



## Joseph Lovett Elementary School

# FLEX FRIDAYS



### CORE COMPONENT

**Learner Focused:** Empower learners to understand their needs, strengths, interests and approaches to learning

### Learner Focused at Joseph Lovett Elementary School

Lovett Elementary focuses on Learner Focused instruction to personalize learning for students. Learner Focused instruction emphasizes a child's strengths, needs and interests to effectively tailor learning experiences for each student.

#### Our Sources



**Samantha Rapson - Assistant Principal**

*"We thought personalized learning was simply using technology, that we would get really great software and some data and that would be it... But I found out that this is much more than technology... We started seeing that personalized learning happens anytime, anywhere. We started learning that this is all about the kids - it's about the kids being learner led and learner focused."*



**Steve McWade - Teacher**

*"As far as Flex Friday goes, we want to give students the opportunity to do something that they may not see during their academic day throughout the week, that can be in a controlled environment...having the kids have an opportunity that's not conventional and confined to our normal classroom... They show you what they've done in Flex Friday and the products are phenomenal. Kids are doing things that I never expected them to be doing this early... These kids are proud of their projects; they want to display them."*

### Flex Friday

Lovett Elementary began its journey to personalized learning by focusing on student interests, strengths and needs to increase student engagement and motivation. After incorporating more interest-based choice and personalized instruction into the day, the team realized there was an even greater opportunity to combine student interest with student-driven activities to create a robust learning experience. Flex Friday is an opportunity for students to experience learning based on their interests. The day features interactive projects and activities around content that may not fit into the planned curriculum but are based on topics of interest for students. Many Flex Friday activities are thought of, planned and taught by the students themselves.

### ABOUT

## Joseph Lovett Elementary School

**Chicago Public Schools Neighborhood School**  
Attendance based on student living in boundary

**372**  
Total K-8 Students

**82%**  
African American

**0%**  
Asian

**16%**  
Hispanic

**0.3%**  
White

**1%**  
Other

**94%**  
Low Income

**13%**  
Diverse Learners

**6%**  
English Learners

**20%**  
Mobility  
*(Reflects any enrollment change between the first school day in October and the last day of the school year.)*

**GET MORE RESOURCES AT: [leaplearningframework.org](http://leaplearningframework.org)  
#LEAPframework**

# HOW IT WORKS *in Mr. McWade's Class...*



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## STEP ONE: Consider individual student interests when planning learning experiences

- **Balance individual needs with the needs of the class community:** As teachers develop activities for Flex Friday, they consider individual student interests and the needs of the class community. They determine skills that will meet class needs, and then incorporate those skills into experiences focused on student interests.



Consider how you can meet academic or social-emotional needs while incorporating student interests. If the class needs practice with collaboration or team skills, design activities focused on student interests that require teamwork to create and problem solve.



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## STEP TWO: Provide opportunities for students to create and facilitate learning experiences for their peers

- **Position the teacher's role based on the learning needs of students:** Flex Friday evolved from teacher-led to student-led. Now, students take ownership of creating the content and learning experiences for their peers. When students take the lead, teachers shift their role to mentor and coach students as they develop their own lessons.



As Flex Friday topics are developed, ask if there are students interested in teaching those topics. Encourage reluctant learners to showcase their strengths and passions. Coach and support the student facilitators to design impactful learning experiences for their peers.



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## STEP THREE: Regularly ask students what they are interested in learning

- **Regularly solicit and compile information regarding learners' interests, strengths and needs:** Flex Friday is experiential learning based on student interests. Teachers use a variety of methods to determine what students are interested in learning, such as polls, student conferences and peace circle questions. Many activities change each Friday, so students have a variety of experiences from which to choose.



To keep up with the varied student interests, regularly ask students what they would like to learn. Also pay attention to what students are reading and talking about with each other. Use this information to create interactive learning experiences based on those interests.



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## STEP FOUR: Discover and ignite passions and talents of all students

- **Partner with learners to continuously align learning opportunities with learners' interests, strengths and needs:** When many of his students expressed interest in learning a second language, Mr. McWade strategically encouraged and involved two students who were commonly reluctant to engage in class discussion. The opportunity to teach their peers revealed a more confident side of these students who thrived in sharing their strengths.



Students designing and facilitating learning for their peers provides a unique opportunity to share and showcase passions and talents that may get overlooked during typical class time. Discover student interests and strengths and help them share with their peers.



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## STEP FIVE: Provide an opportunity for students to share or present what they learned

- **Partner with learners to reflect upon and document their own learning needs and progress:** After Flex Friday, teachers provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their learning and share it with their peers. Students post on Google classroom or present their projects to the class.



Demonstrating learning can take many forms, ranging from written reflections to presentations and projects. Consider a variety of ways that students can show what they've learned: Google Classroom posts, slide presentations, videos, graffiti boards, learning journals, portfolios and so much more!

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