

The School Year Ahead



Wellington High School
and Summit Learning

This week we're diving into your student's classroom experience. Learn more about the real-world projects that students work on throughout the year, the goals of project-based learning, and the role of the teacher.

Student Experience

What is project-based learning?

Projects are the foundation of the academic experience. Through project-based learning, **students develop cognitive skills** - like critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making - that are necessary to be successful in college and beyond. With almost 200 rigorous projects in the Summit Learning curriculum, the final products that students complete are diverse, ranging from simulating historic debates to suggesting changes to school policies to build community. Students build toward the final product by completing a series of checkpoints with their peers, and receiving feedback from their teacher at each checkpoint.

Summit Learning Projects are designed to encourage collaboration. Teachers encourage students to work with their peers on rigorous tasks; they group students flexibly so they can offer workshops for students struggling with specific skills, content and/or habits.

Getting Involved

You don't need to be an expert on the content knowledge covered in your child's projects in order to support them well. The best way you can support your child is to help them reflect, explain their work, and become a better self-directed learner.

You and your students will have access to every project via the [Summit Learning Platform](#). In the Platform, you can see in real-time what project your student is working on, cognitive skills they're building, and learn more about their progress and feedback they've received from their teacher.

A Sample Project

Your student is going to spend much of their time immersed in real-world projects. Since beginning the Summit Learning Program in 2017, Bailey Bridge Middle School staff have observed an **uptick in student engagement as they learn through projects across all subjects**. A favorite project of students and teachers is the [Forces at Work-Rollercoaster Design](#). Watch the [video](#) to hear from a 6th grade teacher and his students on why this project made an impact.



FAQs

Q: What is the role of a teacher in the Summit Learning classroom?

A: Teachers are at the heart of every classroom. They use their expertise to help students understand how what they've learned, and how it applies to the world around them. They focus on helping students develop lifelong cognitive skills such as critical thinking, and they ensure that students are learning to collaborate and build interpersonal habits.

In The News

[3 Middle School Projects that Cultivate Skills Needed for Adulthood](#)

[The Summit Learning Program: Developing critical thinking skills in Dexter's students](#)

THE SCIENCE OF SUMMIT

Part Two: The Importance of Cognitive Skills

Following on from last week's installment on the Science behind Summit Learning, this week focuses on **Cognitive Skills**.

What the research says about Cognitive Skills:

Cognitive Skills such as creativity, critical thinking and collaboration are skills essential for success in college and career. Supported by the most prominent national and international educational models that have been published over the past ten years, cognitive skills are required for college and career readiness. Both State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards emphasize the teaching and learning of Cognitive Skills. Summit's emphasis on Cognitive Skills is based on our careful analysis of what skills employers value in future employees.

What it looks like in the classroom: Students work towards developing the 36 Cognitive Skills that are necessary for college and career readiness. They develop Cognitive Skills in every subject and grade level across multiple contexts, progressing along a continuum appropriate for their level of development and growth. Read more [here](#).

SUMMIT Learning[™] Cognitive Skills Rubric

The Summit Learning Cognitive Skills Rubric is an assessment and instruction tool that outlines the continuum of 36 interdisciplinary, higher-order thinking skills that are necessary for college and career readiness.

Through Summit Learning, students practice and develop cognitive skills in every subject and in every grade level. For each cognitive skill, students must score a six on a 0-8 point scale to demonstrate college and career readiness. Students progress along a continuum demonstrating competency in a skill as appropriate for their level of development and growth. We prioritize the development of cognitive skills; a student's score on the Cognitive Skills Rubric contributes more to a student's grade than does any other outcome measure.



SCALE
Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning & Equity

Developed in collaboration with the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning & Equity. May, 2017.

