



Nevada **Future of Learning** Network

CASE STUDY

MEADOW VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL



“Doc” Michael Roth (Principal and Chief Strategist)

Nick Poulson, Kevin Smith (Student Choice System Designers)

Traci Poulson, Taneil Wood (Parents and Community Voice)

Megan Huntsman (Secretary and Chaos Coordinator- too many roles to list here)

Launa Chaoquer (Rodeo Day Chair), Tara Clarke (animals in movies), Pete and Tony Delmue (Cowdogs)

Sofi, Mason, Layton, Emma C, Emma S, Joaquin, Clayton, Kylie, Gracie, Parker, Crescent, Coy, Brylee (Student Rodeo planning team) Jamie Cole (parent presenter), Trinity Brackenbury (High School Princess)

Parents that volunteered their time, transported the animals to the venue, helped with presentations.

Ethan Mower (Outdoor Sports Day Chair) Barbara Rhode (Bird watching expert)

Charli Miller, Hayley Gloeckner, Crystal Dinely, Jess Rosner, Amanda, Sharee (Medical Day Chairs)

Rodney Balser & Jessica Hernandez from the Boys & Girls Club

Bart Anderson, Lincoln County Hospital

September Barnes, Nevada Bank and Trust

Cindy Higbee (4H and Rodeo Board)

ORGANIZATIONS ON THE TEAM

Meadow Valley Middle School Staff

Lincoln Community Coalition (Sending planners, volunteers, session presenters)

Nye County Coalition (Sending presenters)

Boys & Girls Club (Sending presenters, DJ and Music, Inflatable Bounce House)

Nevada State Parks and Recreation (Organizing presenters in archery, fishing, lake and park hobbies, hiking, etc)

Lincoln County Sheriff Office

Three years ago when I became principal at Meadow Valley Middle School our students were not growing academically (21% proficient on math SBAC exams, MAPS testing was so low every student looked like they needed an IEP.)

I asked students why our community even made schools- why do they exist... here is one response:

"Schools exist because our parents don't know what to do with us all day."

Oliver- proud 8th grader

So what is school? Do we do what we have always done? Is there a difference noticeable between the elementary school and the middle school? Do we care about our customers? Have we thought about the specific strengths, attributes, and characteristics of the generation that is transitioning from childhood to adulthood? Hormones, Attitudes, Emotions, Anxieties, Fears, Impulse Control Glitches, Ferocious Hunger for Justice, Peer Influence Skyrocketing, Grown Up Influence Tanking, Hungry all the Time, Gaming Addictions, Cell Phone Addictions, Conflict Skills Developing, Freedom from Authority Thirting, Tik Toking, Substance Abuse facing... and on and on and on... Even more- we are seeing traumatic events like fentanyl deaths in our community (see Dead on Arrival [\(YOUTUBE LINK\)](#) for a picture of the seriousness of this issue)

And there sits the school- right in the middle of **their timelines** and journeys.

What if...

We designed an experience that made middle schoolers cry on the last day of school?

We found a way to get engagement in learning AND make it fun?

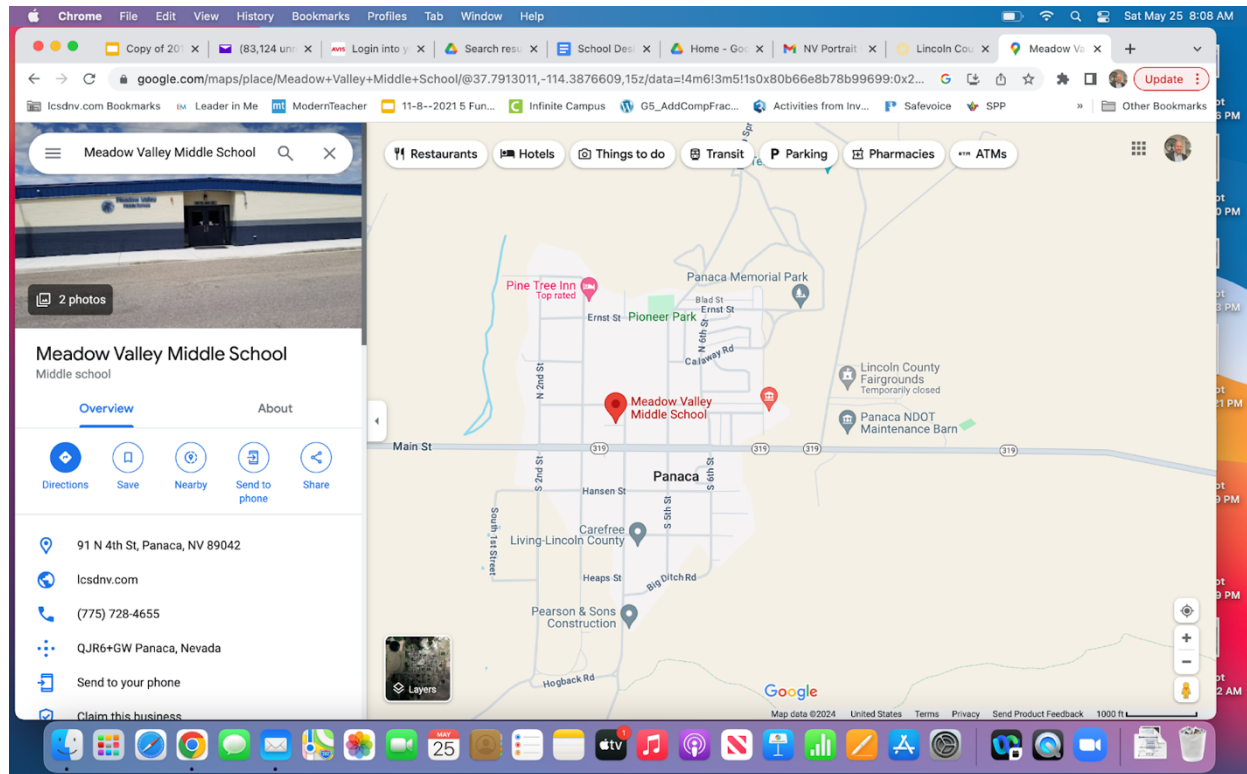
Student leadership was evident throughout our design and they shined more than ever before?

We brought our entire community together to prepare them for peer pressure & substance abuse resistance?

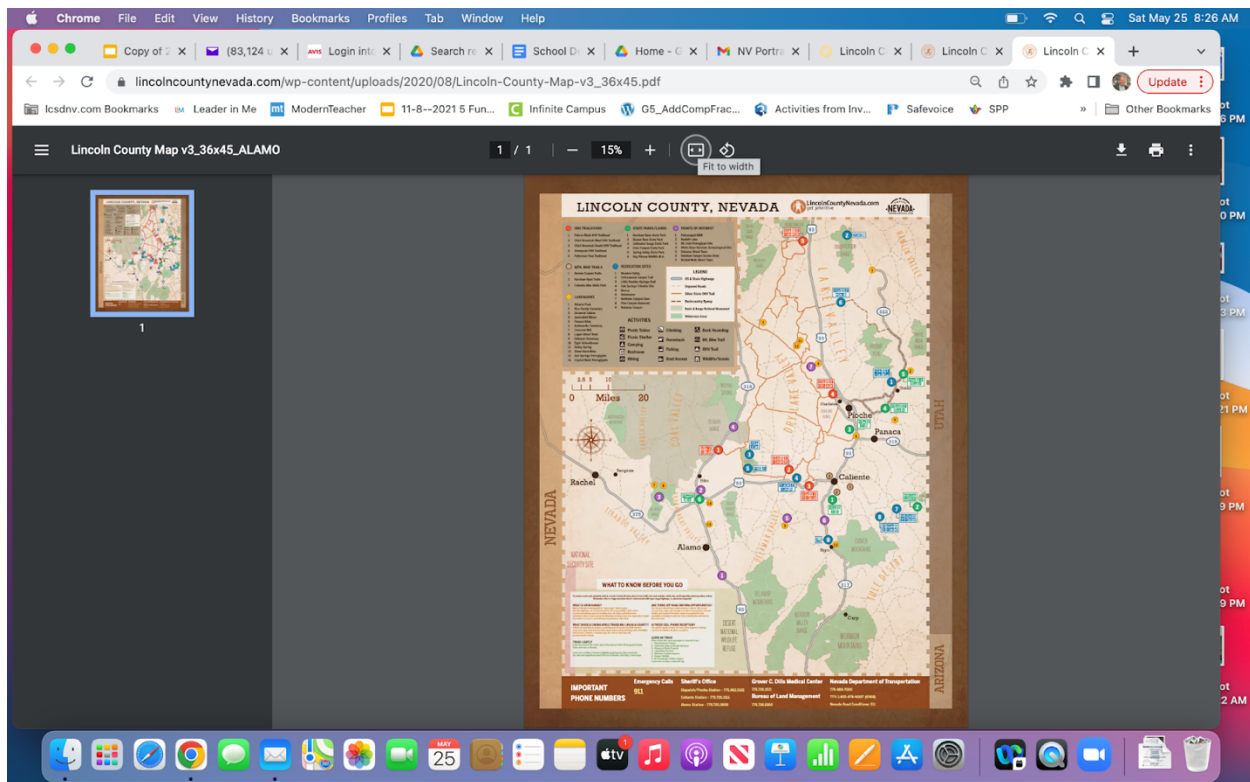
We could walk away from school for summer break with a smile on every staff member's face?

CONTEXT

Location, Location, Location... Our School is located in PANACA, NV



PANACA “A quaint Mormon farming community dating back to the 1860’s, Panaca is the oldest surviving town in eastern Nevada. Rich in tradition and agricultural beauty, many of today’s townspeople are direct descendants of the original settlers. Visitors interested in 19th century architecture can enjoy a variety of beautifully designed buildings. Panaca is a favorite stop for people traveling to Cathedral Gorge State Park which offers year-round camping and exploration.” (from <https://lincolncountynevada.com/discovering/towns/panaca/>)



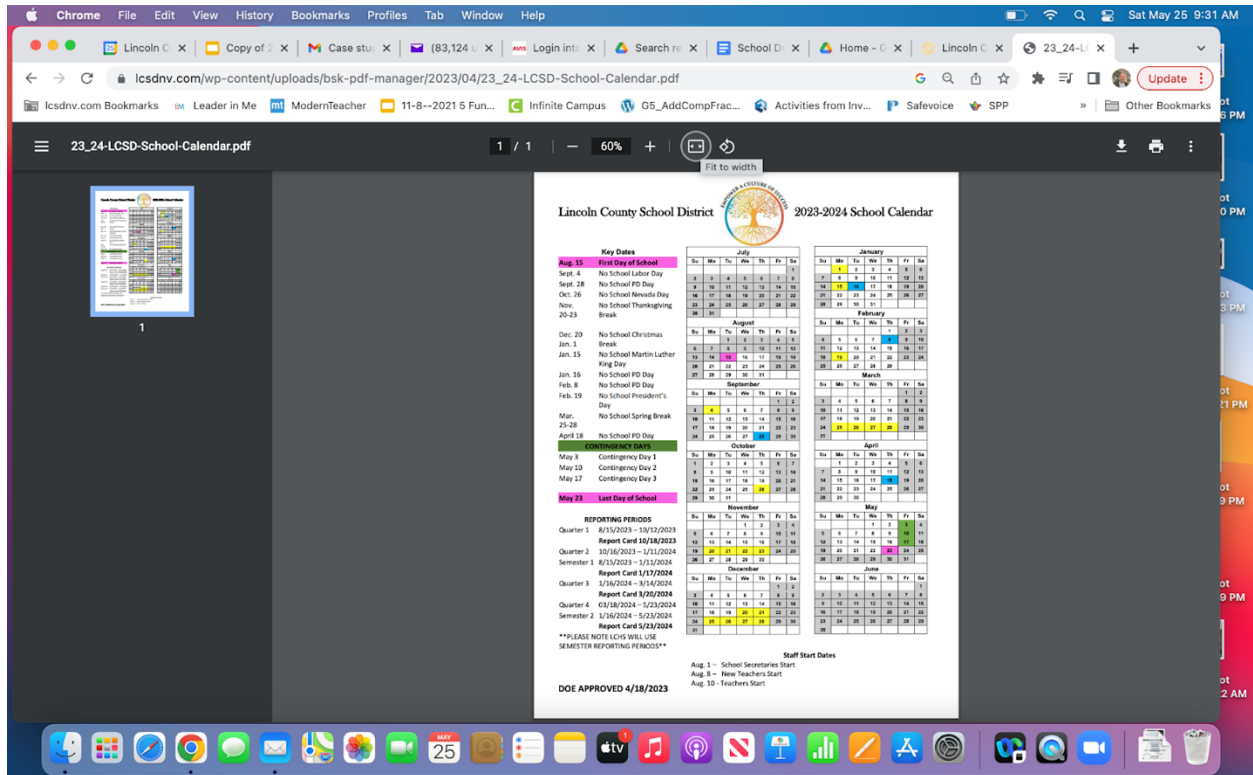
But there is an extra dynamic to this middle school. Our feeder schools come from three distinct communities. You have read about Panaca... do you know about Caliente and Pioche?

PIOCHE In 1868, San Francisco financier Francois L.A. Pioche purchased claims and constructed a smelter in the area, forming the Meadow Valley Mining Company. The mining camp was called "Pioche's City" and later became known as Pioche. The town rapidly became the largest mining town in southeastern Nevada in the early 1870's. Population estimates showed 10,000 people by 1871. The town quickly gained fame for its "toughest town" reputation. Due mostly to confusion over the exact location of mining claims, mine owners finally resorted to hiring guards. Hired gunmen were imported at the rate of about twenty a day during boom times to fight mining claim encroachments. Mine owners often paid the gunmen a salary of \$20 per day—a more certain investment for owners than settling disputes in court where bribery often determined the final outcome. The sheriff's office was reputed to be worth \$40,000 a year in bribes alone. Guns were the only law, and Pioche made Bodie, Tombstone, and other better known towns pale in comparison. It has been reported that seventy-five men were buried in the cemetery before anyone in Pioche had time to die a natural death. According to one reputable source, nearly 60 percent of the homicides reported in Nevada during 1871-72 took place in and around Pioche. The fortunes of Pioche diminished in the 1880's due to the shutdown of the principle mines in 1876. During World War II, an economic boom occurred when Pioche was the second largest lead and zinc producer in the nation. Present day Pioche has little mining activity, and is being the county seat, the main focus is now government.

CALIENTE The meadow area around the junction of Meadow Valley Wash and Clover Creek was originally settled in the early 1860's by Ike and Dow Barton, two Negro slaves who had escaped from Arkansas. In the early 1870's the area was known as Dutch Flat, with Jackman Ranch being established. In 1874, ranchers Charles and William Culverwell purchased the Jackman Ranch and renamed it as Culverwell Ranch. It was later referred to as "Culverwell." Along with ranching, the family earned a living by providing hay for the mining camps in Pioche and Delamar... The town was surveyed, and on August 3, 1901, a post office opened and postal officials renamed the town Caliente, dropping the 's'. The railroad line was completed in 1905, and by 1910, Caliente was the largest town in Lincoln County with 1,755 residents. Within a few years, Caliente grew to more than 5,000 residents. For more than 40 years, Caliente was one of the major division points on the railroad line. When steam engines were replaced by diesel locomotives in the 1940's, the division point moved to Las Vegas. Without the depot as a main railroad stop, the town's growth dwindled but not its spirit. (from <https://lincolncountynevada.com/discovering/towns/caliente/>)

Rivals all their lives- now Falcons... and there are stigmas and beliefs about students who come from the different towns (Caliente has the “bad kids” etc.) and we have the job of bringing them all together as one school. All with the chance to show the greatness in them.

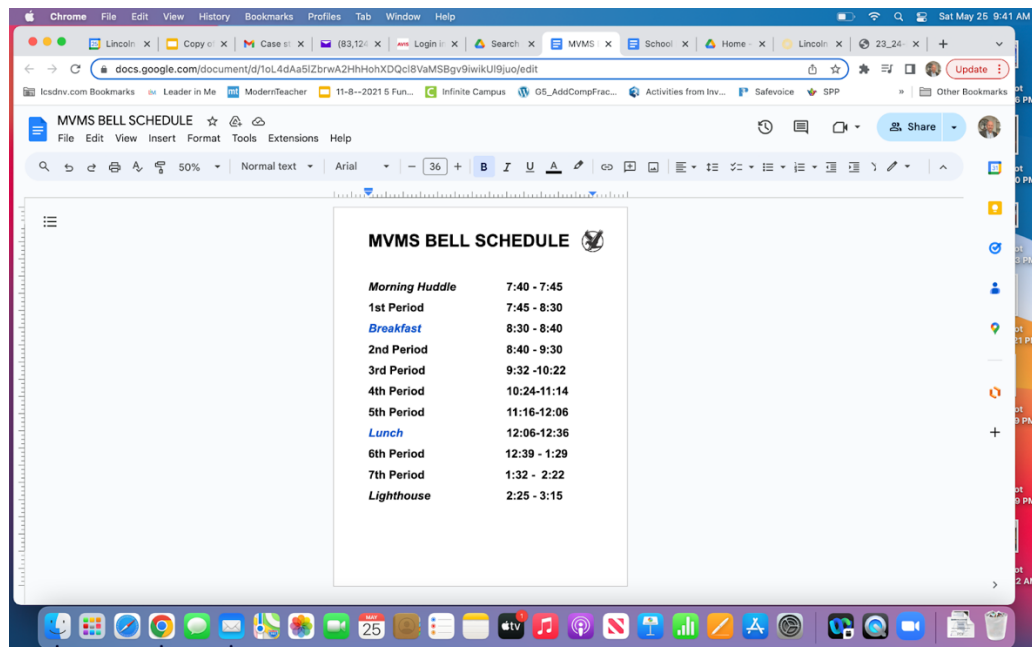




Another element in our context is our calendar. We have a four day school week- we have vacation days, report cards and testing schedules. The ebb and flow of the year has many nuances. Stress and burnout loom at all points throughout the year.

Two zones that are particularly rough are right before winter and summer breaks. In the past these weeks were relegated to activities like movies (Just a lot of babysitting due to the fact that so many students have already "checked out")

You will see how we addressed this later in the case study. That is how our time is organized on a macro level- let's examine how we have designed our daily use of time.



Features to our schedule... We do most of the heavy lifting before lunch.

In rural communities often sporting events involve 4 hours or longer for travel time- so students are often pulled from school after lunch. Also- teens get sleepy and are more challenging to teach when the afternoon comes.

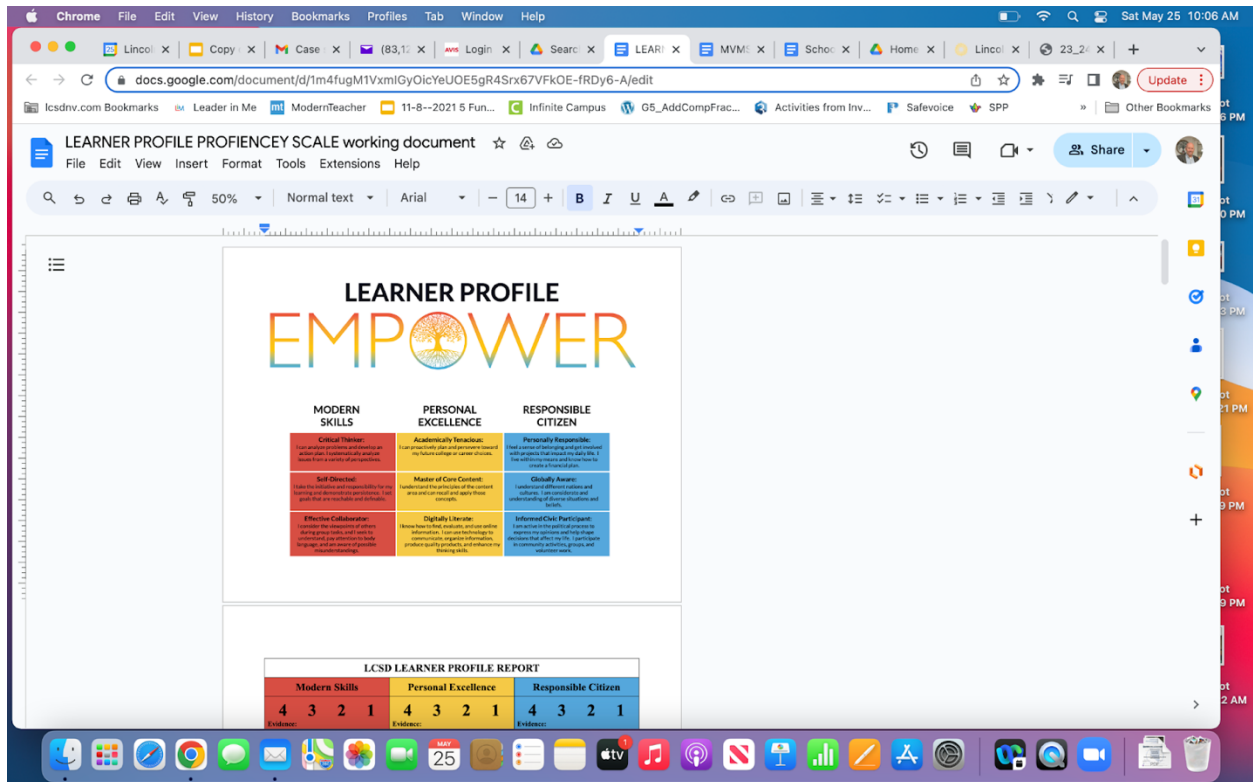
1st, 6th, and 7th period are what we call “Exploratories” for courses that teachers enjoy teaching and students enjoy learning. Courses like Space Camp, Everything Dirt Bike, Robotics and even the Secrets of Grilling were offered this year.

Lighthouse is a Leadership development effort- teaching goal setting and student agency.

This is part of a bell system and outside of exploratories there are few choices made available to students.

Other Context Piece: [The Lincoln County School District Our Graduate Profile...](#) We are trying to build these profile attributes into our systems so students are aware and thinking about themse

attributes.



"We must do school differently."

Nick Poulson- Amazing MVMS Teacher

WHAT DID WE DO?	
With LOCATION	Golden Falcon Trips Falcon Boot Camp Outdoor Recreation Day MVMS Rodeo Day
With the CALENDAR	December and May Strategy Science Fair Cultural Fair
With our DAILY SCHEDULE	Alternative Schedule Trials Added Amazing Exploratories
Other Efforts	Brought in the Community to help Created assemblies and events Leadership Portfolios Student-led Parent Conferences

LOCATION CHANGES

GOLDEN FALCON TRIPS

As a staff we tried to put ideas together on how students could exemplify the LCSD Graduate Profile

Here is one of our Golden Falcon Qualification Sheets. How do we want to exemplify something like Self Directed?

2nd QUARTER

THE GOLDEN FALCON

MODERN SKILLS	PERSONAL EXCELLENCE	RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN
Must Haves <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Complete a 50 project (Critical Thinking, CT)<input type="checkbox"/> Complete an ELA writing activity (CT)<input type="checkbox"/> Complete all requirements for science fair project (CT)<input type="checkbox"/> Reach the Math Target (Self Directed, SD) Other Choices (must complete 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Share an idea that would make our school the best Middle School in Nevada (can be any type of communication: video, video, article, cartoon, artwork, drawing, architectural plans)<input type="checkbox"/> Make something that we use for school traditions, events, assemblies, or awards (Can be on the 3D printer, measuring tools, communication, science, digital media, Effective Collaboration, EC)<input type="checkbox"/> Accomplish weekly Lead Measures in Academic Momentum (AM)<input type="checkbox"/> Write to the Lincoln County Record (CT)<input type="checkbox"/> Win an honor with Choir or Band (EC)<input type="checkbox"/> Play the Elbow or Elbow game exclusively (SD)<input type="checkbox"/> Lead an assembly or bulletin (EC)<input type="checkbox"/> Participate in a full season of a sport, medals, dance team, or play, etc. (SD)<input type="checkbox"/> Meet a Maps Goal in Maps testing (SD)	Must Haves <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Gain 25% progress in ST Math (Academically Tenacious, AT)<input type="checkbox"/> Make/complete on report card (SS, ELA, SC)<input type="checkbox"/> Honor of Core Content (AC)<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Portfolio pages up to date (AT)<input type="checkbox"/> Participate in the Student Leadership Conference (SD) Other Choices (must complete 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Earn Green for skill in all areas on MAPS (AC)<input type="checkbox"/> Earn at least one Blue on MAPS (AC)<input type="checkbox"/> Growth in 2 areas on MAPS (AT)<input type="checkbox"/> Reach 50% progress on ST Math (AC)<input type="checkbox"/> Earn a 3 on a Proficiency Scale (AC)<input type="checkbox"/> Create a Digital Project that makes our school even better (Digitally Literate, DL)<input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to Teacher TV interview (DL)<input type="checkbox"/> Make a Motivational Video for the school (DL)<input type="checkbox"/> Excelled with an exploratory project (AC)<input type="checkbox"/> Participate in Robotics competition, Band or Choir concert, or enter a contest (AT)<input type="checkbox"/> Read 2 Books and Write a report for each (AT)<input type="checkbox"/> Memorize at least 3 quotes of the week (AT)	Must Haves <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> No more than one office referral per quarter (Personally Responsible, PR)<input type="checkbox"/> No more than two tardies per quarter (PR)<input type="checkbox"/> Pick your favorite habit and share an example how you apply it in your life. (PR)<input type="checkbox"/> Earn 30 Falcon Bucks (PR) Other Choices (must complete 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Plan and carry out a community service project (Socially Participative, CP)<input type="checkbox"/> Improve our school through a project (halls, walls, quad, facilities, social media, etc.) (CT)<input type="checkbox"/> Show gratitude or provide inspiration in a significant way to three different audiences (Staff members, family or community members, and a student) (CP)<input type="checkbox"/> Write to a political leader sharing your solution to a local, national, world issue (Globally Aware, GA)<input type="checkbox"/> Present a Project to the School Board (CP)<input type="checkbox"/> Attend & share at the Coalition meeting (CP)<input type="checkbox"/> Get a shoutout in morning huddle (CP)<input type="checkbox"/> Help clean the gym after lunch (PR)<input type="checkbox"/> Help clean the quad after lunch (PR)<input type="checkbox"/> Run 30 times in PE request (PR)<input type="checkbox"/> Help clean with breakfast (CP)<input type="checkbox"/> Help clean the bathroom (CP)

How did it work?



We did three major trips this year... Fiesta Fun, Brian Head and the Adventure Dome. The highest motivation came for Brian Head... it causes so much effort for students. Tricky element- we had a new math teacher with high expectations and so students had a steep climb to keep on track and he pushed them. Many students gave up- feeling it was too hard. Middle Schoolers are learning grit and resilience. So we created extra study support- during and after school.

We felt it was a worthy effort and it did help our students engage because they had something to look forward to- we will be tweaking the requirements but continue this initiative.

FALCON BOOT CAMP

We took a page from the movie Remember the Titans and took our students off campus for the earliest field trip on record- the first week of school we took these rivals out to the 4-H camp to build one culture and community...





OUTDOOR RECREATION DAY

We met with the Lincoln Community Coalition last year to discuss the crisis in our community. The Peer pressure to use alcohol, vape, and other illegal drugs is a major problem for the youth in our community. We have had several fentanyl deaths just here in our small community. So the Coalition discussed how we can work together with schools. Ethan Mower suggested that they could pull together an Outdoor Recreation day to help the students find hobbies and fun things to do when they are not in school. He brought together rangers and the Nevada Department of Wildlife. Be brought in Archery Education and Fishing Education personnel too. It was an amazing day for our students!

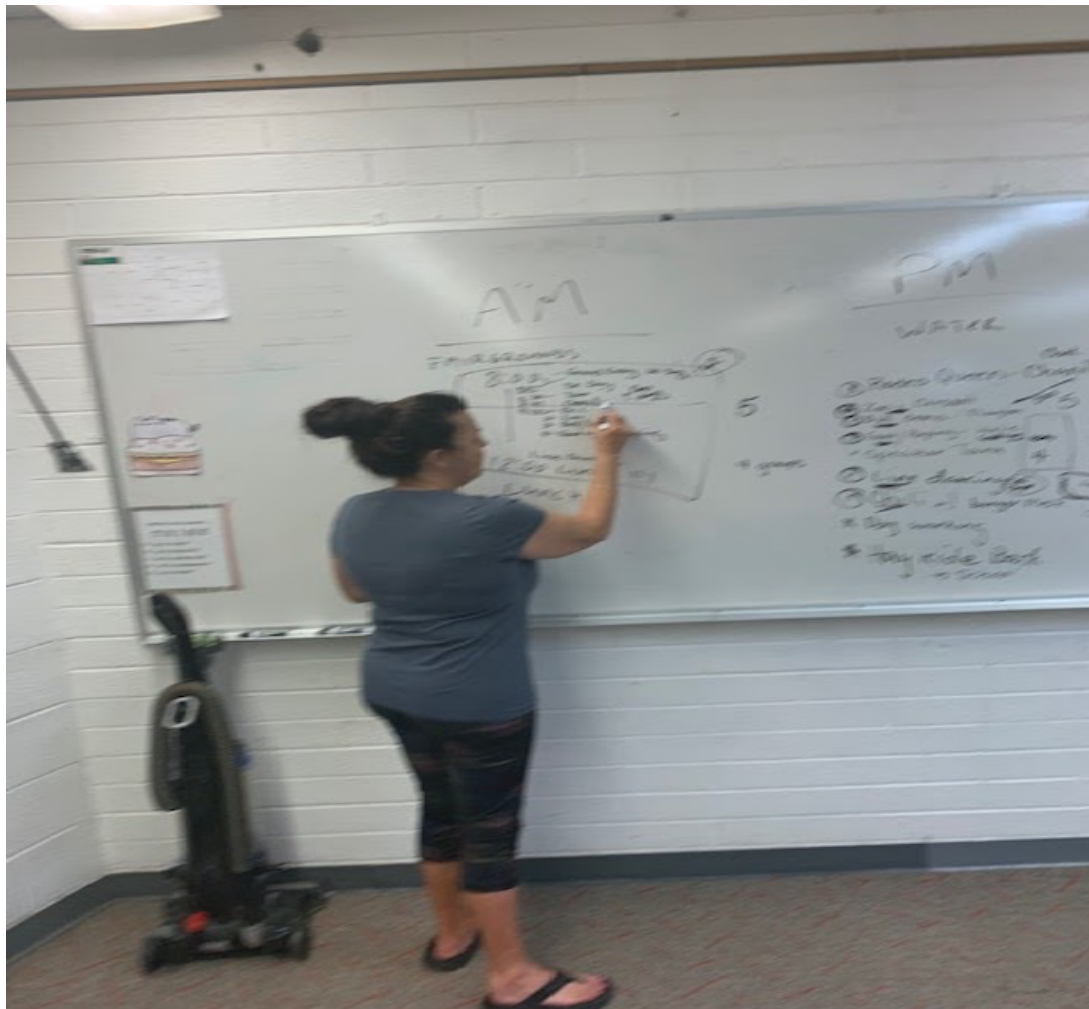
As I walked around between stations- I saw amazing smiles from the students- I heard laughter and saw enjoyment. We had a powerful learning experience. That day...





MVMS RODEO DAY

We reached out to [Launa Chouquer](#) to help us design a day around our local rodeo. See we already have a handful of students that are competing in rodeos - from bull riders to barrel racers and a couple of princesses too. Students presented through a series of four rotations then we all ended up at a Line Dance training led by our local branch manager September Barnes. The students were having such a blast. We as a community came together and it was an amazing experience. This was planned with student meetings- see Launa leading them below...











CALENDAR CHANGES

DECEMBER AND MAY STRATEGY

Alternative Schedules. Two of our teachers created an alternative schedule during the last week in December and again in April. We created a 6 block menu with teachers offering different courses... the students were able to pick the courses they felt helped them the most. They didn't have to take everything offered, only the topics they needed.

In May, we took the final week of school and transformed it into an immersive learning experience. Our community has been struggling with teenage substance abuse. So we created events to develop learning around choices they will be facing. We had sessions with the local ER doctor, the sheriff and our school social worker. We then brought them to Spring Valley Lake to teach them about many things we can do outdoors for fun. Also, we set up the Rodeo day to show them a local tradition that students can become a part of...

The last day of school we had a closing ceremony and our annual water day where the local volunteer fire department came to make the day fun.



SCIENCE FAIR & CULTURAL FAIR

Our teachers created a couple of bigger events that were based on extensive study. Students presented to the elementary schools, the parents and the local community. We added two evening events to our calendar.



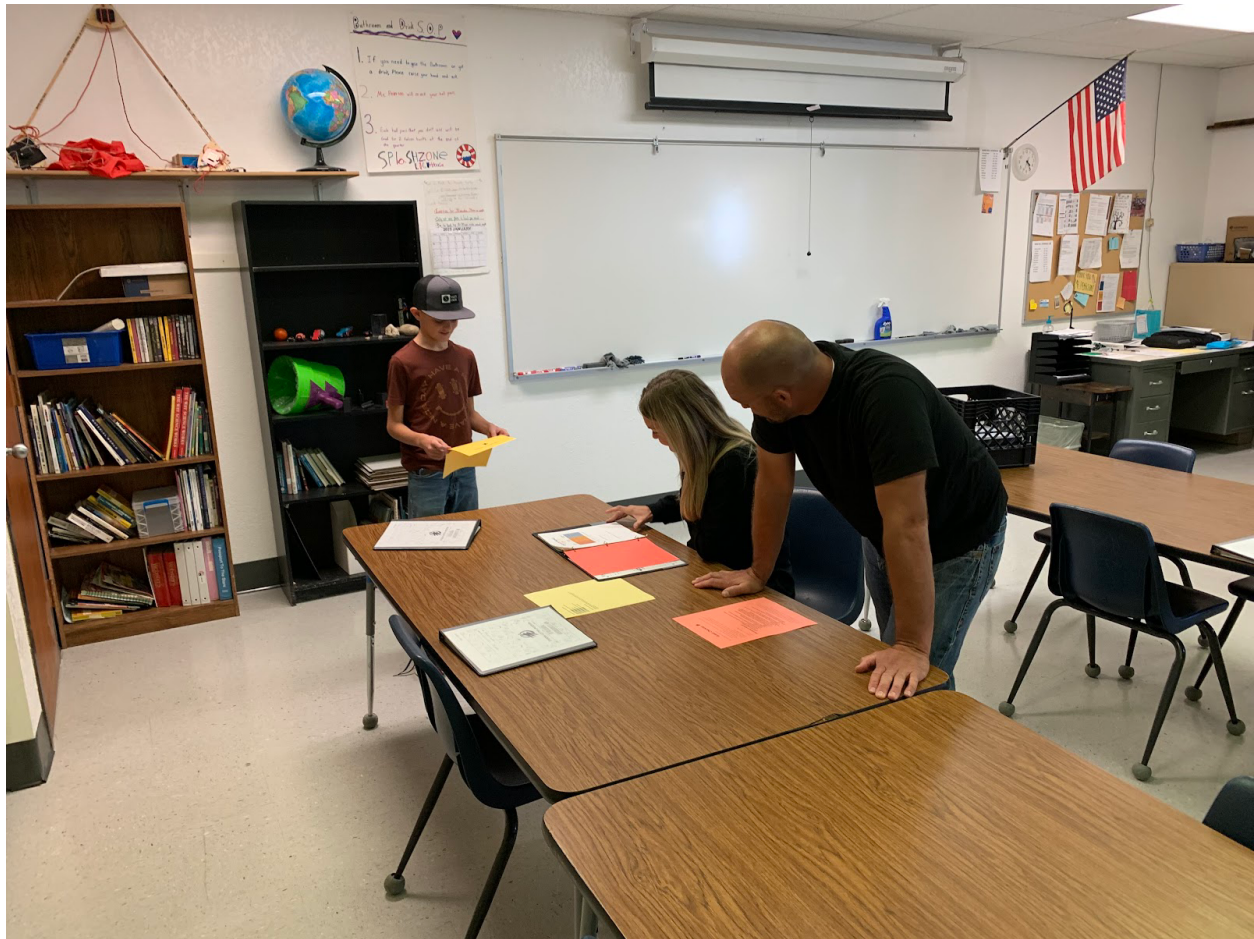
DAILY CHANGES

We shared with you about our alternative scheduling days earlier. Another part of the daily schedule that built aspects of the Graduate Profile was the period we called LightHouse. We

taught students to set goals and follow collaboratively created pathways to learning standards they identified in their MAPS scores. The students put all this into their Leadership Portfolios. These were shared at parent conferences...

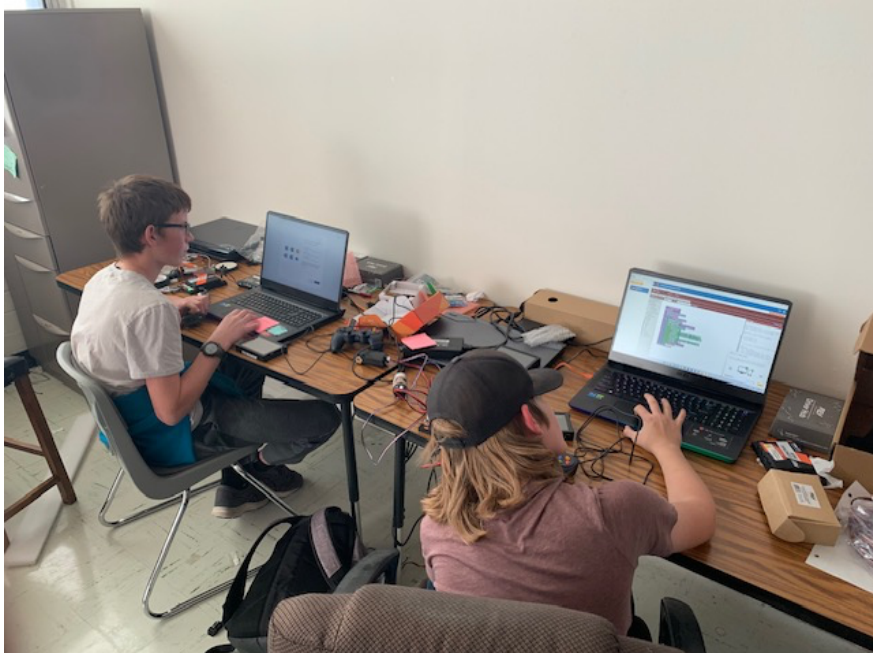


We have seen students begin to show engagement and academic growth through the hard work teachers put into the Lighthouse time.



We have several periods during the day that give students choice and give them a variety of subjects to study. Robotics, Drawing, Spanish, Choir, Band, All Things Dirt Bike, Crafts, Space Camp, PE, Drama, Grilling Basics, Outdoor Survival Skills, Creative Writing, Newspaper, Student Government, Hydroponics, and more.

Photos from some of our Amazing Exploratories









Within the smaller section of time called Periods there is a lot of work being done with teachers as they design their lessons- so that there are choices and opportunities for student choice. Example- in Social Studies students were studying cultures around the world and each student was able to select a nation to focus on... The students wrote letters to ambassadors with their questions... Here is a photo of a student who received a response from an ambassador in Iraq.

