An Inside Look

Jefferson County Public Schools

Location: Jefferson County, Colorado • Type: Urban and Suburban

Impetus for Change
Jefferson County Public Schools, or “Jeffco”, in the metro area of Denver, Colorado, includes 155 schools on 168 campuses with more than 80,000 students enrolled across the district. “Our community values work experience very highly,” said Matt Flores, Chief Academic Officer at Jeffco Public Schools, who sources feedback from community partners like the Arvada Chamber of Commerce and local businesses for insight on what they’re looking for in future employees.

In 2018, Flores’ team was offered an opportunity to attend the New Tech Annual Conference (NTAC), where members from five school teams interested in PBL and deeper learning were able to explore the NTN model; he left the conference impressed in PBL and deeper learning were able to explore where members from five school teams interested in PBL and deeper learning were able to explore the NTN model; he left the conference impressed with how the model prepares students for college and career success.

“We knew NTN was an excellent match for Arvada High School right away,” said Flores. “The outcomes from the NTN model in the classroom matched the desires of our community for students to gain experience that translates back into the success of our community long-term, along with the critical skill-set they were developing at school.”

Engaging with NTN Services
In addition to participating in NTN events like Beyond NTAC and Leadership Summit, Jeffco district leaders participated in workshops led by NTN facilitators to develop their capacity to lead schools in the work.

In January 2019, Jeffco leaders participated in a workshop titled “Leading Deeper Learning” from NTN District and School Development Senior Director Nick Kappelhof. “This workshop brought more than 20 Jeffco school and district leaders together to explore not just what deeper learning looks like in practice, but also how leaders can create conditions for deeper learning to thrive in schools,” said Kappelhof.

Where the Work is Now

“We’re one of the leaders in the state when it comes to kids being successful in concurrent enrollment,” said Flores. “With the type of learning happening at Arvada High School, our kids are well-positioned to be successful in concurrent enrollment opportunities which gives them access to college academics and creates a better chance for success in college before graduating high school.”

Flores shares that the collaboration with community partners is one of the truest practical applications of Jeffco student skills. “The relevance these opportunities provide to our kids is born out of the skills they’ll learn in our New Tech schools and across the district,” explained Flores.

Jeffco district and school leaders continue to receive feedback from local employment partners regarding the performance of students enrolled in work-based apprenticeship and internship programs. “We’ve heard lots of positive feedback from our partners,” reported Flores. “They’ve told us our students are successful, they’re problem solvers, and they add value to their industry.” So valuable, in fact, that in 2019, the City of Arvada Chamber of Commerce awarded Jeffco Public Schools with the Partner of the Year Award for the success of the NTN model in the classroom matched the desires of our community for students to gain experience that translates back into the success of our community long-term, along with the critical skill set they were developing at school.”

Chief Academic Officer Matt Flores

Hopes for the Future

Jeffco’s district and school teams just implemented a second New Tech model at North Arvada Middle School, one of the feeder middle schools to Arvada High School. Middle school students will participate in a program focused on improving student outcomes through project-based learning and deeper learning practices in the classroom, hallmarks of the New Tech model. “With the implementation of the New Tech model at North Arvada Middle School, we’re extending the type of post-secondary preparation that’s happening at Arvada High School – now, it’s beginning in the sixth grade,” said Flores. “It’s only going to set the students, and the community, up for that much more success.”

The district continues to grow its support for post-secondary options for students like concurrent enrollment, apprenticeships, and internships by building a roster of career partnerships on behalf of the students.

Current partners include Lockheed Martin, Marriott, Frontier Airlines, Army, Navy, Colorado State Patrol, engineering firms, and many more. “Our future at Jeffco is focused on creating opportunities for our kids to be successful in the workforce before they go to college, before they get the job themselves,” said Flores. “That has been a huge value-add to our entire county, and something we’re putting extra emphasis on in upcoming school years.”

88,088 Students 17 High Schools 05 Alternative Schools 17 Middle Schools 84 Elementary Schools

Photo Courtesy of Jefferson County Public Schools