



DESIGN - INNOVATE - CREATE

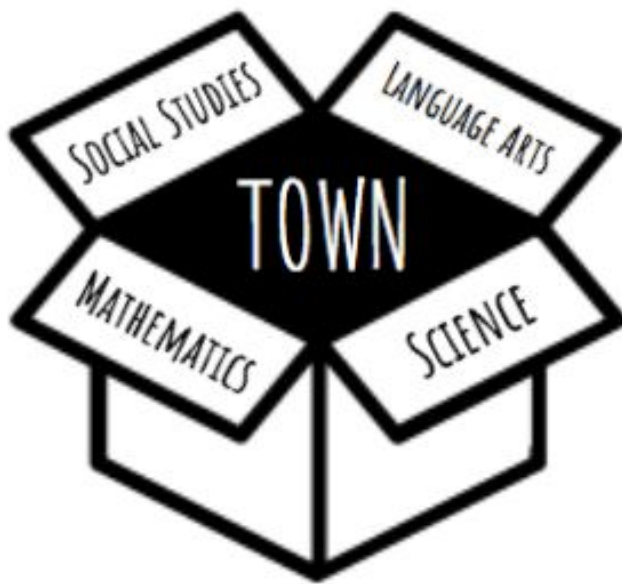
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Students become immersed in critical thinking, problem solving and creativity while developing valuable life skills.

Learning ignited through citizenship & entrepreneurship!

# What is TOWN?

TOWN is a ten month project that allows students to understand the many aspects, attitudes and characteristics of what it takes to become a successful entrepreneur and caring & connected citizen of a community.



TOWN breaks down the traditional walls of a classroom structure. It is a multidisciplinary program, which involves aspects from social studies, language arts, mathematics and science. It provides a great platform for students to apply and appreciate all disciplines do not work in isolation but are dynamic and connected in the real world.

# Why TOWN was created?

Growing up my family valued the traditional belief that school creates opportunities for life beyond the walls of the institution. My family is filled with “*professionals*” (generations of doctors). I did not fit this mould and school became a setting that made myself feel invaluable. When I married my beautiful wife my eyes were widened and my beliefs were split. On one side was my mother, a doctor who had a tremendous school background with a bunch of letters behind her name. On the other side was my father in-law who did not enjoy school; however, built a very successful company. Who is successful? The answer is simple, both. The more difficult question is, how do we *include, educate* and *inspire* **all** students inside our classrooms?

TOWN was created on the basis of creating an authentic, real world approach to school. The program is driven by authenticity and results in engagement and passion. Let students explore and discover in an authentic environment and curiosity will spark a powerful path for learning.

I believe TOWN is an inclusive, all encompassing program that celebrates all individuals and gives each student a chance to excel. TOWN creates an opportunity for students to show their diversity in interests and potentially uncover new ones. The experience fuels and sparks their learning inside the walls of our great schools and promotes valuable life skills that are often intangible and not gauged within the traditional framework of education.

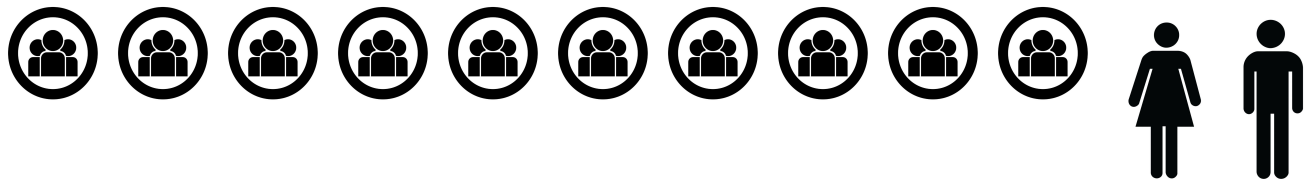
# Why TOWN?



Why is TOWN taught within the walls of school? During my second year of teaching TOWN a student approached myself with a very powerful scenario and question.

**“I am not going to grow up to become an entrepreneur, I just want to clean houses like my mother. I don’t understand how TOWN can help me? “**

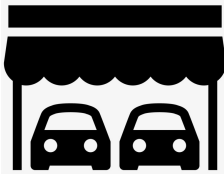





This question caught myself off guard and I struggled to produce an answer. I developed this program on the basis that TOWN would help students in the real world. That student had a legitimate question. In a classroom of 30 students, statistics reveal that only 1.5 - 2 students would become successful entrepreneurs.



That night TOWN became real and started to truly make sense. TOWN is not about the financial environment of success. **Students seek and uncover their definition of success.** The skills & attitudes that students discover such as passion, communication and organization are important attributes towards anything in life. Yes, the monetary system set in place is engaging and drives many students; however, other factors such as citizenship and becoming a caring & connected community member drive TOWN.

A similar message was relayed to the student the next school day. As it turns out the mother worked for herself and built and grew her business. She was an entrepreneur along with a great citizen of her community!

# TOWN DEALERSHIP

	<p>As a teacher you operate the concept of TOWN to students. In this example an automotive dealership will act as an analogy for the student experience.</p>
	<p>It is the teachers job to convey and sell the concept of TOWN to the students. Students have tremendous choice and it can be daunting; however, a teacher helps facilitate student choice.</p>
	<p>Every student will choose a different idea and each idea should be valued. Once students decide on a method of entrance into the TOWN program they are granted access to start their experience.</p>
	<p>TOWN is a student driven program. Students design, innovate and create a majority of the decisions. Teachers give the students the means of entrance and hand over the keys to the vehicle.</p>
	<p>Each students path into entrepreneurship and citizenship is different. Obstacles and tough decisions become the learning opportunities of the experience.</p>
	<p>Students are taught to celebrate achievements and successes throughout the experience. They learn that although each vehicle and path taken is different the overall objective is similar. To uncover and find success.</p>

# Requirement & Commitment

During the TOWN experience students take total ownership in the creation of their community. They navigate critically and solve multiple authentic problems through a creative and innovative process. Development of a character, town, county and business are the foundational aspects within the TOWN program.

Once these foundational aspects are developed the students experience two distinct but connected sections. The first section is dynamic, fluid and exciting. Problems and opportunities are placed in front of the citizens of their respective community. Once these problems and opportunities are addressed, a financial and commodities market is displayed and citizens have a set amount of time to buy and sell commodities such as livestock, agriculture, supplies, land along with inventory. Each week the market prices change and students make strategic decisions on the position of their assets. After the market closes citizens have a set amount of time to purchase and sell products connected to their businesses during an open market called purchasing power.

The financial/commodities market and purchasing power are operated through the web-based software! Teacher involvement is limited and students ultimately shape the financial future of their character and community.

The second section of TOWN is broken into different units. Each unit has one assignment that is completed during a timeframe of approximately one month.

The overall purpose of the first section is to allow students ownership and become totally invested in their learning. Students become active learners in the process of becoming a community member and local business owner. Citizenship & entrepreneurship ignite student learning!

I have been fortunate enough to see the development of TOWN from its earliest days. I have also been delighted to see the students totally absorbed in this remarkable learning experience. It is one of the best learning tools I have ever seen.

*Dr. Peter Gamwell is a speaker and consultant for Individual and Organizational Leadership, Learning and Creativity, and co-author of The Wonder Wall: Leading Creative Schools and Organizations in an Age of Complexity.*

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The concept of TOWN is something I have never seen in nearly twenty years of school administrative experience! The level of student engagement is so high that students spend their evenings and weekends waiting to get back to school so that they can take part in TOWN again the next day. I can honestly say, it is the most impressive teacher-developed program that I have ever witnessed.

*Principal*

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My three sons had the privilege of participating in TOWN when they were in grade 6. The skills, experiences, and opportunities that they gained through this project were innumerable. They would come home from school and talk about it for hours. While having fun and strategizing, they were learning so many different skills. Things like math, communication, critical thinking, time management, economics, and negotiation became a part of their daily discussions. One of the other amazing benefits of this program was that it opened our boys' eyes to different worlds and opportunities. To see our kids, who mostly talk about sports, thinking about their future and expanding their view of where they see themselves fitting in the world is pretty exciting! The creativity, passion, ingenuity, and dedication put into this form of education is unbelievable and we are so thankful!

*Parent*