

What is a Client-Centered Project used to Complete a Post-Secondary Asset?

A **Client-Centered Project** is an authentic project in which students research and create a proposal based on the needs, wants, or problems of a real person, business or organization (the client).

For example:

- Designing a garden for an elementary school.
- Creating a website for a school club.
- Developing a marketing plan for a community event.

The key is to communicate with the client, understand their goals, and design the project to meet their expectations.

How do client-centered projects align with our district's instructional vision?

- Client-centered projects challenge students to solve real-world problems for actual stakeholders, raising the rigor of learning.
- Students must master content and also apply it creatively and critically, often meeting professional or community standards.
- Projects often focus on community-based issues, giving students the chance to work on challenges that matter to them personally. This relevance increases student engagement and fosters authentic responsibility for the outcomes of their work.
- Students practice the life-long skills of managing timelines, responding to feedback, revising their work, and presenting their ideas professionally.
- This deep level of engagement cultivates agency, accountability, and a sense of purpose.
- Teachers often shift roles to act as mentors and coaches rather than just content deliverers.
- This shift allows educators to innovate in their instructional practice and respond flexibly to student needs.

*Note: Client-centered projects counting toward a student's Post-Secondary Asset (PSA) requirement do not have the same guidelines as client-connected projects related to the Real World Learning Market Value Asset (MVA).

How do Client-Centered Projects compare to Project-Based Learning (PBL)?

Aspect	Client-Centered Project	Project-Based Learning (PBL)
Real-World Connection	Direct work for actual clients or stakeholders; problems are authentic and high-stakes	Based on real-world problems or scenarios, but may not involve actual stakeholders
Audience	External (e.g., businesses, nonprofits, community organizations) or internal	Can be internal (classroom peers) or external; audience varies
Accountability	Students are accountable to real clients and expected to meet professional standards	Students are primarily accountable to the teacher and classmates
Teacher Role	Teacher acts as coach/mentor, supporting students in managing professional interactions	Teacher facilitates learning and guides inquiry and skill-building
Purpose	To solve a problem or meet a need for someone outside the classroom	To build deep understanding of content through inquiry and problem-solving
Assessment	Based on client satisfaction, quality of deliverables, and reflection	Based on learning objectives, project process, final product, and reflection
Student Skills Emphasized	Communication, client management, adaptability, professionalism	Collaboration, critical thinking, research, creativity
Level of Authenticity	Very high—students produce work that may be used or implemented in real contexts	High, but sometimes more simulated or classroom-contained

Guidelines for Client-Centered Projects For Post-Secondary Assets

This planning guide is meant to assist teachers in planning a whole-class project which meets the rigor of a Post-Secondary Asset (PSA).

Section 1: Planning the Project

1.1. Secure a Client – This should occur at least one quarter prior to the start of the project.

- Work with our district Career Pathways Facilitators to identify a suitable client whose needs align with your course standards.
 - Facilitators are Amy Nail and Emily Schmidt. They work with community partners on a regular basis and can help determine the best client for your project.
 - If you already have a client in mind, please check with Amy or Emily to ensure we are not over-utilizing any of our community resources.
 - Share your course standards with the client to determine what need they may have that best aligns with your standards.

1.2. Client Request and Alignment

- Ensure the client's request contains:
 - A clear explanation of the **problem or challenge**.
 - The **intended outcome** or **goal**.
 - Specific **project requirements** or **guidelines** that align with course standards.
- Confirm that the project provides meaningful, real-world relevance to students and supports skill development outlined in the **Portrait of a Graduate**.

1.3. Prepare and Submit a Written Proposal

- Complete the district-approved Client-Centered Project PSA Proposal so your CCP can be counted as a graduation-appropriate CCP.
- Submit the proposal to your lead principal or assistant principal for curriculum & instruction for approval before proceeding.

Section 2: During the Project

2.1. Allot Class Time

- Schedule and dedicate sufficient in-class time for students to:
 - Conduct research.
 - Collaborate and plan.
 - Create and refine deliverables.
- Time necessary for projects may vary but the project must be rigorous enough to count as a graduation requirement.

2.2 Group Students Appropriately (if utilizing a group model)

- Share group expectations with students.
- Ensure equal participation and individual accountability in the project by assigning group members individual roles.

2.3. Client Introduction and Kick-Off

- Coordinate an introductory interaction between the client and students via one of the following:
 - In-person meeting.
 - Recorded or live video message.
 - Written request or project brief from the client.

2.3. Student Proposal Components

- Guide students to develop a project proposal that includes:
 - A research component using **authentic data** and/or **industry-relevant tools**.
 - A written component (e.g., report, project plan).
 - A presentation component with **visual aids** (e.g., slides, prototypes, infographics).

2.3. Skill Integration

- Foster use of **Portrait of a Graduate** competencies:
 - **Critical Thinking & Problem Solving:** Encourage analytical approaches and viable solutions.
 - **Creativity & Innovation:** Promote original ideas and out-of-the-box thinking.
 - **Initiative & Self-Direction:** Support independent project management and time management.
 - **Communication:** Emphasize clear, professional, and effective verbal and written communication.

2.4. Feedback Loop and Revision

- If possible, establish a method for students to receive feedback from the client, such as:
 - Interim presentations.
 - Email correspondence.
 - Virtual meetings or surveys.
- If the client cannot provide feedback, the student may receive feedback from another individual:
 - Teacher conference.
 - Student panel from within the class.

Section 3: Culminating the Project

3.1. Assessment and Grading

- Assess students' final projects and assign grades based on:
 - The quality and completeness of the project.
 - Adherence to client specifications.
 - Depth of research and alignment with course standards.

3.2. Rubric-Based Evaluation

- Use a comprehensive rubric that evaluates:
 - Alignment with client needs.
 - Content knowledge.
 - Problem-solving effectiveness and critical thinking.
 - Innovation and creativity.
 - Communication quality.

3.3. Student Presentations

- Students will present their final solutions, including visual aids, to:
 - The entire class.
 - The client, if possible (in-person or virtually).

3.4. Showcase of Top Projects

- If presenting all projects to the client is not feasible:
 - Select top-performing projects based on rubric scores.
 - Organize a showcase event or meeting with the client or a panel of industry professionals to present selected projects.
 - If industry professionals are not available, the panel could be comprised of school-based personnel.

3.5. Student Reflection

- Provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their project – the process as well as the written product and the presentation.

Additional Notes

- Consider how the project might be used as a portfolio piece for students, for example in Xello.
- Gather feedback from the client on the overall project experience for continuous improvement.
- Submit the names of students who completed the client-connected project to the school administrator for recording of a PSA.

Client-Centered Project PSA Proposal

Teacher Name	
Course	
Date	
Name of the Project	
Project Timeframe (start & end dates)	
How much class time will be devoted to the project? Estimate number of class periods or hours.	
Who is the client (individual, business, or organization)?	
What is the problem or challenge the client has issued? Briefly describe the real-world issue or need the client is asking students to address.	
What is the client's intended outcome or goal? Describe the expected results or deliverables the client hopes to receive.	
What course standards align with the project? List the specific course standards or skills that this project will address.	
How will the project kick-off with the client be handled? (Choose one and provide details.) • In-person meeting • Video introduction from client • Written project brief • Other (provide details)	
When and to whom will students present the project? (Choose all that apply.) • To the class • To the client • To industry professionals • Other (provide details)	
Target date(s) for presentations	
How will the project be assessed? (Choose all that apply.) • Rubric (aligned to client request and course standards) • Student reflection • Peer review • Client feedback • Other (provide details)	
If this project is not whole class, please provide a list of student participants on an additional page.	
**Teacher is responsible for submitting the names of students who completed the client-centered project to the school administrator for recording of a PSA.	
Administrator Signature of Approval	
Approving-administrator should keep a copy of the proposal.	