

Project Based Learning Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Project Based Learning?

Project Based Learning (PBL) is a dynamic instructional model in which students actively explore real-world problems and challenges, acquiring deep knowledge and understanding through creative problem solving, critical thinking, contact with real-world professionals/resources, and meaningful collaboration through the design and development of rigorous projects.

2. What are the benefits of learning via PBL?

PBL provides all students:

- Improved ability to apply knowledge in real-life situations
- Increased opportunity to work in high-performing teams
- Exposure to work/career interests
- Challenging, motivating, and meaningful work
- Opportunity to build skills in critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and creativity/ innovation
- Increased time-management, independence, and project management skills

3. How will participation in the PBL pilot impact my student's ability to participate in the music program?

There is no impact on my child's ability to participate in the music program.

4. What is the impact on the study of World Language?

There is no impact on the study of World Language.

5. How do colleges and universities view Project Based Learning?

- Students taught in non-traditional methods bring a fresh perspective
- PBL students learn to be thinkers and problem solvers, evidenced in students' personal essays, their ability to maintain discussions in interviews, and confidence in taking on long term projects.
- Colleges & Universities want leaders who think independently, and can solve problems creatively. PBL is a vehicle that trains young minds to think in these ways.
- Students are expected to showcase their learning by publicly presenting to their peers, teachers, and the community-at-large. This develops speaking skills, increases investment, and helps students find their passions which all translate into college readiness.

6. Will participation in the PBL pilot impact my student's ability to take AP courses?

Yes. English, Social Studies and Science are integrated into the PBL curriculum, so AP courses in these three subjects will be limited to courses taken as electives. AP Courses outside the above subjects, such as mathematics, world language and art may be scheduled for eligible students.

7. Will there be an Honors option within PBL?
Yes. Honors requirements are codified and detailed through teacher derived student contracts for English, Social Studies and Science. Any 1, 2 or 3 of these courses may be taken at the Honors level.
8. Will my student be adequately prepared for the Literature and Biology Keystone exams?
Yes. PBL content will align with PA Core Standards, upon which the Keystone tests are based.
9. Which major courses are incorporated in the PBL program?
English, Social Studies, and Science. For grade 10 students, Health will also be provided during the PBL block.
10. Will my child's IEP, GIEP, and/or 504 plan be implemented?
Yes, IEPs, GIEPs, and 504 plans are legally safeguarded in PA. These designations do not impact a student's eligibility for the PBL pilot.
11. How does PBL programming affect athletic and extracurricular schedules?
The PBL block will occur within the regular CHS school day, and will not impact any extracurricular activities.
12. Will kids be in the same group all year, or will they vary based on projects?
A key tenet of PBL is to develop the interpersonal skills needed to succeed in the 21st Century. As such, students will be in constant rotations with different sized groups, different individuals, and groups aligned with different goals and outcomes. PBL is a socially dynamic approach to learning. There will also be tasks and assessments undertaken individually.
13. Is this experience going to continue into 11th grade after next year's pilot?
Yes, the program will expand into 11th grade in the 2018-19 school year.
14. If a child joins the PBL pilot, is he/she automatically enrolled in PBL for the following year?
Yes.
15. If PBL is not a good match for a particular student, is that students able to opt out?
Yes; the CHS drop/add procedures can be found in the course selection guide.
16. When will student registration take place?
In January 2017, a digital sign-up form will be made available via e-mail to current 8th and 9th grade students, and at www.cheltenham.org/PBL .