



SUMMARY REPORT FOR:

Portrait of a Graduate

PRESENTED TO:

Covington Independent Public Schools

June 2022

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INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Covington Independent Public Schools- DREAM, ACHIEVE, SUCCEED

Why Develop a Portrait of a Graduate?

A “Portrait of a Graduate” serves as a visioning device for a school system. It establishes the purpose for schools because graduates represent the culmination of the K–12 learning experience. Most families hope their children wear their cap and gown and walk across the graduation stage. A student’s successful graduation is one of the first rites of passage that can have significant implications on the scope of life choices to follow. While graduation itself is not enough to help young people maximize life’s opportunities, the competencies students develop by the time they graduate often inform the opportunities available to them after high school.

Covington Independent Public Schools engaged in the Portrait development process to discuss with community members the competencies Covington prioritizes for its learners. This process addresses several limitations in current education systems. Historically, education has emphasized content over skills and mindsets. A focus on coursework is necessary, but insufficient to prepare learners for their post-secondary lives. As such, information about what students know and are able to do is either unclear or short in supply. The Portrait re-orientes how learning is organized and reported, based on a manageable set of prioritized competencies that best prepare students for success after high school. Consequently, the “target” becomes clearer for how the Covington community wants to prepare students for their futures, and information about the same is clearer to all stakeholders. This has implications for aligning curriculum, assessment, and designing students’ learning experiences.

Covington Independent Schools and its stakeholders wish to develop in students a set of key competencies that are transferable across time, space, and life’s myriad situations. Few, if anyone, can predict what situations students will find themselves in when they leave high school. It is difficult to know exactly what content and skills they will need. To hedge against this uncertainty, it is critical to develop in our students’ transferable skills and mindsets that can be applied in many situations, so they will meet challenges, seize opportunities, and continually grow throughout life.

The Portrait Development Process

Covington Independent Schools assembled a Portrait Design Team, a diverse team of community members that represent the various stakeholder groups. The Portrait Design Team identified the competencies for its portrait through a rigorous process, including research, concept design and development. Through this process, many stakeholders had opportunities to interact in community conversation on Covington’s Portrait of a Graduate. Per communications from the leadership team to their Portrait Design Team, this group’s charge was to “develop a collective vision that articulates our district’s aspirations for **all** of our students,” including the youngest learners all the way to the district’s graduates.

APPROACH AND OBSERVATIONS

The Portrait Design Team’s approach included these steps:

1. **Landscape Shift Study:** The Portrait Design Team began their work with a study of a variety of societal changes (i.e., landscape shifts) that have occurred over the last several decades. This study helped the team understand the extent to which our schools are preparing students for success amidst these shifts. There were four key shifts with supporting evidence within each shift. Among the landscape shifts studied were:
 - Workforce
 - i. Routine to Non-Routine Work
 - ii. The “Gig” Economy
 - iii. The Service Economy
 - Pace of Change
 - i. Technology
 - ii. Information Explosion
 - iii. Innovation
 - Global
 - i. Environment
 - ii. Demographics
 - Human Interaction
 - i. Design for Meaning
 - ii. Civic Discourse
 - iii. Empathy
 - iv. High Concept/High Touch

During this study of various landscape shifts, Portrait Design Team members rated the importance of each shift based on their relevance to Chandler Unified School District and the local community. During this process they considered how these landscape shifts may impact students’ prospects for current and future success. The following chart illustrates the landscape shift results, where each landscape shift was rated on a three-point scale:

- Critical–3
- Important–2
- Interesting, but not compelling–1

All supporting data is listed below.

Workforce	Routine to Non-Routine <i>Since anything that is repetitive can and will be automated, how do we prepare our students for non-routine work?</i>	2.5
	Service Economy <i>How do we prepare our children for the human interactions needed to thrive at work?</i>	2.43
	Gig Economy <i>How do we prepare our students to become their own boss?</i>	2.22
Pace of Change	Technology <i>How do we prepare all our students to most effectively use the continually advancing technology to the benefit of themselves and the greater community?</i>	2.72
	Information Explosion <i>How do we help children to critically consume and evaluate all the information that's at their fingertips?</i>	2.18
	Innovation <i>How do we approach the concept of failure/errors/etc. so students feel supported to take risks to innovate and so they keep pace with the acceleration of new ideas?</i>	2.73
Global	Environment <i>How do we prepare our children to address the economic, health, sustainability, and cultural issues of our current and future environmental challenges?</i>	2.18
	Demographics <i>In a world with more diverse sets of needs and wants—as well as an aging population—how can we ensure our youngest generation is prepared to thrive individually, communally, and nationally?</i>	2.24
Human Interaction	Design for Meaning <i>How do we set up children for success in a future where people expect experiences, products, and services to be more than just functional?</i>	2.58
	Empathy <i>How do we help our students develop the ability to emotionally connect with others, understand their perspectives, and act accordingly?</i>	2.84
	Civic Discourse <i>How do we encourage students to value the opinions of others and the importance of effectively using disagreement as an opportunity for progress, especially in light of our changing demographics and too-often impersonal forms of communication?</i>	2.58
	High Concept/High Touch <i>In a world that is so connected, yet very disconnected, how do we encourage our students to remain focused on what it means to be human?</i>	2.66

2. **Competency Identification to Meet Shifts:** Following the group study of societal changes, Portrait Design Team members reviewed an inventory of skills, literacies, and mindsets to broaden their consideration of the possible competencies that could be included in Covington’s Portrait. Then, each team member submitted individual selections of the top seven competencies he or she prioritized based on the landscape shifts study. The group then reviewed and discussed the aggregate results of team members’ submissions. The top seven competencies—by percentage selected—were as follows:

Individual Competency N= 40

<i>Adaptability</i>	21
<i>Communication</i>	16
<i>Critical Thinking</i>	19
<i>Empathy</i>	24
<i>Problem Solving</i>	19
<i>Learners Mindset</i>	14
<i>Self/Goal Directed</i>	14

3. **Small Group Consensus to Prioritize Competencies:** The Portrait Design Team then worked in small groups to develop a set of prioritized competencies and shared their rationale with the broader group. This allowed team members to “test” their initial ideas with their peers. The results the group submissions were as follows:

Group Competency N= 8

<i>Adaptability</i>	5
<i>Communication</i>	8
<i>Critical Thinking</i>	4
<i>Empathy</i>	4
<i>Problem Solving</i>	4

<i>Learners Mindset</i>	5
<i>Self/Goal Directed</i>	3

4. **Elevating Teacher Voice in Competency Selection:** Following the efforts of the Design Team, Covington Independent Schools worked to elevate the voice of educators in the process of selecting competencies. Below is how the teachers saw the priorities in the work:

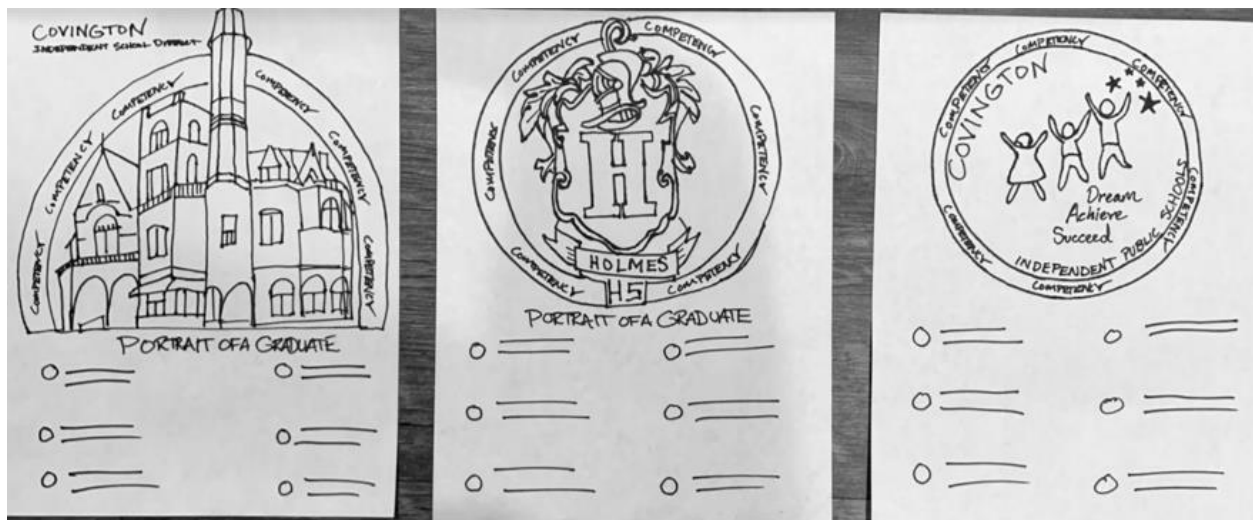
Educator Selections N= 9

<i>Adaptability</i>	5
<i>Communication</i>	7
<i>Critical Thinking</i>	5
<i>Empathy</i>	1
<i>Problem Solving</i>	5
<i>Learners Mindset</i>	2
<i>Self/Goal Directed</i>	0
<i>Leadership</i>	4
<i>Responsible</i>	5
<i>Collaboration</i>	4

5. **Further Refinement of Competencies:** After the pros and cons of competency set options were shared and educator voice was considered, a sharper list of competencies was devised and discussed with the Portrait Design Team. Then, the Portrait team tailored and fine-tuned the definitions for each competency. Through this process, they considered current efforts as well as future goals for Covington Independent Schools' students.

Resilient Learner
Effective Communicator
Critical Thinker
Compassionate Citizen
Life-Long Contributor
Innovative Collaborator
Ambitious Achiever

6. **Portrait Visual Design:** Sample Portraits from across the country were shared with the Covington Independent Schools' Portrait Design Team to help spark thinking about the school district's Portrait of a Graduate, and the visual story it tells. The Portrait Design Team was asked for input to inform the creative inspiration. Many creative ideas were provided. The final Portrait of a Graduate builds on the strong branding ideas which already exist in the district and leaves open the opportunity to continue to build on the competencies as strengths.





PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE



RESILIENT LEARNER



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR



CRITICAL THINKER



COMPASSIONATE CITIZEN



LIFE LONG CONTRIBUTOR



CONSCIENTIOUS COLLABORATOR



AMBITIOUS ACHIEVER

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

The following emerged during the development and vetting processes of Covington Independent School District's Portrait of a Graduate:

- The project leadership team assembled a strong, dynamic, and committed team of community stakeholders. This team worked well together and stayed mostly intact throughout the entirety of the process and provided critical input to inform the Portrait of a Learner.
- The leadership team, consisting of the superintendent and other leaders, were mindful throughout the process of the needs of the students. Clearly, this team was uniquely committed to envisioning a brighter future for Chandler USD students in addition to the needs for a continued relevant and rigorous curriculum.
- Student Voice was EXCELLENT and consistent throughout the process. Students added much to the overall vision for the district and even created their own version of the Portrait of a Graduate which resonated with the community! This was a clear strength for the overall engagement of stakeholders.
- As the Portrait design team engaged in the discussions around how the world has changed over the last generation, it almost unanimously found Human Interactions to be a critical consideration.
- Given the unique circumstances around this gathering of stakeholders from around the community, the project leadership team determined that the last meeting should be leveraged to generate ideas for the cultivation of the Portrait competencies both in and outside the traditional classroom setting.

Activating the Portrait of a Graduate

The Portrait of a Learner should serve as a North Star. Turning the Portrait of a Graduate into a reality for each student means re-examining teaching and learning. The district will allow this to be the foundation of their upcoming Strategic Planning Process.

Once the community has embraced the Portrait of a Graduate, the project leadership team should intend to build the work into the district-wide professional development plan in a manner consistent with the school district's strategic plan.

With a Portrait of a Graduate, Covington Independent Schools should consider the implications for:

- **Visionary Leadership:** Establishing a unifying and enduring vision for the community's shared aspirations for all students, a 21st century vision that is locally developed and globally positioned.
 - Create a strategic plan to fully embed the ideas of the Portrait with the entire learning community of Covington.
 - Share competencies with the school board and describe rigorous process to understand learning.
 - Align board meetings to uplift ideas embedded within the Portrait of a Graduate.
 - Work to ensure collective 21st century vision and ideas are an integral part of the strategic planning process.
- **Measurable Impact and Stewardship:** Leverages meaningful evidence to demonstrate progress, inform continuous improvement, and elevate confidence in the impact of the system to prepare graduates as lifelong learners and contributors in the 21st century.
 - Communicate to stakeholders and create a gap analysis to determine where these competencies are currently being elevated in classrooms and throughout the district.
 - Establish a communication forum to share ideas and then integrate ideas into the existing curriculum.
- **Empowered Workforce:** Elevates all staff in the service of students with human capital systems that attract, grow, and retain innovative talent equipped to realize the district's 21st century vision.
 - Determine a course of action for the Portrait for each employee.
 - Consider onboarding and professional learning opportunities for employees.
 - Consider using PBL units to foster thinking associated with competencies.
- **Thriving Ecosystem:** Fosters a high functioning, equitable, interdependent system, including the broader community, ensuring support for and alignment to the district's 21st century vision.
 - Continue to seek input from strategic planning teams or community members to gain various perspectives on the work around competencies.
 - Continue to build relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
 - Engage in a network to elevate the work.
- **21st Century Learning Design:** Purposely integrates rigorous academic content with experiences that intentionally cultivate skills, mindsets, and literacies essential for all students to become lifelong learners and contributors in the 21st century.
 - Work with staff to understand the selected competencies and understand the process used.

- Develop outcomes for the competencies and possible assessment strategies to allow students to demonstrate specific learning.
 - Create a look-for/listen-for document to allow teachers to deepen their understanding of what the district Portrait of a Learner looks like in practice.
 - Create scope and sequence for scaffolding competencies.
- **Caring, Responsive Culture:** Nurtures a welcoming, inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives and cultivates engagement across a safe school community.
 - Provide opportunities for all students to see themselves in the portrait.
 - Vertically align and articulate competencies.
 - Ensure all students have access to and intentional engagement in learning outcomes.

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