

CLARK STREET

COMMUNITY SCHOOL

See what sets us apart



inside: message from the principal/ benefits of community partnerships/ CSCS glossary/ research behind our methods

CONTENTS



MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Get to know Jill Gurtner, our school principal, as she welcomes you to Clark Street Community School.

OUR INNOVATION ZONE

We're doing school differently and helping students become agents of their own learning. Find out about our approaches, our philosophies and the pathways to graduation.

SAY WHAT?

This is your reference section to keep up with the lingo you'll hear when you talk to people about Clark Street. Now you finally know the difference between an element and an artifact!

MATH AT CSCS

Learn about the multiple ways students are engaging in high level math at Clark Street.

COMMUNITY & COLLABORATION

We have over 50 community partners and collaborations. Find out more about our anchor programs and our continually growing network.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Read more about how restorative practices and social emotional skills are cornerstones of supporting our students today.

**THE FACT IS THAT GIVEN
THE CHALLENGES WE
FACE, EDUCATION
DOESN'T NEED TO BE
REFORMED -- IT NEEDS TO
BE TRANSFORMED.**

Ken Robinson

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE



Welcome to Clark Street Community School and to our collective efforts to transform public education to ensure that every child deeply understands their personal genius and confidently understands how they can use it for the greater good.

Yep, we really mean that! What started as a dream and a challenge to see if you really could build this type of school, has become a reality! One of the greatest lessons learned in this process has been that there is a powerful, mutually beneficial relationship between a supportive and empowering community and fostering the inner genius of every individual. By maintaining laser-like focus on a belief that we are all capable of brilliance and that a community that not only supports, but expects brilliance from all raises all individuals and the community up, we truly have created a powerfully transformed educational experience.

We are thrilled that you have joined us and we know we will be better because you are here! Whether your official title is student, parent, guardian, community partner, staff, or friend, know that we are all learners; we are all contributing members of a thriving community; and we are all geniuses in waiting! As you begin to assess how you want to belong in this community, I encourage you to do it in the way that feels right to you. Sit back and watch and prepare your questions or jump on in and know that you will figure it out as you go. Either way, you can trust that there is a supportive community here to help you thrive!

Thanks for joining us on this incredible journey!

Jill

THE RESEARCH BEHIND CSCS

When we set out to create Clark Street Community School we were inspired by Clayton Christiansen's work on Disruptive Innovation (<http://www.claytonchristensen.com/key-concepts/>) and Margaret Wheatley and Debra Frieze's exploration of communities around the world who walked out of limiting beliefs and assumptions and walked on to create healthy and resilient communities(<http://walkoutwalkon.net/>). We were driven by the quest to use our small size, our skilled staff, and our highly engaged community to design and quickly iterate an educational model which deeply engaged and empowered learners.

Our notion of engagement was based on Phil Schlety's work on Engagement and his research which indicated that by design, the best we could expect to get from students in our schools was "Strategic Compliance." We set out to redesign education in a manner that truly could engage all learners and help them become empowered, self-directed learners. We began to build this school on three pillars:

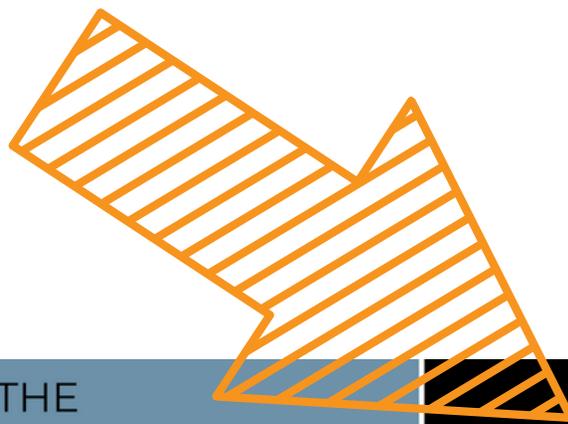
- ~ A personalized learning experience that challenges learners and capitalizes on their interests and passions supporting each student as an individual.
- ~ A democratic learning environment that encourages critical participation and honors the responsibilities and rights of each community member.
- ~ A place-based education that emphasizes connections between people and ideas and fosters work that connects learners to local, regional, national, and global communities.

Since opening, we have partnered with researchers at the University of Wisconsin Madison to help us determine what about our program is most effective and how we can build upon that. Our longest standing research partnership has been with Dr. Richard (Shep) Zeldin, now emeritus professor in the School of Human Ecology and the University of Wisconsin Madison Extension. Dr. Zeldin's work in Youth Adult Partnerships in community based organizations around the world has helped us structure and assess our empowering environment for students. The embedded researchers from this team have found these key factors in our design have served to create a highly empowering environment for students:

- ~ Relational Environment in which everyone matters, is expected to perform at high levels, and strives to build a culture of respect and equality.
- ~ Opportunity Role Structure in which power hierarchies are flattened as much as possible and every community member has a role that matches their choices, skills, and social connections.
- ~ Core Participant Experiences which emphasize that students and adults are all learners and teachers who collectively reflect upon their effectiveness and celebrate their success.
- ~ Values and Principles which honor listening to and validating all voices and encouraging the participation and contributions of all members for the betterment of the community.

We have also worked closely with Dr. Richard Halverson in the School of Education's Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis and his team on exploring the power of a personalized learning approach. With this team, we have deepened our understanding of the power of conferring practices to build healthy learning partnerships between students and adult educators and specifically, how we can design these conversations in a manner which best help students develop strong identities as successful learners and creators.

Our mission emphasizes our commitment to serving as a resource for educators and a catalyst for change. Our strong relationships with researchers and our desire to share what we are learning to continue to improve our practice and to inspire others to implement effective practices in their learning environments ensures that we will continue to play this role.



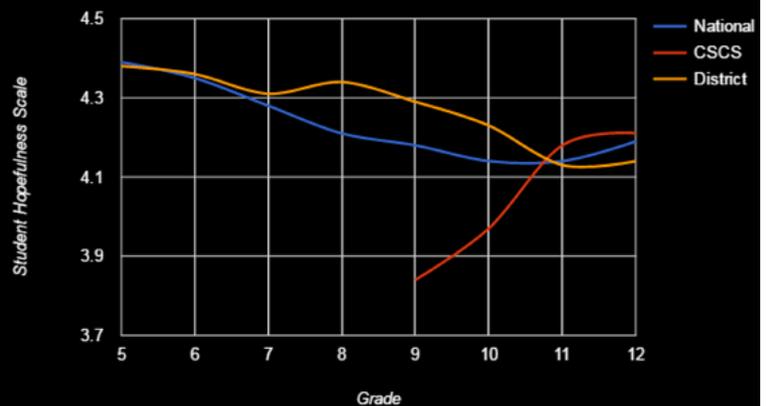
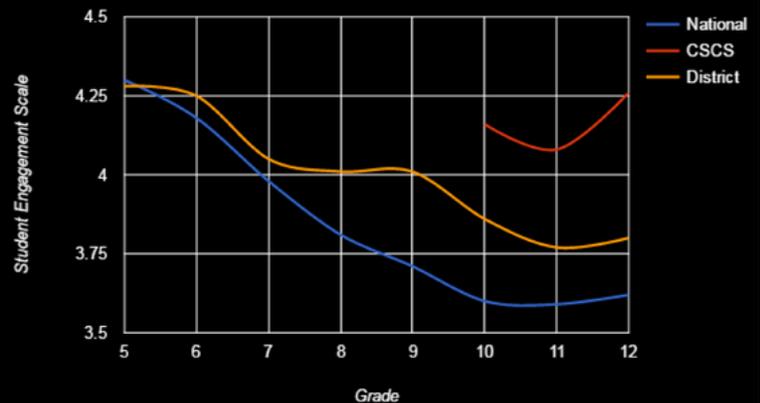
THE GALLUP POLL RESULTS

CSCS Students are consistently **more engaged** when compared to their district and national level counterparts.

This is **despite** the fact that they are significantly less hopeful than their peers at the beginning of high school.

The longer students are with us, the more **hopeful** they become.

Our commitment to cultivating a community of **ENGAGED** learners is **working**.



CSCS has made education more valuable. I am more motivated to be involved to improve the system but also preserve the qualities I like.

-CSCS student

CSCS GLOSSARY

PLPs, ALBs, artifacts and elements....don't be confused by Clark Street lingo! This is your go-to guide to help orient yourself to what you might hear while at Clark Street.

*Nuts & Bolts

*Spaces/Day-to-day

*Philosophies

COMPILED BY CSCS STUDENTS AND STAFF

***Advisor / Advisory:** Each student is paired with a teacher who will guide and support them in discovering their learner identity and implementing their **PLP**, and is identified as their **advisor**. Students that have the same **advisor** make up an **advisory**. *"You should go talk to your advisor about that project idea."*

***All School Meeting:** A time when the whole school meets in the commons, most often for celebrations. *"We'll be having an all school meeting at 8:45."*

***Annual Learning Binder (ALB):** A binder or electronic website that holds all the **artifacts** that a student has earned within a school year, which is used to track **artifact** completion. *"I am handing back your writing pieces, so grab your ALB so you can put them in there."*

***Artifact: Artifacts** are tangible evidence of student learning. *"In this seminar, we'll be creating a narrative writing artifact around protest music."*

***Argument Writing (AW):** A writing **artifact** that demonstrates engagement in the writing process with the purpose of developing a student's argumentative writing skills. *"One option you have is to write an Argumentative piece on the benefits of mindfulness."*

***Blended Learning:** A method of instructional delivery that blends online, whole group, and small group/individual work to create a more personalized approach to learning. *"Math workshop is a space where we practice blended learning, and definitely is not a time when you are using your computer for recreational purposes."*

***Blender:** A supervised work space for students to work on an online class or other individual projects outside of a typical **seminar** setting. *"Go to the blender and check in with Monica before you start working on your online Health class."*

***Buzz:** An online learning management system (LMS) that organizes curriculum and classes. *"Log in to Buzz and click on 'Math Workshop 4'."*

***Circles:** An approach to classroom conversation that allows all voices to be heard, encourages students to practice active listening, and builds community. *Most seminars start with a circle to orient everyone to a particular task while also providing space for each person to share.*

***Community Lunch:** Scheduled time where students and staff come together and eat lunch and enjoy each others company, usually with an all school activity afterward. *"After community lunch today, we will be playing capture the flag."*

***CSCS Student Leadership:** The idea that peer to peer learning and support is critical to the community, and that teachers are not the only conduit of information. *Older students help new CSCS students with setting up binders.*

***Democratic Education:** A democratic learning environment encourages critical participation and honors the responsibilities and rights of each community member. *In our professional development and planning meetings, students are encouraged to attend and have equal voice and input.*

***Effective Communication:** An **artifact** that demonstrates engagement in the public speaking process with the purpose of developing a student's public speaking skills.
"By participating in the gallery walk, you will be earning a public speaking artifact."

***Elements:** Academic content strands that are categorized and tied to specific content areas.
"On this worksheet, you can find the element we're working on, PSI."

***Engagement:** True learner engagement is when students' learning is valued, their voices are heard, they can reflect, they take ownership, and they become agents of their own learning. *Students enrolled in an entrepreneurial seminar who wanted to further their learning of bike mechanics in other spaces.*

***Entrepreneurial Spaces (Garden / Bike Shed):** Student initiated businesses that started in our entrepreneurial classes that have developed into CSCS programming.
"We need families to sign up to take care of the garden this summer so we can harvest in the fall to make salsa."

***Feedback:** A continuous loop of critique for constant improvement. *Students gather feedback on their informational writing pieces.*

***Field Experience:** Field trips or experiences that take students out of the building, usually **seminar** based.
"We have a field experience planned for next Thursday during seminar to Governor Dodge."

***Growth Mindset:** The understanding that skills and abilities are not 'fixed', but can be developed over time. *It's important that students have a growth mindset approach when learning math.*

***Informative Writing (IW):** A writing **artifact** that demonstrates engagement in the writing process with the purpose of developing a student's ability to share their learning with the intent to 'inform'.
"After you research carbon emissions, you will be working towards an Informative Writing."

***Interdisciplinary Learning:** Curriculum that encompasses multiple subjects into one topic, providing a more authentic approach to learning. *The seminar 'Bikes' encompasses Physical Education, Physical Science, and Physics elements.*

***Makerspace:** A large room that houses tools and materials to engage in hands on learning and facilitate large group **seminars**.
"Cigar Box Guitars is meeting in the Makerspace today to work on their fretboards."

***Mindfulness:** A self-care practice that many teachers and students use to refocus. *Jason's class usually starts off with 5 minutes of mindfulness each day.*

***Mission:** The Mission of Clark Street Community School is to democratically cultivate a community of engaged learners, serve as a resource for educators, and as a catalyst for reform in education throughout our region and our nation.

***Morning Meeting (MM):** A group that meets in the morning, combining two or more **advisories** with the purpose of building community and fostering relationships.
"We will be working on artifact reconciliation in morning meeting."

***Narrative Writing (NW):** A writing **artifact** that demonstrates engagement in the writing process with the purpose of developing a student's storytelling skills.
"We've practiced yoga and mindfulness for 8 weeks now, so let's reflect on our experience and learning through a Narrative Writing piece."

***Nutrition Break:** A mid-morning break, with the option of getting breakfast/snacks before transitioning to **seminars**.
"It's 10:00, nutrition break is over!"

***Personalized Learning:** A **personalized learning** experience challenges learners and capitalizes on their interests and passions, while allowing students to develop necessary skills and knowledge to become their best selves. *A student learned about a particular social media platform so they could utilize it in their social justice campaign work.*

***Personalized Learning Plan (PLP):** The plan and path you take towards graduation that is tailored to your personal interests and strengths.
"We can meet tomorrow morning on how to integrate your interests into your PLP."

***Place Based Learning:** A place-based education emphasizes connections between people and ideas and fosters work that connects learners to local, regional, national, and global communities. *Students in the Music and Memory seminar are invited into senior care centers to develop playlists for the senior living community members.*

***Presentations of Learning (POL):** A public speaking platform for students to share a meaningful learning experience or reflection with the community at the end of each semester.
"That might be a great project to do your POL on!"

***Proficiency Portfolio:** A binder or electronic website that holds proficient or exemplary **artifacts** that will be used towards graduation and can also be used to display your best work, with the intent of sharing with post secondary institutions.

"You should go get your proficiency portfolio so you can put your proficient artifact in there, good job!"

***Project Based Learning:** In all seminars, students have the opportunity to take ownership of their learning and further their knowledge in a particular subject area, by developing projects around topics they're passionate about. *Students in the Play in the Woods seminar created their own 'Reduced Shakespeare' version of the play.*

***Project Lab A / Project Lab B (PLA / PLB):** Rooms in the center of the school, most often used for breakout rooms or presentations.

"Everyone who is ready for peer feedback head over to Project Lab B."

***Reading Informational Texts (RIT):**

An **artifact** that demonstrates engagement in the reading process that supports a student's analysis and comprehension of informational and nonfiction texts/articles/media.

"You can earn an RIT this seminar through the excerpts we read around the history of blues."

***Reading Literature (RL):** An **artifact**

that demonstrates engagement in the reading process that supports a student's analysis and comprehension of story elements and author's craft.

"The Go Big Read this year is Hillbilly Elegy, which we'll be reading together as you work towards a RL."

***Research (RES):** An **artifact** that

develops a student's ability to find credible sources and compile information to answer a question.

"We'll be working on a research artifact as we delve deeper into global warming."

***Restorative Practice:** A proactive approach to whole-school community interaction based on improved communication, cooperation, trust, respect, and responsibility. *We regularly engage in restorative conversations, and improve school culture by helping others work through difficulties and look for potential solutions to repair any harm done.*

***Rubric:** A method of competency-based assessment that assesses a student's quality of work on an **artifact**, and shows their progress towards mastery.

"Take a look at the rubric I'm handing back before putting it in your ALB."

***Shared Beliefs:** Our community holds a set of core beliefs that are based on creating a positive learning environment, developing strong support networks, and making connections within the community.

***Seminars: Interdisciplinary** classes that run approximately 90 minutes each day.

"You should sign up for the Great World Texts seminar!"

***Space For Learning (SFL):** A **seminar** that provides more flexibility to pursue independent projects or other learning that aligns with your **PLP**.

"I'm going to sign up for the Space for Learning second block because my foreign language course is during that time."

***SPARK Days:** Approximately two days a month when students are encouraged to pursue 'out of building' experiences, or engage in school clubs, to further their **personalized learning plan**.

"Are you going on the Taliesin field experience next SPARK day?"

***Student Agency / Self Advocacy:**

The understanding that students are more engaged learners when they take ownership of their learning. *A group of students got together to write a letter to the district administration about their thoughts and concerns around the issue of gun violence.*

***Student-Led Conference (SLC):** A student-led meeting about student progress and future plans with the student, advisor and parents/guardians that happens twice a year.

"As we prepare for SLCs, you should review your elements checklist and ALB."

***STAR Testing:** A progress monitoring assessment that students take 3 times a year to monitor reading and math growth.

"Today in math workshop, we'll be taking the STAR assessment."

***Technical Writing (TW):** A writing artifact that demonstrates engagement in the writing process with the purpose of developing a student's procedural knowledge and ability to create a layout that communicates ideas in a concise manner.

"You should turn your knowledge of how to operate a wood burner into a technical writing piece!"

***Vision:** Our Vision is to be a leader in **democratic, place-based** and **personalized education**, facilitating inspirational and authentic learning experiences that engage students, families, educators, and the community.

***Workshops:** Content specific classes that usually run for shorter time periods.

"I'm in Heather's Math Workshop."

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



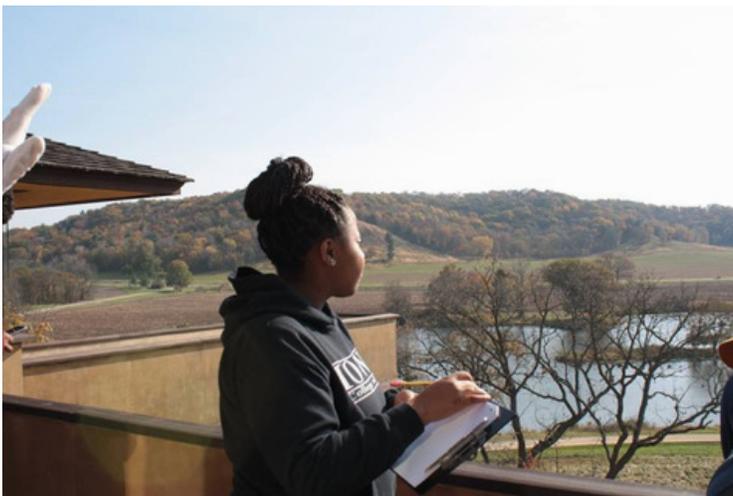
PHOTOS BY CSCS STUDENTS AND STAFF

In Clark Street Community School's innovative educational model, the surrounding community provides the real-world setting for learning. Key to our success is collaboration with the individuals, businesses and organizations that serve as our partners and help our students build vital workplace skills and lifelong habits of learning.

Above: Cycling without Age founder Ole Kassow talks with CSCS students about starting up a local chapter in Middleton.

Top Left: Students with the Music and Memory program visit the Middleton Senior Center to create playlists that engage the memory.

Bottom Left: Students and staff collaborate with Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin house, one of Clark Street's anchor partnerships.



“

The reading and writing strategies CSCS teaches have been really helpful for me in my classes. Having so much experience getting peer feedback also made me feel much more comfortable in my classes. ”

-CSCS graduate on college preparedness

MATH at CSCS

There are 3 major ways that students work towards math at CSCS.

Math Workshop

Every student at CSCS is enrolled in a Math Workshop that meets every day. Math Workshop is a blended learning environment, where math content is delivered to students via an online Learning Management System (LMS), and students work in small groups collaborating and learning together while soliciting “mini” instructional lessons from math teachers as needed. Using an LMS, allows the CSCS Math Instructional Leads to select targeted and robust content across multiple platforms to give students access to the best materials from varied programs without being limited to the confines of a singular curriculum or approach. In all Math Workshops, the work is self-paced and when students demonstrate skills competency within a content strand they move into different groups. Students progress through material only as they demonstrate competency. This ensures students are building necessary foundational skills to move forward while also ensuring students are not slowed or held back when they are ready for ‘next steps’. Flexible grouping, self-pacing and on-demand instruction creates the framework for our blended learning math workshops and ensures ALL students are developing necessary competencies in algebra, geometry, functions, statistics, and pre-calculus.

Interdisciplinary Seminars

Zombie Apocalypse. Rocket Science. Prove It. Lawn Games. These are the titles of just a few of the seminars that have been created that incorporate and apply math concepts. Students have modeled disease growth (exponential functions), built and launched rockets (quadratic functions), build logical arguments(geometric proof), and played hours of corn hole to learn different math skills (probability). Teachers provide structure and instruction on the topics while students get to play and explore.

Math Models

Math modeling is the process of solving a problem by approaching it from a mathematical lens and applying multiple methods to find solutions to the proposed problem. As an iterative process, modeling asks students to review and interpret results, solicit feedback, revise, draw conclusions, and propose follow-up questions. Within many seminar offerings at Clark Street Community School, instructors propose an overarching question and implement a math modeling process to guide students to multiple solutions. In these environments, students are guided by their seminar leader to shape a math model as a class. The scaffolding and guidance provided allows students to learn and practice the process as a community instead of as an individual. This often creates the foundation necessary for students to move to independent math modeling in the future. Students also have the opportunity to create independent math models. Students display their math model learning through presentations, formal written reports, narratives, research projects, interactive displays, online content, 3-D modeling, instructional videos, art and design with more and more ideas and options growing every day.

DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

www.christenseninstitute.org

Disruptive innovation is the catalyst for bringing about more equitable access to high-quality education.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AT CSCS

What is the CSCS Community Practice Belief Statement?

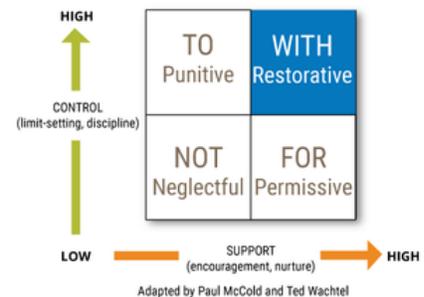
We believe an environment that supports deep, meaningful learning for all requires a safe community that allows individuals to take educational risks. In order for this to occur, individuals must commit to, and the community must support, the development of: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

How do we do this?

CSCS does this through two main approaches:
restorative practices and social and emotional skill development.

Restorative Practices

Restorative Justice is a theory or set of beliefs that informs how communities can resolve problems that have caused harm or damaged relationships. Restorative Justice prioritizes accountability and community healing over punishment and is rooted in values such as interconnectedness, respect and responsibility.



Restorative practices grow out of this philosophy. Restorative practices, including circles, are inclusive and collaborative rather than authoritarian and punitive and utilize a structured process to create opportunities to develop understanding and empathy and problem-solve through open and honest dialogue. These approaches build and strengthen relationships and encourage students to become aware of the impact of their behavior, understand the obligation to take responsibility for their actions, and take steps towards making things right. Restorative approaches, including circles, can also be used to build community and as a framework for addressing a wide variety of topics and challenging issues. Research shows that restorative practices create more positive and equitable outcomes for students and school communities than traditional punitive systems of discipline.

At CSCS, staff and students are involved in a variety of restorative practices, including: classroom and community circles, mediations, collaborative problem solving conversations, restorative conferences, and formal restorative circles.

Social Emotional Skills

Research has shown that social and emotional development can be fostered, and social and emotional skills, attitudes, and behaviors can be taught using a variety of approaches, including teaching practices such as cooperative learning and project-based learning as well as teaching lessons designed to enhance students' social and emotional competence explicitly.

At CSCS, in addition to using cooperative learning and project-based learning teaching practices, advisors will be teaching lessons from the curriculum DBT Skills in Schools: Skills Training for Emotional Problem Solving for Adolescents (DBT STEPS-A). This curriculum focuses on teaching students skills in four main areas: mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation and interpersonal effectiveness.

Clark Street
Community School
teaches students **HOW**
to learn, not *what* to
learn, which is
essential for success
at the post-secondary
level.

MARK DZIEDZIC, DIRECTOR OF GREATER
MADISON WRITING PROJECT UW-
MADISON