



TIMBERLINE PK-8

**FAST FACTS**

**Project :** College and Career Readiness

**Teacher:** Ashley McIntyre, mcintyre\_ashley@svvdsd.org

**School:** Timberline PK-8

**Location :** Longmont, Colorado

**Website:** tpk8.stvrain.k12.co.us

**Start/End date:**  
February-May 2014

**Mentors provided by:** Foxconn Technology Group, Hewlett-Packard Company, MasterCard, Merck & Co., Inc., and Thomson Reuters

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## Peeling onion of interests, abilities reveals college, career choices

Ashley McIntyre wants her students to know they have choices about their future and open their eyes to a whole world of possibilities they don't know exists.

“Working at our school, where students often don't understand what their options are, I knew a College and Career Readiness Project where they are guided by business professionals would provide them with a level of awareness that would set them up for working toward their future,” McIntyre says.



Photo by Lewis Geyer, Longmont Daily Times-Call

The spring 2014 semester was the first time that McIntyre partnered with the International Telementor Program (ITP) to pair her students with professionals who volunteer as mentors. They assist students in “peeling back the onion to their layer of interests and natural abilities and help them research their education and career options.”

David Neils, ITP founder and president, feels there is a tremendous gap between the support students are receiving in this area and what is needed, so was “thrilled to learn about Ashley’s interest in doing something tangible and solid for her 8th-grade students at Timberline. By partnering with great teachers, ITP mentors and staff can really put students on the map.”

The class project began with McIntyre’s 8th-grade language arts students exploring career choices based on their interests, and character and personality traits. Then students researched high school coursework, as well as college or trade school pathways that would lead to their career choice. Additionally, each student had to research the financial feasibility of attending college and trade schools by investigating grant, scholarship and loan opportunities. Mentors guided students through the process.

“I cannot begin to express how powerful the experience was for my students,” says McIntyre. “I wasn’t sure what I expected them to accomplish having never done something like this before, but actual outcomes far surpassed any of my expectations. Students gained so much from work-



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**Ashley McIntyre, Timberline PK-8 Teacher**

ing and communicating with mentors. It wasn't just doing something for a grade, but rather, doing something they knew would be an investment for their lives."

McIntyre says that at the end of the semester, "The results I saw when students gave their final presentations were undeniable. The students were confident, professional, mature and secure in what they were speaking about and how they presented themselves. It was amazing to think that these 8th-grade students were so self-aware and had such a structured path laid out for themselves. Although they may change their minds as far as what they want to do, the tools the students received through the project and communication with their mentors will carry on with the students for the rest of their lives."

Neils knows part of student success is due to mentor support, but when he visited McIntyre's class, he instantly saw why her students make so much progress. "In addition to the incredible one-on-one attention from our mentors, Ashley was also providing this same level of personal care and concern for every student. The old saying, 'Students could care less how much you know until they know how much you care' came to mind."

A few challenges presented themselves throughout the project, however, like the way classes are scheduled in 45-minute blocks of time which doesn't allow students to conduct research or thoughtfully communicate with their mentors like they would have the ability to with longer blocks. McIntyre feels having one long class time per week would help students work more effectively than two shorter periods. Another issue she ran into was securing computer time for her students during the spring testing season as most of Timberline's labs and computer carts are shared between 1st- through 8th-grade students for various exams. The result was that, throughout the month of March, student-mentor

communications decreased. But at the end of the day, McIntyre feels the benefits of using ITP to enhance student learning far outweigh the challenges.

"I would love other teachers to try this out," she says. "I really believe that when students have outside communication with professionals, other than teachers and family, they see what we are striving to teach them. I also think that using mentors is a great way to challenge students to develop workforce skills in writing and their way of thinking. Mentors are great at providing extremely thorough feedback to students and students are very receptive to their feedback. It is almost like students want to make their mentors proud, which is a wonderful thing to see. Many students really just want an adult in their life who sets high standards, cheers them on, supports them with resources and provides encouragement."

Education doesn't get any more real than that. 🌍

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

### Students will:

- ☑ Research careers in which they are interested
- ☑ Demonstrate ability to locate, identify and interpret information
- ☑ Generate choices and make career decisions based on interests, abilities and values
- ☑ Design realistic education and career action plans to reach desired goals
- ☑ Summarize information gathered from the mentoring process in a PowerPoint presentation, portfolio or written report

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The International Telementor Program ■ David Neils, Founder/Director

