Strategic Plan Goals:
  ● SS Goal 1: Establish a district instructional framework for all grade levels PreK-12, based on high-yield best practice and culturally relevant strategies within a personalized learning environment so all children receive equitable educational experiences.
  ● SS Goal 2: Empower and support all student groups to meet growth and achievement goals.

Education Elements and the Work in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

WHO IS EDUCATION ELEMENTS?

Education Elements (EE) works with districts to build and support dynamic school systems that meet the needs of every learner, today and tomorrow. Their team consists of former teachers, principals, coaches, district leaders, program developers, industry experts, and designers. EE strives to take the time to understand the unique challenges school leaders face, and then customize their approach to professional development for each district. Over the past nine years, EE has served hundreds of districts and as a learning organization they have refined the methods of implementing a personalized learning philosophy. EE offers expertise, design thinking, facilitation and the spirit of collaboration, along with an extensive toolkit of resources and technology, to deliver sustainable results.

WHAT IS PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

According to iNACOL, personalized learning is “tailoring learning for each student’s strengths, needs, and interests—including enabling student voice and choice in what, how, when and where they learn—to provide flexibility and supports to ensure mastery of the highest standards possible.” (iNACOL).

Education Elements takes an expansive view of personalized learning and believes there are many valid approaches to personalize learning for students. When implementing personalized learning, a balance of research and known best practices with local context at the school and
district level are integrated into the design. EE believes that personalized learning means that every student participates in learning experiences and receives instruction they need, when they need it. With a focus on incorporating student choice and agency into instructional decisions, students remain at the center. Teachers, coaches, school leaders and district leaders play a key role in nurturing a culture of innovation that allows all learners to thrive. EE’s experience is that personalized learning is most successful, at scale, when classrooms are redesigned to be student-centered, technology is used effectively as a tool to deepen learning, and districts have a clear plan for supporting schools and teachers with instructional transitions.

The evolving definition of personalized learning in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools is as follows:

CHCCS is committed to an instructional framework that personalizes learning for EVERY child through:

- **Instruction** that is rigorous, responsive, standards-aligned, and culturally relevant
- **Assessments** that are continuous and used to inform and adapt the learning process
- **Planning** that is collaborative and creates/curates flexible resources and tools; and
- **Environments** that are safe and inclusive, and honor students’ unique voices, strengths, interests, and needs.

HOW EDUCATION ELEMENTS WORKS WITH CHCCS

Students remain at the center while EE partners with the district to support teachers to enhance their practice and respond to the distinct needs and strengths of their students. EE also supports coaches and school/district leaders in building their capacity to nurture innovation and risk-taking. EE uses research and best practices within the education space. One prominent philosophy that guides this work is Design Thinking, which takes a human-centered approach to problem-solving. EE believes that in the short term, design thinking assists teachers in creating student-centered classrooms and there are longer term benefits from utilizing this approach to solve context-specific challenges.
From the onset of this work, the CHCCS district council identified that success would be contingent upon the feedback and stewardship of leaders and staff in the district. This work is aligned to the goals of the strategic plan and will leverage collective wisdom to design universal principles and apply them in a local context. The team has developed a feedback loop to assist in coordinating stakeholders:

![Diagram]

The team accountabilities are as follows:

- **Project team** manages logistics and interfaces most regularly with EE.
- **District council** synthesizes feedback from workstreams to guide major decisions for district-wide implementation.
- **Advisory team** serves as an advising body that informs the decision-making by providing feedback and recommendations regarding the instructional shift in the district.
- **School Leaders** guide change within school buildings
- **Coaches and Specialists** nurture and sustain strong instructional practices
- **Teachers** receive tools for strong instructional practices and the flexibility to implement according to the unique context of their students and subject areas

Aspects of the district’s strategic plan are being operationalized through this work. The approach focuses on a pedagogical shift to personalized learning based on the evolving district instructional framework (illustrated below). While setting shared expectations across the district, the responsive design of the implementation allows for schools to provide direct input and select areas of focus and growth over time.
Priorities from the above image:

1. Bring leaders together through the District Council, Coaching and School Workstreams, and Advisory Team to engage with diverse stakeholders who will help draw attention to potential blind spots and anticipate the unique needs of the CHCCS community. Additionally, develop feedback cycles that allow for continuous improvement.

2. Equity is the lens we look through to design the work and an important part of how we will measure the impact. There will be different ways this will be implemented in the context of the schools. The district will determine priorities for all schools and principals will work with their teams to determine the needs of individual schools.

3. The District will use formative measures (e.g., walkthroughs, teacher/student surveys) and summative measures (EOG/EOC performance, failure rates) to monitor what is going well and what requires further attention or a pivot that allows us to be responsive to each group or school.
Spotlight Client: **Loudoun County Public Schools, Virginia** LCPS serves a rapidly growing community in Northern Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D C. LCPS consistently ranks near the top of all Virginia districts on traditional measures of school performance.

Priority: As of Fall 2019, 55 schools have / are implementing personalized learning practices across Loudoun County Public Schools.

Results: Since Loudoun implemented personalized learning in their first wave of (13) schools in Fall 2016, they’ve seen large gains: Wave 1 teachers feel more effective by an increase of +32 percentage points (+32pp) and they feel their collaboration with other teachers is more effective (+28pp). Teachers also report their students are more self-directed in class (+20pp) and more engaged in their learning (+7pp). Compared to non-PL schools, Wave 1 PL schools see students are taking more responsibility for their own learning (+4.4pp), are reflecting upon their own learning (+7.6pp), and are more aware of their own learning strengths (+4.3pp).

Spotlight Client: **Enlarged City School District of Middletown, NY** is located in the Hudson Valley approximately 60 miles outside of New York City. The district serves 7,300 students across seven schools. Over three-quarters of the student population receives free or reduced lunch, and over 80 percent are minority.

Priority: Education Elements’ partnership with Middletown started in 2013 with an ambitious plan to support the district rollout of personalized learning to all teachers. As Middletown teachers implemented The Core Four Elements of Personalized Learning and learning became increasingly student-centered, Middletown saw sustained academic growth year after year.

Results: After 5 years of implementing personalized learning, Middletown has seen five years of sustained academic growth. Last year, 57% of Middletown students in grades K-8 tested proficient in ELA, up from 40% five years ago and 62% tested proficient in math, up from 44% five years ago.

Spotlight Client: **Horry County Schools, South Carolina**. Horry County is a suburban district in coastal SC more than 40,000 students in 50 schools. The district serves a student population that is highly diverse.

Priority: Designing instructional models that helped to shift teaching practices to support all learners, increase learner agency, and improve student outcomes. Education Elements has partnered with Horry County since 2015 and has supported the instructional shifts in elementary, middle, and high school implementations of personalized learning practices and the incorporation of digital curriculum and supplemental resources. An additional component of the work was to ensure alignment with the SC portrait of a graduate and the skills promoted with that profile.
Results: Specific to the middle grades implementation, students in grades 6-8 grew by 40% on nationally normed growth targets in ELA and 37% in Mathematics. In 2017-18, 7% more students were meeting or exceeding growth targets in ELA and 17% more students are meeting or exceeding growth targets in Math as measured by the MAPS assessment. High school students have had a YoY rising composite scores on the SAT, and an average of 46 point gain over two years. Teachers also feel more comfortable innovating & taking risks in instruction to personalize learning (+10pp).

Spotlight Client: Syracuse City School District, NY is located in upstate New York, the Syracuse City School District (SCSD) is an urban school district that serves over 20,000 students across 34 schools. The student population in Syracuse is extremely diverse - 76 different languages are spoken by 3500 students and 15,500 SCSD students classified by New York state as “economically disadvantaged” as the city struggled with high poverty rates among families.

Priority: In the 2018-19 school year, Education Elements and the Syracuse City School District engaged in two phases of work. The partnership first worked to deepen the implementation and impact of personalized learning, connecting it to pre-existing systems of support and accountability. The second half of the year built the district team’s responsive organizational practices to further align work across the district and plan for an ambitious literacy-focused goal.

Results: Syracuse Wave 2 teachers report they feel more effective since implementing personalized learning (+7pp), and feel their collaboration with other teachers is more effective (+6pp). Wave 2 has also seen an increase in teachers that are confident personalized learning has a positive impact on teaching and learning (+17pp). Teachers are also more comfortable innovating and taking risks with their instruction to personalize learning (+6pp).