

BLOG

[back to blog \(/blog\)](#)

School to School Learning: Leveraging the Larger Network for Improvement

Posted by [New Tech Staff \(/blog/author/New Tech Staff\)](#) on May 17th, 2016

found in [About our schools \(/blog/category/About%20our%20schools\)](#), [Culture and Collaboration \(/blog/category/Culture%20and%20Collaboration\)](#), [Teacher Voices \(/blog/category/Teacher%20Voices\)](#)

by Katherine Bryant, Humanities teacher in [i2Tech at Brookland Cayce High School \(http://www.newtechnetwork.org/schools/i2techbchs\)](#).

A few weeks ago, my colleagues and I had the chance to visit [Cougar New Tech \(http://www.newtechnetwork.org/schools/cougar-new-tech-entrepreneurial-academy\)](#) in Walterboro, SC. The goal of our trip was get a glimpse of another New Tech school's day-to-day routine. We felt like we had a good grasp on entry documents at the beginning of projects and the rubrics and presentations used at the end, but we wanted to see how other teachers handle the "messy middle."



Since we are only in our second year of New Tech at Brookland Cayce High School, we were excited to visit a school in year three. We were also excited to see another school-within-a-school program and see how we compare.

The trip for us was both eye-opening and reaffirming. The biggest take away from the visit was a renewed confidence that we are on the right track. Over the past year, I have at times felt lost in the jargon and components of New Tech. It's a lot to learn all at once, and my colleagues and I felt like we hit the ground running. Our visit was comforting for us and showed us other teachers have felt the same way and have survived!

We also saw how Cougar New Tech values consistency. The facilitators have collaborated to develop common policies and procedures that convey their high expectations for student learning. It was obvious that everyone was on the same page and knew the goals they were working toward. We do have some common policies in our program, but we started brainstorming even more ways we can add uniformity to the program. This will take a lot of guesswork out of the process for parents and students.

Our goal for the visit was to see another school's "messy middle" so we can make ours better as we get ready to take on year three. It was so beneficial to talk with the staff of Cougar New Tech and hear them honestly discuss their successes and struggles. As a teacher, it's easy to put on blinders and only worry about my classes and my students. I get so overwhelmed trying to make it through today, I forget to think about tomorrow.

However, it is always best practice to take time to collaborate and reflect. This trip was an opportunity to learn from others and get recharged about what we are doing at our school. I am really looking forward to NTAC. Since I know the parts and pieces of the process now, I can focus on talking with teachers from around the country in order to make my projects and our program even better. If we want our students to be life-long learners, we need to set an example of taking advantage of opportunities to learn and grow ourselves.

[+ Share / Save](#) [f](#) [t](#) [g+](#) [...](#) ([https://www.addtoany.com/share?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.newtechnetwork.org%2Fblog%2Fschool-school-learning-leveraging-larger-network-improvement&title=School%20to%20School%20Learning%3A%20Leveraging%20the%20Larger%20Network%20for%20Improvement&description=\)](https://www.addtoany.com/share?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.newtechnetwork.org%2Fblog%2Fschool-school-learning-leveraging-larger-network-improvement&title=School%20to%20School%20Learning%3A%20Leveraging%20the%20Larger%20Network%20for%20Improvement&description=)