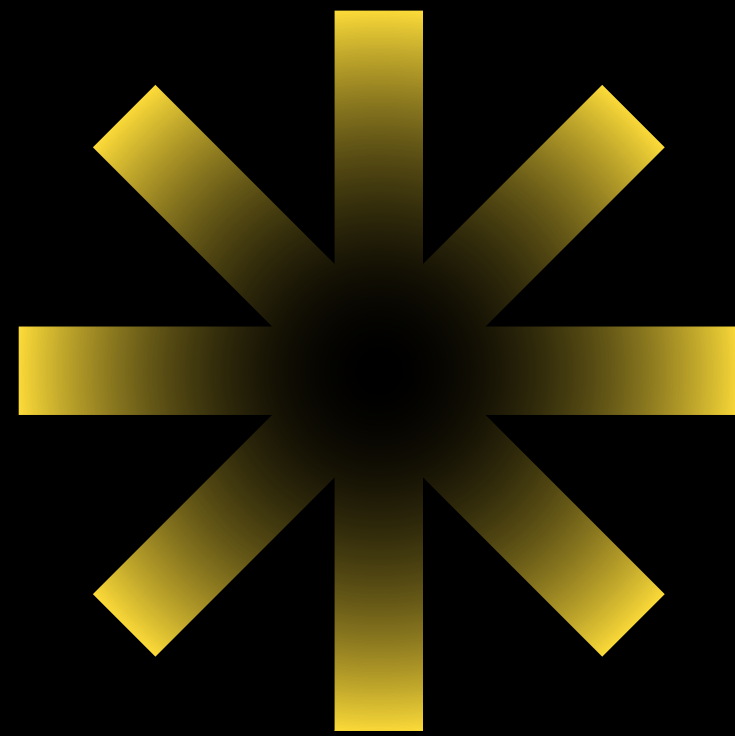# THINKING INSIDE THE BOX

EXPANDING PATHWAYS FOR SUCCESS

KATIE HINTZ
RENEE WULFF
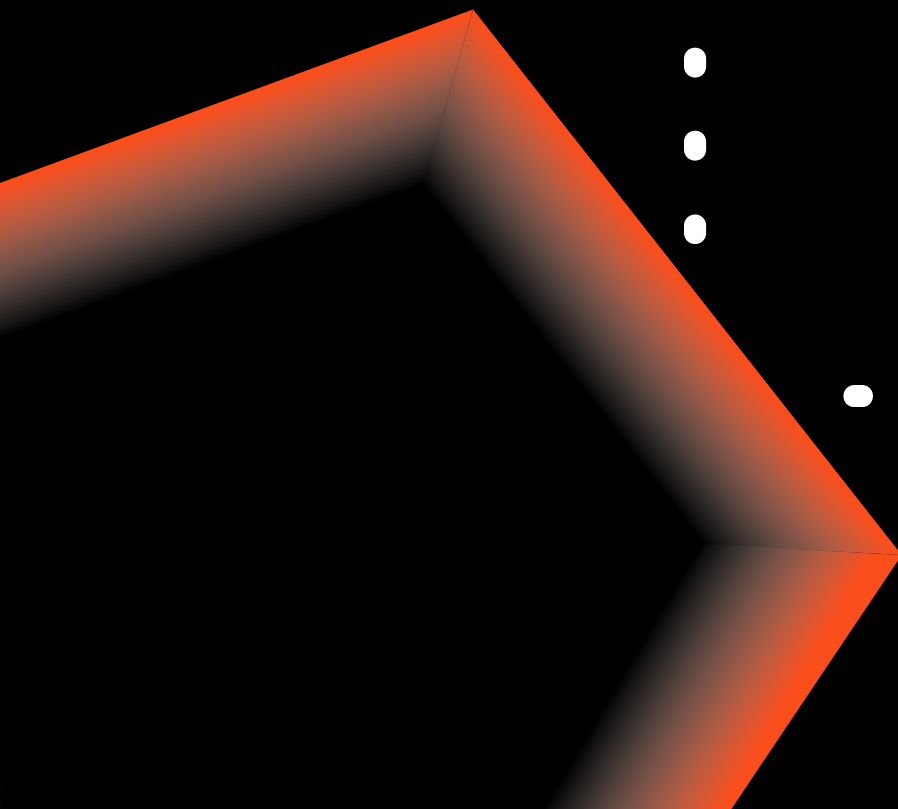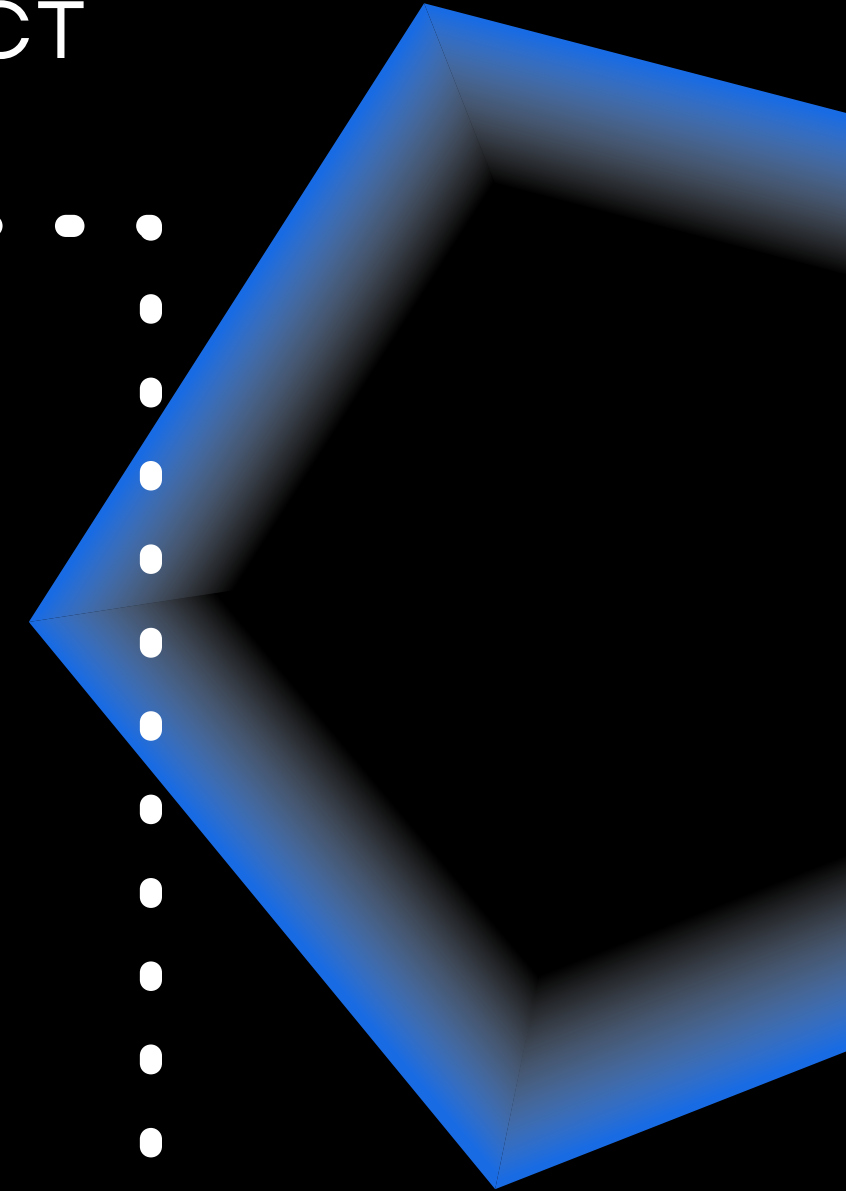
Hello, everyone!

Who we are

Renee Wulff
wulffr@freelandschools.net

Katie Hintz
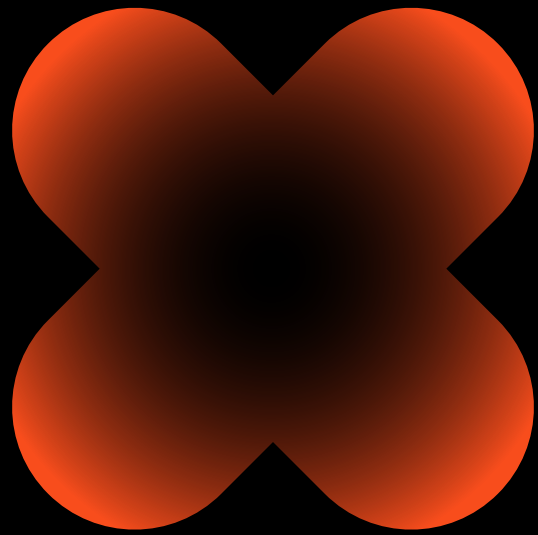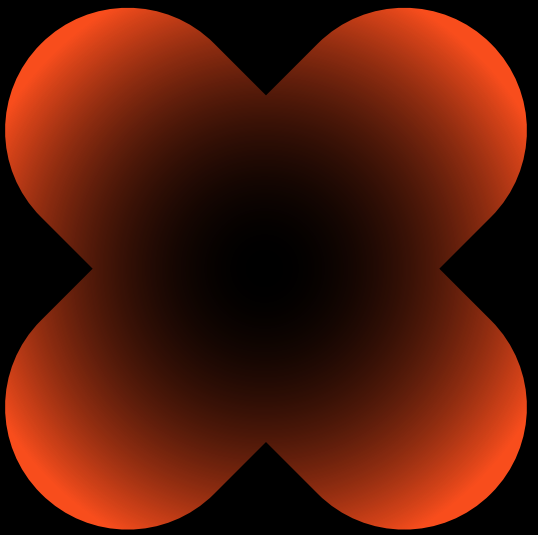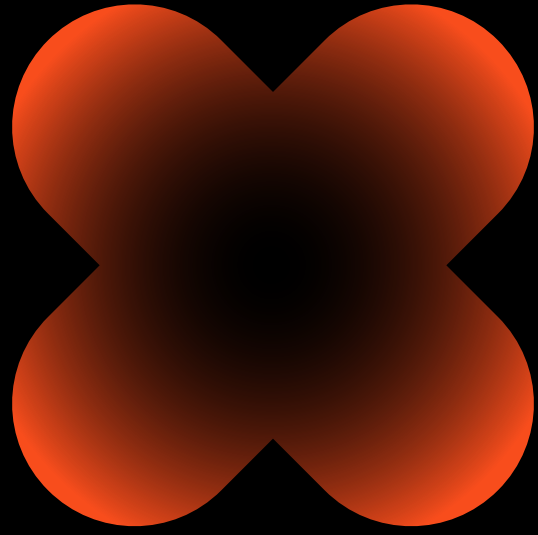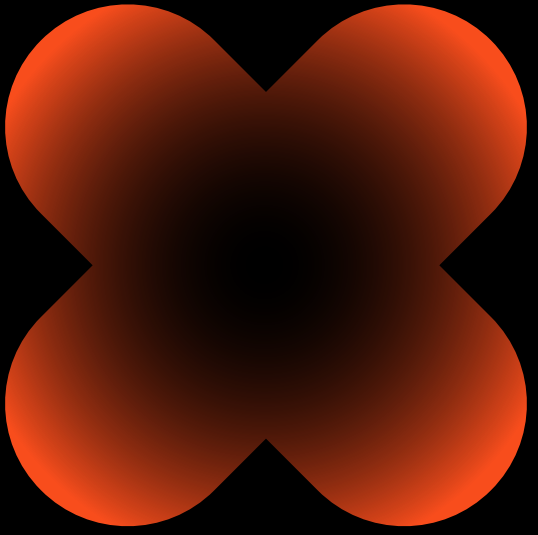hintzk@freelandschools.net

- Support thinking around dismantling structures and challenging current systems that have a negative impact on our students (and staff)
- Processing through our own challenges and asking questions to work toward solutions
- Provide space to reflect on current practices and policies

Problem of Practice

Problem of Practice

Location

- Freeland, Saginaw County
- Lack of alternative educational institutions
- Bedroom community
- Affluent
- Significant population growth in the last two decades

Attendance & Discipline

- Increased attendance concerns following the Covid-19 Pandemic
- Increased disciplinary concerns following the pandemic

Graduation Rates

- Dropping graduation rate following the pandemic
- Increasing drop out rate

MTSS

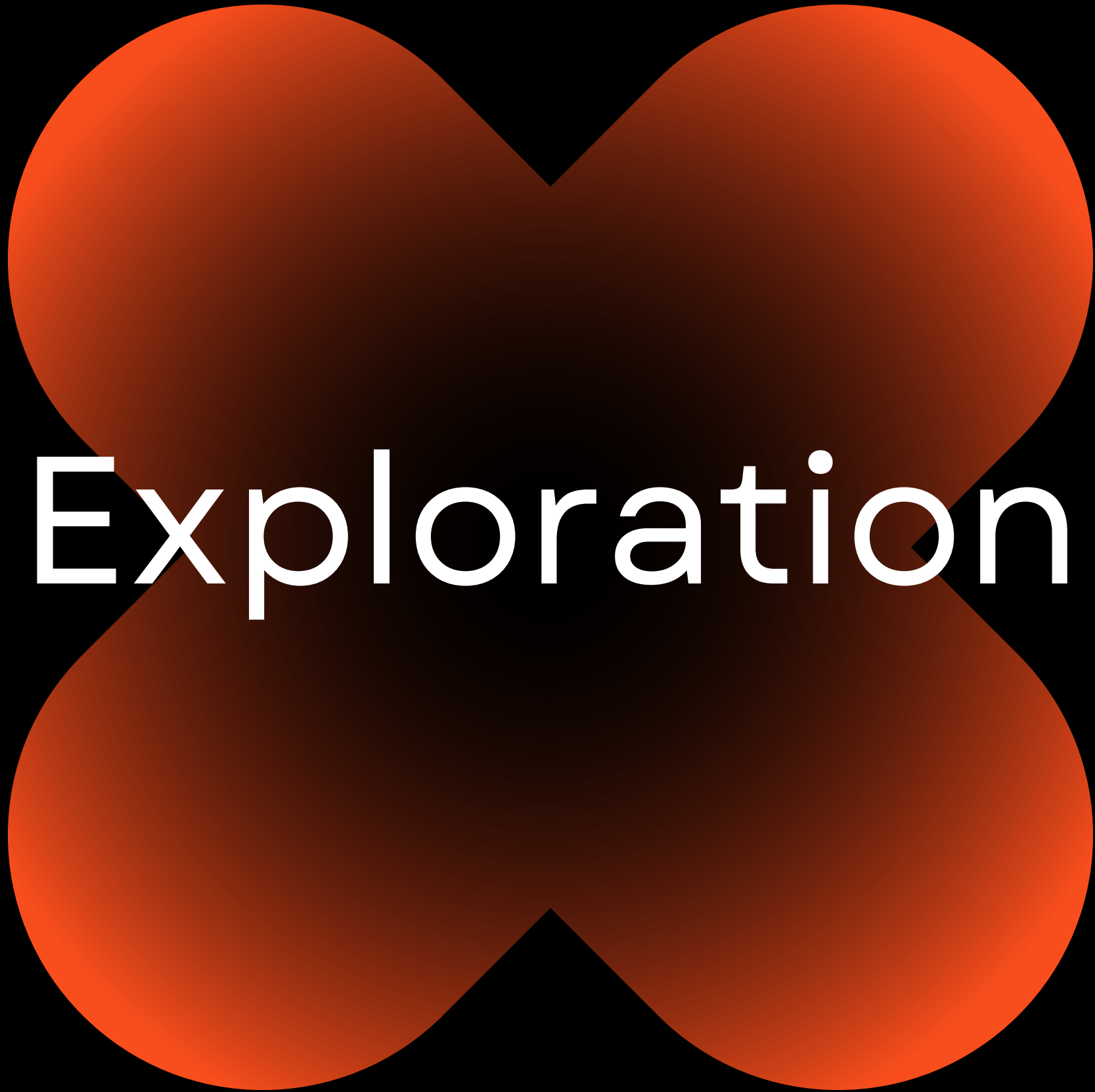**9th grade Team Meetings (monthly) are a part of the implementation of the MTSS Framework.**

Identified need following the pandemic:

- Severe behavior problems
- Trouble regulating behaviors
- Avoidance and refusal
- Attendance concerns
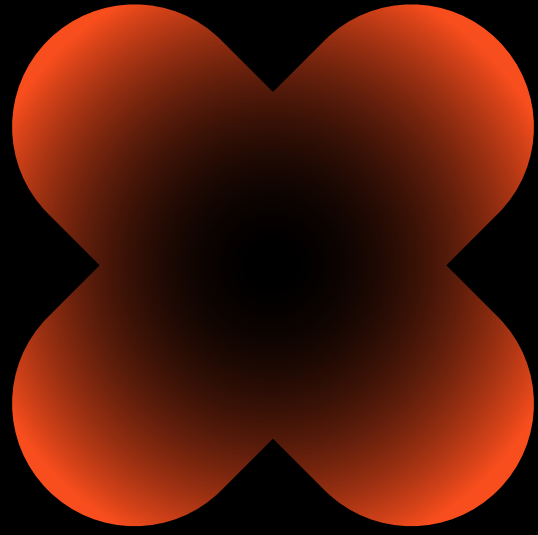
Exploration
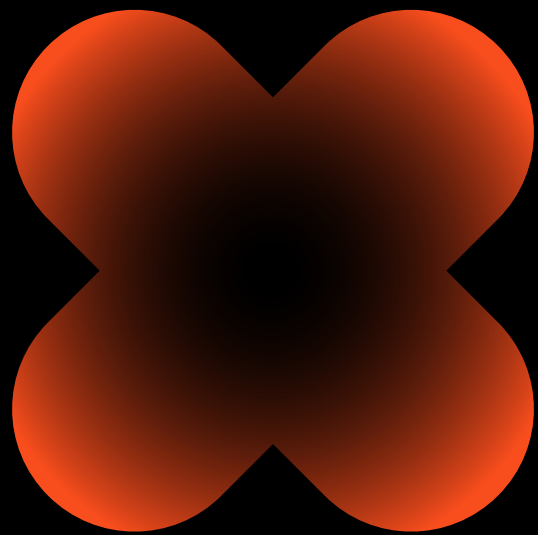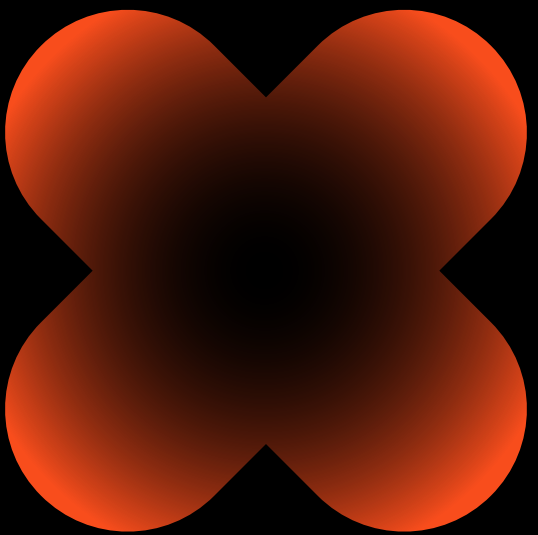
Our Process

- Explore options in the area
  - Visited local school districts who had alternative pathways and programs to graduation
- Brainstorming Ideas for what would fit best within the Freeland Schools community

Questions we had to ask ourselves...

What would happen if we released complete control (or at least as much as possible) to our students when it came to the classroom environment (e.g. furniture arrangement, music choice, seating, lighting etc.)?

How would (or wouldn't) student behavior change if we approached substane use and attendance in a restorative way instead of punitive?

What might happen if students had a say/control in their daily class flow with arrival time, in-person courses, online courses and dismissal time?

How are our assumptions of how students "should act" getting in the way of promoting and embracing individual student identity, agency and felt sense of belonging?

How are we, as staff, putting up barriers instead of opening up pathways for our students?

District Committments

- Serve Freeland students living in district
- Be a part of our Freeland High School Community
- Honor our student population and support them with programs, funds, and services that give them the best chance possible to succeed

Group Dialogue

What is a problem of practice you are facing in your role/position currently?

How has your district or school explored this challenge?
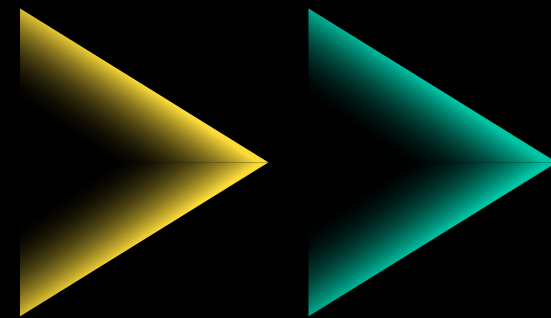
What steps are you taking to try and move into a solution spaced space with the problem you are facing?

How is it going!?

Installation
&
Initial
Implementation

Barriers Faced during Initial Implemenation

Community Dynamics

Teacher Frustration and Concern

No Model or Partner Districts

How we tackled Instruction in Pathways 2 Graduation

Edgenuity

Review of our current online programming led us to move forward with a purchase of Edgenuity for Credit Recovery and Course Completion.

In Person Learning

is also an option

for all students in

our P2G Program

Canvas

FHS Pays teachers to create full online courses utilizing the Canvas LMS. They become teachers of record for these courses.

Teacher Opinion

Initial Perception and Expectations

Self-contained; drill sergeant
Throw away mentality

What are the rules?

Any parameters were self-imposed; what can implement individually for students that is best?

Open Communication

Trauma-Sensitive Classroom - providing teachers with the stories and skills to reinforce compassionate practice. Gearing toward advocacy; embracing

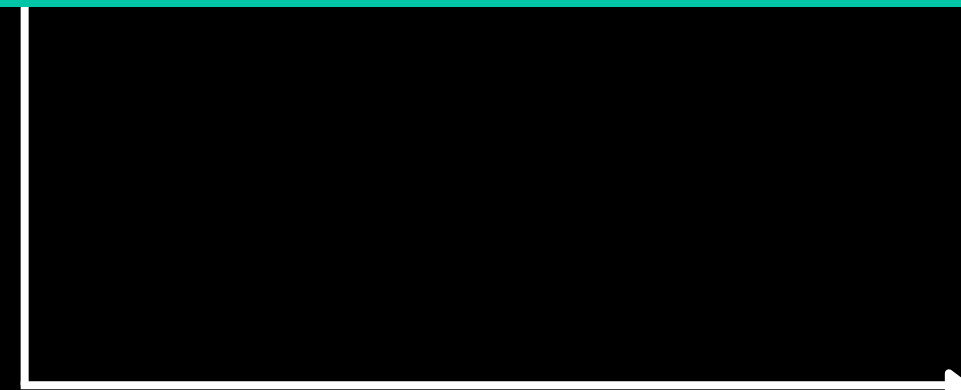Teacher-Student Examples

Judgemental to Acceptance
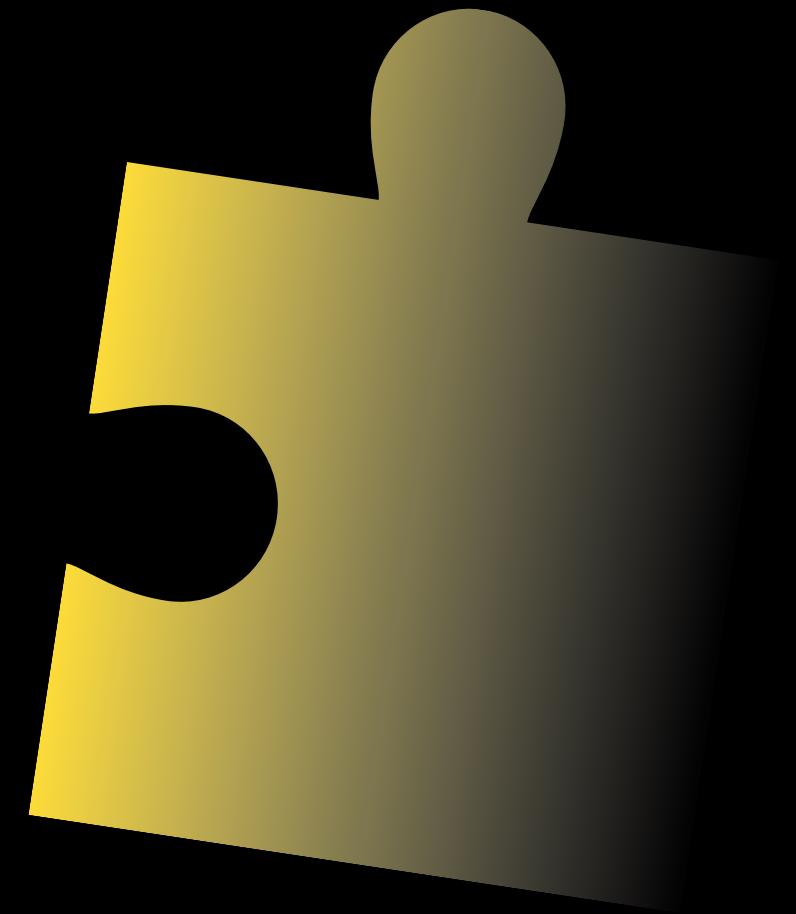
How do we get to Embrace?

How is this applicable to my space?

Take 5 minutes to talk with the folks around you about the following...

What are barriers that I am facing in successfully programming for students in my current role?

What are 2-3 ideas for how to work through these barriers?

Sustaining our Implementation

Adapting to Challenges

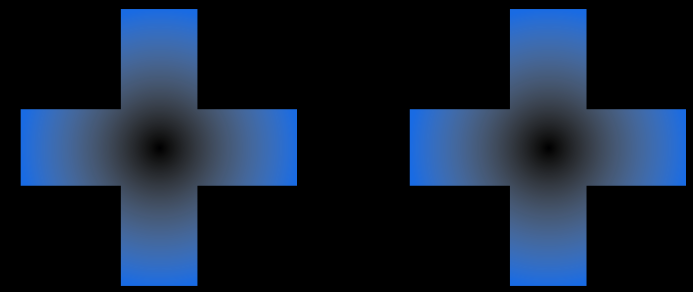Transience and "Aging out - Leveraging Online and PC's"

Removals (Domino Effect) - Expand Demographics

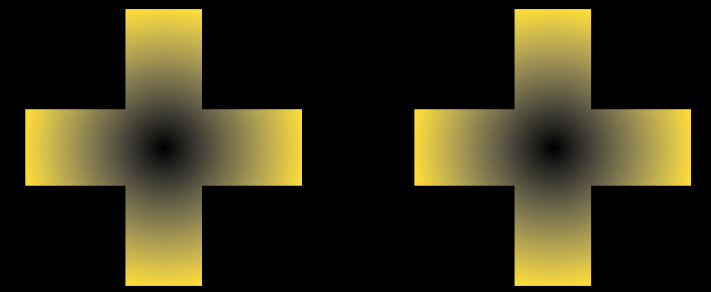Early Dropouts - Flexible Scheduling and Deadlines

Finding the right Paraprofessional

Staff Perception and Segregation - Shifts Toward Inclusion

Mental/Behavioral Health

Mental-Health Practitioners

Social Work Support

School Counseling Support

McDowell Healing Arts Center

Outside Services

Create a Sense of Belonging

Mental Health Support

Do we stand behind whole-child, whole-school education?

How is your current district supporitng the following:
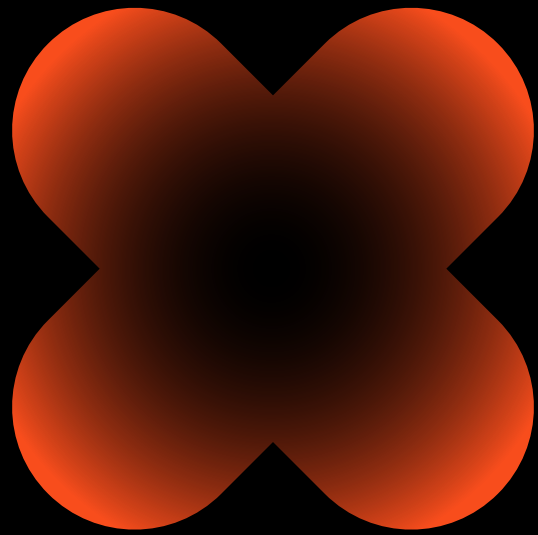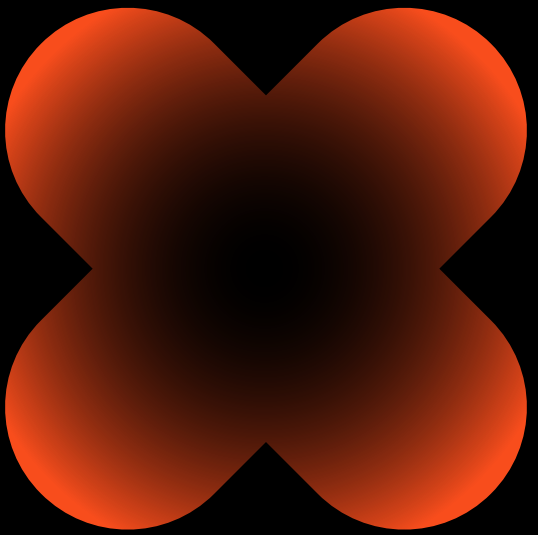
1) Mental-Health supports for students
2) Continuous and ongoing support for staff well-being
3) Social-Emotional Learning

What are the strengths of your school and what do you need to continue to work on as a point of growth?
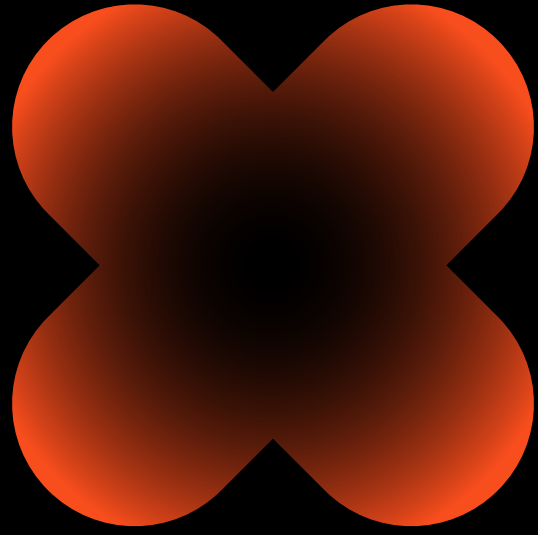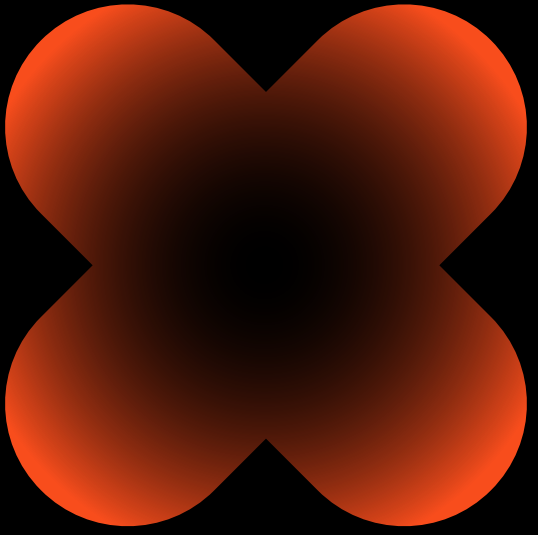
Next Steps in our Journey

P2G Next Steps...

Expand thinking around spaces, belonging, and how we approach secondary instruction

Isolation in teaching staff, subject matter

Lack of student ownership

> >

Self-Directed Autonomy Agency

Collaborative student spaces that promote belonging, choice, and voice

Key Mindset Shifts To Consider

Take a few minutes to journal...
- What is your current mindset around
  - state required standards (MMC)?
  - "Seat-Time" --> start/end times
  - Online Learing Models
  - Pesronalized Curriculum
  - Use of school finances for mental-health
  - Discipline and Behavior
- Where might your mindset, or others you work with, need to shift?

Discipline vs. restoration

Required "seat time" vs. personalizing curriculum, school presence, and goals

District financial investment into mental-health services, on site

Online Curriculum... vendors vs. staff-developed with an LMS

Michigan Merit Curriculum... courses vs. Standards

Questions?