



VILLAGE

HIGH SCHOOL

AN ACADEMY DISTRICT 20 SCHOOL

Who are we?

- Emery Gorsch, 10th grade student
- Katie Flanagan, Science teacher
- Nathan Gorsch, Principal/founder



We believe...

- That the real power of online learning is not location, but the opportunity to personalize the experience for each student.
- That a school can have both high expectations and a nurturing environment.
- That school is not always the most important thing in a student's life.
- That the world has changed more rapidly than our current educational system.
- That rather than preparing students for life beyond high school, a school should operate like an adult workplace.



We believe...

- That students should not have to sacrifice a great academic experience or social experience to pursue their passions.
- That students should have a loud voice in decisions made about their school.
- That when students are treated like adults, they act like adults.
- That students need teachers to be a mentor/coach, not to just share content knowledge.
- That school needs to change



How does it work?

- A modern high school: Hybrid/Blended program that maximizes the best of online learning (personalization) and in-person experiences (collaboration)
- Started as a pilot program with 25 9th graders in 2015-2016 and asked the question: if we could build school from scratch, what would it look like?
- 430 students currently enrolled and a substantial waiting list of over 100 families waiting to get in



Online Core Classes

- Competency/mastery-based curriculum: We use Accelerate Education for our courses and each course has a teacher that oversees the curriculum
- Students must show mastery to move forward in their courses (pre and post tests)
- Honors options are available for each core class, 8-10 AP options each year
- Flexible due dates (due date for the course, not individual assignments)



In Person Elective Classes

- Signature Electives
 - 9th Grade: Freshmen Seminar, Global Health
 - 10th Grade: Contemporary Problems, Communication in a Complex World
 - 11th Grade: Personal Finance, Civics
 - 12th Grade: Career Explorations, Internship opportunities
- Electives
 - World Languages: Spanish, French, American Sign Language (beginner through advanced)
 - Studio Art/Music: Art 1-4, Graphic Design, Digital Photography, Art in Public Places, Ceramics, Guitar, Piano, Music Appreciation
 - PE happens primarily offsite (Hybl Center, Crunch Fitness, Play it Now Sports, Dance Unlimited, Bowling/Putt Putt, Fitness Hiking/Walking, etc)
 - Science in Sports, Engineering, Forensic Science, Popular Culture, Science in the Imagination, Global Art Perspectives, Multicultural America, Science in Society, Abnormal Psychology, Renewable Energy, Sports/Leadership Psychology, Film as Literature, Voices in Conflict, Sports Marketing, Emerging Leaders, Contemporary Women's Voices, Explore Mars Science, Native American Studies, International Relations
 - Individual Projects (Beekeeping, Podcasts, Adulting 101, Interior Design, Olympic Mindset, Architecture, Filmmaking, Archery, Gardening, Jam Band, Complexities of Poverty)

Student Perspective

- I love school which is not normal for a teenager!
- The school model allows me to be in charge of my own learning
- The flexibility around attendance allows me to pursue my passions outside of school



Staff at The Village

- 36 staff members
- Principal and Assistant Principal
- 3-4 teachers in each core content area, 2 Art, 2 PE, World Language, Intervention
- 2 Counselors: 9/10/Social Emotional and 11/12/College & Career
- Security, receptionist, building manager, registrar, bookkeeper, admin assistant



Staff Perspective

- Job of a teacher is more challenging than ever with less time to build relationships with students
- In this model, I am able to pursue passions alongside of students
- I have true life balance (mom, wife, educator) by using digital tools to be more efficient with my time



Flexible Schedule

- Flexible Schedule: Our building is open from 7:30-3:30 Monday-Thursday and we operate on an alternating block (blue day/silver day/blue day/silver day)
- Most students attend electives 4-5 out of 8 periods and then have open periods for online work, teacher help, outside activities, etc.
- We offer blended math for students that want in person instruction for each of our levels of math
- Fridays are a flexible day and are used for extra help or staff planning days.
- Friday Intensive Electives: Clean up Colorado, Ceramics, Outdoor Fitness, Fit/Hike/Walk, Rocky Mountain High, International Foods, Art in Public Places, Field Based Environmental Science, Space Business



A workplace for high school students

- We moved into our new building in September, 2020
- 1355 Kelly Johnson Blvd, the former Air Academy Federal Credit Union
- Operate like an adult workplace, bought a former bank
- Remodeled the building with our school model in mind



Sample Schedules

Student A

- 8:15 Arrival
- 8:15-9:30 Blended Geometry
- 9:45-11:00 Weights
- 11:00-12:00 Lunch, office hours with teachers
- 12:00-1:15 Open period, work on core classes
- 1:30-1:45 Mentor meeting
- 2:00 Depart
- 2:30 Piano lessons
- Friday Intensive (Ceramics)

Student B

- 7:30 Morning training session with coach
- 9:15 Arrival
- 9:15-9:30 Mentor meeting
- 9:45-11:00 Spanish 1
- 11:00-12:00 Lunch w/ friends
- 12:00-1:15 Engineering
- 1:30-2:45 AP Biology
- 2:45-3:30 Office hours, work on core classes

Student C

- 8:30 Arrival
- 8:30-9:00 Catch up with friends in student union
- 9:00-9:30 Talk to Algebra 2 teacher
- 9:45-11:00 Personal Finance
- 11:00-12:00 Lunch
- 12:00-1:15 PE Class
- 1:15-2:45 Theater (AAHS)
- Evening: Personal learning

The best of all worlds

Opportunity to pursue passion

Family time



Rigorous academic experience

Rich social experience

Considerations for your committee

1. How can you create a system that rewards risk taking?
2. Can you financially support systems to develop new models?
3. Is “seat time” the best measure of student learning?
4. What accountability measures support this work by allowing freedom, while also still holding school accountable for student learning?
5. Can you provide flexibility so that each model can meet the needs of their local community?
6. There is no “right way” to do hybrid/online. Some schools lease content, others develop their own curriculum, some do in person core classes, others do electives in person, some require daily in-person attendance while others use work completion for attendance



Q & A

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