

The 48-Student Plan

An ILM School-Within-A-School



The **Inspired Learner Model** (ILM) operates in US public elementary schools with existing budgets and staffing levels. ILM provides every child with the advantages of learner-centered education while meeting state student performance assessment expectations.

This 48-Student Plan is a **bridge program** for individual elementary schools to try ILM on a smaller scale before deciding to move forward with a larger implementation. The option also exists for this school-within-a-school to act as a **magnet** for students throughout the district.

We are confident that the results will accomplish a dramatic improvement in student outcomes and the quality of instruction.



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Learner-Centered Instruction: The Future of Education

This behavioral science-based approach to education builds on each child's interests, passions, and strengths. The **Inspired Learner Model (ILM)**, developed by the **Center for Inspired Learning (CFIL)**:

- Utilizes online learning to enable teachers to focus on creating project- and-activity-based learning opportunities.
- Address individual children's needs and aspirations.
- Creates a supportive environment where kids are engaged and naturally inspired to learn.
- Assesses students to ensure that they are actively engaged in their learning trajectories and making satisfactory progress. This is often done by having children critique their own work to identify areas needing improvement.



ILM Development: This model is the result of a concerted ten-year effort to integrate components of the best learner-centered education models in a way that can work in US public schools with existing infrastructure, staffing, and budgets.

ILM in Detail: Please refer to the following CFIL documents for a deeper understanding.

- [**A Brief Introduction to ILM**](#)
- [**ILM Concept Paper**](#)
- [**Implementing ILM**](#)
- [**Prototype ILM School**](#)



Student Goals

The Inspired Learner Model (ILM) recognizes the value and importance of state essential standards and does not seek to change or disrupt existing goals or expectations for students. ILM does, however, have some specific goals that work in tandem with state standards. The point of these goals is:

- 1. For students to develop a passion for learning so that they WANT to be in school and do well.**
- 2. To set students up for success in their post-elementary school journey, including their future academic, social, family, professional, and civic lives.**
- 3. To give students the desire, tools, and values so that they may have a positive impact on society and help make the world a better place for future generations.**

To these ends, the goal is for all students to:

- Become caring, sharing, inclusive, and compassionate people
- Find their interests and passions
- Participate in extracurricular activities
- Discover and participate in hobbies they enjoy
- Learn at least one foreign language
- Develop conflict-resolution skills
- Become adept at and comfortable with computers and technology
- Achieve digital and media literacy
- Have an awareness of local, state, national, and world issues, and a desire to participate in civic life to help find solutions to these issues
- Learn how to mentor others in the skills they master
- Develop leadership skills
- Have exposure to the arts and ample opportunities to participate
- Develop public speaking skills
- Learn self-care skills (i.e., regular exercise, personal hygiene, healthy eating, etc.)
- Learn “home and beyond” skills (i.e., financial literacy, cooking, using hand tools, basic repairs, etc.)



Components

The goal is for students to be naturally motivated to learn and feel supported in their educational journey. Teachers and staff are seen as part of an away-from-home extended family. The structure creates an inspiring environment and safety net for all children.

Core Components / Phase One Implementation

- 1. Project and Activity-Based Learning (PABL):** Participation in learning-oriented projects and activities enables children to actively participate in their learning process. When a student sinks their teeth into a task, they learn without even realizing they are learning. As part of this, extracurricular activities are built into the school day so that no student is left out.
- 2. Online Learning:** Students are challenged at their current mastery level, meaning that teachers don't get bogged down figuring out how to teach to the most and least advanced students and everyone in between, all at the same time.
- 3. Assessment and Tutoring Centers:** Students are assessed regularly to evaluate their progress in achieving their grade-level expectations and optional personal learning goals, along with tutoring as needed.
- 4. Student Choice:** This allows students to develop their interests and create a personalized curriculum with intrinsic value, another way to inspire children to WANT to learn.
- 5. Peer Mentoring:** Younger students benefit from the experience and knowledge of the older ones, older students reinforce knowledge and gain skills, and teachers are freed up to mentor and oversee PABLs.
- 6. Teacher as Facilitator:** The role of the teacher changes from imparting knowledge to facilitating an atmosphere of curiosity, discovery, and self-motivation.
- 7. Charismatic Leadership:** Charismatic leaders inspire, motivate, and support everyone in the school.
- 8. Personalized Student Growth Plans:** A formal plan that sets learning goals based on personal and academic interests, and completion of grade-level requirements.
- 9. Parental Involvement & Community Engagement:** The passion and knowledge in the community are passed on to the students. This also builds links between the classroom and the world.
- 10. The Home and School Partnership:** Maximizes the relationship and support for the child at home. Parents are also encouraged to volunteer in the school.

Secondary Components / Optional Phase Two Implementation

- 11. Extended School Days:** Schools open earlier and close later. During these earlier and later hours, engaging, supervised activities are offered for any child who shows up at school.
- 12. Longer School Year:** Addresses the “summer slide” when students experience a decline in academic skills, gives more opportunities for social growth and pursuit of educational goals, and allows for more thorough instruction. It also reduces childcare burdens on parents and guardians.



21st Century Curriculum

The Inspired Learner Model curriculum includes subjects that build on the standard elementary school curriculum. These subjects are essential in developing lifelong habits that lead to happiness, healthy relationships, mental stability, community engagement, good health, career success, and financial prosperity.



1. Self-Care: Includes learning the importance of regular exercise, good personal hygiene, getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, constructively dealing with strong emotions, and contributing to a functional home environment.

2. Financial Literacy: Includes counting, conservation, exchange, value, prices, tipping, income, expenses, savings, investment, earned interest, and living within one's means. Such concepts augment and reinforce studies in math.

3. Conflict Resolution: Students receive experience in practicing and applying different methods of conflict resolution.

4. The Arts: The visual and performing arts encourage teamwork, build self-discipline, promote a deeper understanding of other cultures, bridge cultures, reach students who are discouraged in school, and even help improve students' achievement in other subjects. Many children learn better when they watch or listen to something expressed creatively.

5. Citizenship: Students become actively involved in progress related to global social, political, economic, and environmental issues. The goal is for students to see themselves as integral and empowered participants in their community, country, and world.

6. Foreign Languages: Students learn at least one foreign language through online programs. Conversation skills and cultural understanding are included in project and activity-based learning.



7. Media & Digital Literacy: Students develop media literacy by thinking critically about the media, learning to recognize biases, understanding search engine limitations, recognizing and reporting online harassment, avoiding plagiarism, using appropriate privacy settings, understanding digital footprints, employing strong passwords, etc.



Overview

Transforming an elementary school from the 100-year-old **Whole Classroom Instructional Model (WCIM)** to the learner-centered **Inspired Learner Model (ILM)** represents a radical updating and redesign of the classroom, curriculum, and teaching methods. Although many will view the change with skepticism, we know from experience that students, teachers, and administrators generally find learner-centered education less stressful, more engaging, and far more effective than the one-size-fits-all instruction that most of us received when we went to school.

Many schools will find that transitioning an entire elementary school to ILM is too much change all at once. Furthermore, skeptics will want to see positive results before committing more resources to the change. For these reasons, the **Center for Inspired Learning** has developed the **48-Student ILM Plan**. This plan is a blueprint for an individual elementary school to try ILM on a smaller scale before deciding to move forward with broader implementation. It will also demonstrate the power and effectiveness of learner-centered education in an elementary school environment.

In a nutshell, the **48-Student ILM Plan** takes approximately 12 students from each grade 2 to 5 and creates a one-room schoolhouse atmosphere. The teacher/facilitators and monitors will stay with the students during their entire elementary school experience. This allows them to get to know and understand each child's unique needs, interests, strengths, and challenges, thus helping them attain their full potential and individual goals in alignment with their **Personalized Student Growth Plans**.



Staff Roles

Three Teachers

In the learner-centered environment, the role of the teacher changes from “sage on the stage” to “guide on the side.”

Teacher One is responsible for the student’s **Learning Hub** (homeroom).

This is where the following takes place:

- Standards-based online learning
- Virtual reality (VR) learning
- Tutoring
- Assessment
- Development and implementation of each student’s **Personalized Growth Plan**.



Teacher One is aided by cutting-edge **learning technology** and incorporating volunteers and mentors in the classroom.

Teacher Two will be the small group facilitator. They will focus on the following:

- **Life skills**
- **Problem-based learning** - students work in groups to solve open-ended problems
- **Real World learning** - working with community partners to engage students in projects and experiences.

Teacher Three serves as the **Student Coach** and the **Project and Activity Based Learning (PABL)** Coordinator. This teacher helps each student discover and nurture their innate interest and curiosity in a wide range of activities that could include anything from sports and recreation to arts, music, history, science, and technology.

Three Monitors

While the three teachers create opportunities and a safe environment for all students to have an engaging, fun, and meaningful experience, the **Monitors** take on the roles of teacher support and supervising the children.

Classroom Design

Open Configuration

The creation of a learner-centered environment is vital to the success of the Inspired Learner Model (ILM). Most traditional classrooms have rows of individual desks, with the front of the classroom reserved for the teacher and teaching materials.

In the ILM classroom, the space is arranged to foment creativity, teamwork, student projects, and mentoring relationships. In an open-classroom format, student desks are replaced by tables, chairs, workstations, and activity spaces. Classroom layouts are designed by teachers and administrators in accordance with ILM principles and sometimes with the assistance of an ILM consultant.

Two Classrooms

In the 48-Student ILM plan, there are two adjacent classrooms. Ideally, they are arranged so that students in both classrooms can be observed from either room. This may require a minor remodel to remove all or part of the wall between the rooms.



Classroom One, The Learning Hub: a space designed for online and VR learning, small group work, tutoring, and assessment. This classroom includes abundant computers and other technological aids to facilitate online learning and achieve state education standards.

Classroom Two, The Project and Activity Room: a space designed and stocked with project and activity-based learning in mind.

Cost

Once implemented, the Inspired Learner Model is designed to operate with existing school staffing, budgets, and resources. However, in the initial design and setup, there are often costs associated with acquiring computers and other technological aids, replacing desks with worktables and chairs, purchasing teaching aids for project and activity-based learning, and training school staff to work effectively in a learner-centered environment.

Classroom Experience

The Inspired Learner Model can be implemented in any public elementary school, regardless of the size of the school, the number of students enrolled, and the socio-economic conditions of the community. The model is adaptable to state and district-level mandates and achievement goals.

The 48-Student ILM Plan is a sweet spot that will allow elementary schools to create a “school within a school.” In many ways, this small scale with students of diverse ages who have the same teachers as they move through the grades represents a modern version of the one-room schoolhouse. Here is some of what will occur in the classroom:

Workstations - where students work independently on math, reading, science, history, life skills, organizing activities for the week, doing research, etc. Whenever students are not participating in their “activity of choice,” they will be at their workstations.

Project and Activity Based Learning (PABL) Center – music, technology, sports and recreation, performing and visual arts, science, history, global connection, clubs, entrepreneurship, hobbies and games, activities, etc. Each child will participate in a wide variety of high-interest activities in a broad range of disciplines throughout the week.

Testing Center – for evaluation, testing, and to developing test-taking strategies.

Tutoring Center – students can receive support whether they perform at, below, or above grade level standards.

Beyond the Classroom – students will have apprenticeship opportunities and volunteer experiences.

Small-Group Projects – groups of students will be brought together to work on projects or receive additional academic support.

Peer Mentoring – more advanced students will be teaching other students topics and activities of mutual interest.

Curriculum - Students progress through the state standards and take state tests. The curriculum is expanded beyond the traditional offerings to include the development of good life habits, learning a foreign language, financial literacy, public speaking, the arts, and more.



Schedule, Calendar, and Transportation

Since the 48-student ILM plan is essentially a school-within-a-school, its hours of operation and academic calendar can differ from that of the rest of the school that houses it. This will also impact student transportation, which is also addressed on this page.

Schedule

ILM is designed to be flexible in terms of its hours of operation. It can follow the typical 6.5-hour school schedule or be expanded. Because of the demands put on the many parents and guardians who struggle with before and after-school child supervision, some schools may find it beneficial to have a longer school day to help alleviate these burdens.

Before-school hours may include time for students to work on projects and pursue their chosen interests. Children may show up at any time during this period.

After-school hours are similar to the before-school session, but students may leave at any time in compliance with the school supervision policy.

Calendar

ILM is also designed to be flexible in terms of the school calendar. Long summer breaks may also create stressful demands on parents and guardians. Furthermore, a longer school year can help address the “summer slide” that has frustrated educators for decades.

Transportation

A van and driver will be needed to drive children and monitors to activities that happen off school grounds. If so desired, it may also be used to transport students between home and school outside of regular school hours.

Most school districts have a few vans or small buses available to transport children throughout the day. In the beginning, it may be necessary for monitors to drive the vans.



Operation Costs

Per Student Income / Total Budget

The average school district in Washington State receives \$18,175 a year in state and federal funds per student. If we multiply \$18,175 times the 48 children in our plan, that comes out to around **\$872,400** that these students bring into the district. After deducting the costs of special education, vocational education, compensatory education instruction, other instructional programs, community services, student transportation, food services, and district support services, roughly **56%*** of this total goes to basic education. Fifty-six percent of \$872,400 is \$523,400. For this general overview, we'll round that down to **\$520,000** being available for the ILM 48-student program.



Overview of how the \$520,000 is spent

- 1) **3 teachers.** The average cost per teacher is roughly \$70,000 in salary plus \$30,000 in benefits, or \$100,000 per teacher. For three teachers, that would be **\$300,000**.
- 2) **3 monitors.** A school monitor costs roughly \$50,000 in salary and benefits. For five monitors, that would be **\$150,000**.
- 3) **Project & Activity-Based Learning Supplies and Associated Costs / Technology Support, \$70,000.**

TOTAL: \$300,000 + \$150,000 + \$70,000 = **\$520,000**

* See: <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/safs/pub/org/20/2020OrganizationandFinancingofSchools.pdf>

Final Thoughts

A Broken System

We have spent over a century trying to make the standardized “whole classroom instructional model” (WCIM) work. Over recent decades numerous reforms, implemented with the best of intentions, have made a scant difference in education outcomes but have made teaching in the classroom far more stressful. Examples include the Improving America’s Schools Act (1994), No Child Left Behind (2002), Race to the Top (2009), the Common Core Standards Initiative (2010), and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). These efforts, combined with increased funding for public education, have only resulted in lower overall student achievement. It’s time for a reset and implement a system where every child has an equal opportunity to reach their full potential and live happy, purposeful lives.

A Learning-Rich Environment

The underlying philosophy of the Inspired Learner Model (ILM) is that children who *want* to learn and *want* to be in school will attain higher levels of achievement, gain more knowledge, and have increased chances of becoming lifelong learners. Becoming a 48-student ILM school-within-a-school, or transitioning a whole school, is simply the act of creating the environment for this to happen. The reality is that a good teacher can teach 100 students who want to learn but find it stressful or even impossible to teach even one or two students who do not.



Flexibility

The Inspired Learner Model, including the 48-Student ILM Plan, is designed to be flexible so it can work in any public elementary school in the United States. Its components and additional curriculum areas can be skipped or added per the goals, budget, and circumstances of the individual school and school district.

Onward!

For more information, visit our [website](#) or use this [form to contact us](#).

