



## Wilder School District #133

Nestled in the heart of a high poverty community, Wilder School District # 133 is located in Wilder, Idaho, a rural town in Canyon County. The district serves 750 students in grades K-12 with approximately 70% identifying as Hispanic or Latino and nearly all living at or near the poverty level. The district operates four campuses, including one elementary school, one middle school, a high school, and an Idaho Future-Ready Academy (IFRA).

To address the opportunities and challenges presented by the scale and needs of its population, Wilder SD # 133 continues a significant partnership with Apple and the ConnectED initiative, providing a robust instructional technology infrastructure, devices, and training on how to use them for learning. As a result, this Lighthouse District has moved forward with providing a student-centered, equity-focused, and future-driven education for all learners.

Overall, this district strives to create an active, collaborative, and authentic learning environment that is both supportive and challenging for all students, regardless of grade level or preferred learning modality. As co-authors of their own learning, Wilder students work collaboratively with teachers and peers to identify topics of interest, set goals, monitor progress, share knowledge and perspectives, and learn from one another. As a result of continual involvement in peer learning and inquiry-based activities, learners develop their critical thinking, creativity, communication skills, cultural awareness, and collaboration competencies.

Beginning in kindergarten, Wilder students are taught the learning habits needed to succeed in both the educational ecosystem and future career pathways. As learners begin their educational journey, for example, they engage in applying the “16 Habits of Mind” framework, strengthening their ability to strive for accuracy, persist, manage impulsivity, and think critically. As students progress, their teachers and mentors encourage learners to take control of their own learning process, with “sideboards” gradually removed at the appropriate pace for students to be independently successful on a continuing basis.

Creating a learner-centered and personalized environment at all grade levels has resulted in the district’s removal of equity-related barriers evident in more traditional approaches and structures for learning. Wilder # 133, for example, has removed a grade-level focused instructional and bell system at the middle and high school levels. Students are taught based on their mastery assessment placement (in alignment with Zone of Proximal Development theory)—not their grade level. According to leaders, this has “forced school leadership teams to create a robust program model that would teach all students the needed executive functioning skills to be successful in a system where they are the owners of their own learning. Students need voice and choice conversations with teachers to truly become co-authors of their learning.”

Structurally, the overall K-12 system in Wilder # 133 is carefully scaffolded and aligned to ensure vertical, horizontal, and spiraling integration of core knowledge and skills while reinforcing experiential

and inquiry-based learning. At the primary level, for example, learners are given play lists for daily learning, which they must manage. Increasingly, they formulate SMART Goals in daily learning episodes, monitoring their own progress in partnership with their teacher and reflecting on processing their growing proficiency. This process of “thinking about their thinking” reinforces self-regulation and efficacy while encouraging them to strive for more complex and rigorous learning opportunities.

As learners progress through middle and high school, they are required to begin each day or week with SMART Goals to be accomplished that day. They review these goals with their teacher/mentor—and then follow their personalized learning plan (which articulates learning modality, place, and movement for the day). This plan ensures content mastery and movement across classrooms when learning has been completed—rather than a standardized bell system. Using a Habits of Mind rubric, students self-monitor to ensure they are successful co-authors of their own learning process, including striving for accuracy and mastery as well as being required to “teach” the content they have learned to receive a top rubric score (i.e., A/4).

The guiding principles for this learner-centered school district include the following expectations for practices, programs, and expectations:

- We expect professionalism, respect, responsibility, and honesty.
- We embrace innovation in technology tools, resources, and instructional practices.
- We hold accountable the ownership of teaching and learning.
- We incorporate the necessary skills (16 Habits of Mind) and a growth mindset to effectively demonstrate 21st century skills [for students] to thrive in society and promote strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity, and craftsmanship.
- We make decisions based on student-centered and data-driven educational practices.
- We achieve rigor and relevance through relationships of trust, developed as a result of effective and inclusive mentoring.

**Please Note:** A wide variety of videos demonstrating Wilder #133’s commitment to learner-centered instruction are available on the district’s website. Additionally, the district was featured on the *Good Morning America* program, which highlighted its personalized and innovative learning model:

<https://www.wilderschools.org/page/cbsthis-morning-visits-wilder-schools>