Innovative Schools Learning Excursion
Vista Unified School District, March 22-25, 2020

Who: Massachusetts school teams, each comprising 9-12 members representing an equitable distribution of educators, parents, students, and key community members, such as business leaders, leaders of community organizations, school committee members, and local government officials. Priority given to high school teams.

What: Visit a school district that is redesigning the learning experience for students and has deeply involved its community in the effort.

Before the trip:
- With your team, join a virtual meeting with NGLC to learn about “next generation learning” (see p. 2) and a process for observing learning in your own school
- Meet with your school team to observe learning in your own school
- Join a second virtual meeting with NGLC and Vista Unified to learn how educators and community members across the nation are working together to redesign learning
- Join a virtual meetup with other teams participating in the Learning Excursion

During the trip:
- Tour Mission Vista High School (MVHS) to observe its approach to next gen learning
- Meet with MVHS students, teachers, and administrators to discuss their learning redesign
- Meet with parents, business leaders, leaders of community organizations, school board members, and/or local government officials who have been involved in Vista Unified’s learning redesign
- Participate in team work sessions
- Participate in work sessions with other teams attending the learning excursion

Why: The Innovative Schools Learning Excursion will introduce teams to a community that has successfully established innovative teaching and learning across its school district. Teams will be able to apply what they learn from Vista Unified and MVHS to change how they go about transforming teaching and learning within their own school and district.

How: Interested teams must apply by January 24, 2020. The program is capped at 72 participants and selection is based on a set of criteria. Selected teams will be announced by February 24, 2010. Stipends are provided to relieve costs related to participation.
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Overview

Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC), with funding from the Barr Foundation, is excited to announce this Innovative Schools Learning Excursion to Vista Unified School District in California, March 22-25, 2020. This Learning Excursion is uniquely designed for teams of Massachusetts educators, parents, students, and key community members, such as business leaders, leaders of community organizations, school committee members, and local government officials.

Seeing is believing. A Learning Excursion is more than a school tour, it is a learning experience. Facilitators will help every participant learn with and from Vista Unified School District, a community that has successfully established innovative teaching and learning across its district. It is designed to deepen participants’ knowledge of “next generation learning” (see below) approaches in use at Vista Unified and one of its schools, Mission Vista High School, and will provide teams a foundation for developing their own vision for teaching and learning in their school and district.

Rethinking student success in Massachusetts. Massachusetts ranks first in the nation when we look at test scores in math and English. But we continue to see an achievement gap between white students and students of color and between affluent students and students of poverty. We have an opportunity in Massachusetts to build on the strengths of our public schools while also redesigning learning opportunities so that all students have access to high-quality and engaging learning that prepares them to succeed in and beyond high school. Innovative learning approaches can develop students in well-rounded ways to build their academics, life skills, wellness, and citizenship.

Next generation learning. Learning approaches that develop students in well-rounded ways share some common characteristics: They respond to the strengths, needs, and cultural backgrounds of each individual student. They make sure students “master” skills and knowledge before moving on. They connect academic knowledge and skills to on-the-job work experiences and real problems in our communities, adjusted to even our youngest learners. They use the most advanced tools available in our society, including technology but also what is known in education as “learning science.” Educators often refer to these learning approaches as student-centered, personalized, competency-based, equitable, experiential, authentic, and technology-enabled. At NGLC, we use the term next generation learning to capture all of these learning approaches.
Widespread and inclusive community engagement. A key takeaway from NGLC's work with schools and districts that have had success in transforming learning is this: “If young people are going to graduate from U.S. public schools with the skills and mindsets needed to address 21st century challenges, we who serve them—and the schools and organizations we are a part of—must develop and use those same skills and mindsets ourselves.” Most importantly, the change process should be owned by educators, parents, students, and community members, with care taken to be inclusive and equitable. This approach, a diverse team of stakeholders partnering on work that matters for their community and for their students, is transformational. It’s exactly what needs to happen for real and lasting change to take root. It’s what all our students deserve.

Application and Eligibility
Each team must complete the required application form by January 24, 2020. Teams must include equitable distribution of teachers/school leaders, parents, students, and key community members, including but not limited to business and industry leaders, leaders of community organizations, school committee members, and local government officials. The lead applicant may represent any of these stakeholder roles. Application is open to all public school governance types (traditional, innovation, charter). Priority will be given to high school teams. The application collects basic information about the lead applicant’s school/organization and each participant as well as thorough descriptions of the team’s composition, the problem of practice, and intended outcomes.

Selection Criteria
This Learning Excursion will be capped at 72 total participants. We plan to select 6-8 teams each comprised of 9-12 members.

Teams will be selected based on the quality of the application responses and evidence of meeting the criteria set forth in the application, including equitable distribution of stakeholders on the team. Priority will be given to high school teams.

NGLC will review all applications and select finalists. NGLC will conduct calls with finalist teams to determine the strength of foundational structures known to support effective change management, implementation, and long term sustainability. Working with the information obtained from the applications and calls with finalists, NGLC will make final selections with feedback from program officers at the Barr Foundation.
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NGLC will contact finalist teams by January 31, 2020 to schedule a one hour video conference call between February 3-14, 2020. Final selection decisions will be communicated to teams on February 24, 2020. At that time, information about registration and travel will be distributed. Please wait to make any travel plans until we have confirmed your selection.

Stipends
To relieve costs and support school teams to engage in off-site learning, we offer a $1,500 stipend per team member. In order to receive stipends, we kindly request the following actions from each team member:

1. Engage as active members of the learning community by...
   a. Completing all pre-work, including but not limited to readings; the learning log; virtual meetings between your team and NGLC; a next gen learning walk at your team’s school; virtual meet-up with other teams in March prior to the Learning Excursion.
   b. Attending all segments of the Innovative Schools Learning Excursion programming while onsite at Vista Unified School District (start and end times are posted within the table below).
   c. Sharing your thinking and learning visibly during in person and virtual sessions.
   d. Creating an artifact of your team’s experience to share with key stakeholders in your school and community.

2. Use social media to share your learning while on-site using the hashtag #NGLCchat (strongly encouraged).

3. Complete the participant survey at the end of the learning excursion.

Please note that stipends are considered taxable income. These are not reimbursements for travel. Please consult with your tax preparer for questions related to stipends. Stipend checks will be sent by mail after the learning excursion and upon completion of the above actions.

Meals and Travel Costs
NGLC will provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks on March 23 and 24, dinner on March 23, and breakfast on March 25. You will be responsible for dinner costs on March 22 and 24, and lunch costs on March 25. The program will have a designated headquarters hotel with buses, as needed, to shuttle participants to the school and district sites.
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Teams need to pay for all travel-related expenses (hotel, taxi, airfare, train, any non-hosted meals, etc.) up-front with their own funds. You will need a district credit card or personal credit card to reserve and pay for hotel rooms. Please coordinate district payments with the appropriate person at the district office and alert Kerry Norce, knorce@jrglobalevents.com, ahead of time as a credit card authorization for the hotel is required for district-based payments.

Learning Goals
NGLC will organize and share the agenda, pre-work, and other related information via email. Via a Google doc agenda, you will be able to access all information and materials ahead of time, including your team’s learning log. You are also invited to access learning logs from other teams. This is one way to live out a shared commitment to making our learning visible.

About Vista Unified School District

Vista Unified's Blueprint for Educational Excellence and Innovation Plan enables the district to focus on developing personalized learning paths for its students so they are college and career ready. The goal is for each student to “persevere as a critical thinker to solve real world problems.” (VUSD, Blueprint). The district believes that change begins at the school level, not the district level. And it is the responsibility of district leaders to set up conditions that make it possible for each school community to create transformational change. From the beginning, Vista Unified has deeply involved its community in the work of redesigning learning for all students.

To learn more, visit https://www.vistausd.org/
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MISSION VISTA HIGH SCHOOL (9-12), Oceanside CA

Description: Mission Vista High School (MVHS) started its personalized learning journey a few years ago. The school rewrote its Vision, Mission, and Values statements to match their collective "why" and "what." For the past two years, MVHS has created school-wide personalized learning WIGs (Wildly Important Goals), which include targeted experiences in all courses, projects that create collaboration across departments, and activities that are relevant to the World of Work. MVHS has created three distinct pathway opportunities for students: Discovery, Innovation, and Growth (DIG). Teachers and courses at MVHS are at various stages in this journey—teachers who have rewritten their entire curriculum so that it is student-centered, project-based, and personalized; teachers who have started competency-based grading systems; teachers who have crafted units in collaboration with other departments; and courses that are allowing students to completely design the projects they are creating, including a brand new capstone course, "My Vision Personalized," for seniors.

Note: The school is a district magnet school, which means it requires students to apply to attend. Priority is given to siblings, military, foster/homeless, students at the district’s magnet middle schools, and children of district employees, followed by a lottery.

School Demographics:
- Enrollment: 1,693
- Race/Ethnicity: 49% White, 33% Hispanic, 9% Asian, 2% African American, 7% Other
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 27%
- English Language Learners: 0.8%, 18% Reclassified
- Special Education: 5.5%

Look For:
- Pathway curriculum: We provide students with opportunities for individualized, flexible pathways to discover, innovate, and grow in their areas of interest.
- Teacher agency within schoolwide goals: We support our teachers to create and “own” our schoolwide goals, and we support them to create their own goals to advance their teaching and learning.
- A strengths-based culture: We identify and build on the strengths of each individual within our school, students and adults.
### Draft Agenda

**March 22, 2020: Travel & Registration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00 pm - 9:00 pm PT</td>
<td>Registration and networking reception with heavy appetizers and beverages, provided by NGLC</td>
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**March 23, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 am - 8:00 am</td>
<td>Breakfast provided by NGLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am - 4:30 pm</td>
<td>Day One Programming, including lunch provided by NGLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 pm - 6:00 pm</td>
<td>Personal rejuvenation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 pm - 9:00 pm</td>
<td>Cohort Dinner, hosted by NGLC</td>
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**March 24, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 am - 8:00 am</td>
<td>Breakfast, provided by NGLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am - 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Day Two Programming, including lunch provided by NGLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Personal rejuvenation and dinner on your own</td>
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**March 25, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 am - 8:00 am</td>
<td>Breakfast, provided by NGLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am - 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Day Three Programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 pm PT</td>
<td>Departure</td>
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