Arkansas Department of Education
Schools of Innovation Application

Arkansas Department of Education
Division of Learning Services
Four Capitol Mall, Room 306-B
Little Rock, AR 72201
Email: ade.schoolsofinnovation@arkansas.gov
Phone: 501-683-4800

School LEA: 7208062

School Name: WEST FORK HIGH SCHOOL

Submitter Information

Submitter Name:	IRIS LONG
Submitter E-mail:	llong@wftigers.org
Submitter Phone:	4798392231
Date of application:	5/24/2016

District Information

District LEA:	7208000
District Name:	WEST FORK SCHOOL DISTRICT
Superintendent Name:	JOHN KARNES
Superintendent Email:	jkarnes@wftigers.org

General Questions

Special Conditions:	Need Improvement School
School Rating:	B
Is this a brand new LEA?	No
Is this an ALE School?	No

Vision and Mission

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Mission

The mission of West Fork High School Personalized Learning Academy is to develop a personalized learning environment that produces self-motivated students who are independent, critical thinkers and who collaboratively participate in the learning environment.

Vision

The staff and community of West Fork High School understands that each student needs a personalized learning environment that allows each learner to obtain his/her maximum potential. The learning experiences should be real, rigorous, and relevant with cross-curricular connections that prepare students for college or career. Adult mentors will be instrumental in meeting the needs of the whole child while providing the support needed for each learner to take risks and become a self-motivated, life-long learner.

Significance

West Fork School District has seen a 12% decrease in student enrollment over the past 7 years. As a result, difficult decisions related to staffing and services provided to students have been a necessity. We continue to look for the new and innovative ways to meet the needs of all learners with limited resources. This year we began with a survey to students in grades 7 through 12 asking questions related to how our current school structure is working and/or not working for them. It was eye opening to see that many students responded with the desire to have more control over the learning environment, especially the pace at which they could move through a course. We also hosted a community meeting to seek input from the parents and community on suggested changes to the school structure. The parents' comments mirrored that of the students with the desire for the school to allow for more student choice and control in the learning environment. Additionally, parents also pointed out the need for more course offerings for students based on student interest.

We feel that the ability to rethink our mission, vision and purpose through redesigning our learning environment into one that is more personalized with more student choice that better prepares students for college or career will allow for us to efficiently meet the needs of all learners. The School of Innovation process has not only given us an avenue to enhance the conversations at the district level, but has also challenged us to think about how a 21st Century school should operate.

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Goals and Performance Targets

Rationale for Innovation

Rationale
West Fork High School staff use data to evaluate and inform instructional practices and student learning. Based on the 2014-2015 PARCC data, 25% of the non-TAGG group and 7% of the TAGG group students were deemed on target to be college and career ready in mathematics. Also 57% of the non-TAGG group and 15% of the TAGG group were classified as on target to be college and career ready in literacy.

Staff members also use the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments to measure student growth over time. The data indicate that 49% of students in grades 9 and 10 are meeting growth expectations in mathematics and 54% in reading. Further disaggregation of the data shows that nearly 78% of the students who score above the 50th percentile on the math assessment are meeting typical growth expectations, while only 24% of those scoring below the 50th percentile are meeting growth expectations. In reading, 62% of those scoring above the 50th percentile are meeting growth expectations and 41% of those scoring below the 50th percentile are meeting growth targets.

Approximately 55% of our students qualify for the free or reduced lunch program due to household income. We have students that are classified as homeless, come from one-parent homes, or are being raised by family members other than the biological parents. Many of these students fall behind academically and become disengaged in the learning process due to academic skill gaps and social challenges. We will create an environment that supports more personalized time with each student to meet the needs of the whole child. A major support system will come in the form of a mentoring program. The research indicates many benefits of using adult mentors to support all students, especially at-risk adolescents. Mentoring programs strive to build positive, trusting relationships between each student and at least one adult. Programs that focus on supporting youth with education, social skills and relationship were more often effective than ones that focus on behavior problems, and programs that last one year or more were also found to more effective (Child Trends, 2013).

The mentoring program will be a welcome addition to the personalized learning environment at West Fork High School. The mentoring program will not only create lasting relationships with the student but also create a respectful lasting relationship with the families of our students. A personalized learning plan for each student will emphasize the following areas: academic rigor, social and emotional growth, and establishing long-term supportive relationship with an adult mentor.

Our teachers are constantly looking for ways to get more 1-on-1 time with our most at-risk students. Each teacher knows that our current schedule that includes short 45-minute periods with 20 or more students is not allowing time to meet the specialized needs of each student. Through the personalized learning model, we will develop teacher skills that focus on a student-centered personalized learning experience. The professional development model for the adults will also follow a learner-centered personalized learning experience.

Currently students are required to move at a pace that is dictated by the teacher and peers in the classroom, as well as, meet minimum seat-time requirements to obtain the Carnegie Unit. In our proposed model, students can be accelerated into more rigorous courses as they complete competencies for prerequisite courses. Additionally, our model will allow students increased amounts of time in areas in which they struggle. The increased time will allow for any point-in-time remediation that might be needed.

In the first year, a pod of 3 to 6 teachers from the areas of mathematics, science, language arts and social studies will work collaboratively to customize the learning experience for each student in the Personalized Learning Academy. Each student in the Personalized Learning Academy will participate in a 4-period block for a total of 205 minutes each day; the remaining 4 courses will take place in a traditional setting with 45 minutes per course. Students' in the traditional model will continue to take 8 courses of 45 minutes per period. Each pod of teachers will have the same common planning time to allow for ongoing student-centered conversations

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and time to allow for embedded professional development. Future years of the model will see an expansion into more content areas and elective courses.

Beginning in August 2014, West Fork High School began providing a Chrome book for each student in grades 9 through 12. Teachers have been incorporating technology tools that support and extend the learning process for students. In August 2015, in the second phase of our 1-to-1 initiative, we began offering online high school and college courses with approximately 125 course enrollments each semester. Moving to a personalized learning environment in phase three of the initiative is a natural next step in our transformation from a traditional setting to a setting that fosters 21st Century learning processes.

Goal	Goal Description	
1	To close the achievement gap between the TAGG group and Non-TAGG group.	
2	To increase the number of students who are completing rigorous coursework.	
3	To increase the level of student engagement in the learning process.	

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Innovations

Innovation	Purpose
Personalized Learning Model	A Personalized Learning Academy (PLA) will allow students in grades 9-12 more choice in how they master course material using a blending learning format. Students will have control of the path, pace, place and time that they use to complete course requirements. Students that grasp concepts easily and need less 1-on-1 time with a teacher will be allowed to progress through course requirements without being held back by those that need more time to understand concepts. Students that need more 1-on-1 time with a teacher, mentor or tutor will be afforded the time needed due to a flexible learning schedule focus on competencies and not simply time on task. Student will have the choice to work in a 21st Century work space (library) as well as in the classrooms of the teachers in the pod. Each student in the PLA will maintain (with support from both, parents and an adult mentor) a personalized learning plan. The personalized learning plan will also strengthen students' soft skills expected in the workplace: communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, adaptability, problem solving, critical observation, and conflict resolution. Each student that is accepted for the PLA will have the opportunity to be placed back into the traditional classrooms within the first 3-4 weeks of the school year. However, if students begin to fall behind, we want the student to remain in the PLA because additional support through 1-on-1 time with both teachers and mentors can be provided to help the student get back on track. However, if the student is transferred back to the traditional setting, the student will not have the supports needed to fill in the gaps for the student. The PLA will allow us to consider more college and career offerings for all students. Flexibility will allow for students to progress through areas more quickly providing for increased time to obtain skills training and/or college training. Yearly data will be collected to measure progress toward meeting our goals. Data will be analyzed by the Council of Innovation, and adjustments to the plan will be made as necessary and submitted to the Commissioner for review. Findings will be published and presented to parents, teachers, students, community, and school board.

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Innovation	Purpose
School-based Mentoring	Mentoring allows for students to build a deeper, lasting relationship with at least one adult in the school. Some benefits of mentoring programs are: •Students get more one-on-one counseling than in traditional models; •Students usually have a more clear plan for the future; •Students take higher-level academic courses and concentrate on career technical courses; •Student electives are aligned with the focused goals for the future; •Students see a connection between classes and future goals; and •Students receive more timely help when they encounter problems which allows for increases in student performance. (South Dakota Department of Education, n.d.) Each adult mentor will be assigned a group of students that they will work with over multiple years until students graduate. Together, the parents, mentor, and student will develop a personalized learning plan and monitor the progress regularly. Mentors will meet with students at least one time per week and make contact with parents at least one time per month.

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Innovation Plan

Plan Date	Action	Expected Outcome
03/10/2016	Curriculum Advances	All current pre-Advanced Placement courses will be compared to the parallel content courses. We will identify the key activities, projects, and units that raise the level of a course to Pre-AP. These activities, projects, and units will be added as optional portions to the "regular" course. This will allow students to complete the more advanced work in a less threatening environment. We hope that more students will show success in the early advanced tasks and continue to complete the advanced tasks raising the level and depth of their understanding in the content area. This should allow for increased numbers of students completing more advanced coursework.
04/20/2016	Redesign High School Schedule	The high school schedule will be modified to support the flexible use of teacher and student time into a larger block of time—205 minutes—rather than the current eight 45 minute blocks that are used. Staffing decisions will be made based on the needs for this new design. Common planning will be in place for teachers in the PLA to allow for daily collaboration around student data and progress.
02/18/2016	Curriculum Design	Core teachers will work collaboratively to enhance their current curriculum resources to allow for more differentiated experiences for students. The curriculum will be based on the Arkansas Content Frameworks with an increased expectation of rigor and relevance. The curriculum design will also include a focus on cross-curricular connections to include all core areas, art, music, careers and technology. The course content will be loaded into an online learning management system (LMS) to aid in the differentiated delivery to students. The LMS will allow for the tracking of student mastery of skills. The data will be available to parents, teachers and students.

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Plan Date	Action	Expected Outcome
06/15/2017	Additional Curriculum Design	We will add additional core courses to the PLA. Teachers of elective courses will be invited to develop blended course materials that allow for a personalized learning experience for all students. All blended courses will be required to contain real, relevant and rigorous content and high expectations similar to core classes in the PLA.
07/20/2017	Increase Work-based Internship Opportunities	As students begin to successfully complete graduation requirements at a faster pace, the students will be able to spend more time in a work-based internship. The flexible schedule of a PLA will reduce scheduling conflicts that might prevent a student from participating in an internship.

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Requested Waivers

Code section, Rule, or Local Policy	Goal	Rationale
14.03 Clock hours for unit of credit	1	Students will be allowed to show mastery of concepts/skills and progress at a personalized pace through the curriculum. A waiver from the 120 clock hours' requirement will be necessary to allow students to progress as needed. When students have completed the required coursework at the mastery level, they will be able to begin working on the next course in the sequence. We want this waiver to apply to any course offered within the Personalized Learning Academy only. In year 1, we will be including math, English, science and social studies courses in the PLA. In year 2 and beyond, we will be adding elective courses to include career and technical courses.
10.02.5 Class Size Maximum	2	Students will have control of the time, place, path and pace at which they work through the curriculum. Therefore, students will be allowed to find a comfortable location in which to work and get support. This flexibility might result in a teacher hosting over 30 students that he/she is monitoring. The waiver from the maximum class size requirements will be necessary for teachers and students to choose when and where to participate in the learning process. We are asking that a max of 40 students be allowed in any given class with the 150 daily maximum to still remain in tact. This waiver is tied to goals #2 and #3.
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Council of Innovation

District:

School:

Minority at School   7.00%

Council Member Name	Representative Group	Minority	Position	Date Elected
Andrew Stone	Teacher	N	Member	12/18/2015
Morgan Wunder	Student	N	Member	12/14/2015
Kennah Eden	Student	N	Member	12/14/2015
Chana Keiss	Parent	N	Member	1/5/2016
Carl Clements	Other Staff	N	Member	12/18/2015
Valleta Scott	Parent	N	Member	1/5/2016
Kenlea Baker	Parent	N	Member	1/5/2016
Kandy Lichty	Other Staff	N	Member	12/18/2015
Jan Throgmorton	Community	Y	Member	1/5/2016
Amy Simco	Community	N	Member	1/5/2016
Susan Neyman	Parent	N	Member	1/5/2016
Sarah Jones	Teacher	N	Member	12/18/2015
John Crowder	Administrator	N	Facilitator (non-voting)	12/18/2015

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Shared Leadership

Meeting Date	Meeting Purpose	No. of Teachers Present	No. of School Staff Present	No. of Parents Present	No. of Community Members Present	No. of Students Present	Meeting Outcome/ Planned Next Steps
12/1/2015	Campus Leadership Team Meeting	0	0	0	0	0	Share info from site visit-- plan to share with teachers, parents, students
12/18/2015	Staff presentation on Personalized Learning & COI Representatives	25	6	0	0	0	Attend 1st COI Meeting on 1/7/16
1/5/2016	Community Meeting to seek innovation ideas and elect representatives for COI	5	1	9	2	0	Attend 1st COI meeting on 1/7/16
1/7/2016	COI Meeting	2	2	4	2	2	Provide suggestions and select working group to work on details to bring back to meeting on 1/26/16
1/18/2016	Staff Meeting to share notes from 1st COI meeting	26	6	0	0	0	Provide responses to questions that were posed during the 1st COI meeting
1/26/2016	2nd COI Meeting to dicuss draft proposal to submit to ADE for feedback	4	2	4	2	1	Approved the draft to be submitted to ADE

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Meeting Date	Meeting Purpose	No. of Teachers Present	No. of School Staff Present	No. of Parents Present	No. of Community Members Present	No. of Students Present	Meeting Outcome/ Planned Next Steps
3/10/2016	Parent Meeting about SOI	3	1	13	1	5	Obtain more information about SOI plan
2/29/2016	3rd COI Meeting	4	0	5	0	0	Vote to approve plan to be submitted to staff for a vote
3/15/2016	Parent CAP Meeting	27	4	49	0	40	Obtain more information about SOI plan
3/17/2016	Parent CAP Meeting	27	4	49	0	40	Obtain more information about SOI plan

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Election Results

Number of certified and classified on staff:	44
Number of staff who voted:	42
Number of staff who voted for proposed Plan:	40
Number of staff who voted against the proposed plan:	2
Percentage of staff voting in favor of the proposed Plan of Innovation:	95

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Professional Development Scope

Professional Development Plan Part 1

Date	Audience	Purpose of the Session
9/29/2015	District Admin, MS Teacher, HS Teacher	School of Innovation Conference in Little Rock to learn more about innovation and the application process
10/13/2015	Administrators, teachers	Meeting with UA Office of Innovation to discuss application process and potential site visits
11/5/2015	Administrators, teachers	Visit to Western Wayne Schools in Indiana to observe personalized learning model in action and visit with staff and students about their experiences
11/18/2015	Administrators, teachers	Campus Leadership Team Meeting -- Share the information gained from the school site visit
12/11/2015	Administrators, teachers	Office of Innovation Summit—increase the number of teachers that learn about personalized learning model; begin fleshing out the details of a plan of implementation
12/18/2015	Administrators, teachers, other staff	High School Staff meeting to discuss the ideas of personalized learning model, take suggestions and concerns, elect certified and classified representative to serve on the Council of Innovation
1/18/2016	Administrators, teachers, other staff	Professional Development Day – discuss the input from the first Council of Innovation meeting, seek input from entire staff, discuss mentoring and personalized learning benefits and processes

Professional Development Plan Part 2

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Date	Audience	Purpose of the Session
2/4/2016	Teachers, administrators	Deeper Understanding of Personalized Learning Model: WFHS Design
3/15/2016	Parents, students, community	Introduction to WFHS Personalized Learning Model: Responsibilities for parents, students, and staff
3/3/2016	Teachers, administrators	Rigorous Curriculum Design – expectations for curriculum design, collaborative work time to enhance curriculum resources, peer review process to insure quality of design
4/26/2016	Administrators, teachers, other staff	Mentoring 101: How to mentor high school students in a personalized learning model Schoology 101: How to Use the LMS to Enhance Personalized Learning [Note: PD on these two topics will be ongoing throughout the school year. This is just the initial training.]
8/11/2016	Students, parents	The Tools Needed for Personalized Learning: Study skills, organizational skills, netiquette, and learning management system (ongoing)
10/20/2016	Administrators, teachers, other staff, parents, students	Reflection on the process and progress to date (survey or focus group data collection) —use data to make modifications if needed
1/8/2017	Administrators, teachers, other staff, parents, students	Reflection on the process and progress to date (survey or focus group data collection) —use data to make modifications if needed
3/15/2017	Administrators, teachers, other staff, parents, students	Reflection on the process and progress to date (survey or focus group data collection) —use data to make modifications if needed
5/30/2017	Administrators, teachers, other staff, parents, students	Reflection on the process and progress to date (survey or focus group data collection) —use data to make modifications if needed