



CASE STUDY BRIEF

Since 2013, the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) has annually designated 21st Century Learning Exemplars based upon exceptional implementation of the [Framework for 21st Century Learning](#).

Each year, P21 has highlighted a cohort of early learning centers, K–12 schools, school districts, and beyond school programs in the U.S. as 21st Century Learning Exemplars. Now that P21 is a network of Battelle for Kids, we are leading together in celebrating the current year of 21st Century Learning Exemplars.

As part of celebrating these awardees, Battelle for Kids and its P21 network provide ways for their stories and impactful practices to be shared with others. This case study brief and those for the other awardees provide powerful insights to guide other school districts, schools, and programs so that every child can experience the best of 21st century learning experiences.



EVSC New Tech Institute Evansville, IN

EVSC New Tech Institute provides a safe haven for high-quality learning and growth with an unflagging commitment to support the learning styles and social-emotional development of all students.

Grades Served: 9–12

Enrollment: 293 Students

Founded in 2010

[Website](#)

- Indiana Department of Education STEM Certified School
- New Tech Network Demonstration Site and Exemplary School 2015–2018

EVSC New Tech Institute

Evansville, IN

Culture of Care

EVSC New Tech Institute focuses on the whole child. With extensive opportunities for collaboration and clear schoolwide learning outcomes, New Tech Institute fosters a welcoming close-knit environment where students can grow and thrive. With two district-wide frameworks in place—one for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and another that promotes social-emotional growth—the school provides monthly staff trainings on topical areas related to one of the social-emotional competency areas of GAIN: Growth, Academics, Innovation, and Neuroscience.

At New Tech Institute, students are expected to operate from a place of trust, respect, and responsibility. The school focuses on increasing opportunities for and celebrating examples of student agency. Teachers and administrative staff participated in a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) in collaboration with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to explore ways that the school—teachers in particular—can foster student growth in areas such as work ethic, grit, resilience, timeliness, and attitudes toward setbacks as indicators for student agency.

Additional related work on growth mindsets has been done in conjunction with AIR. Freshmen participate in an Innovate Perspectives class which has a major focus on fixed- versus growth-oriented mindsets and behaviors. With increased agency and embedded citizenship practices, students actively engage in conflict resolution, look for opportunities to mentor and collaborate with others, and promote a positive learning environment.

Project-Based Learning

Embedded in the mission statement and the guiding principles of the New Tech Network (NTN), project-based learning (PBL) is the primary instructional method at the school. Supported with a PBL learning management system, Echo, teachers at New Tech Institute embed 21st century learning outcomes into every project “briefcase.” Teachers share these with the broader NTN community of practice to help them iterate and improve.

Students are currently engaged in a multi-year community project with the Peters-Margedant House in Evansville. Designed by architect William Wesley Peters, an apprentice of and relative of the renowned Frank Lloyd Wright, the Peters-Margedant house engaged the school to recreate a dollhouse based on prototypes developed by Peters in the 1930s. With no known dollhouses in existence, students relied entirely on the original blueprints.



Students created a digital copy using a Computer-Aided Design (CAD) program and consulted with several leading architects to ensure fidelity and architectural best practice. Ultimately, the final dollhouse product will be displayed in the Peters-Margedant house. Students already have access to never-before-produced blueprints for a Peters chair, which will be displayed in the office of the President of the University of Evansville.

Critical Friends

New Tech Institute strongly believes in the power of failing forward in the service of character development, creativity, and incremental progress. To that end, the school adopted a process known as “Critical Friends.” Given the supportive learning environment, students feel empowered to provide honest feedback on fellow student projects, understanding that critical, empathetic feedback is part of a necessary process. Instructional and administrative staff also utilize this concept for onboarding new staff, professional development, and weekly collaborative Critical Friends sessions, which are convened at the grade level.

Through horizontal alignment, content-area instructors share projects and provide constructive feedback. Not only a method for improving process and fostering trusting relationships among staff, it also builds awareness of cross-disciplinary opportunities and ways to support the students across their entire academic experience.



2019 21ST CENTURY LEARNING EXEMPLARS

Each of the following earned this year’s award for its outstanding practices in equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge for success in college, career, and life:

Early Learning

The Goddard School Located in Broadview Heights
(Broadview, OH)

The Goddard School Located in Simpsonville
(Simpsonville, SC)

K–12 Schools

Canyon Crest Elementary School (Fontana, CA)
Elon Elementary School (Elon, NC)
EVSC New Tech Institute (Evansville, IN)
Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School for Art + Design
(San Antonio, TX)
Kairos Public School Vacaville Academy (Vacaville, CA)
Kensington Elementary School (Waxhaw, NC)
Moreno Valley High School (Moreno Valley, CA)
Saint Ambrose School (Brunswick, OH)
Santiago Charter Middle School (Orange, CA)
Valley View High School (Moreno Valley, CA)
Vineyard STEM Magnet (Ontario, CA)
Vista Heights Middle School (Moreno Valley, CA)
Wolf Springs Elementary School (Overland Park, KS)

Districts

Lennox School District (Lennox, CA)
Vicksburg Warren School District (Vicksburg, MS)

Beyond School Programs

Camp Champions (Marble Falls, TX)

Learn more about the 21st Century Learning Exemplars at:

bfk.me/p21_ExemplarProgram

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