training, real-time feedback, and iterative refinement of practices and systems. Teachers increasingly demonstrated confidence in facilitating deeper, integrated learning experiences. Students, in turn, became more engaged and produced higher-quality projects as their understanding of PBL expectations matured.

Despite attempts to expand PBL beyond Elementary, success depends on having committed leaders with the capacity to drive the vision. A key takeaway for future scaling.

Budget Alignment

Building capacity for PBL required strategic budget adjustments. Over three years:

- The professional development budget supported external training with PBL expert Kyle Wagner, evolving into in-house training to build internal expertise.
- Field trip funds were partially reallocated to experiential learning aligned with projects.
- A dedicated PBL budget per class was introduced to support hands-on activities.

- An experimental budget and a shift in textbook fees reflected the commitment to experiential, inquiry-based learning over traditional materials.

By Year 3, KPIS was positioned to sustain PBL through its own training hub, reallocating resources to align with the school's evolving pedagogical priorities.The implementation plan emphasized a clear vision, strategic alignment, phased capacity building, and ongoing cycles of feedback and improvement.

4.2 Stakeholders

Leadership

Leadership played a pivotal role in driving the blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) initiative at KPIS International School. The goal was to create a school culture where teachers were empowered to design projects aligned with students' interests, students became risk-takers and lifelong learners, and local businesses and community members participated as collaborators and supporters.

Recognizing that the success of this initiative depended on the capacity of the teaching staff, the first phase of implementation focused on professional development. Teachers received training to support a shift from traditional instruction to facilitation. Leadership ensured that staff roles aligned with their strengths to increase satisfaction and reduce turnover, while cultivating a school culture based on collaboration and continuous improvement. These systems aimed to support long-term sustainability by enabling the team to take collective ownership of PBL implementation.

Head of School

At the end of Year 3, the Head of School, D. Intakanok (personal communication, June 2025), reflected on the changes observed throughout the school community. In her words:

> When we first introduced project-based learning in our elementary school, it truly had a ripple effect that extended far beyond the classroom walls. It was incredible to see how engaged the students became. They weren't just absorbing information but were excited to explore, question, and present their ideas.
>
> But it was not just students who benefited. As we rolled out PBL, parents began to see the transformation in their children. Suddenly, kids were coming home talking about projects, problem-solving as a team, and sharing ideas about how what they were learning connected to the world around them. It sparked conversations at home and drew parents in, making them more invested in their children's learning journey.

Intakanok's reflections reinforce the idea that effective implementation of PBL requires strong, hands-on leadership and the ability to engage all stakeholders in a shared vision for deeper, more connected learning.

International PBL Consultant

K. Wagner (personal communication, June 2025), an international PBL consultant who worked closely with the school over the three-year implementation period, observed:

> Most schools take a limited approach to PBL, implementing it within a few of their existing programs like STEAM, Makerspaces, or after-school spaces. Very few take a whole-division approach, seeking not just to embed a few PBL experiences, but to make it part of their ethos for teaching and learning.
>
> By involving multiple stakeholders and empowering PBL champions at each year level, Mari's staff felt as much ownership over the results as she did. Staff were supported by structures many schools often overlook when implementing PBL, such as common planning time, interdisciplinary teaming structures, ongoing training, funding for necessary resources, an aligned reporting structure, and flexible classroom spaces that allowed them to take risks.
>
> Celebrating the team's successes at assemblies, staff meetings, and showcases built an appetite for risk-taking and a culture of ongoing support. Stakeholders were regularly informed about how each project helped students develop key skills aligned with the school's mission and vision.

Wagner's reflections reinforce that the success of the KPIS model stemmed not only from instructional innovation, but from the leadership structures, professional trust, and community engagement that supported it.

Teachers

Teacher Roles. In traditional settings, teachers often serve as knowledge dispensers, adhering to prescribed curricula with minimal emphasis on inquiry (Kirschner et al., 2006). By contrast, Project-Based Learning (PBL) redefines the teacher's role as a designer and facilitator of learning (Thomas, 2000). This transition demands creativity, risk-taking, and a learner-centered mindset. Teachers must co-construct projects, integrate cross-disciplinary content, and cultivate an environment that promotes student agency. The shift to PBL presented cultural and pedagogical challenges, particularly for staff accustomed to siloed instruction. To address this, a collaborative vision-setting session was conducted where staff co-developed the goals and direction of the three-year blended PBL model. Sharing case studies from my prior leadership roles and my own classroom experience helped foster buy-in by illustrating the tangible benefits of the approach. Aligning teacher identity with the broader PBL vision was essential for sustainable change.

Teacher Recruitment. Effective recruitment is foundational to PBL success. As HR departments often lack insight into pedagogical fit, I led the academic recruitment process, designing interview templates that evaluated creativity, collaboration, and instructional design. Candidates presented slide decks showcasing interdisciplinary project implementation and reflected on their practice, enabling insight into their organizational, technological, and inquiry-driven thinking.

As PBL demands high levels of creativity and adaptability (Resilient Educator, 2020), cultural fit and alignment with the school's innovation-driven ethos were prioritized. Over time, LinkedIn outreach and public showcases of teacher innovation significantly improved the applicant pool. By Year 3, candidates proactively applied, having followed the school's progress via professional networks.

Pre-employment onboarding included self-paced training, early access to resource platforms, and participation in project showcases. These steps helped orient incoming staff, align expectations, and ensure smoother transitions. This approach mirrors findings from Penn GSE, which emphasize the importance of onboarding in sustaining innovative school models.

Teacher Retention. Quantitative data collected from the Human Resources department was analyzed to evaluate the impact of PBL implementation on staff retention. A comparison of the three years prior to implementation (2017–2020) and the three years following implementation (2021–2024) reveals a clear shift. As shown in Figure 1, staff turnover was significantly higher before the blended PBL model was introduced, peaking at approximately 60% in 2017–2018 and again reaching over 40% in 2019–2020.

In contrast, the years following PBL implementation reflect increased stability and retention. From 2021–2024, turnover consistently dropped below 10% (see Figure 2). Year 2020–2021 was excluded due to COVID-related border closures and the shift to online learning, which halted teacher turnover and data collection.

The initial year of PBL included some strategic restructuring, where teachers who preferred traditional methods were supported in finding placements better aligned with their instructional philosophies. Over time, structured onboarding, professional development, and alignment with the school's vision contributed to stronger retention.

Staff were provided with early access to training platforms, engaged in pre-year project showcases, and met with their teams and incoming students. This proactive approach improved engagement and preparedness. As Bunnell (2019) emphasizes, retention improves when schools provide staff with growth opportunities and leadership roles. These findings are supported by the school's own data, which show measurable improvements in both staff alignment and long-term retention.

Figure 1

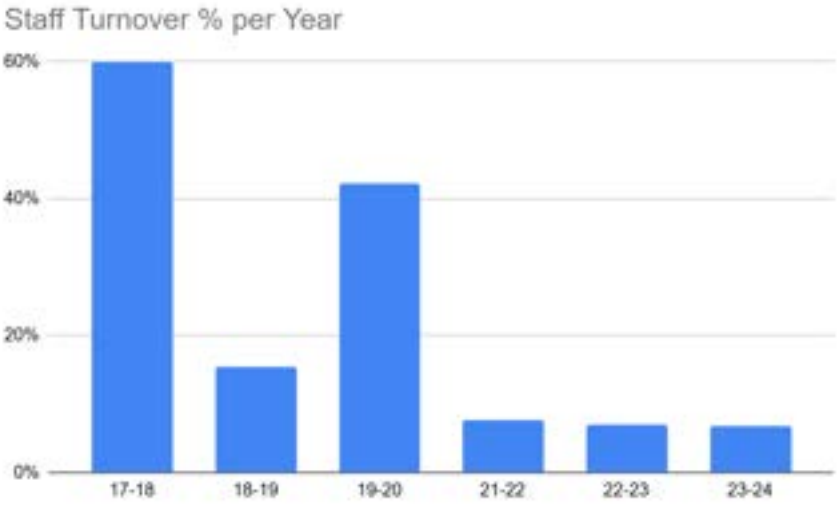
Staff Turnover, Total Staff, and Let Go Staff (2017–2024)



Note. This chart shows staff turnover in blue, total staff in red, and staff formally released as part of the restructuring process in yellow.

Figure 2

Staff Turnover Percentage per Year (2017–2024)



Note. This figure illustrates the percentage of staff turnover annually. The most stable years occurred during PBL implementation (2021–2024).

Teacher Culture. As Peter Drucker famously stated, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” This concept underpinned our efforts to implement a sustainable Project-Based Learning (PBL) model at KPIS International School. High turnover prior to implementation was not only a logistical challenge but a symptom of a fragmented school culture. Teachers often cited a lack of belonging, minimal collaboration, and poor interpersonal dynamics as reasons for leaving. Building capacity for PBL required more than instructional redesign. It demanded a cohesive, collaborative, and values-driven staff culture.

Many faculty members had previously worked in isolation, clinging to traditional models of instruction. To move forward, I had to foster a culture of mutual respect, trust, and shared vision. I approached this with the same lens as I would in the classroom: by acting as a facilitator of learning, viewing my staff as learners, and treating the school itself as my "project." Trusting and empowering teachers to make decisions was foundational to building a unified and committed team.

To set the tone each academic year and create a sense of identity and shared goals, I introduced annual culture-building themes using memorable acronyms. These themes were communicated across all stakeholders (teachers, students, and parents) and served as anchors for schoolwide goals, classroom practices, and community celebrations.

Year 1 GROW: Grow Together, Reach Goals Collaboratively, Optimize Learning, Work as One. This initial year focused on collaboration and team development as we transitioned to blended PBL. Despite pandemic-related hybrid learning, we launched the GROW theme to emphasize alignment and unity. Thematic activities such as plant-based class decor, a "Peace Tree" on Peace Day, and a gratitude wall helped embed the message. These symbols became daily reminders of collective growth and fostered a more supportive teaching environment.

Figure 3

Examples of Schoolwide Community Culture Activities During the GROW Theme Year



Note. These images represent various activities aligned with the Year 1 "GROW" theme. From left to right: (1) Women's Day succulents gifted to staff with theme-related messaging, (2) Grade 2's "Peace Tree" collaborative values display, and (3) the whole-school "Growing Grateful" tree showcasing student reflections during Gratitude Week. These activities promoted shared values of growth, gratitude, and collaboration.

Year 2 SHINE: Support, High Standards, Inclusive, Nurturing Environment. The SHINE theme focused on academic excellence and inclusive student development. Teachers received symbolic bulbs

during orientation to signify their potential to help students shine. Classrooms were decorated accordingly, and the year began with a “Year to Shine” welcome, involving bright visuals and team shirts. We honored outstanding teachers as “shining examples,” and student involvement grew, with one student even getting a star-shaped haircut to celebrate the theme. The SHINE acronym was also used in assemblies and goal-setting exercises, contributing to a strong shared identity.

Figure 4

Examples of Schoolwide Community Culture Activities During the SHINE Theme Year



Note. These images highlight community and student engagement activities from the SHINE year. Top row (left to right): staff welcoming students with a "UR YEAR 2 SHINE" theme backdrop, a teacher recognized as a “shining example,” and a student showing his star-pattern haircut reflecting the theme. Bottom row: scenes from the year-end “Be the Light” performance, where students held tea lights and sang the SHINE theme song. These symbolic practices helped cultivate a nurturing and inclusive culture centered on support, high standards, and student visibility.

Year 3 SOAR: Support, Open-Minded, Accountable, Reflective. In our third year, the SOAR theme emphasized student agency and educator accountability. Staff received geese figurines symbolizing collaboration, inspired by migratory birds flying in V formation, an image that introduced our school year.

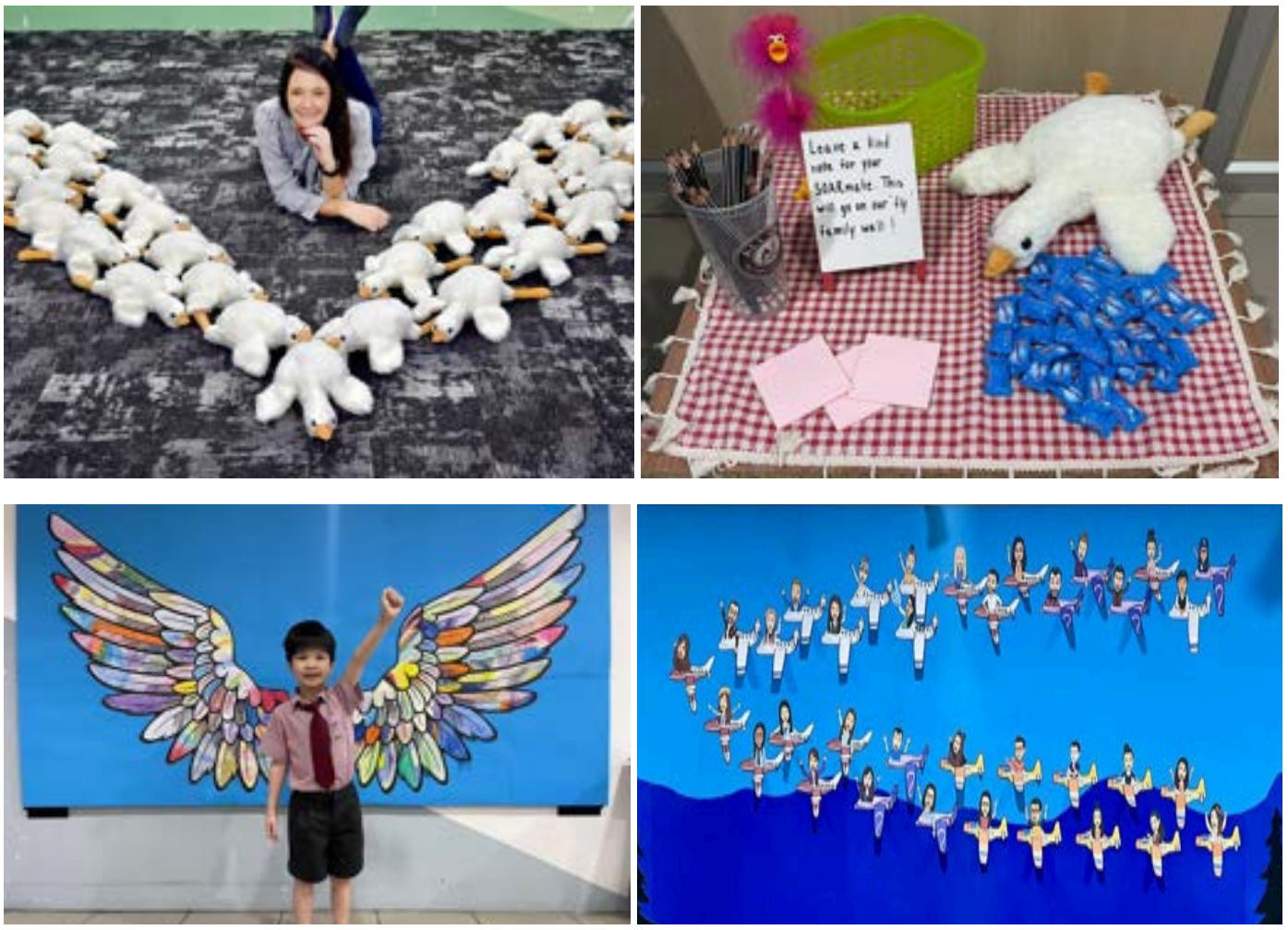
These geese became mascots for learning, appearing in classrooms (e.g., a “Grammar Goose” in Grade 5) and student projects. Wings displays and origami birds filled the halls, encouraging students to reflect on personal growth and shared responsibility. The theme also integrated into emotional well-being spaces, such as a calming corner featuring student-designed wings.

To strengthen school identity, each year we created a team photo using staff Bitmojis, displayed prominently in school hallways. This light-hearted but meaningful gesture reinforced community spirit and allowed students to recognize and connect with their teachers, both visually and relationally.

Across the SHINE and SOAR years our primary focus for this study due to the return to full in-person learning. We saw a notable increase in collaboration, teacher morale, and shared leadership. These culture-building initiatives were not isolated events but part of a larger strategic framework designed to sustain instructional innovation, reduce turnover, and promote collective efficacy.

Figure 5

Examples of Schoolwide Community Culture Activities During the SOAR Theme Year



Note. These images represent key culture-building activities during the SOAR year. Top row (left to right): a flock of stuffed geese arranged in a V formation to introduce the SOAR theme during staff orientation, and a parent station where parents left “soaring” messaged for their children during Open House Day. Bottom row: a student posing with a “wings” mural symbolizing agency and aspiration, and a hallway display of staff

Bitmojis flying in formation, reinforcing the theme of collective support and accountability. These symbolic and visual elements supported the development of a reflective, empowered school community.

Team Building. Fostering a professional culture rooted in mutual respect, collaboration, and lifelong learning was a central goal during our second and third years of PBL implementation. While structural systems were evolving to support transdisciplinary learning, the cultural foundation among staff had to be equally strong. Early efforts focused on building relationships and shifting mindsets, beginning with a shared recognition of the expertise already present within the team.

One impactful initiative was the Collective CV activity, introduced during our Year 2 orientation. Teachers were grouped by grade level or department and asked to collaboratively create a "CV" that showcased their combined experience, strengths, and unique skills. Teams were encouraged to present these visually, through posters, charts, or creative formats, and to craft a slogan representing their collective identity. This exercise served as both an icebreaker and a reflective practice, prompting team members to acknowledge each other's contributions and potential. Each group later presented their CV to the entire staff.

This activity reinforced the idea that professional growth could occur laterally, not just from top-down initiatives. By celebrating peer strengths, we positioned every teacher as a valuable source of knowledge and support. As a lasting reminder, all Collective CVs were displayed in the teachers' lounge, emphasizing our commitment to peer learning and the importance of collaboration. Figure 6 shows one example of a Collective CV created by the Grade 1 team.

Figure 6

Collective CV Activity Showcasing the Grade 1 Team's Experience and Collaborative Identity



Note. Left: The Grade 1 team's "Collective CV" highlighting their combined years of experience, degrees, teaching backgrounds, and shared strengths, along with their slogan, "First Gr. Sticks Together." Right: Teachers across grade levels and departments collaborating on their team CVs during the school-wide orientation session. This activity fostered connection, mutual respect, and recognition of expertise across the staff community.

Building on this foundation, we launched ongoing staff development strategies that included peer-to-peer training, internal workshops, and staff appreciation programs. However, we also recognized that meaningful relationships and psychological safety grow just as much outside of the classroom as within it. To further support staff cohesion, we organized four major team-building events annually, spaced intentionally to counteract high-stress periods in Quarters 2 and 3. These events were designed not only to boost morale but also to reaffirm our core values of community, care, and shared responsibility. Some highlights included:

- A formal annual staff ball, where educators were recognized through awards and friendly competitions.
- An American Thanksgiving luncheon, where school leaders served lunch to teachers as a symbol of gratitude.
- A salsa-themed pool party hosted at a local hotel, offering a relaxed space for informal bonding.
- A karaoke night, which became the most popular event of the year—chosen entirely by staff through a polling system. Though unconventional, it created lasting memories and significantly deepened collegial trust.

These events demonstrated that honoring teacher voice, celebrating individual contributions, and creating informal connection points are essential in sustaining a collaborative culture. As one teacher noted in a follow-up conversation, “This is the first time I’ve worked at a school where we were celebrated not just as professionals, but as people.”

Figure 7

Staff Bonding at the School Karaoke Night



Note. Left: Teachers posing with balloons and humorous speech bubbles during a staff karaoke night. A highly requested event chosen through teacher polling. This informal gathering promoted joy, connection, and cultural cohesion during a high-pressure term. Such moments of levity helped strengthen team morale and staff relationships essential for collaborative teaching in a PBL environment.

Figure 8

Staff Year-End Celebration Capturing Community and Appreciation



Note. Right: Teachers celebrating the end of the academic year at the school's formal holiday party. Events like this served to honor staff contributions, foster a culture of appreciation, and bring closure to shared achievements. These celebratory milestones reinforced the relational foundation necessary for sustained innovation and staff retention.

Teacher Recognition. A key component of our capacity-building efforts for PBL implementation was the development of a school culture that celebrated professional contribution, collaboration, and growth. From the outset, I believed that recognizing teachers for their efforts and successes, both formally and informally, would play a critical role in reinforcing our collective mission and values.

In Year 1, teacher recognition focused on celebrating individuals who consistently went above and beyond in service of students, their grade-level teams, and the broader school community. Acknowledging excellence in visible and timely ways helped boost morale, increased motivation, and fostered a climate of appreciation.

By Years 2 and 3, teacher recognition evolved into a more collaborative, community-driven practice. During student recognition assemblies, time was intentionally set aside for staff to nominate one another. While I continued to highlight exceptional contributions from leadership's perspective, I stepped back to make space for peer-led recognition. These moments when teachers stood before their colleagues to publicly celebrate one another were particularly impactful. They not only elevated individual contributions but also deepened trust, enhanced relational culture, and demonstrated that recognition is a shared responsibility, not just a top-down directive.

To add a tangible and symbolic element to our recognition system, we introduced custom-designed teacher pins. Each year, the pins were redesigned to align with the annual school theme and featured our school mascot, Tuski, alongside thematic icons. For example:

- In Year 2 (SHINE), the pin featured a halo and the words *Shining Teacher*, reinforcing the theme of support, high standards, and nurturing learning environments.

- In Year 3 (SOAR), the pin featured wings to symbolize the growth and elevation that came from supporting others, being open-minded, accountable, and reflective.

Teachers proudly wore their pins throughout the month, and their names and photos were displayed on a recognition wall in a prominent area of the school. These displays not only celebrated individual achievements but served as a visual reminder of the behaviors and attitudes that contributed to our shared success. Teachers frequently expressed how meaningful these recognitions were and how they felt affirmed in their work, not only by leadership, but by their peers and the entire school community.

Figure 9

Themed Teacher Recognition Pins and Honorees Celebrated During Staff Meetings



Note. Left: A group of teachers wearing their recognition pins during a school event. Right: Custom-designed "Shining Teacher" and "Soaring Teacher" pins, aligned with the SHINE and SOAR school themes. These tokens served as visible acknowledgments of excellence and were worn proudly by recipients throughout the month. They symbolized appreciation, reinforced school values, and contributed to a culture of recognition and professional pride.

Teacher Appreciation. A strong culture of appreciation was a cornerstone of the leadership approach used to support Project-Based Learning (PBL) implementation at our school. Recognizing teachers not only for their instructional performance but for their humanity, character, and contributions to the school community fostered a sense of belonging, reduced burnout, and strengthened collaboration. This emphasis on emotional well-being helped build the relational trust required for meaningful instructional transformation.

Rather than limiting recognition to formal events, appreciation was embedded across the academic year, often aligned with high-stress periods or moments of transition. These intentional gestures, both large and small, played a pivotal role in affirming teachers as valued members of the school community.

Thanksgiving Gratitude Initiative. During Thanksgiving, staff received personalized gratitude journals and participated in a public affirmation activity. A whiteboard titled "Principal Mari is Grateful

For…" was displayed with handwritten messages for each staff member, while journals included notes of appreciation from their colleagues. These artifacts served as long-term reminders that each teacher was seen and valued.

Figure 10

Thanksgiving Teacher Appreciation Display Featuring Gratitude Board and Journals



Note. Left: Gratitude board displaying affirming messages for each teacher. Right: Personalized journals distributed to staff, containing handwritten notes from colleagues. These tokens supported well-being and helped foster a culture of care.

Parent-Teacher Conference Recognition. To uplift staff during report card and conference weeks, teachers received surprise snacks and check-ins. A blue-themed "Out of the Blue- I Appreciate You" table was set up in the lounge, another time leadership visited classrooms with a snack basket labeled "You're all that and a bag of chips," offering staff a break and a boost during PTC slots.

Figure 11

Teacher Appreciation Snack Displays During Parent-Teacher Conferences



Note. Left: Out of the Blue-themed snack and treat table for teacher appreciation. Right: Chip basket distributed with personalized messages. These acts helped reduce stress and promoted visibility and connection between leadership and staff.

Teacher Appreciation Day Word Art. To celebrate Teacher Appreciation Day, staff members submitted affirming adjectives about their colleagues through an anonymous digital form. These submissions were transformed into personalized framed word art in the shape of apples, reflecting the year's "growth" theme. The framed gifts were presented during a celebration where teachers saw themselves through the eyes of their peers. Many expressed surprise and gratitude, noting how meaningful it was to be affirmed by colleagues in such a personalized way.

Figure 12

Personalized Word Art Gifts for Teacher Appreciation Day



Note. Left: Word art gifts created from peer-submitted affirmations. Right: Teachers holding their framed pieces during the celebration. This initiative supported self-worth, team cohesion, and emotional well-being, while reinforcing the school's culture of appreciation.

Love and Kindness Week. This themed week began with a shoutout circle where teachers recognized each other publicly. They were then surprised with heart-shaped affirmation cookies and small tokens of appreciation, reinforcing the message that care and kindness were central to the school's values.

Figure 13

Love and Kindness Week Cookie Gift and Staff Celebration



Note. Left: Custom heart-shaped cookies. Right: Teachers celebrating with their gifts following a peer shoutout session. The activity built a sense of community and appreciation beyond professional roles.

International Women's Day. Female educators were honored through a reflective and celebratory gathering that included storytelling, poetry, prayer, and affirmations. Staff were gifted intricately designed floral cupcakes and self-care items in a setting designed to uplift and connect.

Figure 14

International Women's Day Appreciation Display and Floral-Themed Cupcakes



Note. Left: Cupcake and gift display. Right: Flower-themed cupcakes symbolizing growth and strength. The event emphasized the school's commitment to honoring the voices and contributions of women in education.

St. Patrick's Day "Feeling Lucky" Activity. In a lighthearted, week-long event, teachers each selected a numbered rubber duck tied to a mystery prize. Teachers submitted duck selfies throughout the week and attended a lucky draw event with rewards such as bookstore vouchers, lunch with the principal, or classroom resources.

Figure 15

St. Patrick's Day "Feeling Lucky" Duck Draw and Teacher Celebration



Note. Left: Duck draw setup. Right: Teachers posing with their ducks and celebrating prize wins. The event added joy and strengthened interpersonal relationships in a playful, inclusive way.

First Day of School Welcome. To set a positive tone from day one, teachers returned to school to find orange-themed drinks labeled “Orange you glad it’s a new year?” with motivational messages attached. These symbolic gestures promoted optimism and reinforced the message that each staff member mattered from the start.

Figure 16

First Day of School Welcome Gifts for Teachers (2024)



Note. Left: Motivational gift tag. Right: Orange-themed drinks ready for teacher desks. This gesture established a warm, welcoming atmosphere aligned with the school’s values of care and encouragement.

Teacher Appreciation by Teachers for Teachers. By the second and third years of implementation, a significant cultural shift became evident. The appreciation practices initially modeled by leadership were organically adopted by teachers, who began extending those same acts of kindness to one another. This marked a turning point: our community was no longer simply responding to leadership direction—it was living out the values of care, recognition, and collective well-being.

It became increasingly common to see staff bring in small, heartfelt gifts such as homemade baked goods, juices, or handcrafted body scrubs. These gestures reflected more than goodwill—they embodied a spirit of belonging, mutual support, and collegial trust. Teachers were not only recognizing each other's contributions, but also sharing parts of their personal lives, thus deepening relational ties across the school.

One of the most touching examples occurred during a particularly busy school day, which included a half-day for students and a full afternoon of professional development. That morning, three teachers mentioned a quick planning meeting for the afternoon. When we arrived, we were greeted with a beautifully arranged surprise lunch in the staff kitchen. The room had been decorated, soft music played, and an impressive spread of food awaited us. What made it especially meaningful was the addition of motivational labels and pun-filled signage on the dishes- details that mirrored my own style of recognition.

Figure 17

Staff-Led Appreciation Lunch to Foster Peer Support and Community



Note. A surprise lunch organized by teachers during a busy academic day. The thoughtful setup, complete with motivational notes and personalized food labels, reflected a culture of peer-driven appreciation and collective care.

This unprompted act was a powerful affirmation of the school's cultural evolution. Staff no longer needed direction to lead with kindness. They had assumed the role of culture-bearers themselves. In the context of an evolving pedagogical model, such as Project-Based Learning, this relational infrastructure is not merely beneficial, it is essential for lasting impact.

Staff Wellbeing. The mental wellbeing of staff was a foundational pillar in our school's implementation of the blended PBL model. Intentional efforts were made to foster a supportive culture through consistent wellness initiatives and informal community building practices. One key initiative was *Wellness Wednesday*, held monthly, offering staff choice-based wellness sessions such as meditation, yoga, dance, creative arts, and technology focused workshops like 3D printing. These sessions promoted cross-divisional interaction and allowed teachers to recharge while forming new connections.

Casual social structures, including a coffee club and shared kitchen spaces, further nurtured camaraderie. Teachers regularly brought in treats, shared recipes, and exchanged light-hearted content via group chats, helping to humanize relationships beyond professional roles.

Staff wellbeing was also supported through meaningful acts of recognition. Teachers' personal milestones, such as completing master's degrees, were celebrated publicly during assemblies.

Figure 18

Celebrating Teachers' Achievements



Note. Staff graduates were honored with caps and flowers, reinforcing the school's commitment to lifelong learning and appreciation.

Recognition also extended to support roles central to the success of our blended PBL approach. On International Counselor's Day and International Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Day, staff were honored through student-led acknowledgments and personalized messages.

Figure 19

Recognizing SEL and Counseling Staff During Schoolwide Wellbeing Events



Note. Left: School counselor recognized on International School Counselor Day for her contributions to student and staff wellbeing. Right: SEL teacher honored by students during International Social Emotional Learning Day.

Staff Development for PBL Implementation. In the famous words of Richard Branson- "Train people well enough so that they can leave, then treat them well enough so that they don't want to". Sustainable implementation of the blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) model required a multi-tiered

professional development (PD) approach that spanned three years. The strategy included formal training, classroom-based supports, project-specific guidance, and a growing emphasis on peer-led development. Each phase of the training focused on progressively deepening teacher capacity while fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.

Core PBL Training (Years 1–3). The foundational component of staff development was the staged rollout of PBL 1.0 and 2.0 training. In Year 1, all teachers completed PBL 1.0, focused on designing transdisciplinary projects and understanding the eight components of high-quality PBL. Teachers participated in a PBL "hackathon," developed timelines, and practiced aligning standards with inquiry-driven experiences. External consultant Kyle Wagner supported this process through hybrid sessions and leadership consultation.

In Year 2, returning staff advanced to PBL 2.0 while new staff completed 1.0 before joining the main cohort. The 2.0 training emphasized the "12 Shifts for Learner-Centered Classrooms," helping teachers evolve from content deliverers to facilitators of inquiry. Teachers selected two shifts per year as focal points and were supported through PD sessions, collaborative tuning meetings, and guided reflection. Cohesive grade-level collaboration was linked to greater student ownership and learning outcomes.

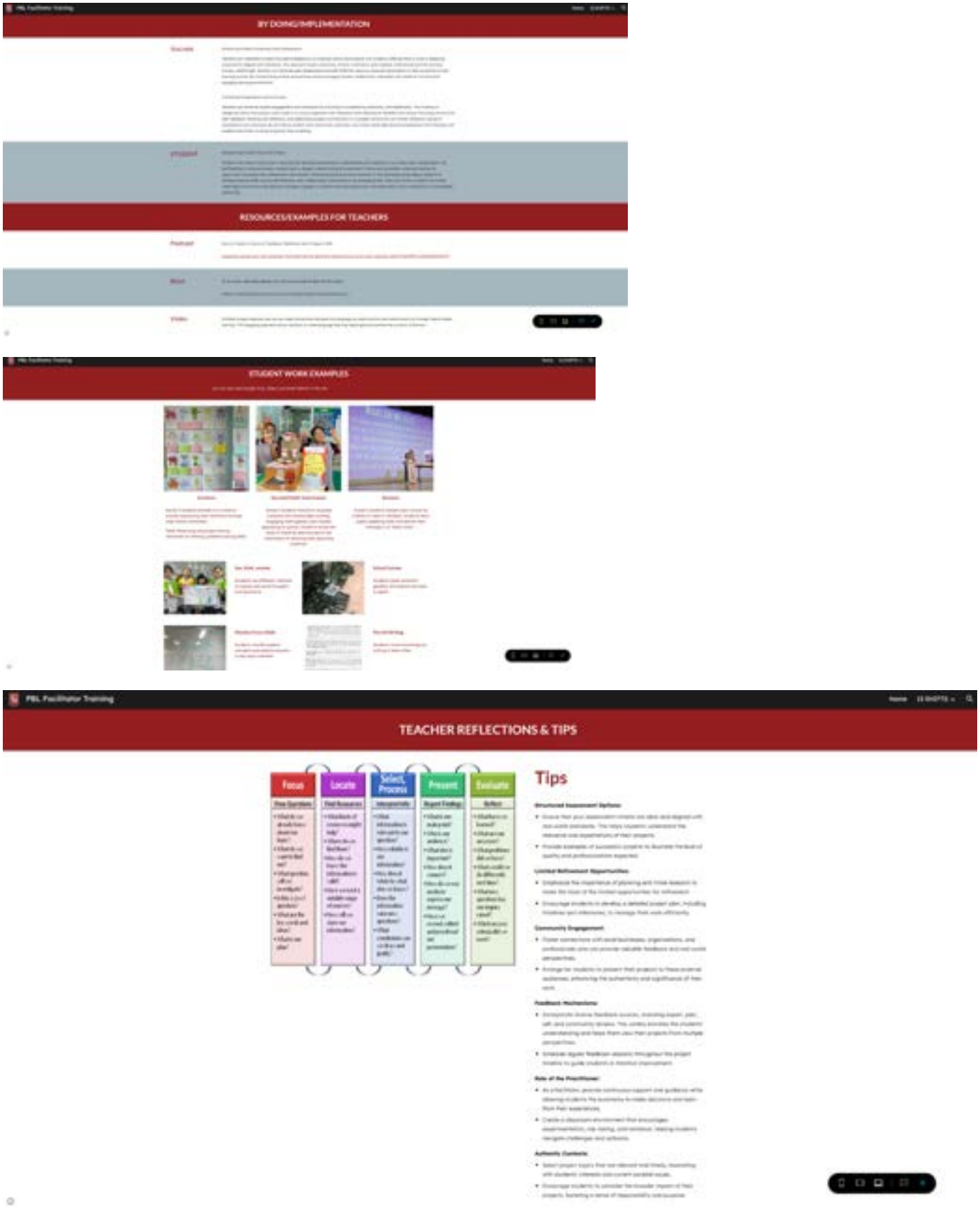
By Year 3, most teachers were in their second or third year of implementation. Teacher confidence increased, and challenges diminished. New hires were required to complete PBL 1.0 in the summer and began 2.0 in the academic year, mentored by returning staff. A key milestone was the launch of the *KPIS PBL Teacher Training Site*, created collaboratively by staff. This Google-based platform documented the 12 shifts, school-based examples, and project artifacts, providing a sustainable, school-specific onboarding and PD resource. Teachers were expected to contribute quarterly, supporting a culture of shared responsibility and continuous growth.

Figure 20

Example from the KPIS Teacher Training Site Showcasing One of the 12 Shifts







Note. This figure presents a screenshot from the KPIS PBL Teacher Training Site developed in Year 3. It features the "Student Work" shift, illustrating how each shift is visually structured and supported with clear goals, definitions, and contextualized resources to facilitate teacher professional development.

Project-Related Training. To support the practical execution of PBL, targeted training sessions were embedded throughout the year. These included:

- Project timelines and benchmarking: Teachers learned to plan 6–7 week projects, create visual learning journey walls, and align student progress benchmarks with timelines.
- Feedback systems: Teachers implemented continuous feedback loops involving peers, mentors, and parents which are aligned with the iterative nature of PBL design cycles.
- Student reflection and ownership: Training focused on fostering student self- and peer-reflection, with younger students using journals and videos, and older students creating digital portfolios.
- Student-led conferences: Teachers were trained to support students in presenting their learning journeys to parents, replacing traditional parent-teacher meetings.
- Formative assessment and standards alignment: Teachers received PD on skills-based formative assessment, power standard identification, and scaffolding for diverse learners.
- Experiential learning and community connections: Teachers learned to design trips aligned with project goals and to develop partnerships with local organizations to enhance real-world relevance.
- Showcasing days: Training emphasized celebration of learning, including documentation, presentation skills, and use of digital tools to exhibit student work.

Classroom Management and Inclusion Supports. In Year 1, supplementary training focused on classroom management and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), crucial for student-centered, collaborative PBL environments. The school implemented Student of Concern (SOC) tracking documents and Student Intervention Teams (SITs) for Tier 2 behavioral planning. These teams, composed of homeroom and specialist teachers, met monthly to discuss anonymous cases and intervention strategies.

In Year 2, professional development shifted toward scaffolding and differentiation. Teachers learned to tailor content, process, product, and environment to meet the needs of English Additional Language (EAL) students, students with special educational needs, and gifted learners. In Year 3, focused training was offered on Standards-Based Grading (SBG) and rubric design to align assessment practices across grade levels. Teachers received additional support on communicating student progress effectively, particularly in the early grades.

Peer-Led Professional Development. Recognizing the growing expertise within the teaching team, the school adopted a peer-led PD model beginning in Year 2. Teachers who demonstrated strong practices were invited to lead sessions on topics such as project planning, reflection tools, or differentiation strategies. These sessions were intentionally collaborative, with teachers contributing resources, modeling techniques, and providing feedback.

By Year 3, this evolved into a more targeted model with multiple concurrent sessions based on staff needs. Presenting teachers received certificates and coaching from leadership prior to delivery. Staff

suggestions were solicited through PD topic request forms, encouraging ownership and initiative. All sessions were documented and stored in a shared drive for ongoing reference. This resource was also used during observations and learning walks to support just-in-time coaching and follow-up.

Figure 21

Peer-Led Professional Development Sessions in Practice



Note. This figure displays two examples of peer-facilitated professional development sessions conducted during Year 3. These sessions allowed teachers to share expertise in areas such as English as an Additional Language (EAL) strategies and digital resource integration, fostering a collaborative and reflective learning culture among staff.

Teacher Growth Celebrations. Recognizing and celebrating teacher growth was a critical element in fostering a culture of continuous professional learning throughout the school's multi-year PBL implementation. While training sessions provided foundational knowledge and skills, intentional efforts were made to ensure that reflection, ownership, and celebration became integral to the learning process.

Visual Recognition and Culture Building. To promote and reinforce teacher engagement with professional development (PD), staff members were invited to share photos of themselves with certificates earned through external and internal training programs. These photos were displayed on a dedicated wall in the teachers' lounge, which became known as the "Growing Together" wall during the GROW themed year and "Look at Me SHINE" during the SHINE themed year. This visual celebration encouraged broader staff participation and created an uplifting environment where professional achievements were visible and valued (see Figure 22).

This initiative also extended to students. During the schoolwide Growth Parade in Quarter 3, students toured classrooms to celebrate learning and visited the teacher lounge to see the PD wall. They left handwritten messages for staff, reinforcing the idea that all members of the learning community, students and adults alike, are lifelong learners. These messages were later returned to teachers as keepsakes.

Figure 22

Staff Professional Learning Recognition Wall

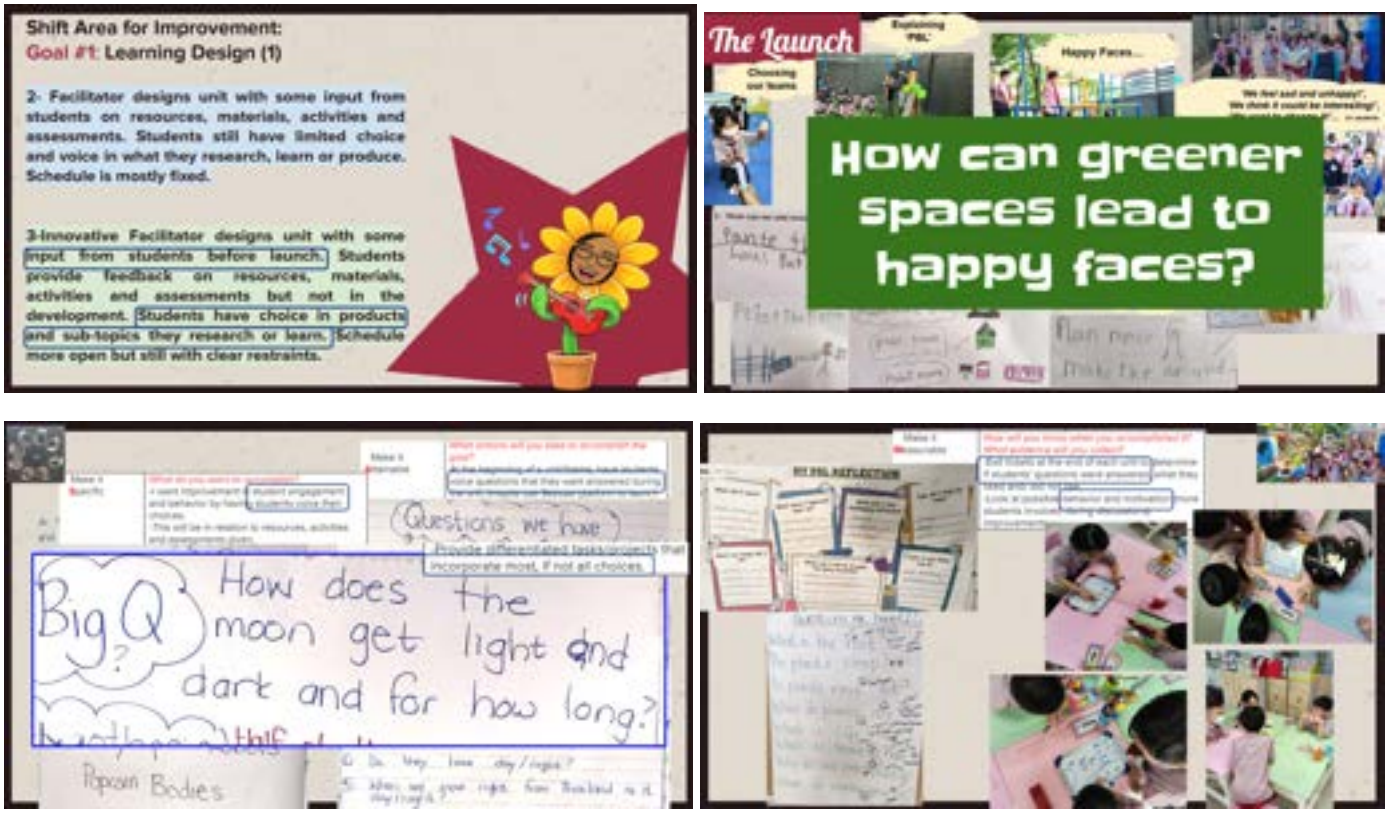


Note. This wall was a key feature in reinforcing a culture of learning, celebrating teacher efforts, and inspiring further participation in professional development.

Self-Reflection and Peer Learning. Upon completing the year-long PBL professional development course, each teacher delivered a self-reflection presentation to the staff. These presentations included evidence of classroom implementation, personal growth, and student outcomes. Teachers linked their progress to their goal-setting documents and identified the two instructional shifts they focused on during the year (see Figure 23). This process not only highlighted individual growth but also served as a platform for peer learning and professional inspiration.

Figure 23

Sample Slide from a Teacher's PBL Self-reflection Presentation



Note. Teachers showcased two instructional shifts they implemented, with supporting evidence linked to their professional goals and student outcomes.

Graduation and Recognition Events. The culmination of the PBL training was marked by a themed graduation event. Teachers were awarded certificates and recognized for their dedication and impact. Celebrations included reflective speeches, recognition of outstanding contributions, and visual displays of project artifacts. These events underscored the message that professional learning is an investment in personal and professional growth, not merely a compliance task (see Figure 24). As a leader, I reminded staff that while support and guidance are provided, ownership of growth ultimately rests with the individual educator.

Figure 24

PBL Graduation Celebration for PBL 2.0 Teacher Cohort



Note. Themed celebrations acknowledged teacher commitment and promoted a positive, motivational culture around professional learning and growth.

Teacher Professional Goal Setting and Reflection. To ensure professional development efforts supported the school's evolving Project-Based Learning (PBL) framework, the teacher goal-setting process was refined over the three-year implementation period. In Year 1, teachers followed a SMART goal structure, selecting two goals aligned to the school's four strategic pillars. While this offered clarity, it often resulted in disconnected goals that did not fully support the instructional shifts required for effective PBL implementation. As the only school in the group adopting a PBL model, a more tailored approach was necessary.

In response, the process was redesigned in Years 2 and 3 to align directly with the *12 Shifts for Student-Centered Classrooms*. Teachers selected two instructional shifts to focus on and completed self-assessments using a shift-specific continuum rubric. These rubrics outlined four levels of practice, ranging from Level 1 ("Youngling") to Level 4 ("Jedi Master"), and described key competencies for each shift, including the degree of student agency, co-design, and inquiry integration (see Figure 26). Teachers used the rubric to identify their current level, define targeted outcomes, and develop actionable plans to improve practice.

Figure 25

Rubric for Levels of Mastery in Learning Experience Shifts

Shifts Levels of Mastery

	1	2	3	4
	Youngling (Teacher)	Padawan	Knight (Portfolio Based)	Jedi Master
Learning Experience Shifts	**TEACHER DESIGNED**		CO-DESIGN/CURATED	CO-DESIGNED/ CURATED
LEARNING DESIGN	Teacher designs the entire learning experience w/ accompanying resources, materials, activities and assessments. Students have no choice or voice in what they research or learn. Schedule is fixed from Day One.	Facilitator designs unit with some input from students on resources, materials, activities and assessments. Students still have limited choice and voice in what they research, learn or produce. Schedule is mostly fixed.	Innovative Facilitator designs unit with some input from students before launch. Students provide feedback on resources, materials, activities and assessments but not in the development. Students have choice in products and sub-topics they research or learn. Schedule more open but still with clear restraints.	Learning experience/ project is co-designed and student driven from start to finish. Students co-design resources, materials, activities and choose how they will be assessed. Students have complete voice and choice in products, and relevant topics they research or learn. Schedule is highly flexible and co-constructed based on constant input from students. Innovative Facilitator acts as facilitator and co-designer.
LEARNING PROCESS	LED BY CONTENT			LED BY INQUIRY
	Academic Content is the main driver of learning with activities and projects tagged on at the end.	Project built around academic content. And while content aligns, questions do not guide the experience, only fulfillment of tasks to meet academic criteria.	Project or Learning Experience has a main inquiry and there are some processes, templates and activities to drive student inquiry. But inquiry is not ongoing and continuous.	Though there are milestones, inquiry drives the progression to each milestone. There are continual processes, templates and activities to support and develop student inquiry through literature, expanded research, connection to experts and field experiences. Teacher acts as an innovative facilitator in the process of connecting student interest and passion to larger, deeper inquiries.

Note. This rubric outlines progressive levels of mastery for the "Learning Design" and "Learning Process" shifts within the 12 Shifts framework. Each level, from 1 (Youngling) to 4 (Jedi Master), defines teacher and student roles, degree of co-design, and instructional focus. The rubric supports teachers in self-assessment, goal-setting, and targeted professional development aligned with learner-centered practices.

Each teacher documented their goals, rationale, and planned strategies on a customized goal-setting template (see Figure 26). These forms linked instructional shifts with expected teacher and student outcomes and guided the coaching and observation cycles throughout the year. Leaders conducted one-on-one meetings to review progress, provide feedback, and offer targeted support. Observations were purposefully aligned to each teacher's selected shifts to ensure continuity and relevance.

Figure 26

Teacher Professional Development Goal-Setting Template Aligned to the 12 Shifts

KPIS

Elementary Professional Development Goals

2023-2024

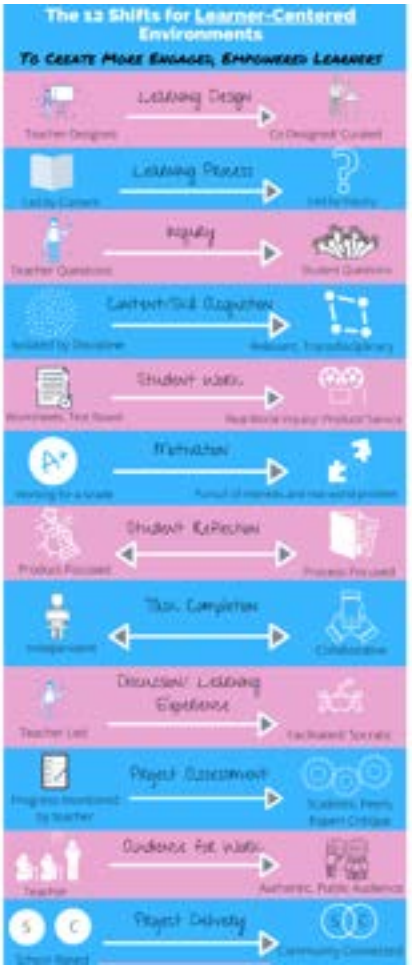
Teacher: XXX

Professional Growth Goals

Two professional growth goals from the 12 shifts (Added below)

Goal 1- Discussions/Learning Experiences	
Now	Look on the shifts doc and copy the description (Grade yourself 1-4) 2 - Some discussions and learning experiences and discussions to support student inquiry and growth in project, but mostly teacher led without clear scaffolding, protocols or processes to guide them.
Next	This will be done at the end of the semester *(Really want to try out the Socratic Method this year--fingers crossed)* 4- Socratic discussions, formats, and learning experiences allow students to progressively dive deeper within the project. Teacher helps set up learning experiences and milestones to support project development, but takes a "back seat" role, facilitating project work from behind the scenes.

Goal 2- Student Reflection	
Now	Look on the shifts doc and copy the description (Grade yourself 1-4) 2- Some reflection within project but not regular or meaningful, with personalized student goals and insight driving each reflection
Next	This will be done at the end of the semester 3- Regular reflection within project experience and opportunities for students to reflect on work, growth, and deeper understandings/ questions, but with limited choice for how they reflect and/ or a place to archive reflection.



Expected Outcomes

How will this professional growth benefit you as a teacher? How will it benefit your students?

Teacher	
G1	It provides valuable insights into individual learning styles, helping me tailor my instructional methods
G2	It also fosters a deeper understanding of students' thought processes, helping me to address specific areas of improvement and celebrate successes too

Student	
G1	It promotes a supportive classroom environment, encouraging open communication and a collaborative approach to learning
G2	It helps students develop a deeper understanding of their own learning strategies and areas for improvement; it empowers them to take ownership of their educational journey

Action Plan

3 steps

Teacher will...	by...(doing)	so that...
Facilitate student reflection	Providing prompts and guided questions during class discussions and written activities	Students engage in thoughtful and self-assessment
Foster student participation in the Socratic Method	Implementing a structured approach that includes pre-discussion preparation, guiding questions, and post-discussion reflections	Students feel empowered to engage in meaningful dialogue, analyze complex concepts about emotion, and develop their ability to think critically
Enhance students' proficiency in discussion	Providing clearer guidelines on turn-talking, active listening, and respectful disagreement	Students develop effective communication skills, and more dynamic and enriching discussions

Note. This example illustrates a teacher's goal-setting form aligned to two selected shifts: "Discussions/Learning Experiences" and "Student Reflection." The document includes self-assessment rubrics, expected outcomes for both teacher and student growth, and an action plan outlining steps for implementation. This shift-based format replaced generic SMART goals and provided a more meaningful, student-centered approach to professional development.

At semester intervals, teachers revisited their goals, reassessed their placement on the rubric, and provided evidence of growth. This reflective cycle emphasized teacher agency, promoted meaningful ownership of professional learning, and ensured that development efforts were directly linked to student-centered instructional outcomes. For example, a teacher who began the year with a Level 2 self-rating in "Discussions/Learning Experiences" might later demonstrate Level 4 mastery, supported by student work samples, reflection logs, or peer observation notes.

To foster collaboration, shift-specific team meetings were introduced in Year 3. These gatherings allowed teachers working on the same shifts to share strategies, address challenges, and learn from one another. This peer-to-peer coaching enriched the professional learning environment, increased consistency of practice, and strengthened a shared vision for PBL.

Teacher-collected artifacts such as student reflections, project documents, and lesson protocols were compiled into a shared digital repository. This content was later integrated into the *KPIS PBL Teacher*

Training Site, which now houses shift-aligned strategies, exemplars, and resources to support both returning and new staff. The shift to a goal-setting process grounded in inquiry and shared accountability transformed professional development from a compliance task into a purposeful and empowering system for continuous improvement.

Teacher Observations. A comprehensive observation model was developed to support instructional improvement, monitor alignment with school goals, and foster a collaborative professional culture. This model included informal (learning walks), formal, and peer observations. Each designed to build teacher capacity and ensure fidelity to the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach.

Informal Observations. Informal observations, or learning walks, were conducted throughout the year to provide timely, focused feedback. These 10–15 minute visits centered on key areas such as instructional alignment, student engagement, classroom climate, and use of time. Beyond instructional monitoring, learning walks also served as informal welfare checks for students of concern, offering insight into their behaviors and classroom interactions.

A key strength of this approach was the alignment of observation focus areas with ongoing professional development. Following training sessions (e.g., technology integration or classroom management), targeted learning walks were conducted to observe implementation and offer constructive feedback. This iterative cycle of learn, implement, observe, and refine helped translate professional development into measurable instructional change.

Formal Observations. Formal observations occurred in two rounds: once in the second quarter and again in the third. Returning teachers participated in two formal evaluations, while first-year teachers underwent three for added support. The first observation followed a rubric aligned with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) standards and covered domains such as instructional strategies, inclusion, assessment, and digital learning. This structure ensured alignment with both internal expectations and external accreditation criteria.

The second formal observation was tailored to each teacher's PBL goals and evaluated their ability to facilitate student-centered, inquiry-based learning. Observers looked for evidence of active projects, including classroom artifacts like "Wonder Walls" and "Project Walls," as well as signs of student ownership, collaboration, and critical thinking. Feedback was used to refine practice and reinforce the shift toward learner-centered environments.

Figure 27

PBL Classroom Observation Form with Teacher and Observer Reflection



PBL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM

Teacher Observed: _____ Date: _____

Teacher Focus Area/Goal

Category	Description	Yes	No	Part	Observations
Environment	The essential/driving question for the project is visible in the room				
	The room is set up flexibly, with ability for students to move freely				
	There are supporting resources i.e. books, materials, supplementary materials, anchor charts that are easily accessible and supportive of learners				
	The process of the project journey is visible				
	There is a healthy 'hum' indicating PLOW state				
Learning	Learning process guided by student inquiry or thoughtful ways to capture them				
	Differentiated student vision/choice for activities and tools they complete				
	Peer to Peer Teaching is evident				
	Balance of collaborative and independent tasks				
	Interactions are fluidly and student-led				
	There are opportunities for Reflection				

Student Teacher Behavior	Student Talk / Teacher Talk				
	Teacher checks in with project teams or holds mini lessons				
	Students act as self-managers				
	Teacher acts as co-learner				

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

TEACHER REFLECTION

What went well in your area of focus? Evidence?

What was challenging?

OBSERVER REFLECTION

What stood out to you?

What are some of your 'wonderings?'

Note. This form was used during formal PBL observations to evaluate classroom learning environments, student engagement, and instructional alignment with project-based learning practices. It includes checklist indicators, open-ended reflection prompts for both the observed teacher and the observer, and a section to document observed student-teacher interactions.

Peer Observations. To deepen professional collaboration, a phased peer observation model was introduced. In Year 1, teachers used structured templates similar to administrative forms, but this approach created tension and proved unsustainable. In Year 2, a simplified "Grow and Glow" format aligned with the school theme ("SHINE") replaced the formal structure. This version emphasized positive feedback, suggestions for growth, and overall reflections, making the process more approachable and constructive.

By Year 3, peer observations were conducted anonymously in collaborative groups. Teachers provided real-time feedback via shared online documents, with the principal curating responses before sharing with the observed teacher. This shift reduced performance anxiety, emphasized shared learning, and fostered trust. Teachers began to view peer feedback as a tool for mutual growth rather than critique. Additionally, many observers actively engaged in classroom activities, which broadened their understanding of instructional strategies and strengthened cross-grade collaboration.

Figure 28

Peer Observation During an Early Years Lesson



Note. This figure shows a group of teachers conducting a peer observation during a live classroom session. This collaborative approach supported professional learning by allowing educators to observe instructional practices, student engagement, and classroom dynamics in real time, fostering reflection and shared growth across grade levels.

Cultivating Teacher Leadership. Although the school did not have a formal middle leadership structure, a strategic emphasis was placed on cultivating leadership capacity from within the teaching team. Rooted in a distributed leadership philosophy, the approach focused on identifying and nurturing emerging leaders through authentic, practice-based opportunities.

In Year 1, leadership responsibilities were centralized to provide consistency during the early phase of PBL implementation. However, teachers demonstrating initiative and expertise were informally identified for future leadership roles. By Year 2, this evolved into structured initiatives, beginning with peer-led professional development sessions. These teacher-led workshops recognized internal expertise and allowed staff to build confidence as facilitators. Participants received training certificates to support their professional portfolios.

Additionally, a peer mentoring system was introduced. High-performing teachers were paired with colleagues seeking support in targeted areas, creating a reciprocal coaching model. New teachers were also matched with experienced staff for their first three months, fostering a supportive onboarding process and strengthening professional relationships across the school.

In Year 3, these leadership pathways expanded further. Teachers facilitated curriculum-focused workshops for parents, extending their influence beyond the classroom and deepening school-home partnerships. Leadership potential was also supported through one-on-one professional growth meetings, where interested staff were invited to take on additional responsibilities—such as assisting with scheduling,

verifying team deliverables, or participating in learning walks. In return, their non-teaching duties were adjusted to accommodate these roles.

This intentional approach empowered teachers to grow as leaders within a culture of collaboration and mutual respect. It laid the foundation for sustainable leadership development and ensured the school could grow its own future leaders from within its existing team.

Teacher Data. To effectively evaluate the professional development, adaptation process, and overall "pulse" of teachers transitioning into Project-Based Learning (PBL) facilitators, we gathered and analyzed a range of data sources. This included pre- and post-training surveys, as well as follow-up interviews conducted at the end of Year 1 and again at the end of Year 3 of implementation. In addition, we collected feedback from students and parents about the teachers' impact and facilitation skills; this will be discussed in detail in the student data and parent data sections respectively.

The teacher data served multiple purposes throughout the implementation phases. Findings from the Year 1 data, for example, informed refinements to the training program and adjustments for onboarding incoming staff, ultimately allowing us to strengthen our approach in Years 2 and 3. This reflects our commitment to an ongoing, responsive feedback cycle that enables us to adapt and improve the program to best meet the needs of our community.

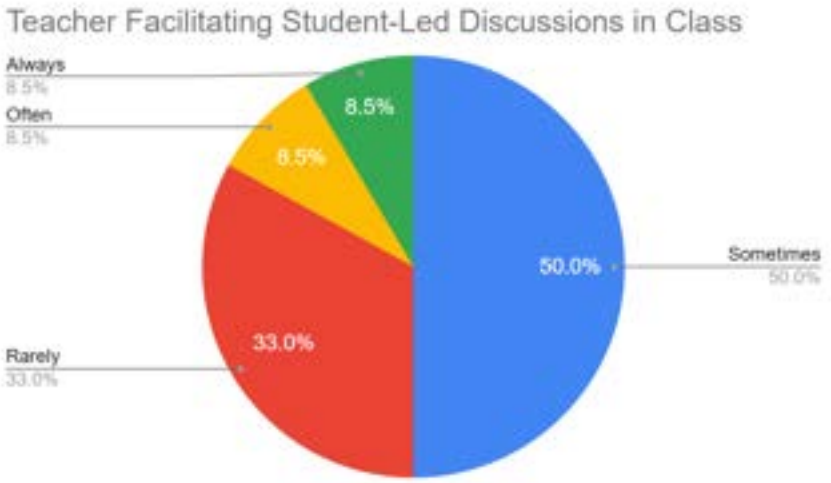
In the sections that follow, we examine the Teacher Implementation Data to assess our teachers' current understanding of PBL, the evolving roles of various stakeholders, and the learning environments we are cultivating. We then present the Teacher Training Data, which evaluates the effectiveness of the training program, the structures put in place, and the resources provided to support professional growth. Finally, we analyze Teacher Growth and Development through staff retention trends, teacher self-reflections, and testimonials that speak to the impact of this professional learning journey.

Teacher Implementation Data. To assess teachers' initial understanding and instructional practices related to student-centered learning, a pre-training survey was conducted. Two key questions provided insight into baseline beliefs and behaviors: the frequency of student-led discussions and the perceived student-centeredness of teaching and learning.

Pre-Training Insights: The first question asked, *"How often do you facilitate student-led discussions?"* Responses ranged from "Never" to "Always." As shown in Figure 29, 50% of teachers responded "Sometimes," 33% "Rarely," and only 17% ("Often" or "Always") indicated they consistently made time for student-led dialogue. This indicated that 83% of teachers facilitated student discussions infrequently, highlighting a need for targeted professional development in facilitating inquiry-based dialogue.

Figure 29

Teacher Frequency of Facilitating Student-Led Discussions in Class (Pre-Training Survey)

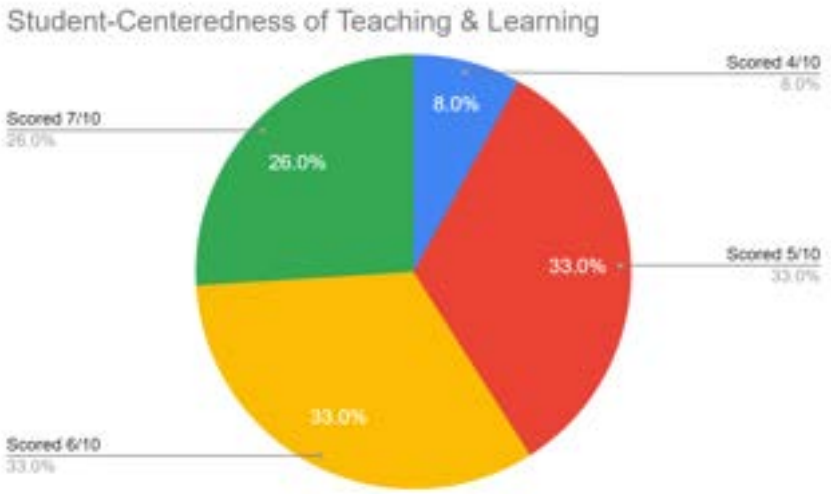


Note. This figure presents responses from a teacher pre-training survey regarding how often teachers facilitated student-led discussions. The majority (83%) reported doing so only "rarely" or "sometimes," indicating a need for professional development in facilitating inquiry-driven, student-centered dialogue.

The second question asked teachers to rate the student-centeredness of their teaching and learning on a scale from 1 (fully teacher-centered) to 10 (fully student-centered). As shown in Figure 30, most teachers scored themselves between 5 and 7, with no one scoring higher than 7/10. Specifically, 33% scored 5, 26% scored 6, and 28% scored 7. These results suggest that 41% of teachers acknowledged their classrooms were not yet student-centered, while the remaining 59% indicated moderate levels of student agency in their teaching.

Figure 30

Teacher Self-Ratings on the Student-Centeredness of Teaching and Learning



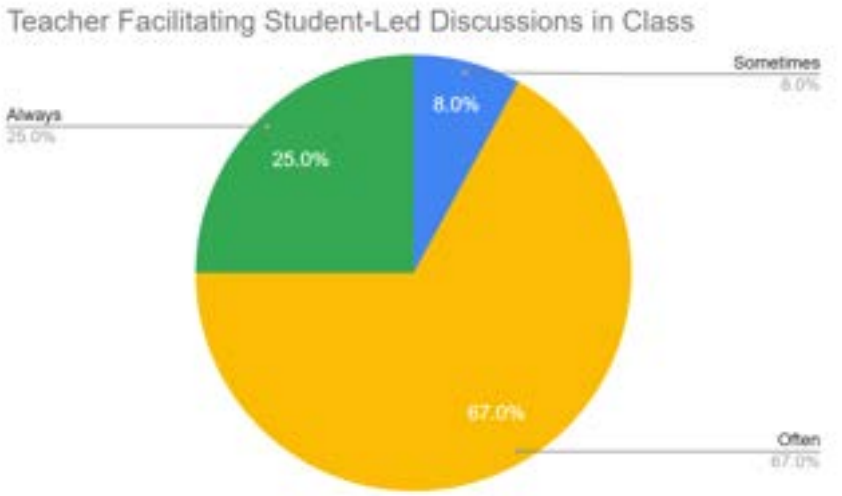
Note. This figure shows the results of a teacher self-assessment on the degree of student-centeredness in their teaching practice, rated on a scale from 1 to 10. The majority of teachers rated themselves between 5 and 7, reflecting moderate student-centeredness. The data suggests a need for deeper understanding of what authentic student-centered learning looks like within the context of Project-Based Learning (PBL).

Many teachers expressed concern about curriculum demands limiting student autonomy. Comments included: *"We have too much assigned curriculum to give the students time to be creative"* and *"If we do not teach from the book, they will not learn."* These beliefs reflected traditional models of instruction and highlighted the need to shift teacher mindsets regarding inquiry, student agency, and the teacher's role in a student-centered classroom. These insights also informed our hiring strategy, as student-centered practices became a key focus during recruitment.

Post-Training Outcomes: At the end of Year 1, the same survey questions were used to evaluate teacher growth. The results revealed substantial improvement. In response to the first question on student-led discussions, Figure 31 shows that 92% of teachers reported facilitating these discussions "Often" (67%) or "Always" (25%), with only 8% responding "Sometimes." No teachers selected "Rarely" or "Never." Compared to the baseline, this represents a 76% increase in teachers regularly facilitating student-led discussions.

Figure 31

Teacher Facilitation of Student-Led Discussions After PBL Training

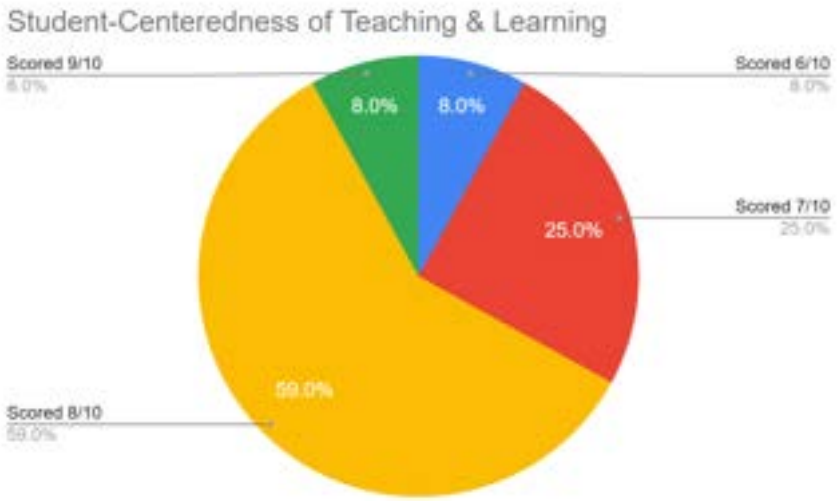


Note. This figure reflects post-training survey results regarding how frequently teachers facilitated student-led discussions. After participating in PBL professional development, 92% of teachers reported doing so "often" or "always," indicating significant growth in promoting inquiry-driven, student-centered dialogue.

Similarly, teacher perceptions of student-centeredness showed marked improvement. As seen in Figure 32, the majority of teachers (59%) now rated themselves at 8/10, followed by 25% at 7/10. Only 8% rated themselves at 6 or 9, showing that 92% of teachers viewed their classrooms as highly student-centered post-training. Compared to the 26% who initially rated themselves 7/10 or higher, this represents a 66% increase in high self-ratings.

Figure 32

Teacher Self-Ratings on Student-Centeredness of Teaching and Learning (Post-Training)



Note. This figure presents teacher self-assessments on the student-centeredness of their classroom practices following a year of PBL implementation. A majority of respondents (59%) rated themselves 8 out of 10, reflecting increased confidence and alignment with student-centered instructional approaches compared to earlier in the year.

These results indicate a significant shift in both teacher mindset and instructional behavior. The combination of professional development, coaching, and peer learning opportunities contributed to measurable growth in teachers' understanding and implementation of student-centered learning practices. Continued support will be necessary to sustain this momentum and further embed inquiry-driven, student-led instruction into classroom culture.

Teacher Training Data. In this section we will examine the teacher training data collected at the end of Year 3, with a particular focus on the training and resources that were provided to support teachers throughout the implementation period. Teachers received training from both myself and our external Project Based Learning consultant, Kyle Wagner. The various types of training resources and sessions have been described in detail in the training section of this paper.

The data collected for this analysis included teacher feedback on the asynchronous training platform, in person training sessions, goal setting and reflection meetings, classroom observations, grade level project meetings, and project brainstorming sessions. These data sources provided valuable insights into how teachers engaged with the training opportunities and how effectively the resources supported their professional growth.

Figure 33

Overall Staff Ratings of the PBL Training Program



Note. This figure illustrates staff responses to a post-training evaluation survey, rating the overall PBL training experience on a scale from 1 to 5. The majority of staff rated the training highly, with 9 staff selecting a 5 and 5 selecting a 4, indicating strong satisfaction and perceived value in the professional development model provided.

When the staff were asked for their overall rating of the training provided, nine participants rated it 5 out of 5, five participants rated it 4 out of 5, and one participant gave a rating of 3 out of 5. Participants expressed strong appreciation for the collaborative nature of the training. Many highlighted the opportunity to engage in professional dialogue and idea-sharing with colleagues as particularly valuable. One participant commented, “The opportunity to discuss and share ideas with colleagues made the experience enjoyable. Learning together and bouncing ideas off each other enhanced the training” (Participant, 2025). Similarly, another teacher stated, “Swapping ideas with other teachers and collaborating helped me reflect and grow as an educator” (Participant, 2025).

The practical elements of the training were frequently praised. Teachers emphasized the usefulness of the hands-on activities and collaborative planning sessions. For example, one participant noted, “The practical exercises and collaborative project planning sessions were particularly beneficial, allowing for immediate application of PBL strategies in a supportive environment” (Participant, 2025). Another teacher remarked, “The real-world problem-solving scenarios were both challenging and thought-provoking, helping me to think critically and creatively” (Participant, 2025).

Several teachers also appreciated the structured approach to learning, indicating that content was delivered in manageable, focused segments. One participant explained, “Instead of taking it as a whole, it was explained and discussed shift by shift, which made it easier to understand” (Participant, 2025). Others valued the flexibility of online components, with one teacher sharing, “It was good that we could do the online training at our own convenient time” (Participant, 2025).

The training's relevance to classroom application was widely emphasized. Teachers noted that the strategies provided were directly applicable, enhancing both teaching effectiveness and student engagement. One participant shared, "I liked receiving practical strategies and techniques that I could immediately apply in my classroom" (Participant, 2025). Another stated, "The training helped me improve my organizational skills and better engage students by making learning more relevant and interactive" (Participant, 2025).

Participants also recognized the benefits for student outcomes. As one teacher reflected, "I liked the knowledge I gained from the training and how it positively impacted my students" (Participant, 2025).

The continuous feedback and support from trainers were cited as essential, particularly because project-based learning (PBL) was a new approach within the school. One teacher expressed, "I appreciate the continuous feedback we receive. Since PBL is new to our school, the ongoing guidance from our trainer is incredibly helpful. It ensures that we are on the right track and supports our growth and understanding of PBL implementation" (Participant, 2025).

When asked about challenges encountered, a common suggestion was the need for a stronger grade-specific focus during training sessions. One teacher remarked, "The training could be improved by placing a deeper focus on specific grades" (Participant, 2025), indicating that strategies and examples tailored to particular age groups would enhance relevance and applicability.

Finally, teachers expressed interest in observing best practices and engaging with external experts. For example, one participant stated, "I would like to visit other PBL schools, such as Green School, to learn from professionals outside of KPIS, or have PBL experts observe what we do and give feedback" (Participant, 2025). Another teacher echoed this sentiment, saying, "I would have also liked a bit more observations to see the techniques in action" (Participant, 2025). These comments suggest a desire for more experiential learning opportunities and external benchmarking as part of ongoing professional development.

Supplement Training Components. To evaluate the effectiveness of the supplemental components of the PBL training program, teachers were asked to rate six elements on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 representing *Useless* and 5 representing *Extremely Valuable*. The components included: (a) Asynchronous Online Course Content, (b) Synchronous Cohort Online Discussions and Sharing, (c) Goal Setting Forms, (d) Supplemental Resources and Frameworks to Support Each Shift, (e) Podcast Episodes with Expert Practitioners, and (f) Classroom Observations.

The results indicated that Goal Setting Forms and Classroom Observations were rated most highly, with both receiving eight responses rated as *Extremely Valuable* and additional support in the *Valuable* category. These findings highlight the perceived importance of structured reflection and observational learning in supporting effective PBL implementation.

Asynchronous Online Course Content was also positively received, with seven participants rating it *Valuable* and six rating it *Extremely Valuable*. Only one respondent rated it below average, and none rated it as *Useless*, suggesting a generally favorable perception of this flexible training format.

Synchronous Cohort Discussions were similarly well regarded, with seven participants selecting *Extremely Valuable* and five selecting *Valuable*. These responses underscore the value of professional dialogue and peer collaboration during the training process.

Supplemental Resources and Frameworks to support each shift received balanced feedback, with six participants rating them as *Valuable* and six as *Extremely Valuable*. A small number of neutral ratings (n = 3) suggest that while the resources were helpful, they may not have been essential for all participants.

In contrast, Podcast Episodes with Expert Practitioners drew more varied responses. While 10 participants rated them as *Valuable* or *Extremely Valuable*, five participants gave a neutral rating. This indicates mixed perceptions of the relevance or applicability of the podcast content.

Overall, the data suggest that most supplemental components were perceived as beneficial to teacher practice, with goal setting and classroom observations emerging as the most impactful elements in supporting meaningful PBL implementation.

Figure 34

Staff Ratings on the Value of Supplemental PBL Training Components



Note. This figure illustrates teacher responses on the perceived value of various supplemental training components provided during the PBL implementation. Ratings were based on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating "Useless" and 5 indicating "Extremely Valuable." Goal setting forms and classroom observations were rated highest in value, while podcast episodes and online discussions received more varied responses.

Teacher Growth Data. Teachers reported significant professional growth as a result of the structured support provided throughout the Project-Based Learning (PBL) implementation. Participants highlighted that the combination of clear timelines, embedded training, and collaborative structures contributed to their development as more effective, organized, and reflective educators. One participant noted, “The combination of structures, timelines, and training helped me become a more effective and well-rounded educator. I have developed stronger instructional practices, noticed great improvement in my students, and cultivated a more dynamic and engaging learning environment” (Participant, 2025).

A recurring theme was the enhancement of organizational and planning skills. For example, one teacher reflected, “The structured approach has helped me organize and plan more effectively, ensuring that projects are well-defined and goals are clear” (Participant, 2025). Timelines were credited with improving time management and supporting consistent student progress throughout each project cycle.

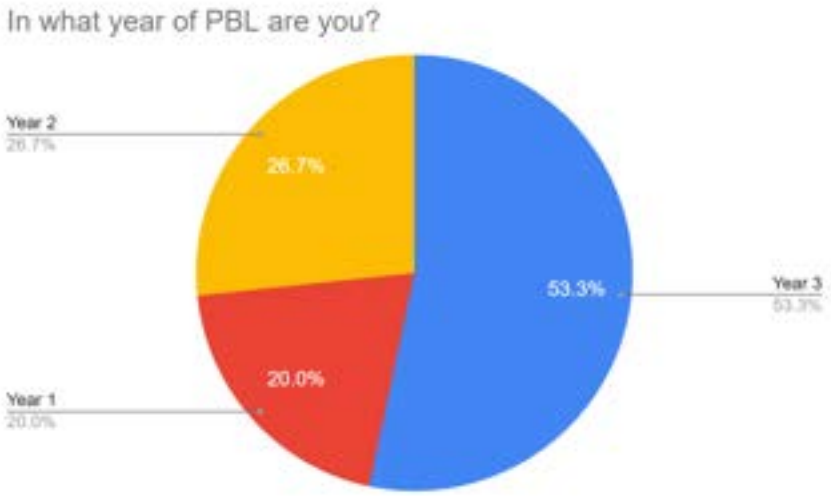
The professional development sessions were also described as transformative. Teachers reported increased confidence in experimenting with innovative instructional methods, noting that the training sessions helped them become more adaptive and student-centered in their practice. One participant stated, “The training increased my confidence in trying new teaching methods. As a result, I feel more capable of meeting my students’ needs” (Participant, 2025).

Moreover, teachers gained a deeper understanding of interdisciplinary learning, with several emphasizing the value of designing cross-curricular projects. As one participant described, “Learning to design and manage projects that span multiple academic subjects has deepened my content knowledge and helped me link curricular goals across different domains” (Participant, 2025). Many also reported improved assessment practices, including greater confidence in evaluating soft skills and practical application of knowledge in both critical elements of PBL environments.

Collaboration was another key area of professional growth. Teachers shared how joint planning and team teaching strengthened professional relationships and enhanced instructional coherence. One teacher noted, “Collaborative projects helped me work more closely with colleagues to design and implement units, share resources, and reflect on practice” (Participant, 2025). This alignment with academic standards also helped improve clarity and rigor in their instruction.

Figure 35

Years of Experience with PBL Among Teachers

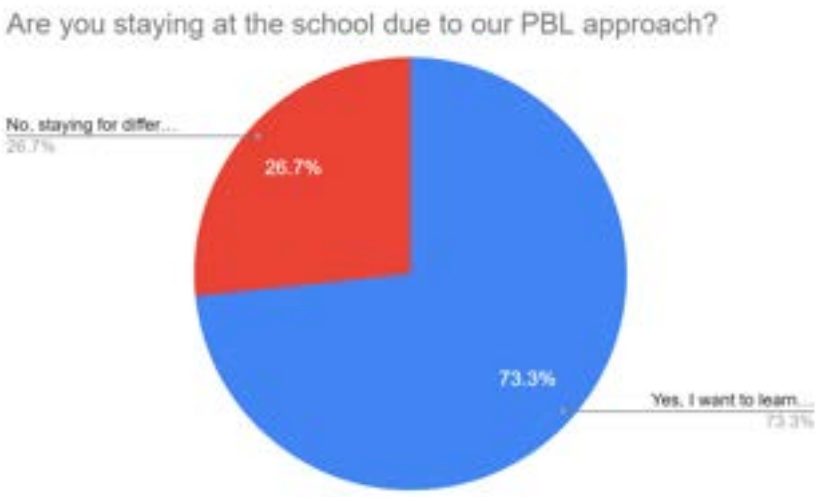


Note. This figure shows the distribution of teachers by their year of involvement in PBL implementation. Over half (53.3%) of teachers had been implementing PBL for three years, while 26.7% were in their second year and 20% in their first year of implementation.

These data reflect a strong continuity among staff, with the majority having participated in the initiative from the beginning. This sustained involvement allowed experienced teachers to support the onboarding and mentoring of new colleagues, thereby enhancing overall implementation quality. With many teachers in their third year, the school benefited from a solid foundation of practitioners who could lead more complex projects and drive deeper pedagogical shifts. This also increases the reliability of professional development insights, as feedback was drawn from individuals with sustained exposure to the blended PBL model.

Figure 36

Teacher Retention and Perceived Value of the PBL Approach



Note. This figure presents teacher responses to the question, "Are you staying at the school due to our PBL approach?" Most (73.3%) indicated that the opportunity to continue learning about and applying PBL was a key factor in their decision to stay.

When teachers were asked whether they were staying at the school because of the PBL approach, 73.3% responded affirmatively. These teachers expressed that the autonomy and creativity afforded by the PBL model were motivating factors for their continued employment. One participant explained that the approach encouraged them to be "innovative and adaptable," while another commented that PBL allowed for "continuous learning and creativity." This sentiment suggests that PBL not only serves as an instructional framework but also as a professional incentive, contributing to teacher satisfaction and retention.

Conversely, 26.7% of participants noted other factors influencing their decision to remain at the school, such as location, benefits, or personal circumstances. This distinction reflects the reality that while PBL is a meaningful driver of engagement for many, it may not resonate equally with all educators. This insight has implications for recruitment and onboarding strategies, emphasizing the importance of hiring educators whose instructional values align with the school's PBL vision.

Feedback on PBL Training and Facilitators. Participants in the PBL training provided detailed feedback highlighting the impact of the program and the contributions of the facilitators. Teachers consistently emphasized the value of the course content, delivery, and the mentorship provided by the facilitators throughout the training. One participant expressed gratitude for the facilitators' professionalism and collaborative spirit:

> I'd like to express my gratitude to Mari and Kyle for their invaluable contributions during the PBL training. Their insights, expertise, and dedication added immense value to our discussions and problem-solving sessions. Mari's thoughtful analysis and Kyle's innovative ideas truly enhanced our learning experience. Their willingness to share knowledge and collaborate with

> others exemplifies the spirit of teamwork and learning. *(Participant, personal communication, 2025)*

Another teacher praised the practical nature of the training and its alignment with classroom needs:

> As an educator looking to integrate Project-Based Learning into my classroom, I found Kyle and Mari's PBL training to be an exceptional resource. Their expertise and dynamic approach to teaching gave me the tools and confidence needed to implement PBL effectively. The practical examples, engaging activities, and supportive environment fostered by both trainers were invaluable. This course is a game-changer for educators ready to make learning more relevant and impactful. *(Participant, personal communication, 2025)*

Participants also commented on the relevance and adaptability of the course framework:

> The PBL 2.0 12 Shifts course is perfectly tailored for teachers who want to move beyond traditional classroom practices and emphasize student choice in demonstrating knowledge. The shifts serve as a guide, helping teachers understand how students use their knowledge to benefit themselves while learning critical life skills often not covered by academic standards. Recognizing that every teacher has a unique style, the course is adaptable, enabling educators to integrate practices that best suit their preferences. *(Participant, personal communication, 2025)*

Feedback further highlighted the mentorship and leadership qualities demonstrated by the facilitators:

> Working with Kyle was not only educational but also inspiring, as his passion for teaching shone through in every interaction. Mari likewise proved to be an exceptional mentor throughout our training. Her leadership style fosters innovation and creativity, empowering her team to explore new ideas and approaches. She goes above and beyond to provide support and encouragement, acting as a guiding light for everyone under her mentorship. Mari's unwavering dedication and positive attitude have been instrumental in our growth and success during the course. *(Participant, personal communication, 2025)*

Teacher Reflections on Transitioning to Project-Based Learning (PBL). Several educators shared their experiences of transitioning to Project-Based Learning (PBL) and described significant pedagogical shifts in their teaching practices. According to Teacher A (personal communication, April 15, 2025), transitioning to a PBL approach required substantial changes in lesson planning and assessment practices:

> "I've developed interdisciplinary project frameworks that integrate core subjects like ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science. Rather than relying on traditional lectures, I now act as a facilitator, guiding students through inquiry-based and real-world problem-solving tasks. This has significantly increased student engagement and understanding."

Teacher B (personal communication, April 16, 2025) emphasized the transformation in classroom dynamics and student ownership:

> "My curriculum has become far more flexible, with projects that span multiple subjects and incorporate student voice and choice. Anchor charts have become a staple in our classroom to

scaffold learning. Students are constantly involved in meaningful conversations, brainstorming sessions, and collaborative presentations. I've seen a genuine spark ignite in my students—a new enthusiasm for learning that's driven by their interests."

Teacher C (personal communication, April 20, 2025) reflected on the shift in assessment practices:

> "I've moved away from traditional testing toward performance-based assessments using rubrics and student presentations. This allows me to evaluate not just content knowledge, but also critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. It's a more holistic way to understand student growth."

Teacher D (personal communication, April 22, 2025) highlighted how PBL enables more authentic and relevant language instruction:

> "In the past, I taught grammar in isolation, which made it hard for students to connect with the material. Now, grammar is embedded into meaningful projects—like when students write persuasive letters, they naturally engage with sentence structure, punctuation, and editing. It's contextualized and purposeful."

Teacher E (personal communication, April 25, 2025) noted the personalized learning benefits of PBL:

> "PBL has given my students more voice and choice in their learning. They're engaging in experiences that reflect their strengths, interests, and needs. This shift has not only improved academic outcomes but also supported social-emotional development and a deeper connection to the learning process."

One teacher provided a particularly vivid reflection on the impact of PBL on both their own practice and their classroom community. Teacher F (personal communication, May 2, 2024) shared:

> "I learned to trust the process and let go. I was able to sit back and watch it unfold. Sometimes I found myself sitting here almost with tears in my eyes, looking at them working together and getting things done. My students' motivation and engagement increased because they were in charge of it. They knew how to talk to each other. There was not a specific way of talking like they talk to me. When they had a problem, they taught each other. They recognized each of their peers' strengths, and it brought them a lot closer."

Students

Student Population. KPIS Elementary School serves students in Grades 1–5, with the majority (92.8%) being Thai nationals and 5.2% of mixed Thai heritage. Only 2% are foreign nationals, and nearly all students are English language learners (ELLs). This demographic profile underscores the importance of instructional approaches that support second language acquisition. Research by Rohmah, Rosyidha, and Saputri (2024) affirms that Project-Based Learning (PBL), with its emphasis on real-world engagement and student-centered collaboration, is particularly effective for ELLs. PBL fosters communicative competence,

increases motivation, and provides authentic opportunities for language use through group work which contributes to both academic and social development.

Student Enrollment Trends. One of the key strategic goals in transforming the elementary division at KPIS was to increase student enrollment and retention. To achieve this, a long-term framework was developed focusing on strengthening school operations, promoting the school's distinctive blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) model, and enhancing the relevance of learning experiences and community engagement.

During admissions interviews, many new families cited the school's progressive educational approach and hands-on PBL model ,alongside convenient location and peer recommendations, as key reasons for enrollment. Once operational systems were firmly established, efforts focused on capacity-building through professional development and maintaining high standards of teaching and learning. These measures aimed to support retention by fostering both academic excellence and community cohesion.

From 2017 to 2020, prior to the implementation of the PBL model, student enrollment remained relatively stable, ranging from 168 to 193 students. Following the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–2021, significant growth occurred in subsequent years. As shown in Figure 37, enrollment increased from 192 students in 2021–2022 to 297 students in 2023–2024—a 76.8% growth compared to pre-pandemic figures. This expansion coincided with the school-wide implementation of PBL and related operational reforms.

The growth was most pronounced in the lower elementary grades. Grade 1 enrollment rose from 32 students in 2017–2018 to 75 students in 2023–2024, prompting the addition of new cohorts in response to demand. Similarly, Grade 2 enrollment increased from 32 to 75 students in the same period. Upper elementary grades also experienced steady growth, with Grades 3–5 now serving approximately 50 students each. Grade 6 enrollment remained more variable due to students transitioning to other middle schools, which reflects common community patterns.

While these trends suggest that the PBL model has positively influenced enrollment and retention, they also highlight infrastructure limitations. With several grade levels now at full capacity and some students placed on waitlists, further growth will require strategic reallocation of classroom space and shared facilities. Given that the elementary division constitutes the school's largest revenue stream, addressing these constraints is critical for sustainable development.

Figure 37

Elementary School Enrollment and Retention Trends from 2017–2024

Total number of students in ES per grade level							MS
	17-18	32	32	33	36	35	23
	18-19	47	35	40	34	37	32
	19-20	39	38	31	42	31	35
Covid 20-21 so skipping this year							
	21-22	42	46	34	35	35	41
	22-23	66	46	50	36	39	31
	23-24	75	75	50	50	47	37

ES student retention numbers			
		17-18	168
		18-19	193
		19-20	181
Covid 20-21 so skipping this year			
		21-22	192
		22-23	237
		23-24	297

Note. The top panel shows the number of students per grade level (G1–G6) for each academic year, excluding 2020–2021 due to COVID-19. The bottom panel displays the total number of students retained in ES each year. Notable increases in enrollment are observed post-COVID, particularly in the years 2022–2024.

Student Learning Data and Engagement. Transitioning students from traditional assessments to project-based learning (PBL) was met with enthusiasm, though building the skills for self-directed learning such as collaboration, critical thinking, and resilience proved more complex. Becoming a self-directed learner requires time, structured opportunities, and intentional guidance. In line with constructivist theory, knowledge is actively constructed, not passively received, and teachers serve as facilitators in this process (Prettyman et al., 2012). As principal, I regularly reinforced student agency, encouraging learners to see themselves as co-designers of their educational journey.

Attendance and punctuality initially posed challenges due to local cultural norms, where tardiness was not widely viewed as problematic. To address this, the school introduced targeted strategies, including quarterly recognition, “on-time” campaigns, and redesigned morning assemblies featuring student awards and engaging activities. These efforts led to measurable improvements: attendance rose from 83% to 89% and punctuality improved by 8% over a three-year period. These results contributed to a stronger culture of accountability and engagement.

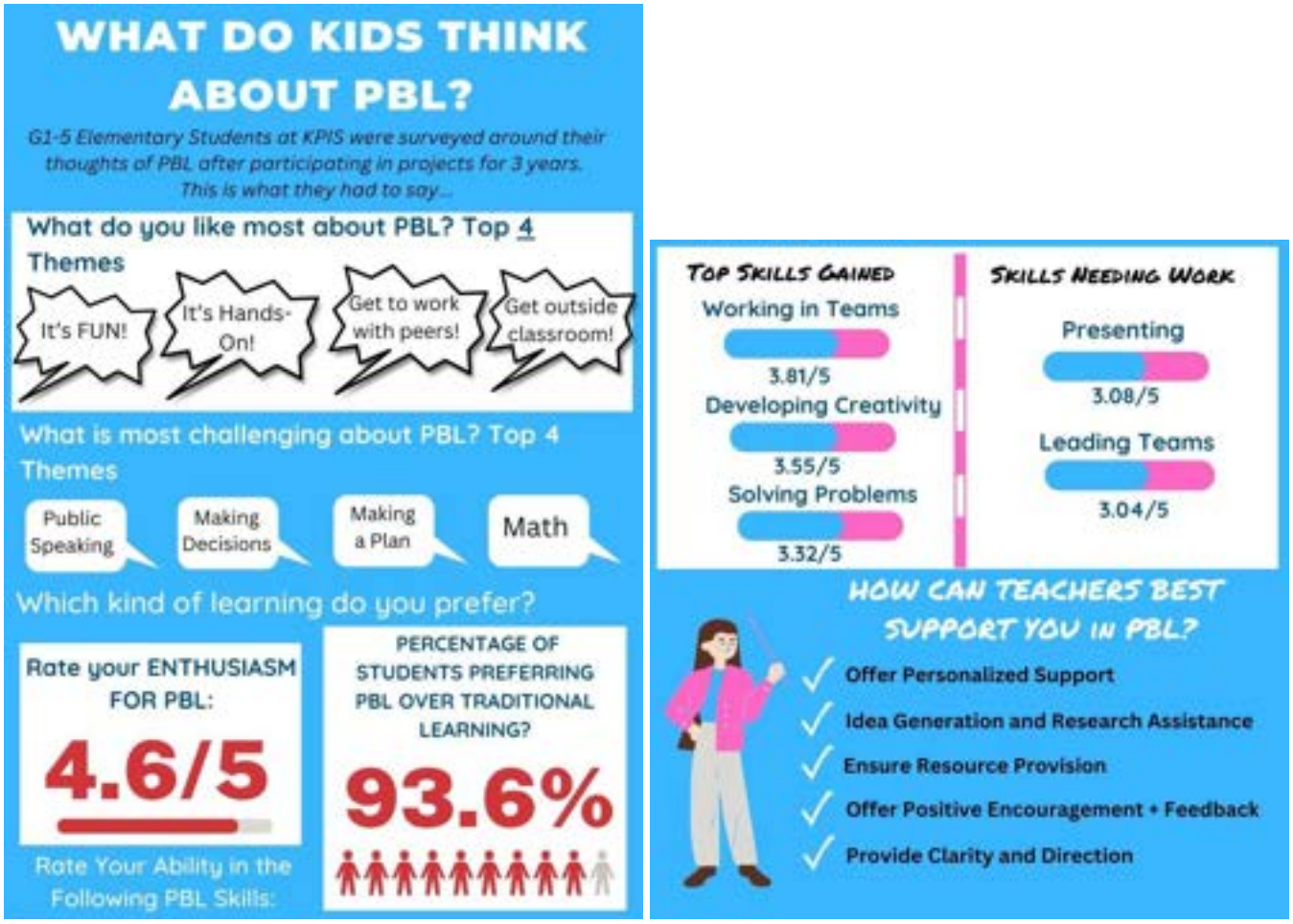
To evaluate the impact of PBL on student experiences, age-appropriate surveys and interviews were conducted. Findings revealed high levels of enthusiasm, with students rating their overall PBL experience at 4.6 out of 5, and 93.6% expressing a preference for PBL over traditional learning methods. Students frequently described PBL as "fun," "hands-on," and collaborative, and they appreciated opportunities to learn beyond the classroom setting.

Students also reported significant skill development. Teamwork was rated highest (3.81/5), followed by creativity (3.55/5) and problem-solving (3.32/5), supporting claims that PBL fosters essential 21st-century competencies. Lower scores were reported for presentation (3.08/5) and leadership skills (3.04/5), highlighting areas for targeted instructional support. These findings suggest that while PBL builds key soft skills, students benefit most when autonomy is balanced with structured guidance.

When asked how teachers could best support them, students emphasized personalized feedback, help with idea generation and research, resource access, and positive encouragement. These responses reinforce the need for thoughtful scaffolding to support learners' independence and success within PBL contexts.

Figure 38

Elementary Student Perspectives on Project-Based Learning (PBL) at KPIS



Note: This figure summarizes student feedback after three years of PBL implementation across Grades 1–5. The top panel highlights what students enjoyed most and found most challenging about PBL. Survey data show high enthusiasm (4.6/5 average rating), with 93.6% of students preferring PBL over traditional learning. Skills most improved were teamwork (3.81), creativity (3.55), and problem-solving (3.32). Areas needing further support included presenting (3.08) and leading teams (3.04). Students emphasized the need for personalized support, idea generation assistance, and clear instructional guidance.

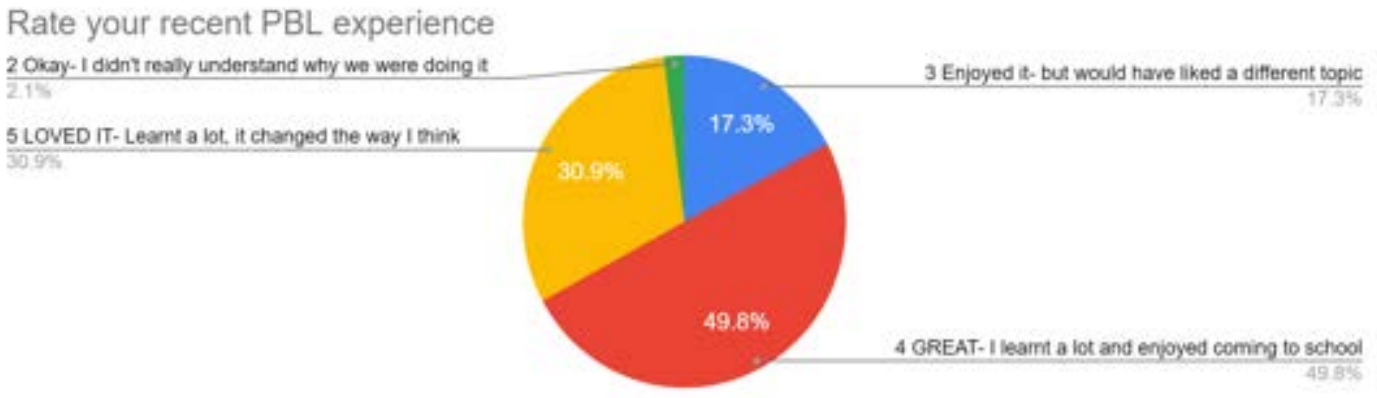
After their recent PBL I asked elementary students to rate their most recent PBL experience. The majority of students responded very positively with 49.8% of students selected “4 - GREAT: I learnt a lot and enjoyed coming to school”, suggesting that nearly half of the student body found PBL not only educationally valuable but also emotionally engaging. This reinforces the idea that PBL can enhance students' overall school experience, making learning more enjoyable and relevant. We had 30.9% who chose “5 - LOVED IT: Learned a lot, it changed the way I think”, indicating a profound cognitive and affective impact. These students experienced a transformational shift in their thinking, which is a key aim of authentic, student-centered learning experiences like PBL. Together, these two top ratings account for over

80% of all responses, strongly confirming that PBL is not only well-received but also perceived as impactful in terms of both knowledge acquisition and student well-being.

On the other hand 17.3% of students selected “3 - Enjoyed it, but would have liked a different topic”. While these students still found value in the PBL experience, their responses suggest the importance of topic choice and student voice in designing projects. This feedback highlights an area of growth: increasing opportunities for students to co-design projects or choose topics aligned with their interests may further boost engagement. A small minority (2.1%) chose “2 - Okay: I didn’t really understand why we were doing it”. This response may reflect a gap in the framing or clarity of project objectives. For these students, the purpose of the learning was not fully internalized. This emphasizes the need to ensure that learning goals, relevance, and success criteria are consistently communicated and understood throughout the project.

Figure 39

Student Ratings of Recent Project-Based Learning (PBL) Experiences at KPIS



Note. This pie chart illustrates students’ self-reported satisfaction with their most recent PBL experience. Nearly half (49.8%) rated their experience as "Great," indicating they learned a lot and enjoyed school. Another 30.9% rated it as “Loved it,” reporting that PBL significantly impacted their thinking. A smaller portion (17.3%) enjoyed the experience but would have preferred a different topic, while only 2.1% indicated limited understanding of the purpose of the project.

Student Testimonials. To complement the quantitative findings, qualitative data were collected through student reflections, classroom journal walls, and individual project feedback forms. These sources provided authentic insights into how students perceived the impact of Project-Based Learning (PBL) on their engagement, creativity, collaboration, and sense of agency. Thematic coding of these reflections revealed several recurring sentiments across grade levels.

A common theme was the contrast students perceived between PBL and traditional instructional methods. Many students highlighted PBL’s interactive and creative nature, with one student noting, *“PBL is more fun and creative than normal lessons. There are no wrong answers, and I feel I can share more ideas. I get to be more independent, solve problems, and figure things out on my own.”* Another student shared, *“Normal learning is just reading and writing at your desk. But in PBL, we get to move, explore, work in*

groups, and even go to different places for inspiration and information." Such reflections suggest that students found PBL more engaging and student-centered than conventional approaches.

Several students also expressed pride in contributing to meaningful, real-world projects. For example, one student described, *"I loved the Teach Me Project. Creating board games to help Thai school students learn was amazing. I felt like a real teacher, and I enjoyed working with my group."* Another student reflected on a sustainability-focused initiative: *"We made a foam sculpture about greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide. It's still on display in the library. It reminds me of the teamwork and what I learned about reducing carbon dioxide."*

Beyond engagement and creativity, students frequently discussed the development of social and emotional competencies. Leadership and collaboration were recurring themes. As one student stated, *"Through PBL, I learned how important teamwork and leadership are. We need to know how to work together to succeed."* Students also reflected on their individual strengths, frequently referencing skills such as problem-solving, focus, creativity, and empathy. For example, one student shared, *"I enjoy creating and building things, and I also work well independently."* Another reflected, *"I can explain how to do things to classmates who need help. I love writing, and I stay focused without getting distracted."* A third student noted, *"My leadership skills help me both in groups and on my own. I often come up with creative ideas to share."* Similarly, another stated, *"I think my greatest strength is being a lifelong learner. I'm always curious and excited to learn something new."*

These reflections highlight the perceived benefits of PBL in promoting holistic development. Students not only recognized academic growth but also articulated the emergence of critical 21st-century skills such as collaboration, leadership, creativity, and self-regulation. The authenticity of these voices underscores the transformative potential of PBL in cultivating engaged, empowered, and lifelong learners.

Student Development. This section examines what a nurturing school environment looks like in practice and details the structures, actions, and initiatives we implemented to promote student development. We believe that our intentional focus on student support, student agency, and student well-being contributed directly to our positive student retention and academic data results. These practices were embedded within our Project-Based Learning (PBL) framework, which aims to build student capacity through ownership, authentic learning, and opportunities for voice and choice.

As Jones, Greenberg, and Crowley (2015) assert, "Soft skills such as self-regulation, social competence, and emotional intelligence are foundational to children's success and well-being and should be treated with the same level of priority as academic achievement in school settings" (p. 61). This belief guided our approach throughout the three years of implementation. If students do not learn how to communicate, collaborate, and interact respectfully, they will face challenges becoming active, responsible members of society. PBL naturally supports soft skill development by immersing students in meaningful, real-world tasks that foster collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking (Siganporia, 2023).

Building Student Belonging. This section explores the intentional structures and initiatives implemented to support student development at KPIS, with a particular focus on fostering belonging, agency, and well-being within the Project-Based Learning (PBL) framework. These efforts were closely aligned with the school's goal of enhancing student retention and academic outcomes.

Consistent with Jones, Greenberg, and Crowley's (2015) assertion that "soft skills such as self-regulation, social competence, and emotional intelligence are foundational to children's success and well-being and should be treated with the same level of priority as academic achievement" (p. 61), the school prioritized the development of these competencies alongside academic growth. The PBL model naturally supports such development by immersing students in authentic, collaborative learning experiences that promote communication, creativity, and critical thinking (Siganporia, 2023).

A foundational aspect of this work involved cultivating a strong sense of student belonging. In the first year, the school introduced "Tuski," a student-designed elephant mascot that represented the identity of the KPIS "Tuskers." Students led the design and naming process, reinforcing agency and participation. Tuski became a symbol of community, appearing in themed outfits for various events and ultimately being gifted to graduating students as a lasting token of connection.

Student voice was further promoted through regular polls and surveys, allowing learners to influence decisions related to school events and activities. Two key community building initiatives, house team orientation days and non-academic field trips, were introduced early each year to strengthen peer relationships across grade levels. The house system, composed of mixed-grade teams, fostered cross-age bonding, while the water park trip offered students a chance to build friendships in a relaxed, inclusive setting.

These initiatives were designed not only to enhance school climate but also to nurture the whole child. By embedding these efforts within the PBL approach, the school created a developmentally supportive environment that empowered students socially, emotionally, and academically.

Figure 40

Student-Led Mascot Initiative Promoting Belonging and Community at KPIS



Note. The school mascot "Tuski" was developed through a student-led design and voting process, fostering ownership and a sense of identity within the elementary school community. Tuski appeared in event-specific costumes,such as graduation attire and traditional Thai dress, and became a meaningful symbol of inclusion. The mascot initiative exemplified how student voice and participation were embedded into school culture to promote belonging and emotional connection.

Empowering Student Agency. A key element of our nurturing environment was ensuring students had genuine opportunities for agency. For example, in Year 1, we piloted a Grade 5 graduation ceremony shaped entirely by students' input. We asked students whether they wanted a graduation, their preferred color theme, and the roles they wished to play such as MCs, performers, or ushers. Each graduate selected a quote to be read as they walked the stage. As a special touch, each student received a Tuski mascot dressed in a graduation gown with their name embroidered on the sleeve.

In Year 2, we added student-led assemblies. Teachers signed up to guide class assemblies twice a semester, and I facilitated larger, school-wide ones. Students could sign up individually, with friends, or even with family members, sharing performances, hobbies, or extracurricular achievements. This student-driven format provided a window into students' personalities and talents. The success of these assemblies inspired the launch of an annual Talent Show in Year 2, which became so popular in Year 3 that we had to limit performances to one minute to accommodate all entries.

Figure 41

KPIS Elementary Talent Show: Celebrating Student Voice, Creativity, and Confidence



Note. The annual talent show provided a platform for students to express themselves through singing, dancing, comedy, and performance art. These events supported social-emotional learning by building confidence, encouraging risk-taking in a supportive environment, and reinforcing a sense of belonging and school pride. Family involvement and peer support further strengthened community bonds and student well-being.

Celebrating Student Achievement and Growth. Feeling seen and valued is fundamental to a nurturing school climate. We celebrated student birthdays both in person and online through Seesaw, our home-school communication platform. I made it a priority to visit each birthday child's classroom with a small gift and a personal message. This simple gesture ensured every student felt special on their day.

We also created multiple recognition systems to celebrate students' academic, social, and extracurricular achievements. Peer-to-peer shoutouts were encouraged through themed boxes like "My Soar Mate" during our SOAR year. Twice a month, selected shoutouts were read during assemblies, highlighting students' kindness and empathy towards one another.

Additionally, each month we awarded "Tuski of the Month" to one student per class, recognizing them for exemplifying our school's learning pillars: lifelong learner, risk taker, problem solver, and global citizen. Students not only nominated peers but also wrote reasons for their choices, which were read aloud and shared with the recipients. Each winner received a large themed pin to wear, a certificate, and a place on the "Shining Students" wall.

Figure 42

Student Recognition Initiatives at KPIS: Promoting Positive Identity and Motivation



Note. Recognition programs such as "Tusker of the Month" and "Soaring Student" celebrated individual student growth, effort, and character. These initiatives aimed to foster intrinsic motivation, positive behavior, and a sense of belonging. Personalized certificates, tokens, and public acknowledgment reinforced students' self-worth and aligned with the school's emphasis on social-emotional learning and student agency.

At the end of each year, the Tusker Awards Ceremony gave students and families a memorable way to reflect on academic achievements and celebrate individual growth. This event included performances by each class and awards not only for academics but also for unique personality traits and social contributions. Every child was recognized, reinforcing the belief that all students are talented in different ways.

Student Wellbeing. Part of our holistic approach included intentional time for social-emotional development. We embedded character-building and community-building activities into the weekly schedule through a dedicated "Community Block." During this block, teachers facilitated lessons and reflective activities focused on empathy, self-regulation, and respect. For example, students explored how their actions impacted others through drawing activities or created self-reflection portraits showing how they perceived themselves and how classmates described them.

Community Block time was also used to revisit class agreements, co-constructed expectations for behavior, ensuring students stayed mindful of shared values throughout the year.

Figure 43

Community Block Practices Supporting Student Values and Behavioral Expectations



Note. Community Block time was used to revisit class agreements, co-construct behavioral expectations, and promote shared values. Activities included team-building exercises, student-created artwork reflecting classroom norms, and collaboratively developed behavior contracts. These practices helped students remain accountable to their community and reinforced positive classroom culture throughout the year.

Our discipline philosophy followed the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) framework, emphasizing proactive strategies and tiered supports. Teachers met regularly to discuss individual student cases, develop intervention strategies, and share what worked. We consistently reinforced the idea that we were addressing behavior, not the student's character. Tools such as behavioral charts and PBIS trackers, customized by teachers to align with our standards-based grading system, provided students with clear feedback and goals.

Promoting Inclusion and Cultural Understanding. Our student population was predominantly Thai, with a significant proportion of Chinese and other international students. Fostering an inclusive community meant celebrating each student's cultural identity. We organized events around Thai holidays, Chinese New Year, and Western celebrations such as Halloween and Christmas. Families played an active role in these festivities. Below is examples of when some parents performed traditional dances or joined fashion shows during cultural events.

It was important for our school and families to give students a strong international education while maintaining their traditional values. Therefore, we mainly focused on celebrating Thai and Chinese values, cultural events, and traditions, and we organised multiple activities and experiences to foster these within our students. These opportunities helped our students develop pride in their heritage and a deeper understanding of their own cultural identity. Figure 44 illustrates how cultural celebrations and family engagement were central to our efforts to promote student identity and belonging.

Figure 44

Cultural Celebrations Promoting Heritage, Inclusion, and Family Engagement at KPIS



Note. These images showcase school events such as Chinese dumpling making, Loy Krathong festivities, and a Chinese New Year performance. Cultural celebrations were intentionally designed to honor students' backgrounds, strengthen school–family partnerships, and support students in developing pride in their heritage within an inclusive, internationally minded school environment.

Moving forward, this approach should be expanded to include more nationalities and international contexts to widen students' understanding of the world and other cultures. Introducing events such as an International Day can provide students with meaningful experiences to learn about global diversity, appreciate differences, and cultivate respect for all communities.

Supporting Student Growth. Goal setting was integrated into our culture from the start of each academic year. During our orientation, I introduced the annual theme, such as our Year 2 theme SHINE, and guided students to set personal goals that aligned with this theme. For example, each student received a lightbulb cutout on which they wrote how they planned to "shine" that year. These were displayed on a SHINE Wall and revisited throughout the year.

Figure 45

Student Goal-Setting Display: SHINE Wall at KPIS Elementary

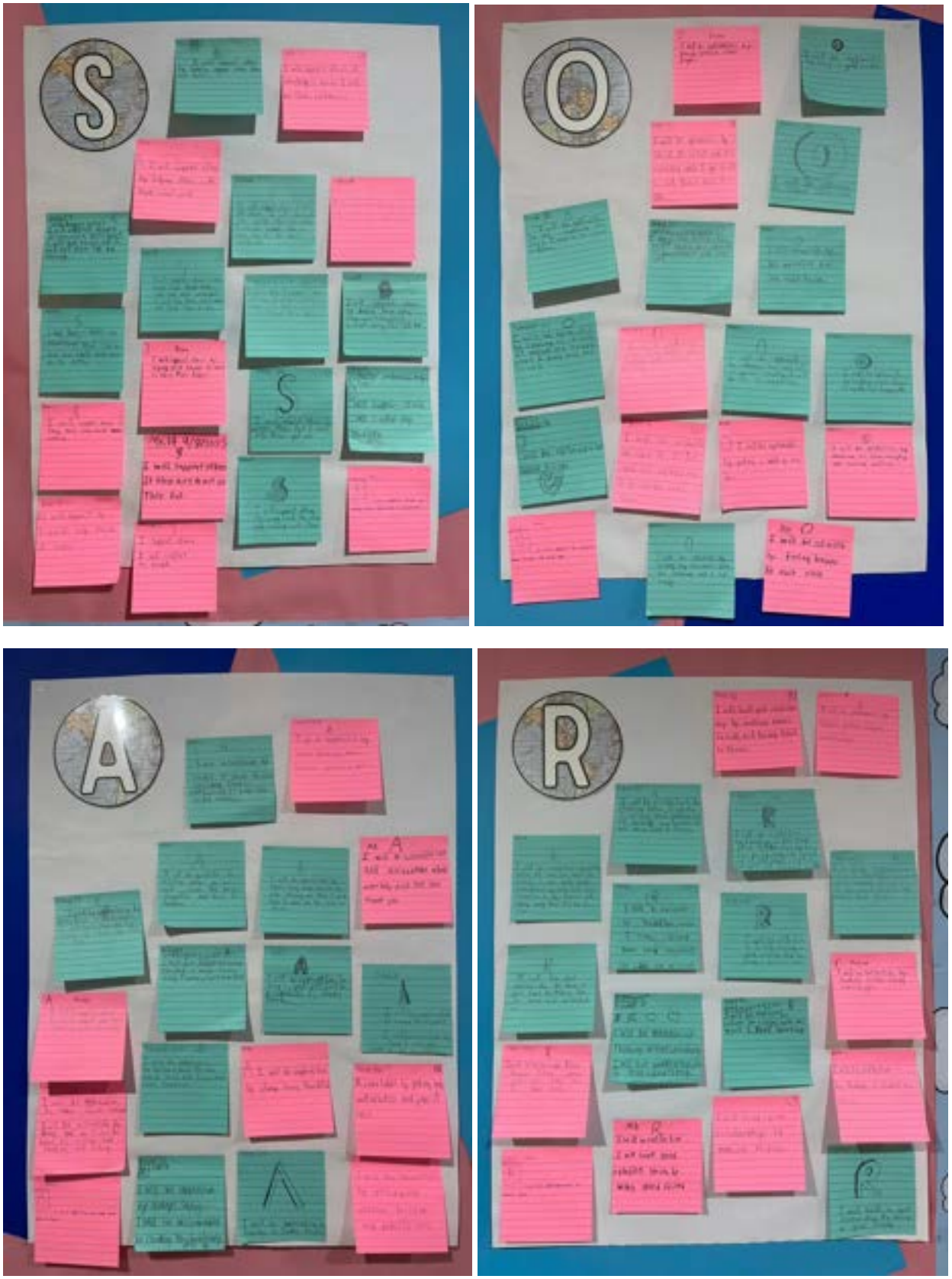


Note. As part of the school's annual orientation, students engaged in goal-setting aligned with the theme "SHINE." Each student wrote a personal goal on a lightbulb cutout describing how they intended to shine that year. These were displayed on a communal SHINE Wall, reinforcing self-reflection, motivation, and a growth-oriented school culture.

In their homeroom classes, teachers began the year by co-creating class goals aligned with the annual school theme I provided. For example, in Year 3, which focused on our “SOAR” theme, Grade 3 students each developed their own individual action plans outlining how they would contribute to achieving the class goals. These goals and plans remained displayed in the classroom throughout the year and were revisited at the end of the year when students reflected on their progress.

Figure 46

SOAR-Themed Class Goal Setting and Student Action Plans in Grade 3



Note. In alignment with the Year 3 schoolwide theme "SOAR," Grade 3 students collaborated to co-create class goals and developed personal action plans for how they would contribute. These student-written commitments were displayed throughout the year and revisited during end-of-year reflections, reinforcing accountability, self-regulation, and collective ownership of classroom culture.

Academic growth goals were developed after students' initial MAP testing session. Students wrote clear, actionable plans for improving in core subjects and could add social or soft skill goals. Teachers supported students in creating age-appropriate plans and facilitated reflection after the second MAP session. Our "Growth Parade" gave students a chance to share their progress with peers and receive supportive feedback before presenting their growth goals to families at student-led conferences.

We encouraged students to be visionaries through projects like Grade 5 vision boards, where students explored their future aspirations. The success of this initiative inspired the launch of Career Day in Year 3.

For Career Day students researched professions, interviewed professionals, and presented their career ideas. Families participated through a costume competition, strengthening the home-school partnership and reinforcing the idea that each child can shape their own future.

Figure 47

Career Day: Exploring Future Pathways Through Student-Led Inquiry and Family Involvement



Note. Students explored future careers through research, interviews, and presentations. Families supported the initiative by helping children dress in costumes representing their chosen professions. This event strengthened home–school connections and encouraged students to envision and take ownership of their future aspirations.

Student Challenge Projects. In addition to our class and group projects, we wanted to nurture students' unique individual interests by offering challenge projects for those eager to take on extra opportunities. I believe in holistic education and wanted to provide diverse avenues for students to showcase their knowledge and passions in creative ways. To support this vision, we introduced the KPIS Challenge Site in Year 2, a platform where students could engage in "out of the box" challenges. I shared this idea with two of our most innovative teachers, who embraced and developed it into a vibrant program. It was inspiring to watch the concept come to life and to see how empowered teachers can lead meaningful initiatives.

One highlight was the Science Challenge, launched at the same time as our schoolwide Science Fair, designed to extend and deepen students' engagement with scientific inquiry. Students were tasked with

designing their own science experiments, which were then judged by a panel, while the entire school community participated by viewing the experiments and casting their “student choice” votes. The response was overwhelming, with so many participants that we organized separate competitions for lower and upper elementary levels. Other creative challenges included designing math games, vlogging about favorite places, and producing a zine centered on our school values, among others.

Figure 48

Student Science Challenge: Promoting Inquiry, Creativity, and Community Engagement











Note. Launched alongside the schoolwide Science Fair, the Science Challenge invited students to design their own experiments using the scientific method. Projects were judged by a panel and voted on by peers in a "student choice" format. The high level of participation led to separate divisions for lower and upper elementary. The challenge extended students' inquiry skills and built enthusiasm for STEM learning across the school community.

Student Health and Safety. Student development includes promoting physical health and safety awareness. Monthly Sports Fridays and a house system encouraged students to participate in diverse sports, fostering teamwork and school spirit. House points were awarded for sports, good behavior, and attendance, culminating in an annual Sports Day and house medal ceremony.

Students also learned essential life skills such as CPR through sessions led by professionals and participated in healthy eating design competitions as part of our commitment to well-being. These events, coupled with broader initiatives in our Design curriculum, empowered students to make healthier lifestyle choices

Figure 49

Promoting Student Health, Safety, and Well-Being at KPIS



Note. The school promoted holistic student development through health and safety initiatives including CPR training, house-based sports competitions, and healthy eating design challenges. These programs aimed to build essential life skills, foster school spirit, and encourage students to make informed, healthy lifestyle choices.

Parents

Recognizing parents as essential partners in the educational process, the school adopted a multi-tiered approach to building understanding and trust in the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model. From the outset, the leadership team emphasized transparency and collaboration to secure parent buy-in and cultivate a shared vision for student success.

During the first year of implementation, parents expressed concerns regarding academic alignment, assessment, and student outcomes. To address these concerns, the school hosted introductory parent sessions that highlighted the 21st-century skills central to PBL such as critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving. A parent "hackathon" workshop allowed families to experience PBL firsthand, leading to greater appreciation of the approach. One parent described the experience as "a very eye-opening approach to learning."

A structured communication and engagement plan was established to sustain parental involvement. Prior to each project cycle, families received project summary documents detailing objectives, learning outcomes, and curriculum links. These were accompanied by expert sign-up sheets inviting parents or community members to contribute professional insights. While initial participation was limited, engagement increased significantly by Years 2 and 3 as families observed the model's positive impact on student motivation and learning.

Student-Led Conferences (SLCs) were also introduced during the first year, giving students the opportunity to present their learning journeys to parents. These conferences were well-received and further strengthened home–school connections. Classrooms featured “learning journey walls” to visually track project progress, making student learning transparent and accessible to families.

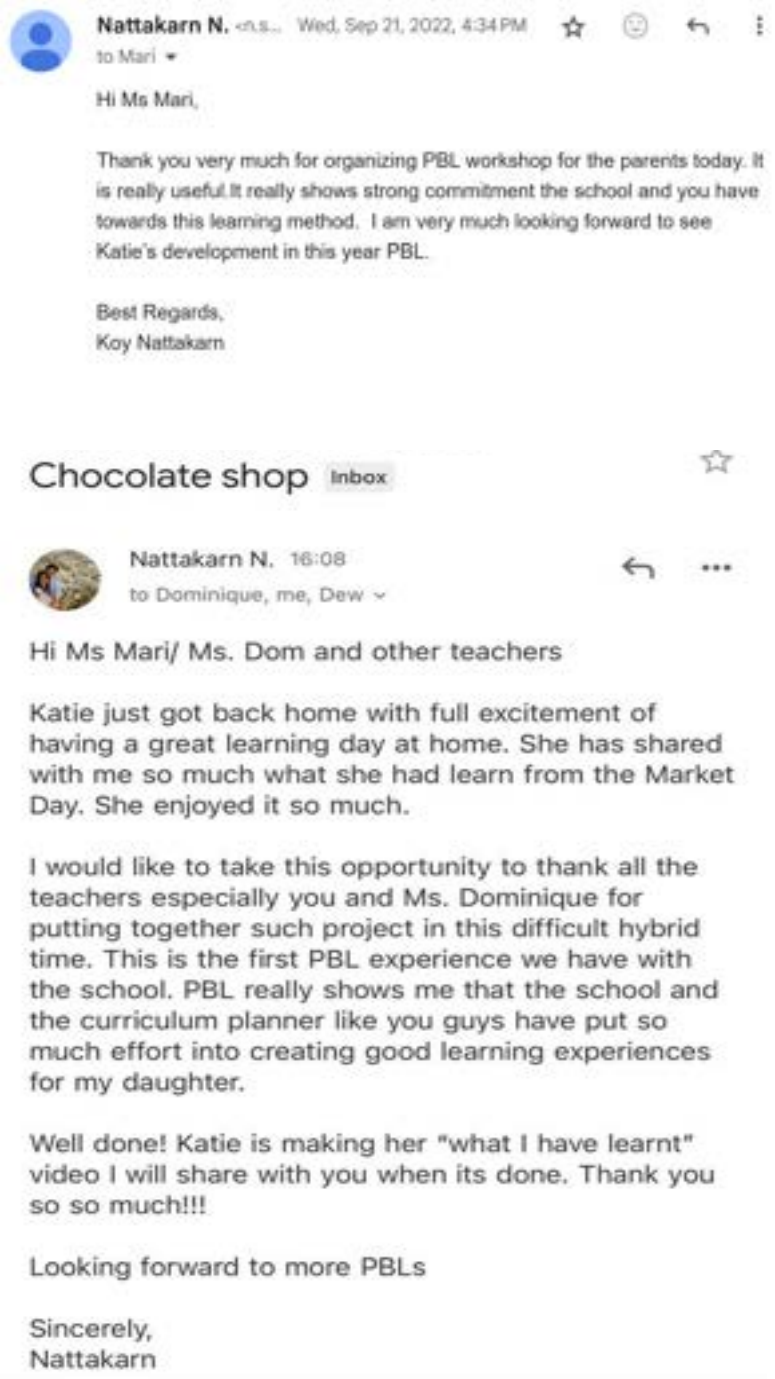
In Year 2, parent involvement expanded through hands-on participation in projects, such as planting seedlings during the School Garden Project and collaborating in-class on final products. The school also launched PBL Showcasing Celebrations, where families viewed student presentations and products at the conclusion of each project cycle. These events fostered community pride and promoted a culture of peer learning and achievement.

By Year 3, the school introduced parent training workshops to deepen understanding and support at home. These sessions provided practical strategies, examples of past projects, and tips for encouraging student ownership. Additional workshops were offered on Social Emotional Learning (SEL), equipping parents with tools to support their children’s emotional development. Sessions were held at multiple times to ensure accessibility and were consistently well-attended.

Collectively, these engagement strategies ranging from early orientation and communication to workshops, showcases, and direct project involvement contributed to a robust, inclusive school community built on strong home–school partnerships and shared investment in student growth.

Figure 50

Parent Feedback on the PBL Experience and Home–School Partnership



Nattakarn N. <n.s... Wed, Sep 21, 2022, 4:34 PM
to Mari

Hi Ms Mari,

Thank you very much for organizing PBL workshop for the parents today. It is really useful.It really shows strong commitment the school and you have towards this learning method. I am very much looking forward to see Katie's development in this year PBL.

Best Regards,
Koy Nattakarn

Chocolate shop Inbox

Nattakarn N. 16:08
to Dominique, me, Dew

Hi Ms Mari/ Ms. Dom and other teachers

Katie just got back home with full excitement of having a great learning day at home. She has shared with me so much what she had learn from the Market Day. She enjoyed it so much.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the teachers especially you and Ms. Dominique for putting together such project in this difficult hybrid time. This is the first PBL experience we have with the school. PBL really shows me that the school and the curriculum planner like you guys have put so much effort into creating good learning experiences for my daughter.

Well done! Katie is making her "what I have learnt" video I will share with you when its done. Thank you so so much!!!

Looking forward to more PBLs

Sincerely,
Nattakarn

Note. These excerpts from parent emails illustrate initial reactions to the PBL model and its impact on student learning and engagement. The first email reflects appreciation for the introductory parent workshop, while the second conveys enthusiasm following the child's participation in a hybrid learning project. Both highlight increased parental trust and recognition of the school's commitment to innovative, student-centered education.

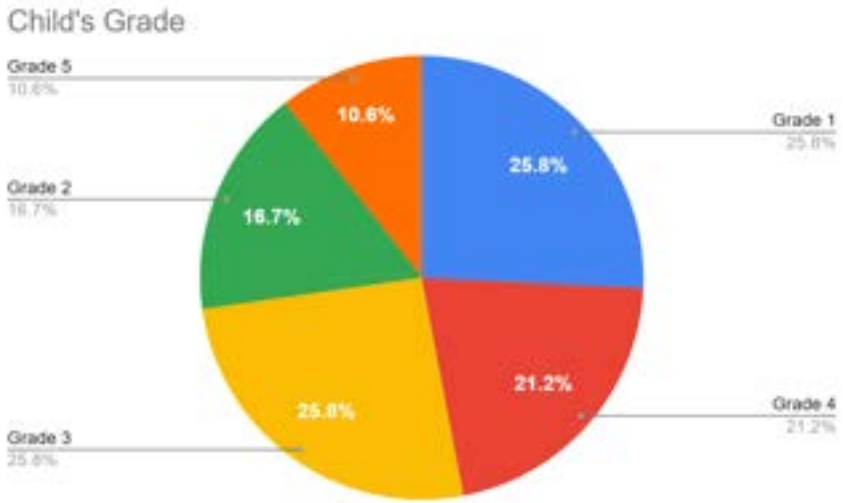
Parent Data & Perception. In the third year of implementation, the school conducted a formal survey to gather parent feedback on the blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) model. While informal input had been collected through coffee mornings and accreditation visits in Years 1 and 2, this survey aimed to

generate concrete evidence regarding parent satisfaction, perceptions of learning impact, and the influence of PBL on school retention.

The survey revealed strong engagement from families in lower elementary, with 68.3% of responses coming from parents of students in Grades 1–3. Grade 1 and Grade 3 parents each accounted for 25.8%, while Grade 2 contributed 16.7%. This trend suggests that parents are particularly involved in feedback processes during early and transitional years of schooling. In contrast, responses from Grades 4 and 5 were lower, possibly reflecting a shift toward more informal communication as relationships with the school mature.

Figure 51

Distribution of Parent Respondents by Child's Grade Level



Note. This chart represents the grade levels of students whose parents participated in PBL-related surveys or feedback activities. The highest participation came from families of Grade 1 and Grade 3 students (each 25.8%), followed by Grade 4 (21.2%), Grade 2 (16.7%), and Grade 5 (10.6%). This distribution reflects broad representation across elementary grade levels.

Parent perceptions of the PBL model were overwhelmingly positive. As shown in the survey results, 62.1% of parents reported that they "love" the approach and 36.4% said they "like" it, resulting in a 98.5% positive approval rate. Only 1.5% expressed a preference for traditional methods. These findings validate the school's pedagogical direction, highlighting strong parent appreciation for student-centered, experiential learning.

Figure 52

Parent Perceptions of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) Approach

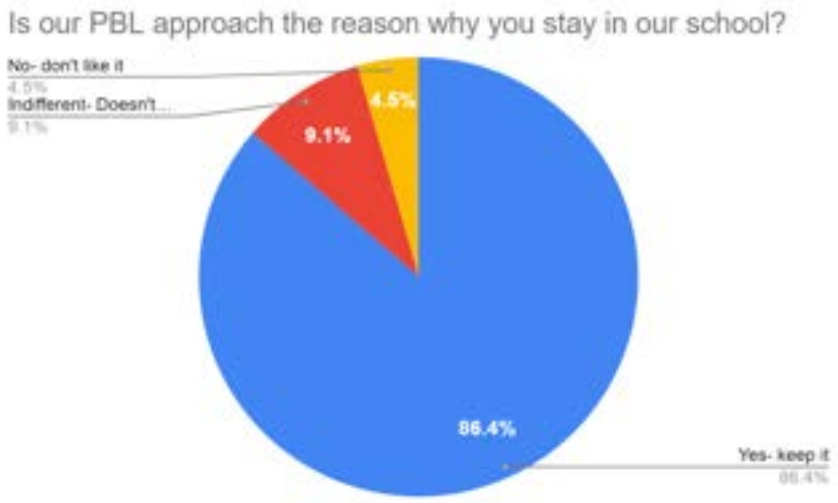


Note. The majority of parents expressed strong approval of the PBL model, with 62.1% reporting they "love it" and 36.4% indicating they "like it." Only 1.5% of respondents preferred traditional methods. These results reflect a high level of parent satisfaction and support for the school's implementation of Project-Based Learning.

When asked whether PBL influenced their decision to remain at the school, 86.4% of parents confirmed that it was a primary reason for staying. An additional 9.1% were neutral, and only 4.5% indicated that they did not favor the model. These results emphasize that the PBL approach is not only widely accepted but also a key driver of parent loyalty and student retention.

Figure 53

Parent Perspectives on PBL as a Factor in School Retention



Note. A substantial majority (86.4%) of parents indicated that the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model was a key reason they chose to remain at the school. An additional 9.1% were indifferent, while only 4.5% reported dissatisfaction with the approach. These findings underscore the significant role PBL plays in fostering parent loyalty and retention.

These data reinforce the conclusion that the blended PBL model has had a positive and measurable impact on parent satisfaction and school community trust. As parent confidence in the learning model has grown, so too has their investment in the broader school experience which supports the school's efforts to build a strong culture of engagement, partnership, and academic innovation.

When considered alongside the steady increase in enrollment over the past three years, these parent data suggest a strong correlation between the implementation of the blended PBL model and the school's growth and retention outcomes. Combined with student performance trends and qualitative feedback from both students and teachers, parent perceptions provide compelling evidence of the model's effectiveness in creating a thriving, future-ready learning environment.

In open-ended survey responses, parents consistently identified several developmental and academic benefits of the PBL model. A recurring theme was the promotion of student voice and agency—parents appreciated that their children could express themselves, apply their talents, and take ownership of their learning. Collaboration was also emphasized, with many parents noting growth in teamwork, peer support, and shared presentations. The hands-on, experiential nature of PBL was frequently cited as helping students connect academic content with real-world application. Additionally, parents highlighted increased motivation, creativity, and the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and social-emotional competencies such as empathy and self-awareness. These responses suggest that parents view PBL as a holistic approach that fosters both cognitive and emotional growth.

The data support the conclusion that the blended PBL model has positively impacted family satisfaction and school community trust. As parent confidence in the learning model has grown, so too has their investment in the broader school experience—supporting the school's efforts to build a strong culture of engagement, partnership, and academic innovation.

Parent Recruitment and Orientation. Project-Based Learning (PBL) played a central role in student recruitment and parent onboarding. At education fairs, PBL showcase videos served as an effective hook to attract interest and initiate conversations with prospective families. During school interviews, parents were given grade-specific PBL booklets featuring student work samples aligned with their child's current year level. This tangible evidence helped parents envision what their child could have accomplished in a PBL environment.

In interviews, leadership began by explaining the school's approach and the rationale behind PBL as a more meaningful, student-centered learning experience. Upon enrollment, families were invited to attend PBL orientation sessions (described earlier), which further deepened their understanding and trust in the model.

Community Partners

Community partnerships played a critical role in enhancing the authenticity, relevance, and impact of student learning experiences within the school's blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) framework. These partnerships, both internal and external, enriched projects by providing real-world expertise, fostering student agency, and reinforcing academic, social-emotional, and civic competencies.

Internal Partnerships. Internal partnership**s** included teachers, librarians, counselors, technology specialists, and instructional coaches who collaborated across disciplines to align projects with curricular goals. Even support staff were meaningfully includedsuch as one student-led conference practice session that featured a member of the custodial team as a guest audience, demonstrating the school's inclusive community culture.

External Partnerships. External partnerships ranged from local businesses and NGOs to international organizations. These collaborations empowered students to engage with real-world issues and audiences, develop solutions, and take action. Trust-building and sustained communication were essential to forming these partnerships, which contributed to a strong foundation for future collaboration.

Project Partnership Highlights. In Grade 2, students engaged in an Entrepreneurship and Economics Project to explore fundamental economic concepts such as goods and services, producers and consumers, wants and needs, and financial literacy. With the guidance of their design and technology teachers, students developed their own chocolate bar brands and organized a Market Day event. They raised 20,000 baht which were donated to the Children Community Foundation (CCF), teaching students the value of social responsibility alongside practical business and teamwork skills.

Figure 54

Grade 2 Market Day: Student-Created Chocolate Bar Products



Note. Students applied economic and design concepts by creating and marketing their own chocolate bars. Proceeds supported the Community Children Foundation, reinforcing financial literacy, collaboration, and social responsibility.

Grade 4 students undertook a Water Access and Advocacy Project inspired by the novel *A Long Walk to Water*. Partnering with the Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation (CWEFT), students investigated water scarcity challenges and developed advocacy campaigns, including posters, fundraising trackers, and digital outreach efforts. Their campaign culminated in presentations to representatives from major corporations such as Pepsi and Tesco Lotus, ultimately raising 225,000 baht to support clean water access in Northern Thailand. The project cultivated essential skills in public speaking, advocacy, campaign strategy, and cross-sector collaboration.

Figure 55

Grade 4 Clean Water Campaign: Student Presentations and Community Engagement



Note. The students partnered with CWEFT and raised 225,000 baht to support clean water initiatives in Northern Thailand. Activities included public presentations, social media campaigns, corporate outreach, and a culminating "dunk the principal" celebration.

Another Grade 2 initiative The Animal Welfare Campaign centered on advocacy for homeless pets and the "adopt, don't shop" message. Students partnered with Catsanova Cats Café in Bangkok and created informative leaflets advocating for pet adoption. Two parent journalists facilitated a public speaking workshop to prepare students for presenting their materials. The project emphasized empathy, civic engagement, research, and persuasive communication.

Figure 56

Grade 2 Cat Café PBL Experience: Literacy, Empathy, and Real-World Connections



Note. Students researched pet adoption, created advocacy materials, and were mentored by parent journalists to develop presentation skills. The project promoted empathy, communication, and civic responsibility.

In Grade 1, the Tuski Garden Sustainability Project involved transforming an unused plot of land beside the school into a vibrant green space. Supported by staff, parents, and faculty experts, students integrated math, science, social studies, and language arts to plan and execute their vision. This project empowered even the youngest learners to take environmental action while developing responsibility, collaboration, and pride in their contributions.

Figure 57

Grade 1 Recycled Garden PBL: Upcycling for Environmental Awareness



Note. Students transformed an unused space into a vibrant garden through interdisciplinary learning and collaboration with teachers and parents. The project promoted environmental stewardship, creativity, and global citizenship.

Finally, a Grade 5 class spearheaded a Food Waste Reduction Project focused on composting and sustainability. In partnership with Bangkok Rooftop Farming, students participated in hands-on learning experiences around urban agriculture and composting. They launched a school-wide composting initiative, adding compost bins to the Tuski Garden and hosting workshops for younger students. The project fostered leadership, environmental literacy, data analysis, and community action.

Figure 58

Grade 5 Organic Farming and Composting Project: Experiential Environmental Learning



Note. Students visited a rooftop composting facility, launched a composting system at school, and facilitated sustainability workshops for younger students. The project developed leadership, environmental literacy, and systems thinking.

Sustaining Partnerships. To maintain and strengthen these collaborations, the school created a structured community partner tracking document. This tool captures key information on each partnership, including organization names, contact persons, areas of collaboration, and project outcomes to supporting future planning and sustained engagement.

4.3 Structures, Curriculum and Programs

Structures

Schedules. In traditional schools, daily schedules typically follow fixed periods or blocks allocated to specific subjects, and teachers are expected to deliver instruction strictly within these times. In contrast,

Project-Based Learning (PBL) schools aim to integrate core subjects into broader, interdisciplinary project blocks, allowing students to work on different aspects of their projects at various points throughout the day. This flexible, merged scheduling approach enables students to move naturally between research, inquiry, and creation phases based on their chosen topics and their team's progress within the project cycle.

During our first year of PBL implementation, we were mindful of the need to build parental understanding and trust in this shift. Many parents initially associated "projects" with the traditional, teacher-led assignments they experienced in school (where students produced identical outputs such as posters) rather than with authentic, student-driven learning. Therefore, we maintained a more conventional schedule to help families gradually understand transdisciplinary education and the depth of true PBL, while ensuring visible structure during the transition year.

To support our significant population of English Additional Language (EAL) students, we kept core subjects visible on the timetable. Language Arts (LA) remained in its designated time slots to align with our push-in and pull-out EAL program, ensuring that EAL teachers could deliver explicit language instruction and equip students with the vocabulary and communication skills needed for inquiry and research. In contrast, scheduled Science, Social Studies, and Math periods gave teachers the flexibility to address whichever elements of the project required focused work at that time. Specialist classes remained in their original scheduled times to maintain consistency. EAL teachers joined each class for two blocks per day: one for targeted LA instruction and one within the project block to scaffold language development and support students' access to the project content alongside their peers.

The next step would be to transition toward a more authentic PBL schedule. This would start each day with goal-setting, class meetings, and social-emotional learning to build community and support self-management skills. The remainder of the day would be dedicated primarily to project blocks, with daily opportunities for explicit language and math instruction embedded within the project context. Reflection and feedback time would be built into support continuous improvement and student ownership of learning. Specialist blocks would become more flexible, redefined as collaborative support time in which specialist teachers rotate according to project needs, ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant, connected, and truly transdisciplinary.

Project Timeline Structures. Each academic year at KPIS is structured around four official transdisciplinary projects, one per quarter, with each having a distinct subject-area emphasis. These projects are designed to align with school events and promote interdisciplinary collaboration.

In Quarter 1, the focus is on Social Studies, with projects aimed at building community awareness and identity. Quarter 2 centers on Science, coinciding with the school's annual Science Fair, and typically includes inquiry-based investigations and experimentation. Quarter 3 is fully dedicated to Project-Based Learning (PBL) and represents the most immersive project period. During this quarter, every grade level engages in a large-scale project that integrates multiple subjects and specialist classes. Music, art, ICT, PE,

and library sessions are intentionally adapted to support the central project theme, making this a highly collaborative and dynamic quarter of learning.

To guide this process, school leaders provide a Quarter 3 Project Timeline to all teachers (see Figure 59). This shared planning tool outlines weekly expectations and bolds key benchmark activities that must be completed during specific weeks. Teachers then adapt this framework to develop their own class-specific project timelines, which are shared during grade-level planning meetings.

In Quarter 4, the emphasis shifts to Mathematics, aligning with the school's annual Math Day celebration. Projects during this period are designed to strengthen numeracy skills through real-world applications and cross-disciplinary math challenges. These include activities connected to the KPIS Challenge Site, where students engage in problem-solving tasks that promote deeper exploration and mathematical reasoning.

This consistent quarterly structure ensures that each project is strategically timed and supports the broader academic focus of the school year.

Figure 59

Quarter 3 Project Planning Timelines Used to Guide PBL Implementation

W19	Project Summaries Experts Needed
W20	**Launch Project**- Send me a GCalendar invite Expert list and project summary list goes out to parents Start building your folders- photos, video clips
W21	Get into rhythm with your projects Can do grade-level lessons, Swap classes, Change locations for instruction
W22	MAP Testing Peer Observations- Instructional lesson **Journey walls** Start communicating with EL Trip options
W23	MAP Testing Peer Observations- Instructional lesson **Experts** come in Send me a GCalendar invite when your expert is coming in
W24	Risk Assessment Trips- Ben & Nok Create Permission Slips
Holiday	
W25	Experiential Learning Trips
W26	Journey Wall and Presentation Skills
W27	**SLCs**- Students present how each subject matter fits into their project
W28	Wrapping up Invites to showcasing/PBL celebrations (45min - 1h)
W29	**Showcasing** per class
W30	**Showcasing** per class Last week of Q3 (Songkran)



Note. Left: Admin-created timeline outlining key benchmarks for teachers to follow during the PBL quarter. Right: A Grade 2 teacher presenting her adapted class project timeline during a planning meeting.

Communication Structures. Establishing a consistent and transparent communication framework was foundational to the successful implementation of the school's PBL model. Early in the principalship, informal staff interviews revealed a widespread perception of inconsistent communication, which often led to confusion and frustration. In response, several key tools and systems were introduced to ensure clarity, consistency, and collaboration across all stakeholders.

A central pillar of this framework was the Weekly Implementation Plan (WIP), a single-source document shared every Thursday, detailing the following week's key events, meetings, classroom focus areas, and PBL-related updates. This structure allowed staff to plan proactively and reduced reliance on daily emails, promoting efficiency and clarity. The WIP format remained consistent each week, included links to necessary resources, and aligned with the school calendar and Semester Outline.

The Semester Outline (SO) provided a macro view of the academic term, including event days, assessment deadlines, assembly duties, and professional development schedules. Updated weekly, it helped teachers visualize the semester and anticipate upcoming responsibilities.

Quarterly Checklists (QC) further supported implementation fidelity by outlining key deliverables and deadlines for each quarter. Midway through the term, teachers received their QC to begin preparations. Department leads reviewed submissions, and the live document enabled real-time monitoring. To boost engagement, a lighthearted competition rewarded the first teams to complete their checklists, fostering accountability and community spirit.

Beyond documents, multiple communication channels were employed strategically. Google Chat was used for daily coordination, LINE served for urgent messages outside school hours, and Seesaw facilitated transparent home-school communication. Morning assemblies were leveraged to share updates and reinforce school culture with students.

Robust planning meeting structures also played a vital role. Each grade level received 180 minutes of co-planning time weekly, with Design and EAL teachers collaborating closely to support interdisciplinary integration and scaffolding. Biweekly meetings between the principal and grade teams ensured strategic alignment, while additional "tuning" and "reflection" sessions supported continuous improvement of PBL practices.

To foster creativity and ownership, school-wide PBL Brainstorming Meeting were held to collaboratively design projects. Teachers presented ideas, received peer feedback, and co-developed projects with subject specialists. This was followed by tuning meetings, mid-project check-ins, and pre-showcase reviews to support successful execution. These collaborative sessions fostered a unified vision and deepened interdisciplinary connections. Teachers worked together to map ideas, refine project elements, and ensure alignment across the curriculum. Figure 60 illustrates scenes from one such session, highlighting both the facilitation of whole-group discussions and the collaborative planning process among teachers.

Figure 60

Schoolwide PBL Brainstorming Meetings



Note. Left: Facilitators introduce the project design framework and driving question. Center: Teachers collaborate on planning authentic project experiences. Right: Staff map out interdisciplinary connections and ideas during the December brainstorming session.

Lastly, a focus on wellbeing and culture-building was embedded in communication routines. “Love for Education” meetings, guided meditations, and community-building activities were intentionally designed to reduce stress and build trust. These nurturing touchpoints helped sustain staff morale and strengthen collective commitment to the school’s PBL vision (see Figure 61).

Figure 61

Love for Education Morning Meeting held Before Open House



Note. Left: Staff gathered for a pre-event reflection and origami heart activity. Right: Teachers celebrating their shared passion for education with joyful camaraderie.

Curriculum

Curriculum Overview. As an American curriculum school, instructional planning was anchored in the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS), ensuring a rigorous, standards-based approach across all grade levels. However, the school deliberately moved beyond traditional textbook-based instruction by

emphasizing inquiry-driven, hands-on projects. This approach provided students with authentic, meaningful contexts to demonstrate their learning, while minimizing repetitive, decontextualized workbook tasks.

High-quality instructional resources supported this model, including *MyView* and *Envision Math* (Savvas Learning) and *Mystery Science*. These tools were used flexibly rather than as prescriptive programs. Teachers adapted materials to align with project themes, selecting only the most relevant lessons or texts to support targeted skill development within each unit. This maintained academic rigor while allowing for creativity, cross-disciplinary connections, and responsiveness to student interest.

Grade-level Program Overviews were created to provide families with a clear narrative of expected learning outcomes and key unit topics for the academic year. These overviews outlined the skills and standards addressed, even when the exact project themes were determined collaboratively with students. Annual revisions ensured accuracy and helped surface gaps in subject-specific content, thereby informing curriculum improvement efforts.

Figure 62

Grade 2 Program Overview



Grade 2

"Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire."

Ms. Rebecca Ms. Gben Ms. Laurian Ms.Christy Ms. Arlene

Philosophy

In Grade 2, we encourage our students to draw from their learning experiences in Grade 1 by exploring their own questions and working together to find answers. We support students' individual needs through differentiation as no two children learn in the same way. The children enjoy centres, small-group work, hands-on learning, and learning by experience. Our approach to learning is holistic, developing social-emotional skills alongside academic skills as set out in our ESLRs.

We evaluate student growth through continuous assessment throughout the year, in the form of small-group observations, exit tickets, formal written assessments, presentations, NWEA testing, and individual and group project based learning. We use standards-based grading to determine whether students are meeting grade-level expectations and then use that information to modify our instruction for reteaching and differentiation.

Curriculum Overview and Highlights

Assessment Types	Differentiation Strategies	Habitudes We Focus On	Feedback Given
• Pre-and post-assessments • Performance based • Work-integrated • Projects • Formative - Pencil and paper - Think pair & share - Graphic organizers - Writing Samples - Running Records • Summative (end of the unit) - MAP data - Project-based - Presentation-based - Final Paper-based	• Maths stations • Book variation & choice • Writing at their level • Open-ended questions • Differentiation by learning needs • Work closely with counselors and EAL support staff • Enrichment activities for higher level thinkers • Peer-to-Peer support opportunities	• Work independently and manage time effectively • Ask for assistance if needed and follow up on missing work • Show independent thinking and problem solving • Being lifelong learners • Showing organizational skills: remembering materials like pencils, notebooks, water bottles, etc • Assist classmates who need it	• Collaborative work and the building of good relationships is reflected in our performance and end result • Feedback is provided on all work, graded or not, in order to help the students grow from each lesson and experience • Feedback is given with scaffolding so students know the areas they need to work on.

Language Arts- Our Language Arts approach allows students to write drafts, edit their work and then publish their own pieces of writing. Students will learn to write various styles of writing, including nonfiction, procedural, and friendly-letter writing. Students will also learn strategies for reading and understanding both fiction and nonfiction books, and building fluency. They will explore various genres and more challenging texts and will apply the skills learned at the beginning of the year to prepare for Grade 3 reading. This includes identifying author purpose, main idea of texts and making inferences and predictions. Students will engage with hands-on centers based learning that supports skills we are learning in different elements of our myView Literacy Curriculum. Students will be assessed using the Common Core Grade 2 Standards.

Reading- By the end of the first semester, students will be able to apply an array of strategies to help them read fictional and nonfiction books with fluency. They will also be able to identify important elements in stories such as the author's purpose, craft moves, and story morals, all of which help strengthen their reading comprehension skills. By the end of the second semester, students will have learned the purposes of nonfiction reading and will know many approaches to reading nonfiction books to help them grow their knowledge about a particular topic. They will also be able to apply skills learned in weekly Phonics lessons to reading fiction and nonfiction books with greater fluency throughout the year.

Writing- Students will develop the habit of planning, drafting and editing their work. Students will also learn how to give feedback to their peers. By the end of the first semester, students will be able to write a non-fiction text showcasing text features. Grammar focus will be on capitalisation, punctuation and parts of speech. By the end of the second semester, students will understand the purpose of scientific writing. Students will also learn a writing style based on the PBL learning skill needs. In 2023-24, our students learned to create persuasive writing and to caption videos..

Speaking and Listening - Speaking and listening skills are modeled and practiced in all subject matter, as students are expected to present their learning in a variety of ways in front of their peers. Students develop the skills of active listening and respectfully disagreeing. Teachers monitor student progress through an ever-evolving anecdotal portfolio. Students will present to their peers and members of the community.

Phonics- By the end of the first semester, students will be able to learn and apply word analysis in decoding words. They will be able to read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

- Short and long vowels
- Vowel teams
- R-controlled vowels
- Homophones

Grammar- By the end of the first semester, students will be able to use different kinds of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs. They will learn how to form and use simple verb tenses, produce, expand, and rearrange complete simple and compound sentences, and use ending punctuations, commas, and apostrophes.

- Noun and the different kinds
- Sentences
- Expanding and combining sentences
- Subject and predicate
- Action verbs
- Simple verb tenses
- The verb *have*
- Linking and helping verbs
- Irregular verbs
- Pronoun
- Adjectives
- Adverbs
- Contractions

Social Studies- Students will engage with the AERO Social Studies standards supported by the Thai Social Studies curriculum. Students will have the opportunity to apply their learning in a wide variety of practical application settings. This will include field trips and experiential learning units which will draw on learning and lessons from across subjects. Topics of study include the following areas. Students will learn about past, present and future and continue their understanding of how things have changed over time. Students will engage throughout the year in social interaction, we will focus on bullying and online safety to instill early digital hygiene. We'll discuss and interact with budgeting, creating our own budgets, providing understanding that income is what you have to live. We'll discuss the cost of living and how budgeting plays a role. Each year students will work towards a PBL. Within the PBL they will learn many different skills and cover various topics based on the students interests. The students will ask a driving question and through their learning journey they will figure out the answer to their question. We began with a mini-PBL about bats, before moving on to a student led PBL reflecting their own passions and interests. The children chose to "Save Lives, Save Animals."

- Ethics (Bullying including cyber safety)
- Citizenship, Culture, and Social Life
- Economics (Budget)
- Research Skills
- Present and Past
- Life and Environment
- PBL

Maths - Throughout the year, students will work on Math Practices and Skills. For example, making sense of problems and persevere in solving them. Students will learn to reason, construct, model, use appropriate tools, use precision, look for and make structures and be able to express regularity in repeated reasoning. Students will also engage with hands-on centers based learning to enhance the skills they are learning in their regular Maths lessons. We use the Envision Math Curriculum as our guide and assess on the Grade 2 Common Core Standards.

- Add and subtract within 20
- Work with equal groups
- Add within 100 using strategies
- Fluently add within 100
- Subtract within 100 using strategies
- Telling time to 5 minutes using both analog and digital clocks
- Graphs and Data
- Work with money
- Solving one-step and two-step problems with addition and subtraction

Science- Students will explore animal, plant, water/land, and matter investigations throughout the year. We will use Mystery Science to support our learning. We will collaborate with the Design Team to extend our in-class lessons to make them as meaningful and engaging as possible. Most of our Science will be Project Based Learning. Students will also work on these life skills: communication, thinking, problem-solving, applying life skills technological application. We will also incorporate the AERO standards into our lessons.

- Biodiversity through animal investigations.
- Structure, Function, and Adaptations through plant investigations.
- Earth's Surfaces Processes through water and land investigations.
- Properties & phases of matter and materials.

Note. This overview outlines the annual learning focus, instructional strategies, assessment methods, and standards-based goals for Grade 2. It is shared with families at the start of the year to promote transparency and clarity regarding student learning and curriculum structure.

Although the school invested in Curriculum Trak as a digital curriculum mapping platform in Year 2, it proved better suited for the more traditional planning models used in secondary and KG divisions. The elementary team, being the first to implement PBL, found that custom-designed planning templates and Unit & Standards documents were more effective for capturing integrated learning outcomes and interdisciplinary project designs.

Curriculum Alignment. A lack of pre-existing curriculum maps or standards alignment tools was identified at the outset, creating inconsistencies in instructional coverage and progression. To address this, a comprehensive curriculum alignment initiative was introduced to ensure both horizontal (across subjects and classrooms) and vertical (across grade levels) coherence.

In Year 1, grade-level teams collaboratively identified "power standards" the essential learning outcomes that all students must master and "flex standards," which supported differentiated instruction and skill reinforcement. These were embedded into Unit & Standards documents, which served as planning tools and alignment trackers. This process ensured that projects were standards-driven, logically sequenced, and academically rigorous.

Figure 63

Grade 1 Units and Standards Document – Semester 1

Semester 1				
	LA	**Math**	**Science**	**Social**
Unit/Topic	U1 - My View - My Neighborhood Phonics Sentence Features Upper- and lowercase Letters Realistic Fiction- Describing Realistic Fiction Writing (Book)	U1 - Understanding addition and subtraction	U2 - Patterns in the Sky	U2 & 4 History Being good members of family and school.
Standards Covered	CCSS.G1.LIT.RL1.1 CCSS.G1.LIT.RL1.2 CCSS.G1.LIT.RL1.5 CCSS.G1.LIT.RL1.7 CCSS.G1.LIT.RF1.2B CCSS.G1.LIT.RF1.2D CCSS.G1.LIT.RF1.3C CCSS.G1.LIT.SL1.1 CCSS.G1.LIT.SL1.1A CCSS.G1.LIT.SL1.5 CCSS.G1.LIT.L1.2A CCSS.G1.LIT.1.2D CCSS.G1.LIT.1.2E	CCSS.G1.MA.OAD.7 CCSS.G1.MA.OAD.8 CCSS.G1.MA.OA.B3 CCSS.G1.MA.OA.B4 CCSS.K12.MATH.MP1 CCSS.K12.MATH.MP2 CCSS.K12.MATH.MP3 CCSS.K12.MATH.MP4 CCSS.K12.MATH.MP6 CCSS.K12.MATH.MP7 CCSS.K12.MATH.MP8	G1.1-ESS1-2DCI.ESS1.A G1.1-ESS1-2.SEP.INV G1.1-ESS1-2.SEP.DAT	K-5.AERO.1.2.a K-5.AERO.1.2.b K-5.AERO.1.2.c K-5 AERO.5.2.a K-5 AERO.5.2.b K-5 AERO.5.2.c
Standards Assessed	CCSS.G1.LIT.RF1.2.A CCSS.G1.LIT.RF1.3 CCSS.G1.LIT.RF1.1.A CCSS.G1.LIT.L.1.1.A CCSS.G1.LIT.RL.1.3 CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.3	CCSS.G1.MA.OA.A.1 CCSS.G1.MA.OA.S5 CCSS.G1.MA.1.OA.C.5 CCSS.G1.MA.1.OA.C.6	G1.1-ESS1-1 G1.1-ESS1-2 G1.1-PS4-3	K-5.AERO.1 K-5 AERO.5
Unit/ Topic	U2- I spy	U2 - Fluently add and	U(1-2) - Light and Sound	U5 Things around us

Note. This sample curriculum document outlines core units, standards covered and assessed across English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. It illustrates how interdisciplinary project planning is anchored in the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and AERO standards, ensuring vertical and horizontal alignment across subjects.

The alignment work was supported by data from MAP Growth assessments. Teachers used this data to identify learning gaps and adjust unit planning proactively. Revisions to the Unit & Standards documents were made throughout the year to ensure that priority standards were revisited and reinforced before subsequent testing cycles.

This structured yet flexible system supported a more coherent and responsive instructional model. It also enabled the identification of strengths and gaps across the curriculum, informed professional learning needs, and enhanced instructional consistency. The curriculum alignment work laid the foundation for deeper integration of project-based pedagogy and improved student learning outcomes.

PBL Curriculum Adaptation. Implementing high-quality Project-Based Learning (PBL) requires a significant pedagogical shift for many educators, particularly those accustomed to traditional, pre-scripted curriculum models. Designing real-world, standards-aligned projects demands more than lesson delivery; it calls for creative, flexible teachers who can synthesize content standards, academic skills, and authentic issues in ways that resonate with students and their communities (McCauley, 2014; Lucas Education Research, 2022).

In a transdisciplinary PBL framework, project planning is not the sole responsibility of homeroom teachers. Instead, it is a collaborative process involving subject specialists such as art, design, or music teachers who integrate their disciplines into the broader project experience. This collaborative structure adds complexity to curriculum planning and requires coordinated efforts across multiple educators.

Recognizing the need for greater structure and support, a comprehensive PBL Project Planning Template was developed. This template (see Figure 64) guided teachers through the process of designing rigorous and meaningful projects by mapping out the driving question, targeted standards, learning outcomes, real-world connections, assessment methods, and opportunities for student agency. Unlike traditional lesson plans, these templates served as detailed blueprints for the full duration of each project.

To ensure alignment and quality, teachers submitted completed project plans a minimum of three weeks before launch. Each plan was reviewed by the school leader and an external PBL consultant, who provided formative feedback. This feedback was shared prior to grade-level meetings, fostering a collaborative review process that encouraged reflection and continuous improvement.

Once finalized, project plans were linked to the grade-level Unit and Standards Documents to ensure full alignment and standards coverage. Additionally, teachers documented how each project addressed the school's Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs), reinforcing the broader mission of preparing students for real-world success. Project Summary Sheets were also maintained to track implementation across the academic year and are discussed in greater detail in the data collection section.

This systematized approach to PBL planning enhanced teacher capacity, ensured curriculum coherence, and supported fidelity to the school's vision for high-quality, inquiry-driven learning.

Figure 64

PBL Project-Based Learning Planning Template



KPIS International School

PROJECT BASED LEARNING PLANNING TEMPLATE

Name of Project				Duration/ Dates	
Subject/Course		Teacher(s)		Grade Level	
Other subject areas to be included, if any					
Project Summary	(include student role, issue, problem or challenge, action taken, and purpose/beneficiary)				
Step 1: So What? Who cares?	(What big understandings do you want students to reach?) Link to our school ESLRs				
Step 2: 'Need to Know': (What academic and non-academic knowledge and skills will students 'need to know' to reach your hoped outcomes and understandings in the project?)	Humanities	Language	Math	Science	Others
Step 3: Driving Question	(This will launch the project and focus students on the parameters. It will create a 'need to know' for the content identified in the earlier steps. Keep it open-ended, concrete, process oriented and focused on big understandings.) 'How might we...'				
21st Century PBL Skills: (to be taught and assessed)	Critical Thinking/Problem Solving		Communication		
	Collaboration		Creativity		
	Others:				

Step 4: Product/ Exhibition	(What authentic product to might students create/ produce and/ or exhibit to fulfill project requirements and answer the driving question?)
Step 5: Timeline/ Milestones for Project	(What milestones are necessary to ensure feedback and a positive final outcome?)
Entry Event	(How will you launch the challenge and get kids excited?)
PROJECT DESIGN OVERVIEW	
Making Products Public	(Include how the products will be made public and who students will engage with during/at end of project)
Resources Needed: (What experts and resources will you use to ensure success?	Experts:
	Technology:
	Materials:
	Community Resources:
Step 5: Reflection/ Assessment Methods	(How will individual, team, and/or whole class be assessed and reflect during/at end of project)
Additional Notes	

Note. This planning tool guides teachers through essential project components, including driving questions, standards alignment, interdisciplinary links, assessments, and public product design. Teachers complete this form in advance of each project and submit it for feedback and revision prior to implementation.

Other Curriculum Adaptations. To ensure equitable access to the curriculum, multiple adaptations were implemented to support English language learners, students with diverse learning needs, and those requiring enrichment. The school employed both push-in and pull-out models for English Additional Language (EAL) support, with teachers scaffolding content and providing targeted language strategies to promote independence and integration into mainstream classes.

An intentional integration of Language Arts and Social Studies content proved particularly beneficial for EAL learners. Rather than purchasing a separate Social Studies curriculum, teachers used core Language Arts materials to reinforce shared themes and vocabulary across both subjects. This approach supported content mastery, reduced teacher workload, and provided EAL students with repeated exposure to key academic concepts in varied contexts.

The school maintained a strong commitment to inclusive education, with collaborative planning between homeroom teachers, the Special Educational Needs (SEN) team, and social counselors. Students with disabilities were supported through Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), regular intervention sessions, and classroom adaptations that enabled full participation in PBL units. For example, tools like Calming Corners and behavioral intervention strategies were used to support emotional regulation and focus. Further detail on these practices is provided in the Social Emotional Learning section of this study.

To extend learning for Gifted and Talented students, Passion Projects were introduced as differentiated opportunities for independent inquiry. These projects allowed students to pursue self-directed learning beyond the scope of core units. One notable example involved a Grade 3 student who researched,

wrote, and published her own autobiography, which was later shared with peers and archived in the school library to demonstrate both academic depth and student agency.

These curriculum adaptations reflect the school's broader vision of a responsive, inclusive, and student-centered learning environment, in which every learner is challenged and supported to achieve success.

Transdisciplinary Project Example. One notable example of a fully transdisciplinary PBL unit was a Grade 3 stop-motion animation project designed around the driving question: *"How can stop motion help us express and explore a spectrum of emotions and feelings?"* The project integrated disciplines including Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Art, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Design, and Computer Science, allowing students to engage in creative storytelling while developing academic and emotional literacy.

In Language Arts, students wrote scripts and developed characters to enhance narrative structure and expressive writing. In Mathematics, they applied measurement, proportion, and time interval concepts to frame sequencing and animation timing. Science lessons explored light, optics, and digital technology, while Social Studies components focused on cultural variations in emotional expression. In Art, students used color theory, composition, and facial expression to visually represent emotions.

The project also embedded SEL, offering opportunities to practice empathy, emotional regulation, and collaboration. In Design, students storyboarded, built sets, and revised creative elements based on feedback. Computer Science skills were developed through the use of stop-motion software and animation tools.

The project culminated in student-created animation films, which served as authentic artifacts demonstrating 21st-century competencies such as communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. Learning extended beyond the classroom through partnerships with Grade 11 media students and parent experts from the film industry, as well as an experiential learning trip to a filmmaking museum. These interactions deepened student understanding of the filmmaking process and provided real-world connections to their learning.

Figure 65

Stop-Motion Animation: Student Collaboration and Filmmaking Process



Note. Grade 3 students designed and filmed clay animation projects in a transformed classroom environment. They collaborated with Grade 11 Media Production students and received expert feedback on storyboarding, lighting, and filming techniques. The project integrated academic and creative disciplines to support emotional literacy and technical skill development.

Figure 66

Parent Experts and Experiential Learning at the Filmmaking Museum



Note. As part of the stop-motion project, two parents, professional actors, spoke to students about filmmaking techniques, enhancing the real-world relevance of the unit. The experiential learning trip to a filmmaking museum allowed students to explore practical filmmaking elements such as stage design, lighting, illusions, and short film production.

This project exemplified how a transdisciplinary approach can foster both academic rigor and holistic development by engaging students in meaningful, integrated inquiry.

Project Longevity. A key goal of Project-Based Learning (PBL) is to ensure that learning experiences have lasting value beyond the project's conclusion. At the case study site, several strategies were implemented to sustain the impact of student projects over time. One such strategy was the creation of an exhibition space in the library where project artifacts are displayed and rotated throughout the year. This ongoing visibility allows students to reconnect with past projects and reflect on their relevance, reinforcing learning outcomes and student agency.

Several PBL units illustrate how authentic student work continued to influence the school community:

- Tuski Garden and Sustainable Garden Project: What began as a Grade 1 initiative to transform an unused area into a school garden evolved into a sustainability-focused extension. Students introduced compost bins, educated younger peers on composting techniques, and collaborated with kitchen staff to collect food scraps. This ensured that environmental stewardship became a lived value across the school.
- Sensory Toys Project: Grade 5 students designed and created sensory toys for a local school for the visually impaired. This project deepened empathy, promoted inclusive design, and had a long-term effect within the school; many of the toys were later integrated into classroom calming corners to support emotional regulation for all students.
- Community Hero Books Project: Students researched, wrote, and illustrated books celebrating local heroes. These books were added to the school library collection and made available for circulation, showcasing student voice and inspiring future cohorts to contribute their own creative works.
- Math Games Project: Grade 1 students used recycled materials to design hands-on math games and manipulatives. These games supported conceptual learning and were stored in the school library for reuse by other Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes, including incoming students the following academic year. This project exemplifies how student-created materials can serve as durable instructional tools and foster peer-to-peer learning.

Figure 67 illustrates a collection of the math games developed by students. Each game was designed to reinforce specific mathematical concepts—such as addition, number sense, and problem-solving—while encouraging creativity, collaboration, and sustainability.

Figure 67

Grade 1 Student-Created Math Games



Note. As part of a PBL unit, Grade 1 students designed math games using recycled materials to support foundational numeracy skills. These games were later stored in the school library and reused by current and future students, illustrating the long-term educational impact of student-created resources.

These examples demonstrate that when student work is purposefully embedded within the culture and systems of a school, projects can have an enduring impact. Through strategic exhibition, resource repurposing, and curricular integration, the school successfully sustained student contributions in ways that enriched both learning and community engagement.

Technology. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the global need for digital fluency, prompting schools to reassess how they integrate technology into teaching and learning. At the case study school, this shift led to the intentional embedding of technology within both core instruction and Project-Based Learning (PBL) initiatives to support 21st-century skill development.

Students in Grades 1–5 used a variety of digital platforms to reinforce academic content and manage learning workflows. Tools such as RAZ Kids, IXL, and Mystery Science supported literacy, numeracy, and inquiry-based learning. Seesaw and Google Classroom were implemented to facilitate assignment management and communication between students, teachers, and families. Digital portfolio use was scaffolded by age: students in Grades 1–3 used Seesaw to document learning through multimedia formats, while Grade 3 served as a transition point to Google Classroom in preparation for the more advanced digital expectations in Grades 4 and 5.

The Computer Science curriculum played a critical role in building foundational digital literacy. In the early grades, instruction focused on digital citizenship, keyboarding, and block-based coding. By Grades 3–5, students engaged with coding fundamentals, online research, and Google Suite tools, supporting independent and collaborative work across subjects. These skills were not taught in isolation; instead, they were reinforced through interdisciplinary application, particularly within PBL.

PBL provided authentic contexts for students to apply digital tools in meaningful ways, including research, multimedia presentations, digital design, and collaborative problem-solving. Projects required students to select appropriate technology, collaborate in shared digital spaces, and present findings to authentic audiences. These skills critical for future academic and professional success.

Collaboration between homeroom teachers and Computer Science specialists ensured that technical competencies taught in specialist classes were transferred into project-based work in the classroom. This integrated model allowed students to see technology not as a standalone subject but as a key enabler of inquiry and creativity across the curriculum.

An example of this integration was the school's participation in the International Hour of Code initiative. Student participation increased from 154 in Year 1 to 386 by Year 3, reflecting the school's growing culture of digital confidence, curiosity, and computational thinking. This initiative, along with embedded technology in PBL, supported the development of responsible digital citizens who are both creators and critical thinkers.

Programs Added

Design Program. During our transition toward a blended Project Based Learning (PBL) model, it quickly became clear that a traditional timetable focused solely on core subjects such as Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science did not provide enough opportunities for the level of interdisciplinary and practical engagement needed for high quality project work. To address this, we introduced a dedicated Design component to enrich student engagement and increase instructional depth within our PBL units.

Two specialist Design teachers were appointed to work alongside homeroom teachers and students, delivering targeted support twice weekly in a dedicated Design Lab. This learning space became an

extension of the homeroom environment, providing students with the time, tools, and expert guidance needed to plan and create the physical or digital products required for their projects.

The Design curriculum was initially based on the Design and Technology National Curriculum Standards from England, but was thoughtfully adapted to align with the unique goals and outcomes of each grade level project. This required our Design teachers to demonstrate significant flexibility and creativity as they collaborated across all grades to build strong connections between core content and practical application. In these sessions, students developed skills such as prototyping, mechanical assembly, coding, digital fabrication, and presentation design. For larger or more complex projects, the Design teachers also co-taught within homeroom classes during an additional weekly session to maintain strong integration of design thinking and technical skills within core instruction.

To enhance hands on learning, the school invested in a range of tools and technologies, including 3D cutting machines, SAM Labs for coding and programming, basic drones, and culinary equipment. This broadened the curriculum to include emerging skills such as robotics, digital fabrication, and practical problem solving, giving students valuable real world competencies.

In the first year, the program was in a developmental phase marked by experimentation, careful planning, and ongoing reflection. The instructional team focused on identifying what worked well, adjusting curricular frameworks, and creating a reporting structure that captured student progress and growth in this new subject area.

By the second year, the program had become more stable and effective. With clearer expectations and stronger curricular alignment, the Design team introduced special Design Challenges to inspire creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving beyond the regular PBL units. To celebrate student achievement, a Design Showcase Day was also added in the final quarter, giving students a chance to present their work to an authentic audience and take pride in their learning.

Figure 68

Student Design Challenges: Formula 1 Cars and Culinary Design



Note. These images showcase Design Challenge activities including a mini Formula 1 CO_2 car competition and a baking challenge judged by staff and students. These events provided hands-on opportunities to apply scientific and design principles while fostering collaboration, creativity, and real-world problem solving.

Overall, the Design program has become an essential pillar of our PBL model. It gives students authentic opportunities to bring their ideas to life, deepens cross curricular connections, and builds the technical and creative skills they need for success in the future.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Program. Research affirms that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is foundational to effective Project-Based Learning (PBL), supporting relationship-building, empathy, and self-regulation competencies that are essential for successful collaboration and engagement (Baines et al., 2021; Lucas Education Research, 2021). At KPIS SEL was intentionally embedded into project planning and daily practice, with an emphasis on nurturing student wellbeing and promoting real-world social connection.

Program Development and Delivery. A structured SEL program was established, with a dedicated weekly period integrated into the timetable by reallocating one Physical Education session. In Year 1, implementation focused on foundation-building using *Second Step* as a core resource, supplemented with school-developed content tailored to student needs. The SEL teacher delivered lessons directly in homerooms alongside teachers, ensuring consistent language and reinforcement across classrooms.

A trial in Year 2 positioned SEL as a standalone subject but resulted in increased behavioral incidents due to reduced homeroom teacher involvement. The model was promptly revised, returning SEL instruction to the homeroom setting with co-teaching. This change reinforced daily SEL practices through class routines, Friday community-building blocks, and informal social support sessions.

Key Structures and Initiatives. Several practices supported emotional regulation and positive culture:

- Affirmations & Bucket Filling: Weekly affirmations and interactive “bucket filling” stations promoted kindness and self-worth.
- Mindful Mondays & Wellness Wednesdays: Students participated in guided meditation and physical wellness routines; some sessions were student-led by Year 2.
- Color Me Calm Wall: A public space allowed students to color for self-regulation. It became a cross-divisional wellness tool embraced by families and staff.
- Calming Corners: Each classroom featured a sensory-rich space for mindfulness. Older students co-created sensory tools in partnership with Design teachers.
- Support Goose & Student Support Room: These safe spaces offered students comfort and access to social workers or quiet reflection.

Figure 69

Social Emotional Learning Structures Supporting Student Wellbeing



Note. Clockwise from top left: a student-led Mindful Monday affirmation promoting self-love; the "Color Me Calm" wall for emotional regulation through art; a classroom calming corner equipped with sensory tools; the Student Support Room designed as a safe space for reflection and emotional resets; and students cuddling the Support Goose, a symbolic figure introduced to promote comfort and emotional safety during the SOAR-themed year. These initiatives reinforced emotional literacy, self-regulation, and a culture of empathy throughout the school.

SEL Events and Community Engagement. The school hosted multiple SEL-themed events that reinforced student wellbeing, agency, and global citizenship:

- Peace Day: Students created poems, dances, and a dove-shaped field formation symbolizing collective hope and unity. A collaborative dove display showcased personal pledges for peace.
- Unity Day: Wearing orange, students participated in anti-bullying skits, affirmations, and symbolic ribbon-tying at the school gate to reinforce belonging and inclusion.
- Odd Socks Day: Celebrated diversity and self-expression, with discussions and storytelling that promoted empathy and allyship.

- Kindness Week: Replacing Valentine's Day, students engaged in acts of kindness. Activities included gratitude walls, peer thank-you notes, and gifting handmade cookies and appreciation cards to school staff.
- Gratitude Week: Linked to Thanksgiving and the school's annual theme (SHINE & SOAR), students created a gratitude jar installation, reflecting on thankfulness as a habit for emotional wellbeing and community connection.

Figure 70

Schoolwide SEL Events Promoting Inclusion, Gratitude, and Kindness



Note. Clockwise from top left: Peace Day dove formation symbolizing unity; Odd Socks Day promoting inclusion and individuality; students gifting baked cookies and thank-you cards to school staff during Kindness Week; the Gratitude Tree display featuring student-made appreciation notes; and the "You Are Loved" board filled with peer messages during Kindness Week. These SEL events provided authentic opportunities for students to practice empathy, gratitude, and social responsibility.

These integrated SEL structures supported the school's mission to develop compassionate, confident, and emotionally resilient students. By embedding SEL into the fabric of daily routines and PBL

implementation, students not only learned how to collaborate and communicate effectively, but also how to lead with empathy, regulate emotions, and contribute meaningfully to their community.

4.4 PBL Learning Pillars

The successful implementation of the blended PBL model was grounded in four core learning pillars: Learning Professionals, Learning Community, Learning Experiences, and Learning Environment. Each pillar supported the development of a school culture that values student agency, interdisciplinary learning, and authentic engagement.

PBL Learning Professionals

A critical shift during implementation involved transitioning teachers from content deliverers to facilitators of inquiry. This required extensive professional development in transdisciplinary planning, flexible curriculum design, and collaborative teaching. Teachers learned to align standards across subjects, adjust pacing to fit project timelines, and integrate real-world problems into core content. Over time, educators grew more confident and passionate about guiding student-centered learning. One teacher remarked, “I now act more as a facilitator than a traditional instructor, allowing my students to take the lead in their learning journey” (Teacher Feedback Survey, 2025).

PBL Learning Community

A vibrant, inclusive learning community was cultivated through intentional design of social spaces and routines. Hallways became interactive displays of student work and reflection such as the Year 3 “SOARing Community Corner,” where students displayed origami birds symbolizing personal goals. Other underutilized areas, like the Student Support Room, were repurposed to promote social-emotional wellbeing. Teachers used structured classroom routines like think-pair-share, discussion circles, and collaborative tasks to ensure equitable student voice and participation. These practices reinforced a culture of inclusion and mutual respect, as emphasized by one teacher: “This inclusive approach ensures that even the quieter students are heard and valued” (Teacher Feedback Survey, 2025).

Figure 71

SOARing Community Corner: A Student-Centered Learning Space



Note. As part of the Year 3 SOAR theme, this previously unused hallway was transformed into a student workspace decorated with origami birds symbolizing personal dreams and goals. The space became a vibrant reflection of student voice, providing a communal area for reflection, collaboration, and ownership of learning.

PBL Learning Experiences

Learning was structured around active, student-driven engagement. Classroom culture shifted toward participation, hands-on learning, and real-world relevance. Activities such as designing, prototyping, data collection, and group discussions became central to daily instruction. Teachers noted increased student motivation, critical thinking, and ownership. “The structured approach and clearly defined timelines have helped me plan and execute lessons that are more engaging and relevant to my students,” one teacher explained (Teacher Feedback Survey, 2025).

Expert Involvement. To connect learning to real-life contexts, each project cycle incorporated expert engagement. Teachers and students collaboratively identified relevant professionals both internal (e.g., senior students) and external (e.g., paramedics, artists, business owners) who could enhance understanding and provide authentic feedback. For instance, during a Grade 3 “Heroes Journey” project, emergency responders visited to discuss life-saving careers and answer student-generated questions. These interactions not only deepened content understanding but also inspired students’ sense of purpose and civic responsibility.

Figure 72

Expert Visit: Emergency Response Team Supporting Grade 3 "Heroes Journey" Project



Note. As part of their PBL unit on modern-day heroes, Grade 3 students met with emergency medical professionals to learn CPR techniques, ask questions, and understand real-world applications of emergency response. These expert visits deepened engagement, built relevance, and strengthened students' sense of civic responsibility.

Experiential Learning Trips. Experiential learning was embedded within each project, reinforcing the school's commitment to developing lifelong learners. Rather than choosing destinations arbitrarily, trips were aligned with project goals and designed to extend inquiry beyond the classroom. For example, during a Grade 5 sustainability project, students visited *Precious Plastic*, where they learned to repurpose plastic waste into functional products. They also partnered with *Cirplus*, a recycling company, and returned with a student-designed recycling bin ("BOB") that became a schoolwide symbol of environmental action. These experiences helped students apply their learning in authentic contexts and develop global citizenship.

Figure 73

Experiential Learning Trip and Student Recycling Initiative: Precious Plastic and BOB



Note. As part of their sustainability project, Grade 5 students visited Precious Plastic to learn about recycling innovations and repurposed plastic caps into functional pencil holders (left). Inspired by this, they launched a student-led recycling initiative featuring "BOB" and companion bins placed throughout the school. Student-designed posters and public displays promoted environmental responsibility and supported real-world application of project learning.

Student Workshops. Workshops provided students with targeted, skills-based learning experiences that deepened engagement and supported the goals of specific PBL units. These on-campus sessions often filled instructional gaps that could not be addressed through traditional field trips or expert talks.

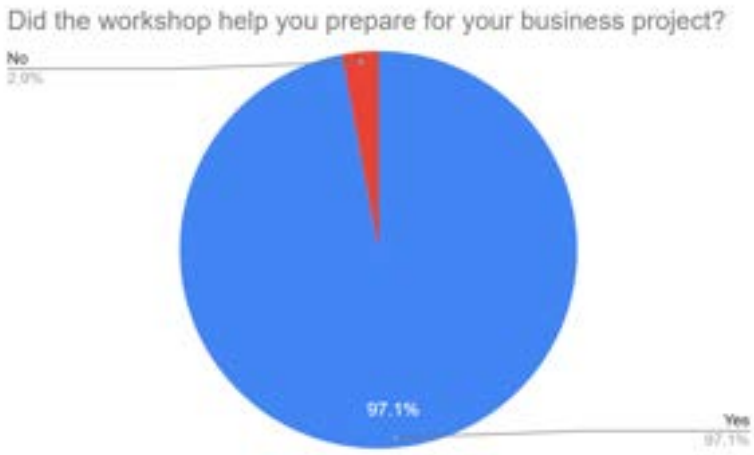
In a Grade 1 sustainability and fashion design unit, students worked with local fashion designers to create aprons using recycled fabrics. The hands-on experience allowed them to connect design concepts with environmental responsibility and left students inspired to express creativity through practical means.

In a Grade 4 entrepreneurship project, an immersive workshop led by *Master Kids Bangkok* gave students the opportunity to simulate real-world business development. Over the course of the workshop, students formed business teams, created branding and marketing plans, budgeted, purchased supplies, and presented products in a mini-market format. The session provided critical scaffolding for students to apply inquiry-based learning in a realistic context.

To assess the workshop's effectiveness, a post-workshop student survey was administered. As shown in Figure 74, 97.1% of students reported that the workshop helped prepare them for their business project, while only 2.9% did not find it valuable.

Figure 74

Student Perceptions of Entrepreneurship Workshop



Note: Based on a post-workshop survey (n = 34), 97.1% of Grade 4 students reported that the hands-on entrepreneurship workshop helped prepare them for their business project. Only one student indicated the session was not beneficial.

Open-ended responses further revealed key themes. Students reflected on risk, teamwork, and the complexity of business planning. Many were surprised by the statistic that "starting a business might fail 90% and be successful only 10%," while others emphasized that "teamwork always works out" and "managing the business is the hardest part" (Student Survey, 2025). Students noted the importance of passion, branding, and cost management: "An entrepreneur needs passion," and "Buying ingredients costs a lot, so we can sell them and have more money." One student shared, "I learned to be brave and not be shy," highlighting the personal growth encouraged by this real-world learning experience.

Another impactful example of workshop-based learning was a Grade 4 service project. Students created language acquisition games for children at an under-resourced Thai school and facilitated a workshop where they taught the games they had designed. This student-led experience fostered empathy, leadership, and a sense of purpose by using their knowledge to empower peers.

These workshops demonstrated the value of structured, real-world simulations in enhancing student readiness, confidence, and skill application in alignment with the school's PBL framework.

PBL Learning Environment

Flexible Learning Spaces. A key element in creating a successful PBL framework was the intentional design of flexible learning environments that promoted student engagement, collaboration, and autonomy. At the start of implementation, students were encouraged to view the entire school as a learning space rather than being confined to their classrooms. By the second year, it became common to see students learning in hallways, courtyards, and communal areas. This reflected a cultural shift toward more dynamic, student-driven environments.

To support this shift, the school repurposed underutilized areas into functional learning zones. For

example, hallway spaces were transformed into math learning stations, research tents were set up for reading and inquiry, and even the school's drive-thru was converted into an Earth Day exhibition space. These creative uses of space made learning more memorable and helped foster student ownership.

Figure 75

Making Use of Schoolwide Learning Spaces



Note. Left: Grade 3 students practicing multiplication and geometry in the hallway. Middle: Reading and research tent transforming an open space into a learning zone. Right: Students using the school drive-thru for an Earth Day chalk exhibit, showcasing learning beyond the classroom.

In classrooms, lightweight and modular furniture allowed students to reconfigure their learning environment based on the needs of each project. Round and triangular tables encouraged collaboration, particularly for English language learners who benefited from small group instruction. Bean bags, floor mats, and window seating offered students choices aligned with their learning preferences. Additionally, designated calming corners and breakout areas such as the Student Support Room and Community Corner provided inclusive options for students needing quiet or sensory support.

The classroom design also supported specific PBL projects. For instance, a stop-motion project area featured a whiteboard studio wall, a tracking display on the glass window, and moveable furniture for flexible staging. Writable surfaces on tables promoted real-time brainstorming, while visual displays of student work enhanced the learning environment and reinforced a culture of celebration and visibility.

Flexible learning environments benefited the broader school community by enabling personalized instruction, maximizing use of existing resources, and reducing renovation costs. Most importantly, they fostered agency and adaptability, helping students develop the real-world skills needed for future learning and life.

Figure 76

Flexible Classroom Design to Support PBL



Note. Left: An open classroom setup with adaptable, collaborative furniture and visible learning tools. Right: Writable tabletop surfaces used for brainstorming during student-led inquiry, encouraging creativity and agency.

Learning Journal Walls. To reinforce student ownership and visible learning, *Learning Journey Walls* were introduced in Year 1 as an essential feature of the classroom environment. These evolving displays documented each project's progression from launch to final presentation, supporting student reflection and self-regulation. As students moved through the phases of inquiry, research, prototyping, and revision, evidence was regularly added to the wall to illustrate their learning path.

Teachers began by co-developing project timelines with students, including daily benchmarks and expectations. These timelines were prominently displayed to build accountability, guide group check-ins, and support project pacing. Figure 77 shows how a Grade 4 class used visual markers and annotations to track daily progress and align instruction with their project benchmarks.

Figure 77

Grade 4 Project Planning Timeline With Daily Benchmarks



Note. This timeline visually represents the class's daily goals and project progression, including visuals and reflections updated regularly by the teacher and students.

Students were responsible for contributing to their Learning Journey Walls as the project unfolded. In younger grades, this included labeled steps, sketches, photos, and reflections. Older students added more complex documentation, including digital elements, and used the wall to guide their Student-Led Conferences and final Showcase presentations.

Figure 78 presents a Grade 2 Learning Journey Wall from their project titled *"Save Lives, Save Animals."* The wall highlights how students internalized the theme, applied their learning, and constructed meaning across multiple phases of the project. Their work included research findings, ethical reflections, and creative output aligned with the project objectives.

Figure 78

Grade 2 Learning Journey Wall for the Project "Save Lives, Save Animals."



Note. The wall showcases student-led documentation, reflections, and project milestones centered on veganism and animal welfare.

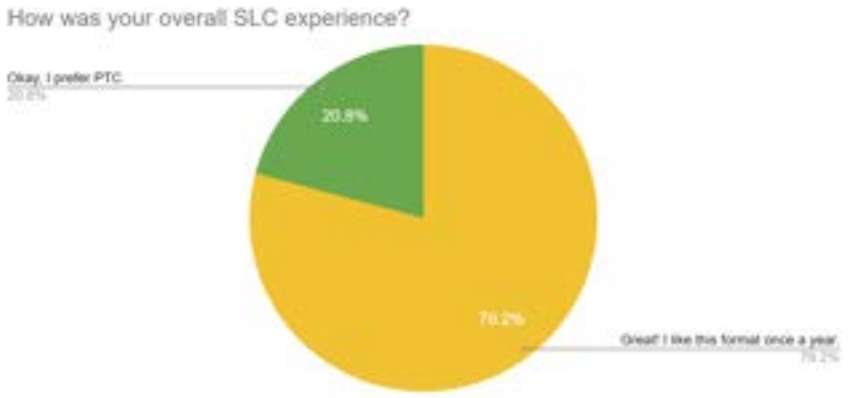
Student Led Conferences. In Year 2, we introduced Student Led Conferences (SLCs), which quickly became a celebrated event in the school community. While not a new concept in education, SLCs were new to KPIS and aligned well with our blended Project Based Learning (PBL) framework. Scheduled in Quarter 3, when students neared completion of their major annual projects, these conferences positioned students as leaders of their own learning.

SLCs were anchored in the Learning Journey Walls displayed in each classroom. Students guided their families through these displays, explaining project rationale, timelines, and milestones. A key focus was for students to articulate transdisciplinary connections in their own words, helping parents understand how different subjects were integrated into their work. This process fostered ownership, confidence, and reflective communication.

A parent survey following the first implementation of SLCs revealed that 79.2% preferred continuing with one Parent Teacher Conference and one Student Led Conference annually. In contrast, 20.8% preferred two traditional Parent Teacher sessions. While this could indicate hesitation due to language barriers or cultural expectations, the majority clearly valued student ownership of learning.

Figure 79

Parent Survey Responses on Preferred Conference Format



Note. 79.2% of parents supported the continuation of annual Student Led Conferences alongside one Parent Teacher Conference. Only 20.8% preferred two traditional Parent Teacher meetings.

Parents also reported improvements in their children's confidence, language skills, and leadership. Comments included, "I see leadership and confidence in my child," and, "They explain causes and effects much more clearly now." Many also noted development in soft skills such as planning, teamwork, and emotional regulation, including managing frustrations with teammates and meeting group expectations. These skills are essential to student success within the PBL framework.

To support younger students, such as those in Grade 1, visual SLC maps were provided to guide the discussion. These tools helped students stay on track and allowed parents to follow the flow of the presentation. As shown below, students confidently led their parents through the different elements of their projects using the Learning Journey Walls as reference points.

Figure 80

Student-Led Walkthroughs During SLCs



Note. Students used maps, project displays, and growth posters to independently guide parents through their work during Student Led Conferences.

Showcase Days. Showcase Days were designed to celebrate the culmination of student learning at the end of each project cycle. While smaller celebrations were held in classrooms or during morning assemblies for projects in Quarters 1, 2, and 4, Quarter 3 featured large-scale Showcase events in the school auditorium. These end-of-project celebrations were fully student-led and served as platforms for students to present their learning journeys to families, peers, and community members.

Each Showcase was approximately 45 to 60 minutes and featured student presentations that followed the structure of their Learning Journey Walls. Students explained key milestones in their projects, including research findings, expert interviews, and field trips. These presentations were developed collaboratively by student teams and showcased their ability to synthesize and communicate transdisciplinary learning outcomes using shared digital slide decks (see Figure 81).

Figure 81

Grade 4 Auditorium Showcase Presentation



Note. Students presented the timeline, research, prototypes, and learning outcomes of their PBL unit to families and invited classes. Presentations were collaboratively created and delivered by student groups.

Following the auditorium presentations, students often led parents to their classrooms to explore project artifacts in a more personal setting. These homeroom-based extensions of the Showcase events helped strengthen classroom community ties and enabled more in-depth student-parent dialogue.

An example from a Grade 3 class illustrates this practice. As part of a project on community heroes, students authored and illustrated their own books, which were professionally published. After their Showcase presentation, students hosted a book unwrapping event in their homeroom. This was the first opportunity for students to see their printed books, and it provided parents with a meaningful occasion to engage with their children's work. Parents left written feedback, ordered copies, and had their books signed by the young authors. Copies were also donated to the school library to inspire future learners (see Figure 82).

Figure 82

Grade 3 Book Unwrapping and Author Celebration



Note. Students celebrated the publication of their community hero books with parents, who were invited to read the books, leave messages, and order signed copies. This event supported literacy, creativity, and strengthened the home-school partnership.

4.5 Data Capturing, Assessments and Reporting

Data Capturing

Effective data use extends beyond collection; it requires systematic analysis and application to drive improvement. At KPIS, various data sources: teacher-generated, curriculum-aligned, project-based, and student-collected were developed and used strategically to support the implementation of our Project-Based Learning (PBL) model.

Teacher Data. In Year 1, the school launched an Elementary Google Shared Drive to centralize teaching resources and data. This addressed the previous lack of a secure, collaborative system and served as a repository for planning documents, instructional videos, and training materials. The Shared Drive included structured folders for grade levels and a dedicated PBL folder, promoting alignment and access across the staff. Over time, it became an essential tool for onboarding, professional learning, and ensuring consistency in instructional practice.

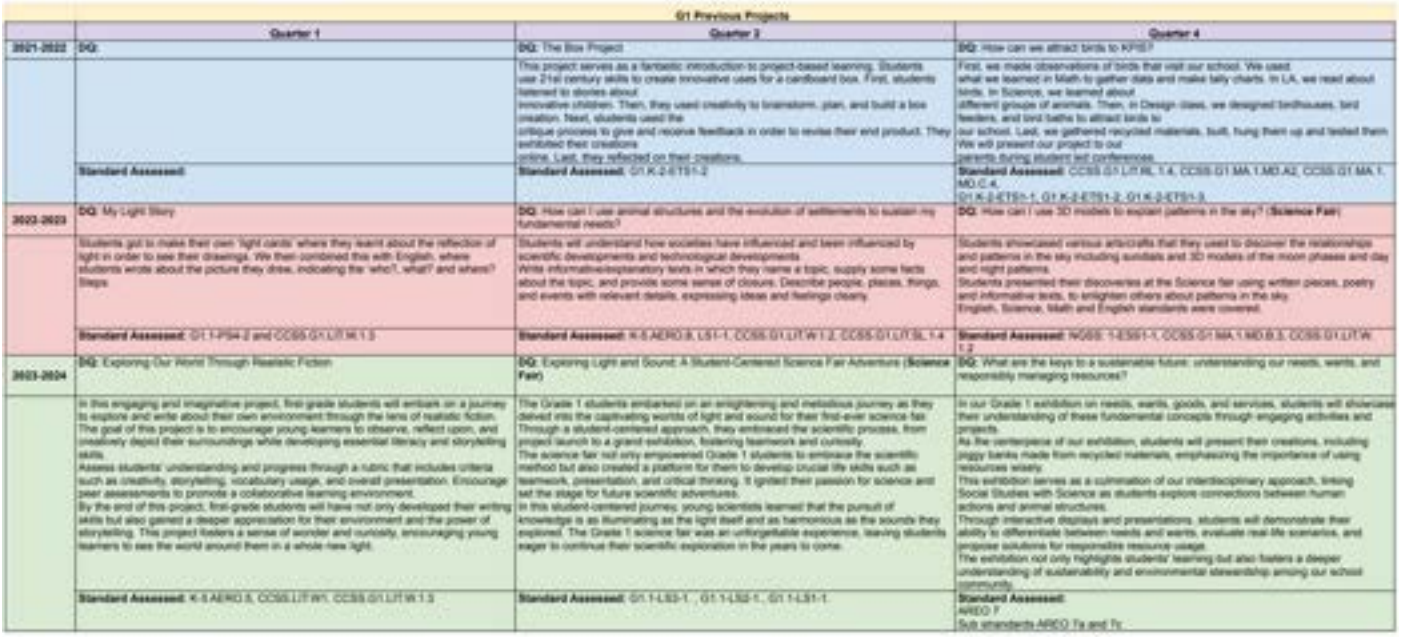
Curriculum Data. To ensure horizontal and vertical alignment of our in-house curriculum, teachers initially used Units and Standards documents to guide planning. In Year 3, Curriculum Trak was introduced for lesson planning and curriculum mapping. However, due to its limitations with transdisciplinary approaches, PBL project templates remained the primary planning tools for project-based units. These templates supported coherence across subjects and ensured alignment with learning outcomes discussed earlier in the Curriculum section.

Project Data. To improve long-term planning and reduce redundancy, a Project Summary Document, referred to by staff as our "Project Gold Mine", was introduced in Year 3. This centralized tool recorded all projects conducted by grade level and year. It helped ensure variety, developmental appropriateness, and alignment with standards while reducing repetition of themes across grades. New teachers could quickly gain insights into previously implemented units, while returning staff used it to extend learning in new directions.

The document also served as a curricular archive and strategic planning tool, enabling the principal to review and give feedback on project proposals prior to planning meetings. This oversight reinforced curriculum coherence and supported ongoing innovation.

Figure 83

*Summary of Grade 1 Quarter 1, 2, and 4 Projects Over Three Academic Year*s

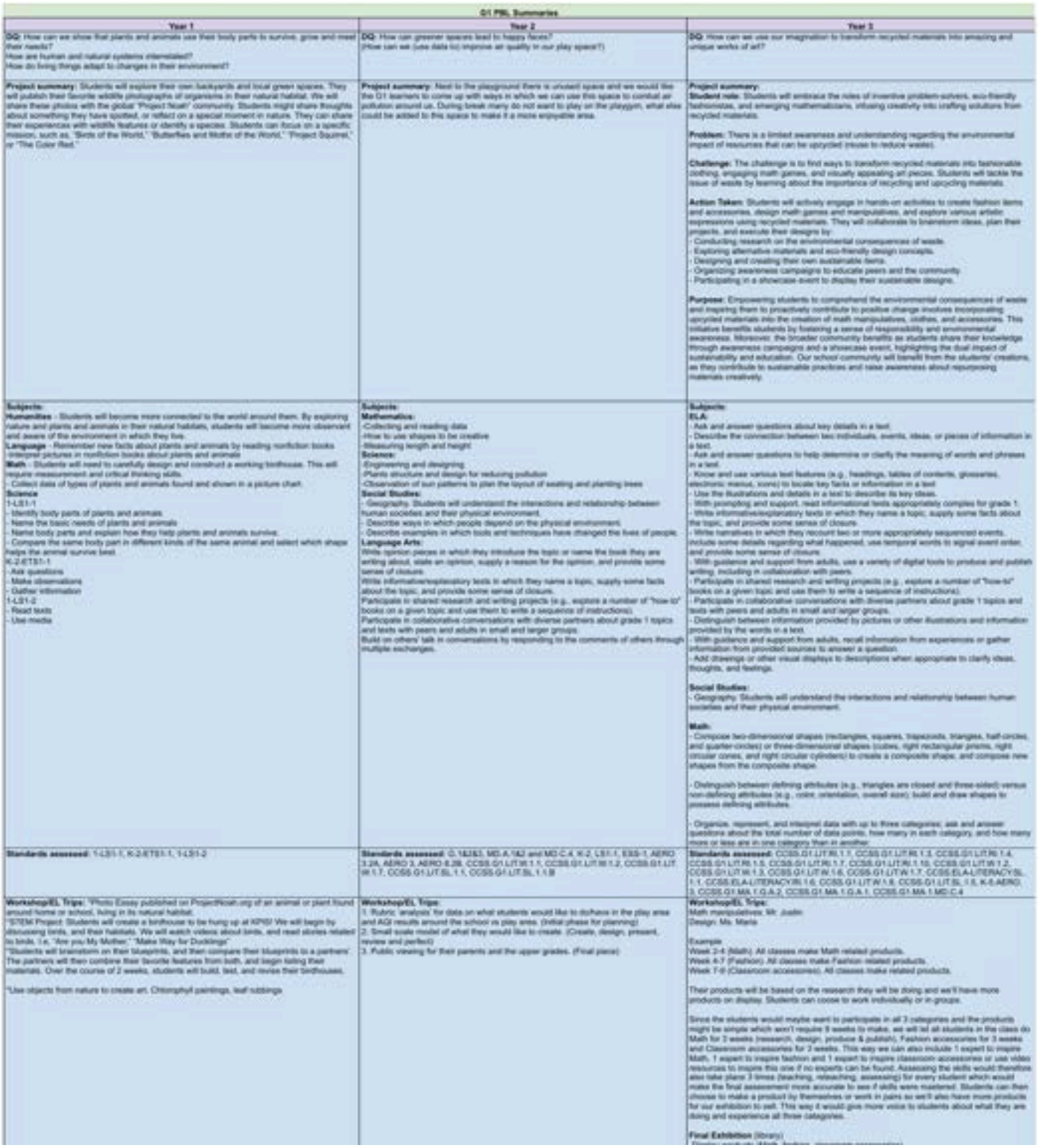


G1 Previous Projects			
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 4
2021-2022	DQ:	DQ: The Box Project	DQ: How can we attract birds to KPIS?
		This project serves as a fantastic introduction to project-based learning. Students use 21st century skills to create innovative uses for a cardboard box. First, students listened to stories about innovative children. Then, they used creativity to brainstorm, plan, and build a box creation. Next, students used the critique process to give and receive feedback in order to revise their end product. They exhibited their creations online. Last, they reflected on their creations.	First, we made observations of birds that visit our school. We used what we learned in Math to gather data and make tally charts. In LA, we read about birds. In Science, we learned about different groups of animals. Then, in Design class, we designed birdhouses, bird feeders, and bird baths to attract birds to our school. Last, we gathered recycled materials, built, hung them up and tested them. We will present our project to our parents during student led conferences.
	Standard Assessed:	Standard Assessed: G1.K.2-ETS1-2	Standard Assessed: CCSS.G1.LIT.RL.1.4, CCSS.G1.MA.1.MD.A2, CCSS.G1.MA.1.MD.C.4, G1.K-2-ETS1-1, G1.K-2-ETS1-2, G1.K-2-ETS1-3
2022-2023	DQ: My Light Story	DQ: How can I use animal structures and the evolution of settlements to sustain my fundamental needs?	DQ: How can I use 3D models to explain patterns in the sky? (Science Fair)
	Students got to make their own 'light cards' where they learnt about the reflection of light in order to see their drawings. We then combined this with English, where students wrote about the picture they drew, indicating the 'who?, what?' and where? Steps	Students will understand how societies have influenced and been influenced by scientific developments and technological developments Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure. Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.	Students showcased various artscrafts that they used to discover the relationships and patterns in the sky including sundials and 3D models of the moon phases and day and night patterns. Students presented their discoveries at the Science fair using written pieces, poetry and informative texts, to enlighten others about patterns in the sky. English, Science, Math and English standards were covered.
	Standard Assessed: G1.1-PS4-2 and CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.3	Standard Assessed: K-5.AERO.8, LS1-1, CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.2, CCSS.G1.LIT.SL.1.4	Standard Assessed: NGSS: 1-ESS1-1, CCSS.G1.MA.1.MD.B.3, CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.2
2023-2024	DQ: Exploring Our World Through Realistic Fiction	DQ: Exploring Light and Sound: A Student-Centered Science Fair Adventure (Science Fair)	DQ: What are the keys to a sustainable future: understanding our needs, wants, and responsibly managing resources?
	In this engaging and imaginative project, first grade students will embark on a journey to explore and write about their own environment through the lens of realistic fiction. The goal of this project is to encourage young learners to observe, reflect upon, and creatively depict their surroundings while developing essential literacy and storytelling skills. Assess students' understanding and progress through a rubric that includes criteria such as creativity, storytelling, vocabulary usage, and overall presentation. Encourage peer assessments to promote a collaborative learning environment. By the end of this project, first-grade students will have not only developed their writing skills but also gained a deeper appreciation for their environment and the power of storytelling. This project fosters a sense of wonder and curiosity, encouraging young learners to see the world around them in a whole new light.	The Grade 1 students embarked on an enlightening and melodious journey as they delved into the captivating worlds of light and sound for their first-ever science fair. Through a student-centered approach, they embraced the scientific process, from project launch to a grand exhibition, fostering teamwork and curiosity. The science fair not only empowered Grade 1 students to embrace the scientific method but also created a platform for them to develop crucial life skills such as teamwork, presentation, and critical thinking. It ignited their passion for science and set the stage for future scientific adventures. In this student-centered journey, young scientists learned that the pursuit of knowledge is as illuminating as the light itself and as harmonious as the sounds they explored. The Grade 1 science fair was an unforgettable experience, leaving students eager to continue their scientific exploration in the years to come.	In our Grade 1 exhibition on needs, wants, goods, and services, students will showcase their understanding of these fundamental concepts through engaging activities and projects. As the centerpiece of our exhibition, students will present their creations, including piggy banks made from recycled materials, emphasizing the importance of using resources wisely. This exhibition serves as a culmination of our interdisciplinary approach, linking Social Studies with Science as students explore connections between human actions and animal structures. Through interactive displays and presentations, students will demonstrate their ability to differentiate between needs and wants, evaluate real-life scenarios, and propose solutions for responsible resource usage. The exhibition not only highlights students' learning but also fosters a deeper understanding of sustainability and environmental stewardship among our school community.
	Standard Assessed: K-5.AERO.8, CCSS.LIT.W1, CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.3	Standard Assessed: G1.1-LS3-1 , G1.1-LS2-1 , G1.1-LS1-1	Standard Assessed: AREO 7 Sub standards AREO 7a and 7c

Note. The document shows project titles, descriptions, and standards addressed, serving as a curriculum alignment tool and planning reference.

Figure 84

Grade 1 Quarter 3 PBL Summaries from Years 1 to 3



G1 PBL Summaries

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
DQ: How can we show that plants and animals use their body parts to survive, grow and meet their needs? How are human and natural systems interrelated? How do living things adapt to changes in their environment?	**DQ**: How can greener spaces lead to happy faces? (How can we (use data to) improve air quality in our play space?)	**DQ**: How can we use our imagination to transform recycled materials into amazing and unique works of art?
Project summary: Students will explore their own backyards and local green spaces. They will publish their favorite wildlife photographs of organisms in their natural habitat. We will share these photos with the global "Project Noah" community. Students might share thoughts about something they have spotted, or reflect on a special moment in nature. They can share their experiences with wildlife features or identify a species. Students can focus on a specific mission, such as, "Birds of the World," "Butterflies and Moths of the World," "Project Squirrel," or "The Color Red."	**Project summary**: Next to the playground there is unused space and we would like the G1 learners to come up with ways in which we can use this space to combat air pollution around us. During break many do not want to play on the playgym, what else could be added to this space to make it a more enjoyable area.	**Project summary**: **Student role**: Students will embrace the roles of inventive problem-solvers, eco-friendly fashionistas, and emerging mathematicians, infusing creativity into crafting solutions from recycled materials. **Problem**: There is a limited awareness and understanding regarding the environmental impact of resources that can be upcycled (reuse to reduce waste). **Challenge**: The challenge is to find ways to transform recycled materials into fashionable clothing, engaging math games, and visually appealing art pieces. Students will tackle the issue of waste by learning about the importance of recycling and upcycling materials. **Action Taken**: Students will actively engage in hands-on activities to create fashion items and accessories, design math games and manipulatives, and explore various artistic expressions using recycled materials. They will collaborate to brainstorm ideas, plan their projects, and execute their designs by: - Conducting research on the environmental consequences of waste. - Exploring alternative materials and eco-friendly design concepts. - Designing and creating their own sustainable items. - Organizing awareness campaigns to educate peers and the community. - Participating in a showcase event to display their sustainable designs. **Purpose**: Empowering students to comprehend the environmental consequences of waste and inspiring them to proactively contribute to positive change involves incorporating upcycled materials into the creation of math manipulatives, clothes, and accessories. This initiative benefits students by fostering a sense of responsibility and environmental awareness. Moreover, the broader community benefits as students share their knowledge through awareness campaigns and a showcase event, highlighting the dual impact of sustainability and education. Our school community will benefit from the students' creations, as they contribute to sustainable practices and raise awareness about repurposing materials creatively.
Subjects: **Humanities** - Students will become more connected to the world around them. By exploring nature and plants and animals in their natural habitats, students will become more observant and aware of the environment in which they live. **Language** - Remember new facts about plants and animals by reading nonfiction books. Interpret pictures in nonfiction books about plants and animals **Math** - Students will need to carefully design and construct a working birdhouse. This will require measurement and critical thinking skills. - Collect data of types of plants and animals found and shown in a picture chart. **Science** 1-LS1-1 - Identify body parts of plants and animals. - Name the basic needs of plants and animals - Name body parts and explain how they help plants and animals survive. - Compare the same body part in different kinds of the same animal and select which shape helps the animal survive best. K-2-ETS1-1 - Ask questions - Make observations - Gather information 1-LS1-2 - Read texts - Use media	**Subjects**: **Mathematics**: -Collecting and reading data -How to use shapes to be creative -Measuring length and height **Science**: -Engineering and designing -Plants structure and design for reducing pollution -Observation of sun patterns to plan the layout of seating and planting trees **Social Studies**: - Geography. Students will understand the interactions and relationship between human societies and their physical environment. - Describe ways in which people depend on the physical environment. - Describe examples in which tools and techniques have changed the lives of people. **Language Arts**: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of "how-to" books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions). Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.	**Subjects**: **ELA**: - Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. - Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text. - Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text. - Know and use various text features (e.g., headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text - Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas. - With prompting and support, read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1. - Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure. - Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure. - With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers. - Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of "how-to" books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions). - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. - Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text. - With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question. - Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings. **Social Studies**: - Geography: Students will understand the interactions and relationship between human societies and their physical environment. **Math**: - Compose two-dimensional shapes (rectangles, squares, trapezoids, triangles, half-circles, and quarter-circles) or three-dimensional shapes (cubes, right rectangular prisms, right circular cones, and right circular cylinders) to create a composite shape, and compose new shapes from the composite shape. - Distinguish between defining attributes (e.g., triangles are closed and three-sided) versus non-defining attributes (e.g., color, orientation, overall size); build and draw shapes to possess defining attributes. - Organize, represent, and interpret data with up to three categories; ask and answer questions about the total number of data points, how many in each category, and how many more or less are in one category than in another.
Standards assessed: 1-LS1-1, K-2-ETS1-1, 1-LS1-2	**Standards assessed**: G.1&2&3, MD.A.1&2 and MD.C.4, K-2, LS1-1, ESS-1, AERO 3.2A, AERO 3, AERO 6.2B, CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.1, CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.2, CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.7, CCSS.G1.LIT.SL.1.1, CCSS.G1.LIT.SL.1.1.B	**Standards assessed**: CCSS.G1.LIT.RI.1.1, CCSS.G1.LIT.RI.1.3, CCSS.G1.LIT.RI.1.4, CCSS.G1.LIT.RI.1.5, CCSS.G1.LIT.RI.1.7, CCSS.G1.LIT.RI.1.10, CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.2, CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.3, CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.6, CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.6, CCSS.G1.LIT.W.1.8, CCSS.G1.LIT.SL.1.6, K-5.AERO 3, CCSS.G1.MA.1.G.A.2, CCSS.G1.MA.1.G.A.1, CCSS.G1.MA.1.MD.C.4
Workshop/EL Trips: "Photo Essay published on ProjectNoah.org of an animal or plant found around home or school, living in its natural habitat. "STEM Project: Students will create a birdhouse to be hung up at KPIS! We will begin by discussing birds, and their habitats. We will watch videos about birds, and read stories related to birds. I.e, "Are you My Mother," "Make Way for Ducklings" "Students will brainstorm on their blueprints, and then compare their blueprints to a partners' The partners will then combine their favorite features from both, and begin listing their materials. Over the course of 2 weeks, students will build, test, and revise their birdhouses. *Use objects from nature to create art. Chlorophyll paintings, leaf rubbings	**Workshop/EL Trips**: 1. Rubric 'analysis' for data on what students would like to do/have in the play area and AQI results around the school vs play area. (Initial phase for planning) 2. Small scale model of what they would like to create. (Create, design, present, review and perfect) 3. Public viewing for their parents and the upper grades. (Final piece)	**Workshop/EL Trips**: Math manipulatives: Mr. Justin Design: Ms. Maria Example Week 2-4 (Math): All classes make Math related products. Week 4-7 (Fashion): All classes make Fashion related products. Week 7-9 (Classroom accessories): All classes make related products. Their products will be based on the research they will be doing and we'll have more products on display. Students can coose to work individually or in groups. Since the students would maybe want to participate in all 3 categories and the products might be simple which won't require 9 weeks to make, we will let all students in the class do Math for 3 weeks (research, design, produce & publish), Fashion accessories for 3 weeks and Classroom accessories for 3 weeks. This way we can also include 1 expert to inspire Math, 1 expert to inspire fashion and 1 expert to inspire classroom accessories or use video resources to inspire this one if no experts can be found. Assessing the skills would therefore also take place 3 times (teaching, reteaching, assessing) for every student which would make the final assessment more accurate to see if skills were mastered. Students can then choose to make a product by themselves or work in pairs as we'll also have more products for our exhibition to sell. This way it would give more voice to students about what they are doing and experience all three categories. **Final Exhibition** (library)

Note. This document outlines key driving questions, project challenges, subject links, and standards addressed in each year, enabling continuity and scaffolded student learning experiences.

Student-Collected Project Data. By the third year of implementation, students had developed increased confidence and skill in collecting and using data to inform their projects. Students engaged in interviews, peer surveys, and parent questionnaires, demonstrating the application of research methods and

data analysis within authentic contexts. One Grade 3 class, for example, conducted an interview with the principal, distributed surveys to younger students, and later engaged parents to gain multiple perspectives relevant to their project topic.

Figure 85

Grade 3 Student-led Data Collection Activities



Note. From left to right: students interviewing the principal, surveying younger students, and gathering a parent perspective. These examples highlight authentic inquiry and data application within the PBL process.

Student Data. In a student-centered learning environment, capturing and analyzing student data is essential to support progress monitoring, personalized instruction, and school-home communication. Our school used multiple systems, both digital and analog, to ensure comprehensive, longitudinal documentation of each learner's growth.

Student Data Folders. Introduced at the end of Year 1, individual student data folders were stored in a secure Google Shared Drive. Each folder included MAP reports, report comments, behavioral records, and an annual student summary. These folders followed students as they advanced through grades, providing a continuous record of academic and behavioral development. Teachers received early access to incoming student folders at the start of each year, supporting targeted planning. Confidential information related to Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Students of Concern (SOC) was shared through secure meetings to ensure discretion and appropriate intervention.

Student Portfolios and Project Journals. Project journals and portfolios were central to documenting student learning across the PBL cycle. They included self-reflections, peer feedback, teacher observations, and samples of student work. Grade 1 students used digital journal templates compiled and printed as keepsake books for families during SLCs. These journals showcased step-by-step project development, including photos of final artifacts and individualized feedback.

Grade 2 portfolios were handwritten to strengthen literacy skills. Students documented business plans for a Chocolate Shop project, including market research, branding, product development, and event

planning. Final market proceeds were donated to a local children's charity, reinforcing real-world connections and empathy-driven learning.

From Grades 3 to 5, students transitioned to digital portfolios. Grades 3 and 4 utilized Seesaw, while Grade 5 students used Google Workspace tools to curate project steps—from research and data collection to reflection and presentation. This progression promoted digital fluency and prepared students for the demands of Middle School.

Student Quarterly Learning Journey Videos. Launched in Year 2, these videos complemented the Learning Journey Walls by offering dynamic, student-led summaries of learning each quarter. Produced collaboratively by homeroom and specialist classes, the videos highlighted student voice and ownership, capturing learning processes, achievements, and reflections. They became a vital communication tool that reinforced family engagement and celebrated student growth in an accessible and meaningful format.

Feedback Data. Establishing strong feedback systems is essential for fostering continuous improvement in a Project-Based Learning (PBL) environment. Over the three-year implementation period, feedback practices evolved to become more embedded, timely, and actionable which enabled learners, educators, and families to engage in a dynamic cycle of reflection and growth.

Immediate Feedback. In PBL settings, immediate feedback allows for real-time instructional adjustment and differentiation. Teachers used visible thinking strategies such as See–Think–Wonder walls, interactive boards (e.g., Context Clue boards), and exit tickets to gauge student understanding and tailor support accordingly. These tools enabled both formative assessment and reflection within group-based learning, where progress rates varied significantly.

Peer Feedback. Peer feedback was a cornerstone of our feedback culture. Through structured interactions, students learned to give and receive feedback that promoted revision, critical thinking, and collaboration. Feedback was facilitated face-to-face across grade levels and through digital tools such as Seesaw and Padlet. Weekly shared Padlets encouraged schoolwide participation in offering feedback across projects.

Parent Feedback. Parental involvement in feedback was encouraged through surveys, coffee mornings, and in-person events. During exhibitions and conferences, students presented their work to families and invited feedback. One strategy involved setting up a "parent feedback station" aligned with a specific project, where parents could leave reflections linked to their child's work. Teachers later displayed this feedback to reinforce student motivation.

Teacher Feedback. Teachers consistently modeled constructive feedback using the TAG method (Tell, Ask, Give). Feedback was tied to learning objectives, helping students focus on specific criteria for improvement. Quarterly book scrutinies were conducted by leadership to ensure consistency and celebrate student progress. These were supplemented by personalized notes from the principal to students.

Self-Feedback. Self-assessment was cultivated through reflection journals, checklists, and student presentations. Students engaged in guided reflection using rubrics and self-check tools to evaluate their progress and prepare for project showcases. These instruments fostered metacognition and empowered learners to take ownership of their development.

Assessments

Traditional assessments often emphasize memorization and high-stakes testing, which can foster passive learning and anxiety (Stiggins, 2002). In contrast, Project-Based Learning (PBL) offers a more equitable and engaging model that fosters deeper understanding and critical thinking (Bell, 2010). Research from Edutopia indicated that nearly half of students in PBL classrooms outperformed their traditional peers on AP exams, with especially notable gains among students from low-income backgrounds. These findings support the potential of PBL to provide authentic, student-centered learning even within accountability-focused systems.

Feedback from teachers, however, highlighted a need for clearer guidance on assessment within PBL contexts. One participant in the Teacher Survey stated, “I wish there were more discussions about how to assess students during PBL,” reflecting the complexity of aligning open-ended projects with fixed standards and ensuring consistency across classrooms.

Internal Assessments. To support authentic assessment practices, the school prioritized continuous, formative assessment embedded in project work. Rather than relying on cumulative exams, teachers assessed students' mastery of standards through hands-on tasks, performance-based rubrics, and digital platforms such as Seesaw and Google Classroom. Written tests were compiled into individual testing portfolios, which formed part of each student’s broader learning portfolio for the year.

A central tenet of our assessment culture was that evaluations should be growth-oriented and student-friendly. Progress was celebrated and made visible through self-monitoring tools like the Grade 4 clean water project tracker (see Figure 86), which displayed mastery levels using water droplet icons on a scale from Developing to Exceeding. Students were able to track their weekly progress against specific standards, fostering ownership, reflection, and intrinsic motivation. Alongside this, clearly defined rubrics, such as those shown below, guided student projects from inception to final product, offering both structure and clarity throughout the learning process.

Figure 86

Grade 4 Clean Water Campaign Tracker and Water Cycle Rubrics



Note. The mastery tracker visually displays student progress using water droplet icons aligned to assessment standards. The accompanying rubrics were used to evaluate both the visual (cover design) and narrative (story content) components of the Water Cycle project.

External Assessments. The school utilized the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) as its sole standardized external measure. Students in Grades 1–5 completed MAP tests in Reading and Mathematics across three sessions annually (Fall, Winter, Spring), with Language Usage included for Grades 2–5. These assessments offered longitudinal insight into student growth.

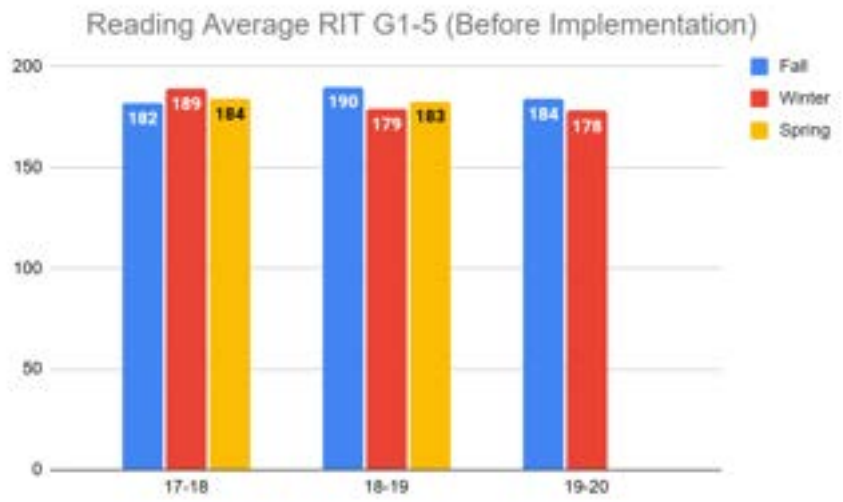
A key challenge for PBL environments is measuring authentic learning through conventional tools. As Ravitch notes, “Sometimes the most brilliant and intelligent students do not shine on standardized tests because they do not have standardized minds.” This highlights the importance of complementing standardized assessments with holistic evaluation methods.

To evaluate the impact of PBL implementation, average RIT scores in Reading and Mathematics were compared across two periods: pre-implementation (2017–2020) and post-implementation (2021–2024). MAP assessments were paused in 2020–2021 due to the pandemic, and Spring 2020 data were unavailable.

Reading RIT Score Trends. Prior to PBL, Reading scores ranged from 179 to 190, with minor fluctuations and a dip in the final year. Post-implementation data show a consistent upward trend, with Winter averages rising from 186 (2021–2022) to 194 (2023–2024) and Spring scores increasing from 190 to 197 over the same period.

Figure 87

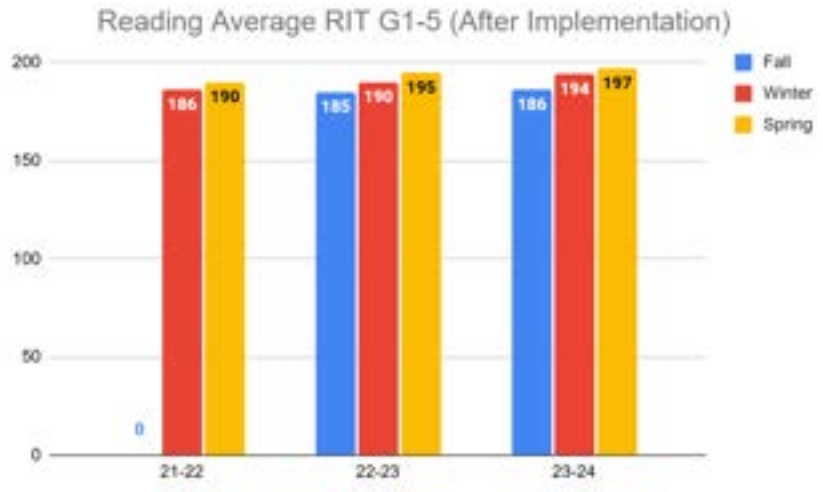
Average Reading RIT Scores for Grades 1–5 Before PBL Implementation (2017–2020)



Note. This chart presents average MAP Reading RIT scores across Fall, Winter, and Spring for Grades 1–5 in the three academic years prior to PBL implementation. Data shows minor fluctuations with a slight decline by 2019–2020.

Figure 88

Average Reading RIT Scores for Grades 1–5 After PBL Implementation (2021–2024)

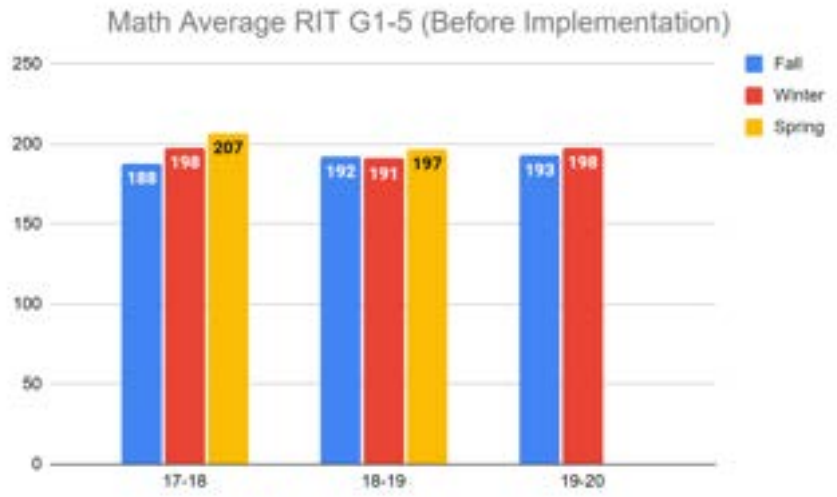


Note. This chart presents average MAP Reading RIT scores across Fall, Winter, and Spring for Grades 1–5 in the three academic years following PBL implementation. The upward trend across sessions suggests a positive trajectory in reading performance.

Mathematics RIT Score Trends. Math scores prior to PBL were inconsistent, with Spring averages falling from 207 (2017–2018) to 197 (2018–2019). Following PBL implementation, Math scores showed steady growth, particularly in Spring, increasing from 197 (2021–2022) to 204 (2023–2024).

Figure 89

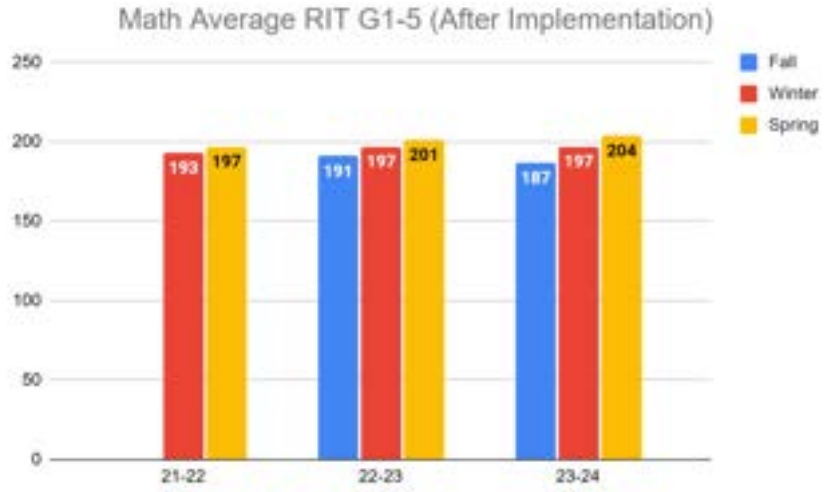
Average Math RIT Scores for Grades 1–5 Before PBL Implementation (2017–2020)



Note. This figure presents average MAP Math RIT scores for Grades 1–5 across Fall, Winter, and Spring sessions during the three years prior to the introduction of Project-Based Learning (PBL). The data show minor fluctuations and a relatively flat performance trend.

Figure 90

Average Math RIT Scores for Grades 1–5 After PBL Implementation (2021–2024)



S

Note. This figure shows average MAP Math RIT scores for Grades 1–5 across three academic years following PBL implementation. The post-implementation data reflect improved consistency and gradual growth, particularly in Spring assessments.

Grade-Level MAP Trends Over Six Years. A six-year grade-level analysis reveals more nuanced effects of PBL.

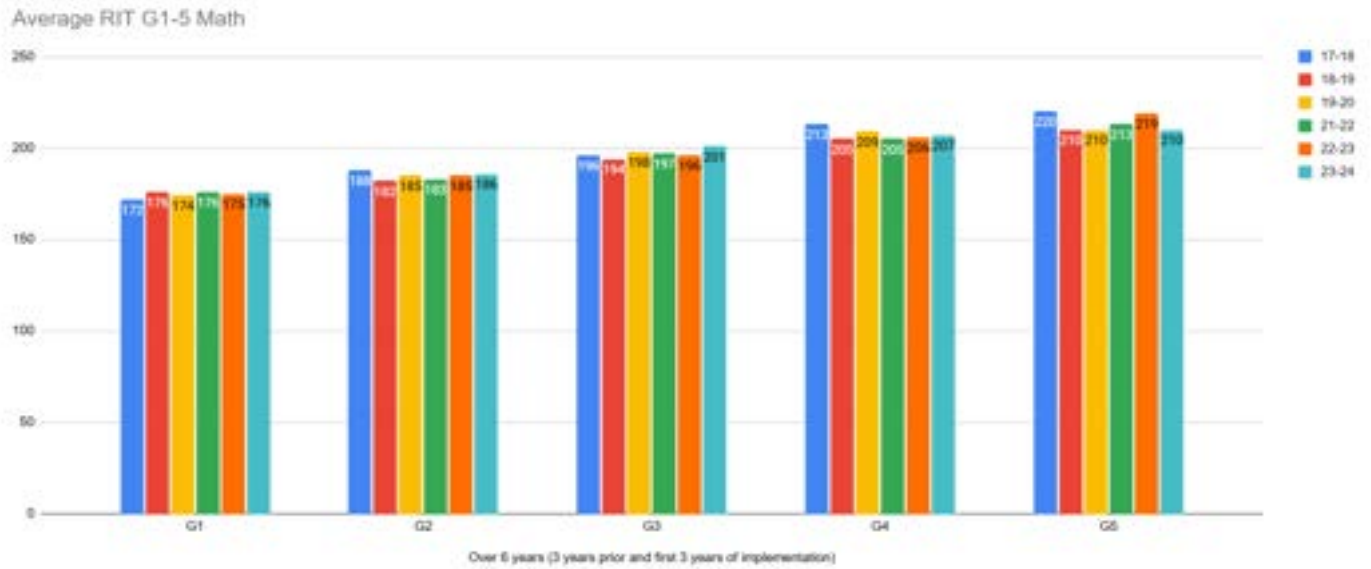
Mathematics:

- Grades 1–2: Scores remained relatively stable, indicating a need for stronger early math scaffolding.
- Grade 3: Improved from 196 (2017–2018) to 201 (2023–2024), suggesting benefits from real-world math integration.

- Grades 4–5: Grade 4 scores remained stable across six years, ranging narrowly between 205 and 209, indicating minimal change. Grade 5 showed the strongest improvement, rising from 210 in 2020–2021 to 219 in 2022–2023, before returning to 210 in 2023–2024.

Figure 91

Average Math RIT Scores by Grade Level (Grades 1–5) Across Six Years



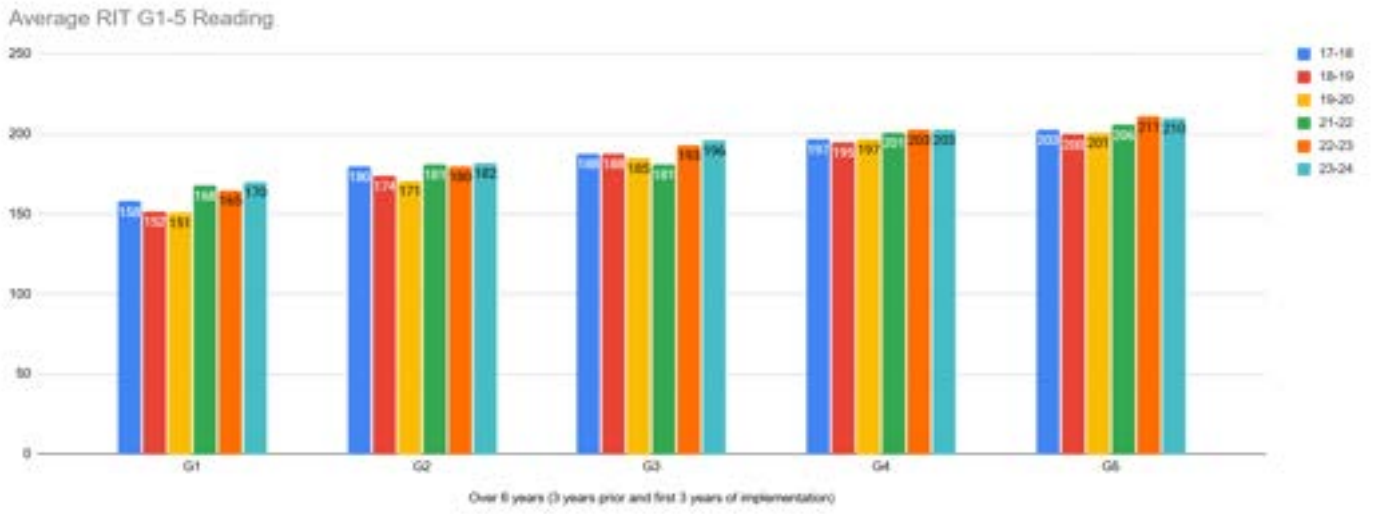
Note. This figure displays the average MAP Math RIT scores for Grades 1 through 5 over a six-year period, including three years prior to Project-Based Learning (PBL) implementation and the first three years following implementation. The comparison shows that while Grade 1 scores remained relatively stable, notable growth occurred in Grades 3–5 after PBL was introduced, particularly in Grade 5 where scores increased from 210 in 2020–2021 to 219 in 2022–2023.

Reading:

- Grades 1, 3–5: All demonstrated upward trends. Grade 5 increased from 203 (2017–2018) to 210 (2023–2024).
- Grade 2: Minor but consistent gains.

Figure 92

Average Reading RIT Scores by Grade Level (Grades 1–5) Across Six Years



Note. This figure shows the average MAP Reading RIT scores for Grades 1 to 5 from 2017–2018 to 2023–2024. The data includes three years before and three years after the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL). The most significant post-implementation growth occurred in Grades 4 and 5, with Grade 5 improving from 200 in 2019–2020 to 210 in 2023–2024. The trend suggests greater consistency and a positive trajectory in reading performance under the PBL model.

Interpretation of Impact. Overall, Reading scores demonstrated stronger and more consistent gains than Math, indicating that PBL may more effectively support literacy development. This aligns with research suggesting PBL enhances reading comprehension, vocabulary, and synthesis through authentic inquiry (Condliffe et al., 2017). While Math showed moderate gains, upper-grade declines suggest a need for tighter integration of content standards and PBL design.

Triangulation of Data. Triangulation was essential to capture diverse forms of learning evidence, including projects, journals, and presentations. Relying on standardized tests alone risks overlooking competencies such as creativity and collaboration. Future assessment should incorporate both qualitative artifacts and standardized data.

Adding a tool like the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) would further enhance the assessment framework. By evaluating students' verbal, non-verbal, quantitative, and spatial reasoning, CAT4 provides insight into cognitive potential beyond content knowledge, enabling more personalized and equitable learning strategies.

Reporting

Grading. The school implemented a Standards-Based Grading (SBG) system aligned with the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS), AERO, and NGSS frameworks. Student performance was evaluated using a four-point proficiency scale: 1 = Developing, 2 = Approaching, 3 = Meeting, and 4 = Exceeding grade-level expectations. A score of 3 indicated the student was on target, while a 4 signified mastery and the ability to apply or teach the skill, reflecting deeper learning. Research supports that mastery-based scales and performance descriptors promote student understanding over point accumulation (Brookhart, 2011; Guskey & Jung, 2013).

To promote student agency, each standard was reworded as a student-friendly "I Can" statement and integrated into lessons at multiple points. Younger students received printed statements in their workbooks, while older students recorded them independently. Visual tools were also used to reinforce understanding of the four-point scale. Prior to final submission, students completed self-assessments, compared them with teacher feedback, and identified next steps. This is an approach aligned with research advocating for student involvement in co-creating assessment tools (Andrade & Du, 2007).

Projects often spanned multiple standards, with rubrics addressing six to eight criteria. In upper grades, teachers collaborated with students to co-create rubrics, fostering transparency and deepening understanding of performance expectations.

Progress Reporting. Academic progress was communicated to parents through PowerSchool, the school's learning management system. Report cards displayed achievement levels for each subject's main strand, aligned with CCSS, NGSS, and ESLRs. Behavior, attendance, and engagement were also reported.

While this system effectively communicated overall performance, it was less suited for reflecting the depth and complexity of learning in PBL environments. For example, reporting a single score for "English Language Arts" did not reveal progress in subskills like evidence citation or persuasive writing. This limitation highlighted the need for a skills-based reporting system that disaggregates subjects into distinct competencies.

Incorporating narrative feedback would further enhance communication with families. As Hattie and Timperley (2007) argue, descriptive feedback supports student motivation and achievement when it is specific and improvement-focused. Narrative-rich, skills-based reporting would better reflect the developmental nature of learning and align more authentically with the principles of PBL.

Chapter 5: Conclusion, Implication and Recommendations

This chapter presents the major conclusions of the study, explores the implications of the findings for educational leadership and instructional practice, and offers strategic recommendations for improving and sustaining a blended Project-Based Learning (PBL) model in traditional school settings. The research was conducted as a case study of KPIS International School's elementary division in Bangkok, Thailand, and examined how leadership capacity, professional development, and school culture influenced the successful implementation of PBL.

The results indicate that intentional leadership, a distributed change model, and job-embedded professional development were central to transforming instructional practices from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches. The study further identified both strengths and areas for improvement in the integration of PBL, particularly concerning Mathematics instruction, assessment alignment, and sustaining teacher capacity over time.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

One of the study's strengths lies in its use of a multi-source data collection approach. By triangulating teacher surveys, stakeholder interviews, MAP growth data, and implementation artifacts, the research provided a comprehensive view of the PBL transformation process. The three-year longitudinal perspective also allowed for a rich examination of how leadership vision, cultural change, and professional learning evolved over time.

The role of distributed leadership emerged as a significant enabler of success. Empowering teacher leaders to guide planning, mentoring, and peer observation fostered a sense of ownership and collective efficacy. Additionally, strategic investments in professional development, aligned to the 12 Shifts for Student-Centered Classrooms, contributed to measurable improvements in instructional practice.

The research also illuminated a clear alignment between authentic learning experiences and improved literacy outcomes. Post-implementation MAP data showed consistent gains in reading across all grade levels, which supports prior research on the benefits of PBL in fostering reading comprehension and critical thinking (Condliffe et al., 2017; Thomas, 2000).

Limitations

Despite its strengths, this study has several limitations. First, it was conducted in a single international school setting, which limits the generalizability of the findings. The results are context-specific and may not directly apply to schools with different governance models, curricular frameworks, or faculty profiles.

Second, while teacher reflections and survey responses provided valuable insight, they are subject to self-reporting bias. Although data were triangulated with artifacts and observations, the absence of formal student interviews or focus groups limited direct insight into student voice and experience.

Third, the study relied primarily on MAP assessments to track academic progress. While these assessments are useful for measuring growth in core subjects, they do not fully capture essential PBL outcomes such as creativity, collaboration, and social-emotional learning. Frequent student tardiness also disrupted instructional time, potentially affecting data consistency.

Finally, as both the principal and lead researcher, I was embedded in the initiative. Although this enabled real-time insight, it required deliberate triangulation to reduce personal bias and strengthen research objectivity.

Recommendations for Improvement

Based on the data analysis and reflective insights from stakeholders, several key recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of the blended PBL model:

- Enhance Math Integration within PBL Units**:** While reading outcomes showed consistent growth, Mathematics scores in Grades 4 and 5 declined. Instructional teams should design interdisciplinary projects that more explicitly align with grade-level math standards, including skill scaffolding and opportunities for guided practice.
- Provide Targeted Coaching for Upper Grades: Additional professional development and instructional coaching are needed to support teachers in balancing inquiry with explicit instruction, particularly when teaching abstract or procedural math concepts.
- Strengthen Foundational Numeracy in Early Grades: Grade 1 Math scores remained static, indicating a need for enhanced foundational numeracy strategies within early PBL tasks. Incorporating manipulatives, games, and small-group interventions could boost engagement and growth.
- Continue Literacy-Rich, Authentic Projects: Reading success validates the integration of student-led research, presentations, and reflection. Literacy should remain embedded in all project phases, supported by clear rubrics and formative feedback.
- Invest in Data-Driven Planning Cycles: Annual review of MAP scores, alongside classroom assessments and teacher observations, should guide instructional decision-making. Leadership teams should model how to use data for planning and reflection.
- Formalize Middle Leadership Structures: To address staff turnover and sustain momentum, schools should formalize teacher leadership roles, such as grade-level PBL leads, to distribute responsibility and build internal capacity.
- Expand Family and Community Engagement: Deeper parent involvement in project exhibitions, experiential learning, and feedback mechanisms can strengthen home–school partnerships and build

broader buy-in for the PBL approach.

Recommendations for Further Research

This case study opens several avenues for future research that can deepen understanding and improve the implementation of blended PBL models:

1. Longitudinal Studies on Academic and SEL Impact: Research that tracks student achievement and social-emotional development over multiple years would provide stronger evidence of PBL's sustained impact.
2. Comparative Studies Across Schools and Models: Investigating outcomes in schools using traditional models, fully inquiry-based models, and blended models can reveal which conditions best support student growth and teacher engagement.
3. Impact of PBL on Specific Learner Groups: Future studies should examine how blended PBL affects English Language Learners (ELLs), Students of Determination (special needs), and gifted students. Differentiated strategies may be needed to ensure equity.
4. Role of SEL Integration in PBL: Exploring how embedding social-emotional learning within the PBL structure (rather than treating it as an add-on) influences student behavior, values, and classroom culture would add practical value.
5. Leadership Approaches and Organizational Change: Further research could examine how leadership styles (transformational, instructional, distributed) affect PBL implementation success and sustainability across diverse educational settings.

Conclusion

The implementation of a blended Project-Based Learning model at KPIS International School demonstrates that meaningful instructional transformation is possible when leadership, professional development, and culture align toward a shared vision. Over three years, teachers evolved from passive implementers to active designers of inquiry-rich learning experiences. Students demonstrated increased engagement, agency, and connection to their learning, while families became more invested in the school community.

Though challenges remain ,particularly around Mathematics integration and teacher retention, the case study provides a practical framework for other schools seeking to adopt or refine blended PBL models. The strategic use of distributed leadership, job-embedded coaching, reflective tools, and stakeholder involvement proved essential to building sustainable capacity.

As education systems around the world adapt to changing student needs and global demands, this study underscores the importance of cultivating schools where curiosity, collaboration, and creativity drive learning forward.

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