



Russellville High School

Russellville Independent Schools

Bart Flener
Superintendent

Steven Moats
Asst. Superintendent

James Milam
Board Chairman

PEAK Award Application

Objectives of Russellville Ready

Russellville Ready represents the priority goals of our teachers, students, parents, administrators, and community members that outline and specify the personal, cognitive, and interpersonal competencies that students will have when they leave Russellville Independent Schools. These collaboratively designed competencies can be easily communicated to all stake-holders via our graduate profile graphic. Our graduate profile graphic provides clear visualization of the priority that we have placed on students being **Effective Communicators, Productive Collaborators, Innovative Problem Solvers, and Compassionate Citizens. (EPIC)** Being an “EPIC Panther” is the main objective of our program, but we do not dismiss the content knowledge that students must learn in parallel on their pathway to becoming an EPIC Panther. We also know that a students’ social and emotional needs must be met first; and that is why you will find the words “social and emotional” encompassing the image of a student that is centered in our graduate profile. The process nor the visualization of desired outcomes make our program unique, but the way in which we provide authentic opportunities to measure those desired outcomes is noteworthy.

When I became the superintendent in Russellville, I saw the opportunity to have our seniors declare their readiness for life as an authentic assessment opportunity. The idea of this performance based type of assessment was an oral panel presentation in May of their senior year. Speaking personally for my two oldest children who are now college students, I knew that while GPA & ACT mattered, their ability to communicate, collaborate, innovate, and show compassion as a citizen would mean just as much if not more when it comes to being hireable, employable, and successful in whatever career field they eventually land.

The phrase “Russellville Readiness” has come to symbolize a measurement of 12 indicators for our seniors in three vital areas (post-secondary, portable skills, and Panther sense) on an actual scorecard that seniors maintain throughout the year under the guidance of our college/career coach in the RISE (Russellville Independent Senior Experience). The scorecard is referenced below in Table 1. After three deep dive days throughout the year (described elsewhere), each senior has the chance to “stand and deliver” why they are “Russellville Ready” to graduate from our school system and face the world. These presentations take place in front of a seven (7) member panel composed of a teacher, an alumnus, a board member, a business representative, a community representative, and an administrator. Seniors present a slide

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presentation answering the imperative questions, reflecting upon their educational journey, and answering any follow up questions during a fifteen minute experience in the boardroom at the Russellville Independent Schools Central Office.

Scope of Russellville Ready

Our Russellville Ready program focuses on all grade-levels K-12, with an emphasis on transition grades five, eight, and twelve. At each of these grade-levels, students are explicitly taught EPIC skills through embedded classroom instruction and Deep Dive Days that occur at least three times per year. Each of our Deep Dive Days are 6-7 hour structured days with the entire grade-level in one central location. These days are organized by our District Instructional Facilitators and our College and Career Readiness Coach in collaboration with grade-level teachers. A project-based learning experience is outlined for each day of learning that ends with groups of students sharing presentations to their peers and a panelist of teachers, community members, and/or administrators.

Although the Deep Dive Days are designed for transition grades, and points are only accumulated during a student's senior year- our graduate profile visual is posted in all classrooms across the district and teachers are encouraged to use the language and embed the Russellville Ready competencies into daily instruction. Our goal is that students begin to view our community based competencies as a natural part of what they do every day in and out of the classroom and that they begin to recognize these skills as young Panthers and reach their highest level of execution and reflection as a senior.

Uniqueness of Russellville Ready and School Board Involvement

Our program has been a collaborative effort designed with the input of various stake-holders since its inception three years ago. Year one of Russellville Ready was a pilot year. In 2018-2019, our board members voted for Russellville Ready to become a graduation requirement. Students now receive a high school credit for the completion of Russellville Ready. A communications course was also added as a graduation requirement so that communication skills are explicitly taught and opportunities are given to students to practice these skills.

Cost and Funding Source of Russellville Ready

While cost are not significant, our board members support us spending money on materials to support the program such as: food for our Deep Dive Days, printing cost for the projects, and the medallions that we purchase for our graduation ceremonies. Community outreach has no cost associated with it and our panelist volunteer on the days that are part of our learning.

Assessment of Program Progress

At the end of the pilot year implementation, only 27% of our seniors chose to complete the entire program and they each received the Russellville Ready medallion during the 2018

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graduation ceremony. This past school year, after our board members supported Russellville Ready as a graduation requirement, 100% of our seniors received the Russellville Ready medallion during the 2019 graduation ceremony. In order for students to graduate “Russellville Ready” students must earn at least 900 points from our Russellville Ready scorecard. (see scorecard below)

(Table 1)

RUSSELLVILLE READY

<div style="background-color: black; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">PS1</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">(POST-SECONDARY) "COLLEGE"</p> </div> </div>		
A	GPA --Use Conversion Scale	(120)
B	ACT --Add up sub scores	(144)
	English _____ +	
	Math _____ +	
	Reading _____ +	
	Science _____ =	
C	EIQ-Emotional Intelligence	(100)
	Taking Test (20pts) _____	
	Analyzing Results (60 pmts) _____	
	Action Plan (20 pts) _____	
D	StrengthsFinder	(100)
	Take Assessment (50 pts) _____	
	Analyze results (50 pts) _____	
Subtotal		464

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A	Career Preparedness	(100)
	Micro-credential (50pts) _____	
	Higher or class grade or final /2	
	Resume (50 pts) _____	
B	Oral Communication	(120)
	Panel Review Presentation	
	(see rubric)	
C	Solution Finding	(100)
	Deep Dive Days (50 pts each)	
	Best 2 of 3	
D	Group Membership	(120)
	Team member rating	
	Follow Rubric _____	
	Coach Rating	
	Follow Rubric _____	
	Team Recommendation:	
	Bonus _____	
Subtotal		440

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A	American Citizenship	(125)
	Score from test _____	
B	Digital Citizenship	(100)
	Score from test _____	
	Or	
	Microcredential score _____	
C	Financial Citizenship	(100)
	Score from test _____	
	Or	
	Microcredential score _____	
D	Community Citizenship	(120)
	Score from Rubric _____	
Subtotal		445

Total Possible Points = 1349
Including Bonus Points



Minimum Graduation Requirement
900/1200 points



Students with a score of 1080 or higher
will receive special recognition.

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There are several components of Russellville Ready that equip our students with the essential skills and dispositions that they need to meet the demands of a 21st century college or work environment. Our goal is that students are not only able to articulate the essential skills that we have identified, but to demonstrate those skills and confidently reflect on their growth and experiences on their journey to becoming an “EPIC Panther”.

Sincerely,

Bart Flener, *Superintendent*

September, 3, 2019

To Whom it may concern:

It is with great excitement and honor that I am able to write this letter to provide insight to you about the current and future impact that the Russellville Ready Program has had and will continue to have on our students. We have spent the past three years developing a system to measure the success of our students as **E**ffective Communicators, **P**roductive Collaborators, **I**nnovative Problem Solvers, and **C**ompassionate Citizens. We have worked as a staff to make sure students had opportunities to grow in these four areas and then to defend their positions as being EPIC (Effective, Productive, Innovative, Compassionate) Panthers.

As a school system we have intentionally focused on providing students as many opportunities as possible to become effective communicators. First, our Board of Education made a communication course a requirement for graduation. So for the past two years we have worked to make sure every student has a communications class. This class is a freshman requirement, to ensure that all students begin high school with the foundation they need to be effective communicators. Throughout the following years, teachers are intentionally providing opportunities for students to hone the skills they were taught during their communications class. During the senior year each student is given ample opportunities to communicate with others in various situations that will help them to be ready for "real-world" communication. At their senior year, students are placed in groups and choose a project to develop and execute throughout the school year during their Deep Dive Days. This helps sharpen their ability to communicate information to large groups. Students are also required to participate in a mock interview with a member of our business community. Our culminating activity is the Senior Panel Review Presentation. At the end of the school year each student must present a 10-12 minute presentation to a panel of 6-8 people from community defending that they are Russellville Ready, and have acquired the skills needed to graduate and be a successful member of society. This scaffolded system has made an enormous impact in the ability of our students to effectively communicate in various situations. They have grown in their ability to organize information and present it in ways that grab and hold the attention of their audience. They have developed confidence in their thoughts and abilities and not only have helped them to be successful within the school system, but as citizens in the community.

We have incorporated productive collaboration into many of our classroom experiences to give each student the opportunity to use their strengths to contribute to a group. Our most exciting addition for improving our students abilities to be productive collaborators is the addition of Deep Dive Days. During these days all of the seniors meet together 3 times throughout the year. Prior to the first Deep Dive Day, the senior read Clifton's Strength Finders and take the assessment associated with the book. They are then placed in groups based on their strengths. Ideally each group is given students from as many different categories as possible. The students then work together to choose a project that they believe will make a positive impact on their community. This has been a great experience for students to build a skill set of how to effectively work with others. Teams run into many issues that they did not anticipate and are forced to work together to overcome those issues. Which leads to our next expectation, that students are innovative problem solvers.

One of the greatest skills a student can have is to be an innovative problem solver. The Deep Dive Day experiences give them many opportunities to develop skills to help them to be problem solvers. We have also developed a dual-credit mentorship program that allow students to take online dual-credit classes with the support of a mentor to help ensure success. As we all know in today's times the ability to communicate and be productive online is of great importance. Many students in the past have not been successful in this area because they lack many of these problem solving skills. So they get frustrated and just quit. This mentorship program allows students to meet with a mentor each week and "think out loud" about possible ways that the problems they are facing with their classes can be "fixed". Students will be able to take the lessons they have learned with them to their post-secondary choice and continue to build on these skills to be successful. In the past many of the students lacked these skills and without the supports in place they struggled to be successful at the postsecondary institution and dropped out.

Finally, we strive to help guide our students to be compassionate citizens. Each student is required to participate in community service hours. Many use the team project they work on during their Deep Dive Days as a good portion of those hours. When they discover the fulfillment of helping others they want to continue to do so and search out other opportunities to make the community around them better for everyone. They have worked within the school system, with local churches, with local non-profit groups and individually with a person they just see that is in need.

All of these events help to mold each of our students into the EPIC Panthers that we know they are. As stated above, the culmination of their senior year is their Panel Review Presentation. It is with such amazement that I sit and listen to each of our seniors stand in front of a panel of adults that they do not know and talk about how the events above, along with other experiences they have had throughout their high school years have helped to transform them into a young adult ready to take on the world. These presentations bring smiles and tears, but always pride in their accomplishments.

I primarily work with our high school students and our seniors, but this program is scaffolded across all grade-levels and our fifth and eight graders also participate in Deep Dive Days and panel review presentations on a smaller scale. As a teacher in the Russellville Independent School system, and as a parent of a student who has had each of these opportunities- I am honored to be a part of a system that cares so much about not only the grades and test scores, but the true person that we have the privilege to help mold into an EPIC Panther.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Naylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tracy Naylor

September 6, 2019

PEAK Award committee,

I was asked to share reflection on the Russellville Independent Schools Russellville Ready program. As a parent of two Russellville Ready graduates, I just cannot say enough good things about the Russellville Ready initiative and the positive impact it has had on both of my children.

In August of 2017 when I first heard mention of Russellville Ready and Deep Dive days, I had no idea what it was about. The idea that additional requirements were going to be added to our graduates seemed unnecessary. Many parents and students thought it was going to be a huge waste of time. My daughter Katie battles anxiety, and there was rumor students were going to have to do a presentation in front of a panel. Katie was dreading every moment.

After Katie's first Deep Dive day she and I talked about her day. She was happy to find out that some of the project time was going to be spent working in a group learning to be a **Productive Collaborator**. The anxiety she first felt seemed to have lifted a little. Over the next few months of school I began to hear more about what the program involved. I love that the Program strives to develop compassionate citizens and bring awareness to needs in the community. Katie's group chose for their service project to volunteer at the Logan County Humane Society. I watched Katie begin to grow more excited about their project and begin to look forward to the Deep Dive Days days at school. Her skills for becoming a more **Effective Communicator** were nurtured and developed while speaking in her peer group. By the time graduation week came around, Katie was showing a new found confidence in speaking before her panel review board.

Ethan, my second graduate from the Russellville Ready program, also feels that the essential skills developed during Deep Dive days helped him greatly grow his confidence when interacting with the public and helped to get ready him for college. For their Community Service Project his group learned to become Productive Collaborators by creating a Panther outreach to develop community awareness to teen depression and suicide. The program not only helped these students to be more **Compassionate Citizens**, but to also develop their problem solving skills when discussing how to implement this community outreach.

These **Innovative Problem Solving** skills were also used by both my children during Deep Dive Days throughout the year as they worked on class assignments such as learning how to create a budget for a group of students. Throughout each year they developed presentations, learned about financial literacy, took a citizenship test, and proved their digital literacy readiness for the workforce. By the end of the year, each of their presentations before a panel review board involved self-reflection about preparedness, growth, and compassion for their community.

Both of my students agree wholeheartedly that the time invested in their Deep Dive days was time well spent. The confidence each felt walking out of their panel review was well worth it. As a parent, watching my children grow through this E.P.I.C. process brought about a new level of respect for the administrators of this program. Through their innovative foresight and dedication to the students at Russellville High School, I think the Russellville Ready program is an epic success!

Sincerely,


Kelley Paul

September 12, 2019

To Whom it may concern

Re: Russellville Ready

“Are they ready for the future?” That was the question asked by the Russellville Independent School District Board Members and Administrators after graduation ceremonies over two years ago. Thus began the implementation of a process we call “Russellville Ready” whereby RHS Seniors are required to display competency in U.S. Citizenship, Financial Literacy, Digital Literacy, and Community Citizenship while being an Effective Communicator, Productive Collaborator, Innovative Problem Solver, and Compassionate Citizen.

The Russellville Ready process is one that challenges our seniors to think and perform in ways that most have never been asked to do. Throughout the school year, Deep Dive Days are scheduled to assist in developing the skills the seniors will be asked to present before graduation. During these development days, the seniors are divided into small groups of seven to ten students and given a challenging situation to collaboratively solve and present to their peers.

The process culminates in a mandatory oral and visual presentation to a panel of adult business and community leaders as well as members of the Russellville Independent School District staff. I have been fortunate to be the Panel Review Moderator the past two years for one half of the presentations each year. It is both humbling and exhilarating to hear stories of some students of the hardships they have overcome in their personal lives as they have pursued their education. All of the students talk of the strengths they have identified during this process and the community project that their group selected and implemented as a part of the Russellville Ready Process.

The community and business leaders that have served as panel review members have remarked that the process is innovative, impressive, exciting, and extremely valuable as a tool in preparing our students for life beyond high school. Most of the panel members have volunteered to return for the next year’s presentations and talked of the inspiration they have received from listening to the presentations.

The Russellville Ready process is innovative, one of a kind, outside the “box”, pushing students to develop necessary skills and preparing them to engage in substantive discussions with adults. It is apparent to this Board Member that we have answered our opening question and it is a resounding “YES”.



Joe Sparks. - Board Member
Russellville Independent School District

We R Equipping Panthers ... for Life