



(2025)

PBL



CORE VALUES

/CAST Pillars + PBL

@castschools

(Spring 2025)

A guide for teachers
of all experience levels.



www.castschools.com

CAST Philosophy at a Glance



Reinventing Learning Through PBL

In short, at CAST Schools, we reimagine education by blending career pathways, student agency, and real-world learning to bridge equity gaps and prepare students for success.

PBL is Built on CAST's Four Pillars >



Relationships

Schools co-create projects with industry & community leaders.



Equity

Diverse, integrated learning communities that meet all student needs.



Youth Voice & Agency

Students drive learning, set goals, and solve real problems.



Authentic Learning

Projects connect to the real world, engaging students beyond school walls.

> Bringing the CAST Vision to Life with PBL

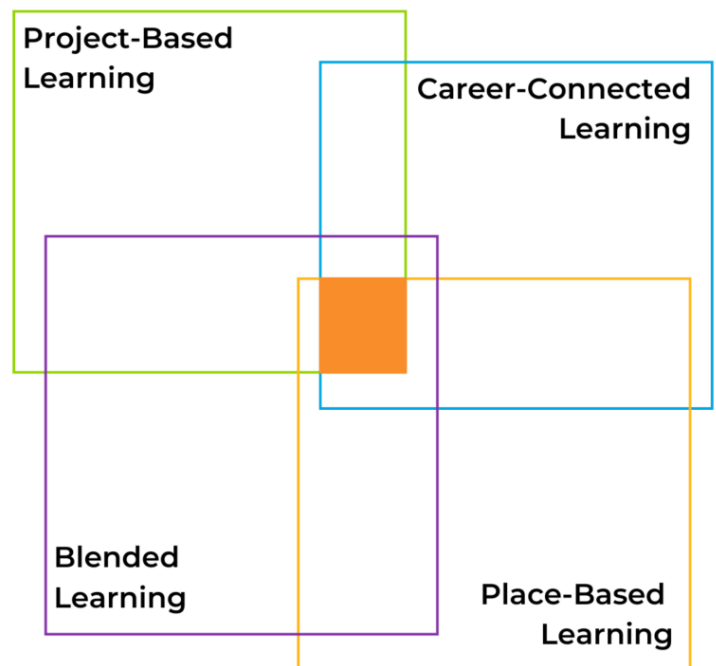
CAST Pillar	In Action	
Relationships	Community-Connected Projects	• Partnering with local experts • Showcasing real audiences
Equity	Differentiated & Inclusive PBL	• Various access points for learning • Scaffolding support
Youth Voice & Agency	Student-Designed Inquiry	• Students co-create driving questions • Students self-assess progress
Authentic Learning	Real-World Problem Solving	• Workplace learning • Industry challenges

Designing Student Experiences >

At CAST, we believe that authentic learning experiences result in the development of students' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Our instructional models are designed to achieve this goal.

“Your future boss isn’t going to give you a project with instructions. This is your chance to learn how to figure it out without getting fired. Take advantage of this opportunity.”

-CAST Student on PBL





Relationships

Industry and other community leaders are equal stakeholders in school design and governance; they collaborate and work alongside students and co-create everything from projects to school curriculum and schedule.

What it looks like in PBL:

- Community-Driven Projects: Students engage with local industry or community leaders to co-design projects addressing real-world issues (e.g., Milestone 2: Add Community Focus).
- Expert Feedback: Industry professionals provide authentic feedback on student work (e.g., Milestone 3: Share and Receive Feedback).
- Mentorship Opportunities: Community leaders mentor students through interviews, workshops, or guest speaking engagements (e.g., Milestone 3: Build Knowledge).
- Co-Creation of Curriculum: Leaders collaborate with teachers to align projects with both industry needs and educational standards.
- Showcase Events: Students present their work to community leaders at culminating events, fostering meaningful dialogue and recognition (e.g., Milestone 4: PBL Showcase and Celebration).

Equity

As a community, we help all students reach their full potential. Our schools are intentionally diverse and integrated, and our enrollment practices create schools that reflect the communities we serve. We use data to drive continuous improvement and to ensure that every child's needs are seen and met.



What it looks like in PBL:

- Student Voice and Choice: PBL empowers students to select topics and questions that reflect their unique perspectives and lived experiences, ensuring diverse viewpoints are represented in every project (e.g., Milestone 1: Launch PBL).
- Differentiated Supports: Teachers scaffold learning activities based on individual needs, providing tools like sentence starters, graphic organizers, and varied levels of resources to ensure equitable access to project success (e.g., Milestone 2: Build Knowledge).
- Inclusive Team Collaboration: Teams intentionally reflect diversity, and team-building activities help foster respect and understanding across different backgrounds (e.g., Milestone 2: Form and Build Relationships).
- Data-Informed Reflection: Teachers and students use data from formative assessments, peer feedback, and milestone check-ins to identify gaps and adjust instruction or project focus to meet individual needs (e.g., Milestone 5: Reflection).
- Equity-Focused Driving Questions: Projects address social justice themes or challenges relevant to the school community, encouraging students to explore solutions for systemic inequities (e.g., Milestone 3: Add Community Focus).



/CAST Pillars & Project Based Learning:

Youth Voice & Agency

Students act as co-creators and co-problem solvers at the school and beyond, offering ideas, posing new questions, and authentically engaging in their education.

Student-led learning promotes effective collaboration, development of leadership skills and the development of self-management, goal setting, self-advocacy, and student agency.

What it looks like in PBL:

- **Co-Creation of Driving Questions:** Students take the lead in developing driving questions that guide their projects, ensuring they are relevant and meaningful to their interests (e.g., Milestone 1: Launch PBL).
- **Student-Led Progress Checks:** Students manage milestone check-ins, facilitating discussions with peers, teachers, and even parents about their progress and next steps (e.g., Milestone 4: Tune and Finalize Showcase).
- **Team Leadership Roles:** Within teams, students assume leadership roles, such as project managers or research leads, to build self-management and collaboration skills (e.g., Milestone 2: Organize and Plan).
- **Goal Setting and Reflection:** Students set individual and team goals at the start of a project and reflect on their progress and outcomes at the end, fostering self-advocacy and accountability (e.g., Milestone 5: Reflection).
- **Authentic Engagement with Community Issues:** Students design projects that solve real-world problems, positioning them as active contributors and leaders in their school and community (e.g., Milestone 3: Add Community Focus).
- **Voice, Choice, Task, and Time:** Using blended learning strategies, flipped classroom design, choice boards, and similar tools, students are given more power over what, how, and when they work. Teachers provide scaffolding to support students stepping into this level of autonomy a little at a time.

Authentic Learning

Student learning is connected to real-world needs outside the school walls; students travel to the workspace and design relevant projects for real audiences with competitions, presentations, and other authentic exhibitions of learning.



What it looks like in PBL:

- **Real-World Projects:** Students identify and tackle real-world problems relevant to their community or industry, such as creating solutions for environmental issues or improving local resources (e.g., Milestone 2: Add Community Focus).
- **Engaging with Experts:** Students connect with professionals through interviews, workplace visits, or virtual platforms like Nepris to gain insights and refine their projects (e.g., Milestone 3: Build Knowledge).
- **Public Showcases:** Students present their work to authentic audiences, including industry leaders, local organizations, or community members, in professional settings or exhibitions (e.g., Milestone 4: PBL Showcase and Celebration).
- **Competitions and Real-World Validation:** Students participate in competitions, pitch their ideas to potential investors, or implement their solutions in real contexts, fostering a sense of purpose and accomplishment (e.g., Milestone 4: Finalizing PBL Projects).
- **Actionable Outcomes:** Projects culminate in tangible products or actionable plans, such as prototypes, campaigns, or community improvement initiatives, ensuring that learning extends beyond the classroom (e.g., Milestone 5: Call to Action).