



CONNECTED CLASSROOMS

A Lafayette College and Easton Area School District
Collaborative Learning Experience

LANDIS

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

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aspiration

1. a hope or ambition of achieving something
2. the object of one's hope or ambition; a goal



Thank you for your interest in the Connected Classrooms Program.

Connected Classrooms is a partnership between Lafayette College and the Easton Area School District that supports student growth within both institutions. Connected Classrooms exposes children in the district to college early in their educational careers in order to increase their aspirations toward post-secondary education. At the same time, Lafayette students develop their leadership and critical-thinking skills as they explore theoretical concepts and apply them to practical situations.

This manual will provide the information and resources new Connected Classrooms partners will need to get started on the initiative and that returning partners can use to further develop their projects.

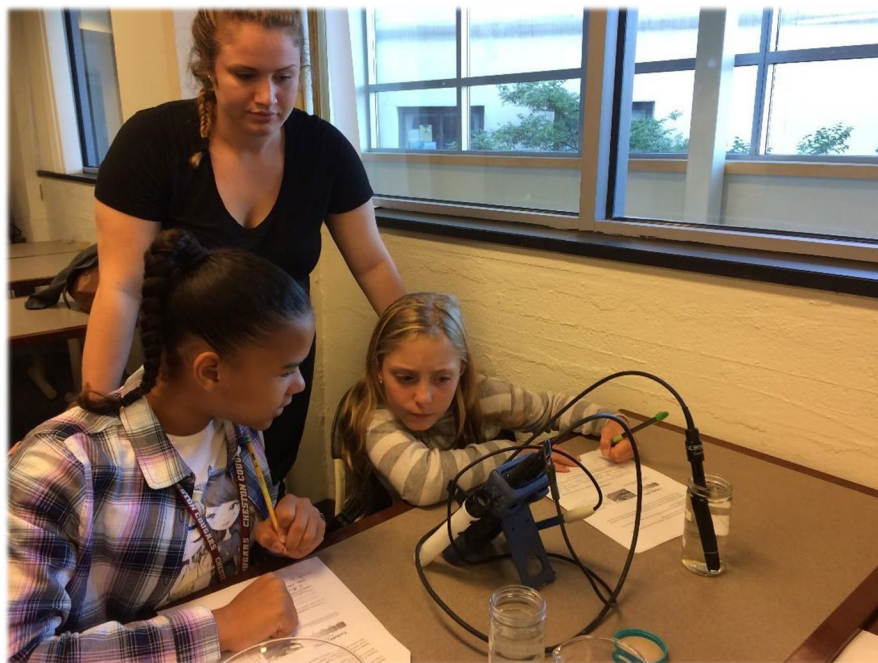
Sincerely,

Landis Center

Introduction

Piloted in the Fall of 2017 as the Cheston Partnership, the original intent of *Aspirations* was to reinforce elementary students' understanding of core curricular concepts. However, this intent evolved following the first module held in October 2017. During the lesson between 5th-graders and environmental engineering students, non-faculty Lafayette observers noted a high level of student engagement in both the Cheston and Lafayette students, not only in the material being shared, but also in communication about the college experience. As they worked, Cheston students were asking Lafayette students what it was like to be a college student – was it hard? Did they live there? Did they miss their parents? How did they make friends? Was it fun? This interest in post-secondary education posed an unexpected outcome to what was initially envisioned as a program meant to boost educational outcomes in the core curriculum. We posited that the true measurable outcome might be how these modules impact Cheston students' knowledge of, interest in, aspiration toward, and finally expectation of continuing education beyond high school.

Another observable outcome of this pilot module was the enthusiasm with which Lafayette students engaged with their Cheston partners. Even as they explained the finer points of turbidity, they answered every question the elementary students came up with. Before long, a dialogue evolved. Cheston students began to share small details of their lives in exchange for the responses they were hearing from their Lafayette partners. Lafayette students began asking follow-up questions, and somewhere in that small window of time, a connection was made. Thus, *Aspirations* was born. The program continued to evolve into Connected Classrooms as the school district and Landis Center worked together to more intentionally include the *Aspirations* ideals across our partner programming. Through those efforts, *Aspirations* became the relationship as a whole, with Connected Classrooms as just one of the programs supporting its mission.



A Shared Vision

Connected Classrooms was developed by the Landis Center for Community Engagement at Lafayette College in partnership with the Easton Area School District and in alignment with the United Way's vision of promoting positive youth development in the Lehigh Valley. The program also supports Pennsylvania's academic standards for career education and work, as well as the Leader in Me program adopted by EASD. Through existing and new programs, Lafayette strives to develop a strong and consistent connection with students in the District, beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school graduation. Connected Classrooms supports leadership models used by the Landis Center that guide Lafayette students into strong civic leaders. This program supports learners within the school district and at Lafayette through sustainable mentorships, targeted interventions, and innovative programming that develop the competency, confidence, connection, character, and caring of students of all ages.

Connected Classrooms engages children in the district in a college environment early in their educational careers in order to instill an understanding that a college education is an option available to them after high school. At the same time, Lafayette students develop active citizenship and civic leadership. The goal of Connected Classrooms is twofold: 1) understand how early exposure to a college environment influences the knowledge of, interest in, and aspirations toward post-secondary education in populations less likely to explore college; 2) evaluate the impact on College students' sense of civic knowledge, civic learning, civic reflection, and civic efficacy.

Elementary Aspirations

The four corners of Easton Area School District's Framework for Success are Student Achievement, School Culture/Climate, Organizational Effectiveness, and Student Supports. Connected Classrooms supports the School Culture/Climate and Student Supports corners of the Framework by aligning program goals with initiatives embraced by the District.

The Five Cs of Positive Youth Development

Positive youth development focuses on teaching young people how to navigate obstacles and build resiliency rather than on the necessary avoidance of challenges and fixing of problem behaviors.

Lerner et al (2005) found that the greater number of these Cs a young person exhibited, the more likely it was that they would grow into healthy, productive adults and make contributions – the 6th C – to the self, family, and a civil society. They also found that the fewer Cs a young person exhibited, the more likely they were to exhibit maladaptive behaviors.

<u>Five C's</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Competence	Positive view of one's actions in domain-specific areas including social, academic, cognitive, and vocational. Social competence pertains to interpersonal skills, (e.g. conflict resolution). Cognitive competence pertains to cognitive abilities (e.g. decision making). School grades, attendance, and test scores are part of academic

	competence. Vocational competence involves work habits and career choice explorations.
Confidence	An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy; one's global self-regard, as opposed to domain-specific beliefs.
Connection	Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in bi-directional exchanges between the individual and peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship.
Character	Respect for societal and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity.
Caring	A sense of sympathy and empathy for others.

Second Step Social-Emotional Learning

The Second Step program is a holistic approach to building supportive communities for every child through social-emotional learning. It is a transformative, whole-school approach that helps release students' full potential through cooperation, communication, and decision-making. The program teaches students to identify and respond to their own and others' emotions, communicate their needs assertively, and to solve problems collaboratively.

The Connected Classrooms supports the Second Step social-emotional learning initiative by developing learning modules that focus on collaboration, problem solving, and decision-making.



College and Career Readiness

Pennsylvania recently adopted Academic Standards for Career Education and Work. These Standards describe what students should know and be able to do at four benchmark levels – 3rd grade, 5th grade, 8th grade, and 11th grade. Areas of knowledge include Career Readiness and Preparation, Career Acquisition, Career Retention and Advancement, and Entrepreneurship. Beginning in 3rd grade, students build a portfolio of “artifacts” of learning that will follow them through high school. The goal is to have each student collect two pieces of evidence each academic year in support of their career readiness efforts. Participation in Connected Classrooms is considered one of those artifacts as children engage with older students actively engaged in learning to prepare them for their future careers.

Connected Classrooms is the first step in the scaffold of *Aspirations* programs strategically integrated throughout elementary, middle, and high school levels to support the awareness of, exploration of, and readiness for post-secondary education and employment. At the middle school level, Lafayette students partner with an after school Picasso program to explore different college majors and possible careers associated with them. The children in the Picasso program most often have matriculated from Paxinosa or Cheston and are familiar with Lafayette through their participation in Connected Classrooms. Approximately once a week, students from the Picasso program meet Lafayette mentors on campus to learn about different academic programs and the careers they support. Students also visit other post-secondary institutions, such as Northampton County Community College and Lincoln Technical Institute with their Lafayette mentors. In the spring semester, the after-school program participates in a career fair in collaboration with Gateway Career Services.

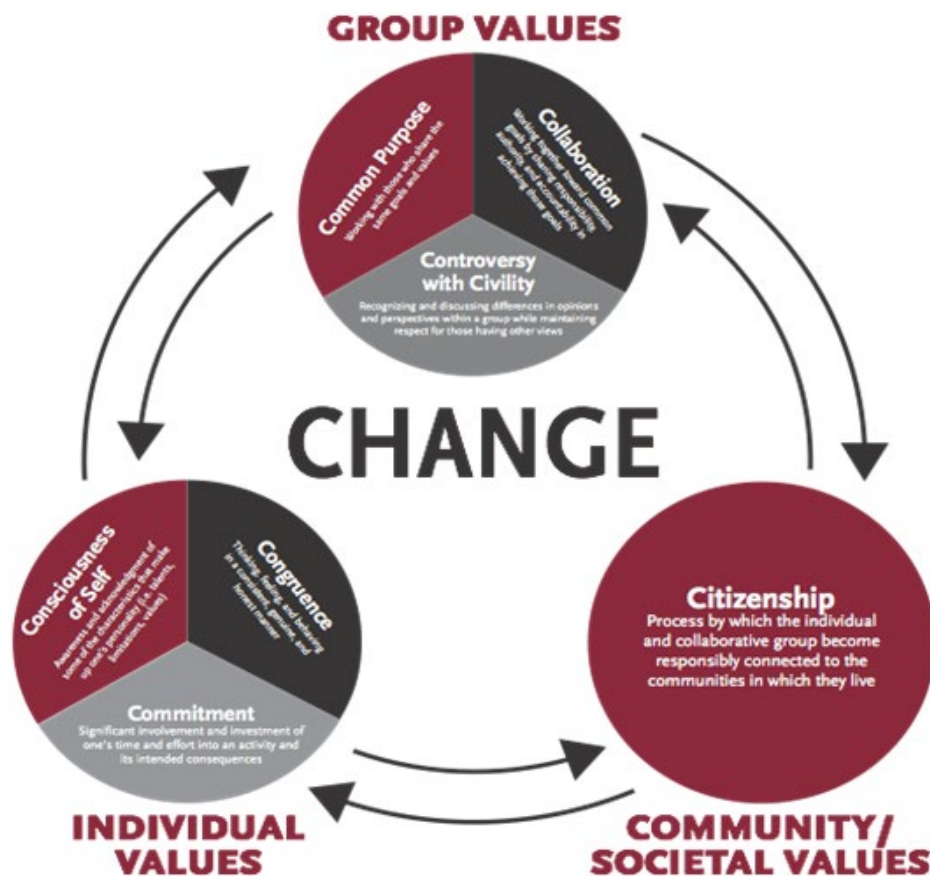
At the high school level, targeted programs provide students with practical experience they can include in their college and career applications. The Robotics program engages faculty from both the high school and college working alongside their respective students on a dedicated robotics project with aspirations of competing in local, state and national FIRST Robotics Competitions. A second connects students to the national college/career readiness program, ACE Mentor Program of America. This program provides our students and faculty the opportunity to collaborate on a preconceived design project led by a national construction firm, Turner Construction. Students meet once a week after school for six weeks to consider the architectural, construction, and engineering needs of the design project. Each meeting is led by a professional from Turner Construction, Alma Architecture, or our own engineering students and faculty. The high school teams are encouraged to compete at the local, state and national levels through the ACE infrastructure. In addition to these targeted programs, Lafayette students mentor Easton Area High School students through Generation Next and You Can Too. These programs pair Lafayette with EASD students to provide support for the final steps to prepare for life after graduation. Students work together to complete FAFSA applications, college essays, job applications, and cover letters.

Developing Engaged Citizens

Lafayette College seeks to develop systems of values that include an understanding of personal, social, and professional responsibility. The Landis Center seeks to graduate active citizens who consider their communities a priority in their daily lives. The Connected Classrooms Program supports these priorities by reinforcing the core leadership models embraced by the Center.

The Social Change Model of Leadership

The Connected Classrooms Program allows all participating students to develop their skills as engaged leaders, whether they have been volunteering for years or are just starting out. The Social Change Model describes leadership as a collaborative commitment to the values of self, group, and community. Leadership is a process through which individuals constantly examine the relationship between their values, the values of the group they are representing, and the values of the community they are a part of. Consistency in the expression of those values builds trust and creates an environment open to change.



Triangle of Quality Community Service

Successful community engagement requires more than just direct service in the community. Without education and reflection activities to support the experience, community engagement has the potential to do harm where it intends to do good. Understanding the community with which they will work can help students separate that community from the stereotypes that may reproduce in society, and ensures that they will not inadvertently say or do things that might be psychologically or emotionally harmful. Reflection activities allow students the space to understand how the experience has been important to them and the people with whom they have worked, and reinforces the belief that they can, as individuals, have a positive impact on society. The Triangle of Quality Community Service illustrates the relationship between education, direct service, and reflection, and briefly describes the negative impact the absence of any one of these components can have on the community engagement experience.



Adapted from Breakaway

Anticipated Student Outcomes

Elementary Student Outcomes

- Introduction to post-secondary educational environment
- Expressed interest in coming to school
- Positive interaction with college student mentors

Lafayette Student Outcomes

- Positive interaction with students from diverse backgrounds
- Ability to communicate complex information effectively
- Expression of civic engagement attitudes
 - Civic knowledge
 - Civic learning
 - Civic reflection
 - Civic efficacy

The Process

Lafayette faculty partner with teachers in the Easton Area School District to determine how their two classes align and how they can develop a lesson plan that can benefit both Lafayette and EASD students. Based on the content determined the faculty and teacher partners, Lafayette College students then work in small groups to develop learning modules they will then share with their elementary student partners at an approximate 1:1 ratio at either Lafayette or Cheston Elementary. The learning modules can be delivered at either Lafayette College or the partner school. EASD students who come to campus can also amplify the experience with a campus tour and lunch on campus.

Shared Responsibilities

Lafayette faculty, EASD teachers, Landis Center staff, and staff of our EASD partners all play a role in developing the learning modules and related activities. The responsibilities are shared according to the following:

Lafayette College faculty:

- Reach out to Landis staff with subject interests
- Complete interest inventory with Landis assistance
- Commit to a teaching partner
- Set meeting module day/time with teaching partner
- Reserve room for module or arrange for transportation to partner site
- Inform Landis of materials needed up to \$100. The Landis Center will reimburse individual faculty members or perform a departmental transfer of charges with a receipt.
- Direct students in development of modules
- Coordinate practice session with faculty class and teacher

Easton Area School District faculty:

- Reach out to Communities in Schools Coordinator with subject interest(s)
- Commit to faculty partner
- Set meeting module day/time with Lafayette partner
- Work with Coordinator to secure transportation and nurse (if necessary)
- Confirm date/time with Lafayette partner
- Coordinate practice session with Lafayette faculty partner

Easton Area School District Communities in Schools Coordinator:

- Determine how many hours are necessary to complete module and on-campus experience. All experiences must occur between 9:30am and 1:30pm. The entire class must present on the same day.
- Clear suggested days with school principal
- Decide how many adults will attend the field trip to Lafayette
- As soon as possible after ensuring that the date is open, the EASD teacher must complete online form for field trip bus request to secure the date
- Share tentative schedule with Landis Center so that tour and lunch can be arranged

- Submit number of students in class
- Secure permission slips and media consents for students participating in field trip
- Keep running list of students who cannot be photographed
- Get map from Landis Center of exact building location
- Send email to faculty partner, teacher partner, school principal, and Center for Community Engagement to confirm trip dates and schedules

Landis Center for Community Engagement staff:

- Connect Lafayette and EASD faculty
- Work with Communities in Schools Coordinator to connect Lafayette and EASD staff
- Arrange tour
- Arrange space for lunch
- Create and share itinerary with all partners
- Distribute evaluations and provide reports to all partners

Suggested Language for Syllabus

You have enrolled in a course that partners with the Landis Center for Community Engagement to provide experiential learning activities in the Easton community. Your course participates in the *Connected Classrooms* program designed to support learners at Lafayette and at our partner elementary schools in the Easton Area School District. *Connected Communities* is not a reading or tutoring program. *Connected Communities*:

- Provides incentive for children to come to school so that they can learn
- Allows for positive interaction between elementary children and college students
- Supports Easton Area School District's positive character development initiatives
- Tells children that the community cares about them and their successes
- Increases children's knowledge of, aspirations toward, and expectations of continuing education after high school

As a Classroom Connector, you are expected to collaborate with your classmates to develop a grade-level appropriate, hands-on learning module to share with your elementary partner classroom. This module should be constructed in such a way that it reinforces your own understanding of foundational course concepts. You are also expected to communicate with your partner teacher at the elementary school to ensure that the material you are presenting is grade-level appropriate and you will present a practice module to the teacher no later than one week before your scheduled *Connected Classroom* visit. In an effort to ensure that *Connected Classroom* is achieving its stated goals, Classroom Connectors are required to participate in a brief Civic Engagement 101 module prior to engaging with their partner classroom and to participate in a reflection activity immediately following the *Connected Classroom* visit. Some students may also be asked to complete a brief survey. Community engagement outcomes for Classroom Connectors are:

- To introduce civic knowledge, i.e., to understand the social, political, and/or historical context of the community organization
- To enhance students' sense of civic efficacy, i.e., to be confident in one's own ability to contribute meaningfully to their community
- To cultivate students' civic learning, i.e., to apply academic competencies such as teamwork, communication, critical thinking, creative problem-solving, etc. to a community goal

ENGAGE ASPIRE INSPIRE

Planning Sheet

The planning sheet serves as a guide for Lafayette and Easton faculty. In addition to necessary logistics, such as course and scheduling information, it allows space for partners to think about where their course objectives and students' learning might overlap.

Planning Sheet (Lafayette & EASD Faculty)

Faculty/Teacher Partnership	
Lafayette Faculty Member	
Faculty Academic Department	
Campus Office	
Easton Faculty Member	
Easton School	
Course/Classroom Partnership	
Lafayette Course Title	
Lafayette Class Meeting Time	
Number of Lafayette Students	
Lafayette Student Year	
Elementary Grade	
Number of Elementary Students	
Lafayette/Elementary Student Ratio	
Leader in Me	
Habit Integrated into Module	
Project Description	
Objective	
Activities	
Materials	
Known Risks or Assumptions	

Planning Sheet (cont.)

Module Logistics	
Time/Date of Practice Session	
Location of Practice Session	
Module Date/Time	
Location of Module	
Transportation	
*Drop-off and pick-up is always at Markle Hall	
Time/Location of Bus Pick-up from Elementary School	
Name of Lafayette Representative Meeting the Bus	
Tour	
*All tours meet at Markle Hall	
Time of Tour	
Name of Lafayette Tour Guide	
Lunch	
Time/ Location of Lunch	

Reflection and Evaluation

Reflection allows participants an opportunity to connect their Connected Classroom experience with other areas of their personal, academic, or professions lives. From a programmatic standpoint, reflection helps us determine how well we are meeting the stated goals of Connected Classrooms and allows us to develop programmatic improvements based on feedback.

EASD Students

The below questions are designed to address the elementary students' knowledge of, interest in, and aspiration toward college.

Connected Classrooms Program Reflection	
Name	
Grade	
Date of Field Trip	
Talk about one or two things you learned about college that you didn't know before going on this field trip.	
Please tell us about a few subjects or programs you want to know more about.	
Imagine you are about to graduate high school. Talk about what you see yourself doing next.	

For Lafayette Students

Responses to the following open-ended questions determine the extent to which college students display active citizenship following participation in the Connected Classrooms program according to the following indicators: civic knowledge, civic learning, civic reflection, and civic efficacy. This evaluation is distributed electronically as a Google form following students' module date.

Pre-Evaluation

Connected Classroom Program Reflection	
Course	
Date of module	
Gender	
Graduation year	
Previous community engagement experience (measured in years)	
What are some ways you can or have contributed your skills and/or knowledge to your community?	
Please share a few words that describe your feelings about working with elementary school students this semester.	
What are you hoping to gain from the experience?	

Post-Evaluation

Connected Classroom Program Reflection	
Course	
Date of module	
Gender	
Graduation year	
Previous community engagement experience (measured in years)	
Please explain some methods you employed to make the academic material understandable to elementary school children.	
Please explain one thing you would do differently if you were to do a similar project in the future.	
Please talk briefly about one thing you learned about Easton or the students and/or school you worked with.	
Based on this community engagement experience, please provide a few reasons you would or would not participate in community engagement in the future.	
Please describe some of your own skills and knowledge you believe you can apply toward the	

benefit of your community.

For All Faculty

Connected Classroom Program Reflection	
Name	
Course or Grade	
Date of module	
Please tell us about one or two aspects of the project that went particularly well.	
Please tell us about any challenges you faced.	
Please explain one thing you would do differently if you were to do a similar project in the future.	

NOTES