

Personalization for Academic and Social Emotional Learning



Questions to Guide PASL Implementation

PASL is designed to be adapted to specific school contexts. With this in mind, the following questions serve to guide schools in building from the best practices in PASL while attending to their own needs, strengths, and contexts.

Capacity to Implement

A first step in developing an implementation plan is to assess the readiness of a school to take on a significant change. To what extent is there a) sufficient alignment of organizational structures and resources (e.g. time, personnel, money, expertise) to support and sustain PASL, and b) commitment and capacity from critical stakeholders?

How many students should be involved in PASL?

While the ideal may be all students, building the capacity for whole school implementation takes time. Keep in mind that you will need a teacher for every 20-25 students. One school, for example, began with six PASL teachers and slowly incorporated more teachers (and thus students) as the school experienced success with PASL. In 2018-19, all 9th graders are involved in PASL and they are piloting how to adapt PASL to meet the needs of 10th graders with a small group of 10th grade PASL classes. Schools that more recently joined the PASL network have smaller cohorts that they are working to expand.

What are your school's special strengths or unique attributes?

PASL should take advantage of the unique assets of each school and integrate PASL into existing programs. For example, one school had a well-regarded peer mentoring program. They integrated peer mentoring into their PASL activities.

What are existing programs that align well with PASL?

Many existing district initiatives align well with PASL. The extent to which these initiatives have strong implementation in your school can thus support PASL. PASL's focus on goal achievement, for example, aligns with how counselors use Naviance to support college and career goals. JROTC and AVID also have strong goal achievement components on which PASL can draw. Many schools also have programs such as Mentoring Tomorrow's Leaders and Latinos in Action, that can support building a culture of personalization where all students feel that connection and belonging to the school.

What are the unique needs of the school?

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What evidence can you examine that informs you of students' academic, social-emotional, and behavior needs? For example, one high school identified needs around managing stress and negative emotions and developed PASL activities to support those needs.

Implementation Infrastructure

What structures could be used to support PASL implementation?

How will you develop structures to support teachers, counselors, and other staff in implementing PASL? Schools use a variety of team structures and recognition systems. One school, for example, has a PASL leadership team and uses substitutes to cover their class so they can meet on a regular basis. Support for PASL teachers comes in two forms; quarterly meetings that happen during professional study days and a PASL teacher leader assigned to be their "point person" for any questions. Another school has a more streamlined PASL leadership, but they have monthly meetings with the PASL coordinator for training.

What teachers will be involved in PASL? In the PASL leadership team?

Teachers bring a variety of expertise to their work. With PASL's focus on building a sense of belonging among students and integrating academic and social-emotional experiences of students, there is opportunity for a diverse group of teachers to engage in leadership. In our research on PASL, coaches, teachers who lead clubs/activities, JROTC, and arts or other elective teachers often have deep relationships with their students because they may teach students in each grade level and can thus maintain long-term relationships. Counselors and behavioral specialists also have unique contributions to make for PASL.

How will you roll out PASL to all stakeholders?

Training and ongoing support for teachers and other school staff is critical for implementation. So is communication with all stakeholders. Communication should be bi-directional. What do teachers, parents, and community members see as the needs of the school as it relates to PASL? One school, for example, hosted two parent nights where they engaged in discussions with parents about PASL activities.

Deciding on the PASL components

What students will be in PASL? How will they be grouped?

Given the size of your initial PASL implementation, you may beginning implementation with a segment of the school population. What characteristics of students will select them into PASL? For example, one school decided to focus on low-performing 9th and 10th

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graders while another school has a cross-section of 9th graders that are heterogeneously grouped.

What are the expectations for Rapid Check Ins?

Rapid Check Ins (RCI) are a core PASL routine. How often will you expect teachers to document RCIs? A common solution is every two weeks. In some schools, RCIs involve reviewing students' grades, attendance, and behavior. In other schools, RCIs are more informal.

How will you incorporate the intentional use of data?

PASL data includes grades, attendance, behavioral referrals, and extracurricular activities. In addition, schools document student goals and interests, as well as any pertinent information gathered through RCI. This is often used if particular concerns are raised that a teacher, administrator, or counselor will need to follow up on. School teams should decide how these data will be documented, how often they will be updated, and the process for sharing among educators. How will you form educator teams to support students?

How will you build goal achievement skills?

The core goal achievement lessons integrate best practices in goal achievement interventions: focusing on mastery learning goals, having students visualize obstacles and develop an action plan, and monitoring goal progress. Schools also build on other skills, such as managing stress, understanding your GPA, and study skills.

What are the expectations for building a culture of personalization?

All school improvement initiatives need to focus on changing culture, as well as practice. What norms of engagement between students and staff do you want to foster? How will you model and share those norms? What other ways can you build a sense of belonging?