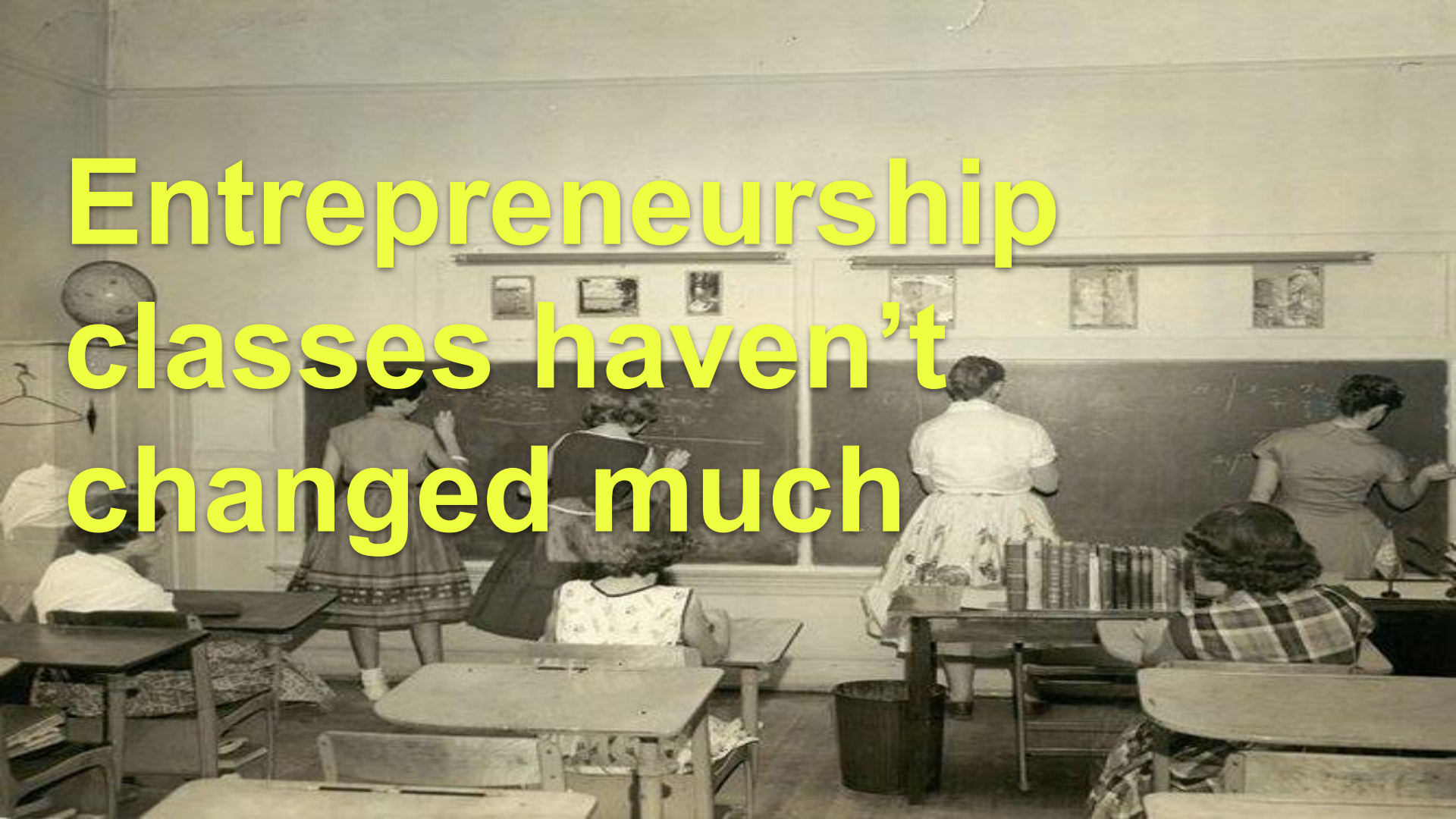




## **Beyond Simulations:**

*What happens When You Let Students Run a Real Business?*

**Entrepreneurship  
classes haven't  
changed much**



# The typical Entrepreneurship class will result in.....

Business plans nobody ever launches

Forgettable simulations with no real consequences

Students asking, "Why are we doing this?"

Almost no ownership or accountability



It's me.

Hi, I'm the problem.

It's me.

**What if I changed my  
approach to this class?**

Old  
Mentality

Let's design some activities that  
show students what it's like to  
start a business

New  
Mentality

This is not a class  
anymore....this is a business



# AN IDEA 10 YEARS IN THE MAKING



2016

**Benson HS**

I found a cool  
“project”



2019

**Wynot**

Saw the response  
to hands-on-  
learning



2020

**Blue Inferno Pizza**

Realized what  
happens when a  
need meets the  
right team



2024

**Back in the  
Classroom**

Found an  
opportunity to tie  
everything together



# NON-NEGOTIABLES

*This is a business, act accordingly.*

*We operate like a business,  
not a classroom*

*Show up everyday with an  
entrepreneurial mindset*

*The bare minimum is not acceptable*

*We own what we create*

*We are a team and every employee  
contributes to our success*

**I designed these  
rules just as much  
for myself as I did  
for my students**

# 30 Days to Launch

I set an aggressive launch date of only 30 days

- Created urgency
- Created real-world pressure
- Removed the option of laziness on all parties

**SINK**  
**-OR-**  
**SWIM**

# The Banner-Press

Area state wrestling qualifiers



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026

David City, Nebraska | thebanner-press.com



Vote for Athlete of the Week

## HEART OF SCHUYLER

CHI HEALTH SCHUYLER



Customers line up at the register on the opening day of the Heart of Schuyler gift shop within CHI Health Schuyler on Feb. 6, 2026. The gift shop, recently reorganized, reopened and now run by Schuyler Central High School entrepreneurship students, had previously been closed for several years due to COVID-19.

### Schuyler high school students reopen, run, organize gift shop

JARED BARTON  
columns telegram

For the first time in over five years, conversation, footsteps and human presence filled the gift shop at CHI Health Schuyler on Feb. 6, now dubbed the "Heart of Schuyler."

This started as an entrepreneurship class project, Schuyler Central High School business teacher Gunt Torpin said.

"It's a project my students and I have been working on for the last month and a half where we started out with a totally blank canvas," Torpin said. "The gift shop here closed after COVID and never reopened and we saw this opportunity to give students the amazing hands-on

experience where they do everything to start a business, everything from working with vendors to creating inventory, pricing, accounting, marketing...

It took some work, but the students sourced items from local vendors to stock the shop, with students starting it and keeping the books on it going forward.

When students aren't available, there are some volunteers that will step in, but the hope is to get a lot of the school involved, including some of the special needs students, Torpin said.

This is a major collaborative community effort, CHI Health Schuyler President Connie Peters said at the ribbon-cutting.

It's exciting to see as these young

the business owners of tomorrow. Peters said she hopes this fosters a love for health care in some of them and prompts them to find a way to keep working at the hospital down the road in a doctor or nurse capacity, perhaps.

Claudia Lamuzzi, CHI Health Schuyler's executive assistant, and foundation director, said the gift shop serves two local functions: within the hospital workings, a place for employees to buy gifts for employees with

It's not going to be perfect....but that's the real world

# Once we launched... we transitioned to a department approach

- Mimics the real world
- Creates more ownership
- Creates leadership opportunities
- Gives students the full picture of business





# DEPARTMENTS

## Human Resources

- *Volunteer scheduling*
- *Training*
- *Organize business files*
- *HR retreats*

## Marketing

- *Facebook page*
- *Market research*
- *Promotions*

## Inventory & purchasing

- *Ordering*
- *New inventory research*
- *Pricing decisions*
- *Manage Square*

## Finance

- *Vendor payouts*
- *Cash drawer reconciliation*
- *Monthly financial meetings with hospital*
- *Deposits*

## Operations & Store Experience

- *Create featured displays*
- *Signage*
- *Ensure accurate pricing*

## Community & Vendor Relations

- *ALL vendor communication*
- *Recruit new vendors*
- *Work with news outlets*

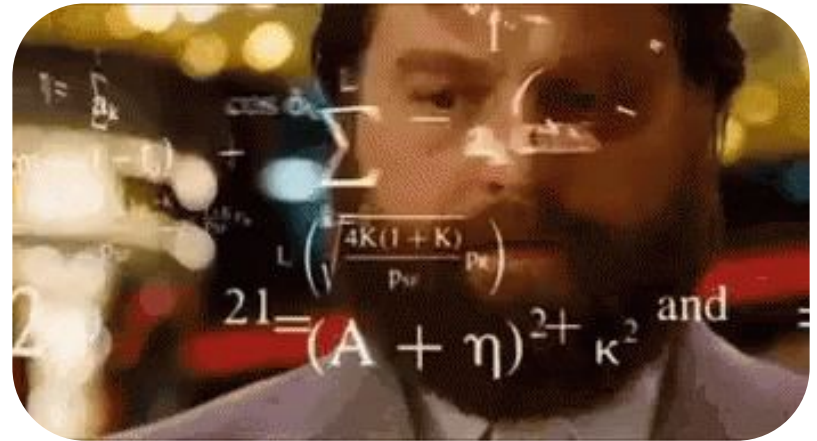
# A Typical Week

- 1-2 days on site
- Daily sales reporting (finance team lead)
- Department check in/staff meetings
- “Professional development” learning opportunities
- **Flexibility!**



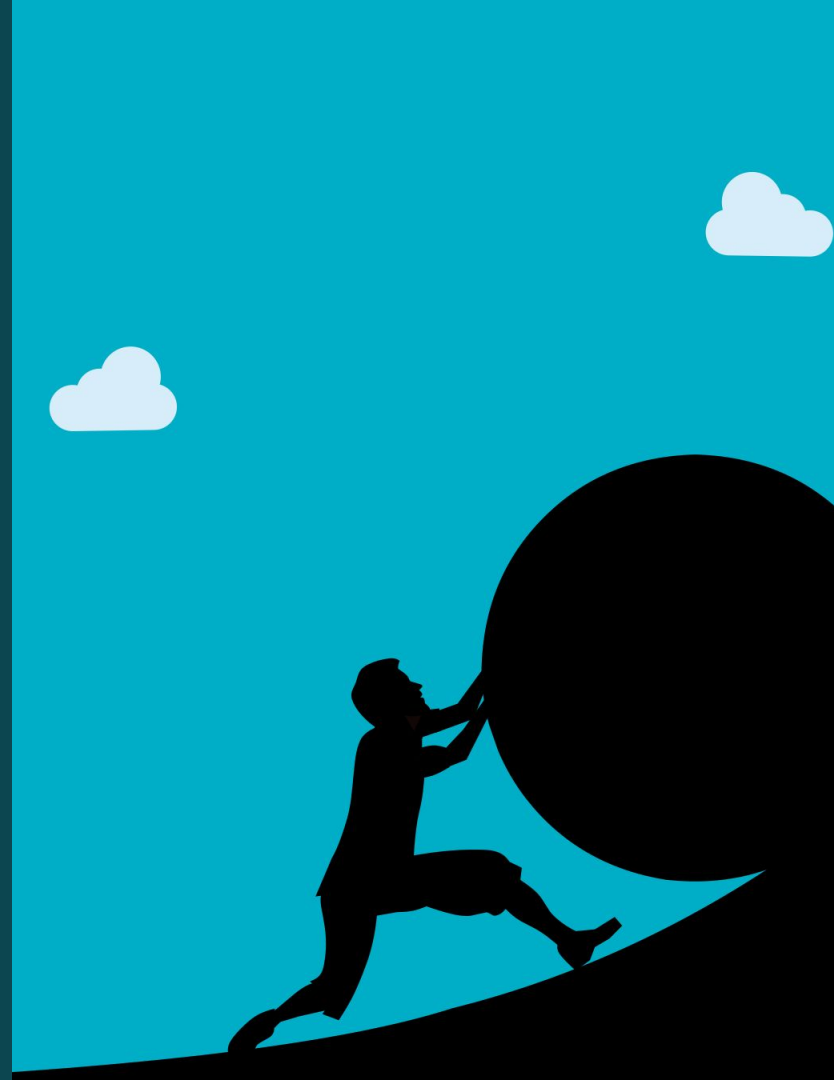
# The Logistics

1. The hospital provides the space
2. The school runs the operations and helps with staffing
3. Money is split according to an MOU between
  - a. School
  - b. Hospital
  - c. vendors



# Challenges

- Red tape at hospital
- Vendor relations
- Making sure this doesn't become my part-time job
- Finding ways to keep risk low
- “That one student” ....let's be honest, there will always be one



# THE RESULTS

- \$3,160.53 in total sales in first 3 months
- 7 local vendors with a new avenue of revenue
- \$700 in prize money at an entrepreneurship contest
- 3 newspaper articles
- A news video viewed over 30,000 times
- Meaningful work for Barbara
- An experience that 13 kids will never forget



# Lessons Learned



# Lessons Learned

**YOU'LL NEVER HAVE  
THINGS PERFECT....SO  
STOP TRYING**



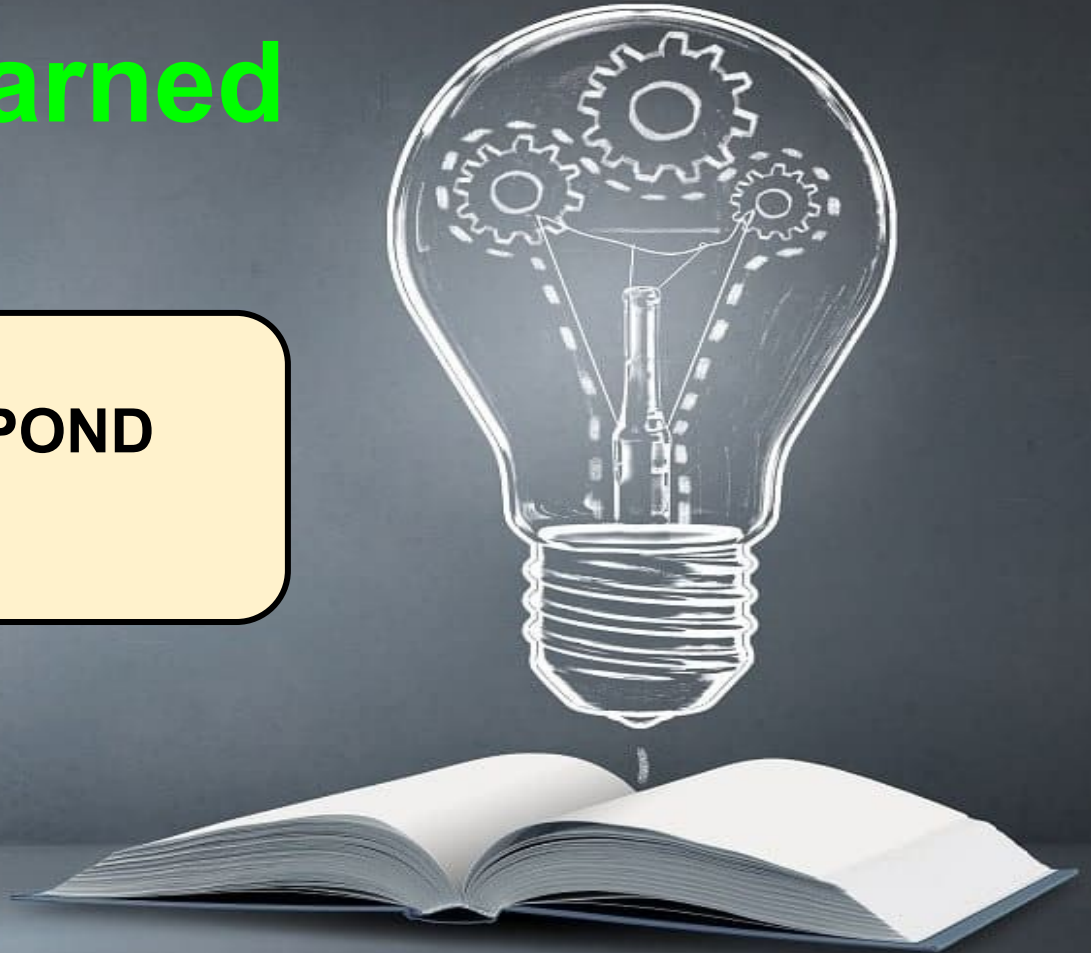
# Lessons Learned

**OWNERSHIP CREATES  
ENGAGEMENT**



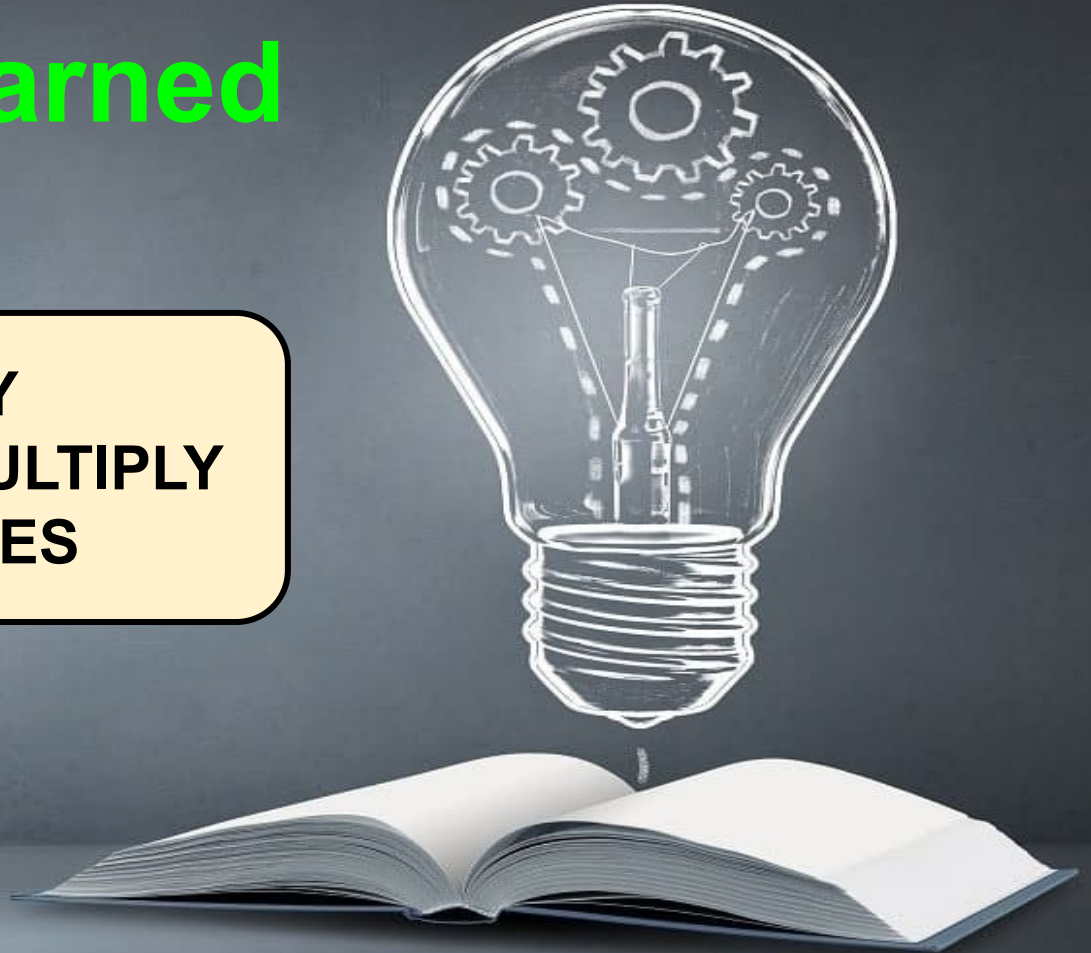
# Lessons Learned

**STUDENTS RESPOND  
TO TRUST**



# Lessons Learned

**COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS MULTIPLY  
OPPORTUNITIES**



# Lessons Learned

**YOU DON'T NEED  
POWERPOINTS TO TEACH  
BUSINESS SKILLS**



 Heart of Schuyler

# THE FUTURE OF THE HEART OF SCHUYLER

C & CIZZ BIZZ

ITEM	PRICE
1 lb Pure Honey	\$6.00
Gift Pack	\$7.00
Half-gallon Honey Mustard	\$7.00
1-gallon Honey Mustard	\$7.00

\$5

3D FIGURES

 Heart of Schuyler

## Turn the Heart of Schuyler into a whole brand

- The Heart of Schuyler Gift Shop
- The Heart of Schuyler Print Shop
- The Heart of Schuyler Media Network

C & CIZZ BIZZ

ITEM	PRICE
1 lb Pure Honey	\$10.00
Gift Food	\$17.00
Half-gallon Honey Mustard	\$17.00
1-gallon Honey Mustard	\$17.00

\$5

3D PRINTERS

 Heart of Schuyler

# Create an internal Career Academy

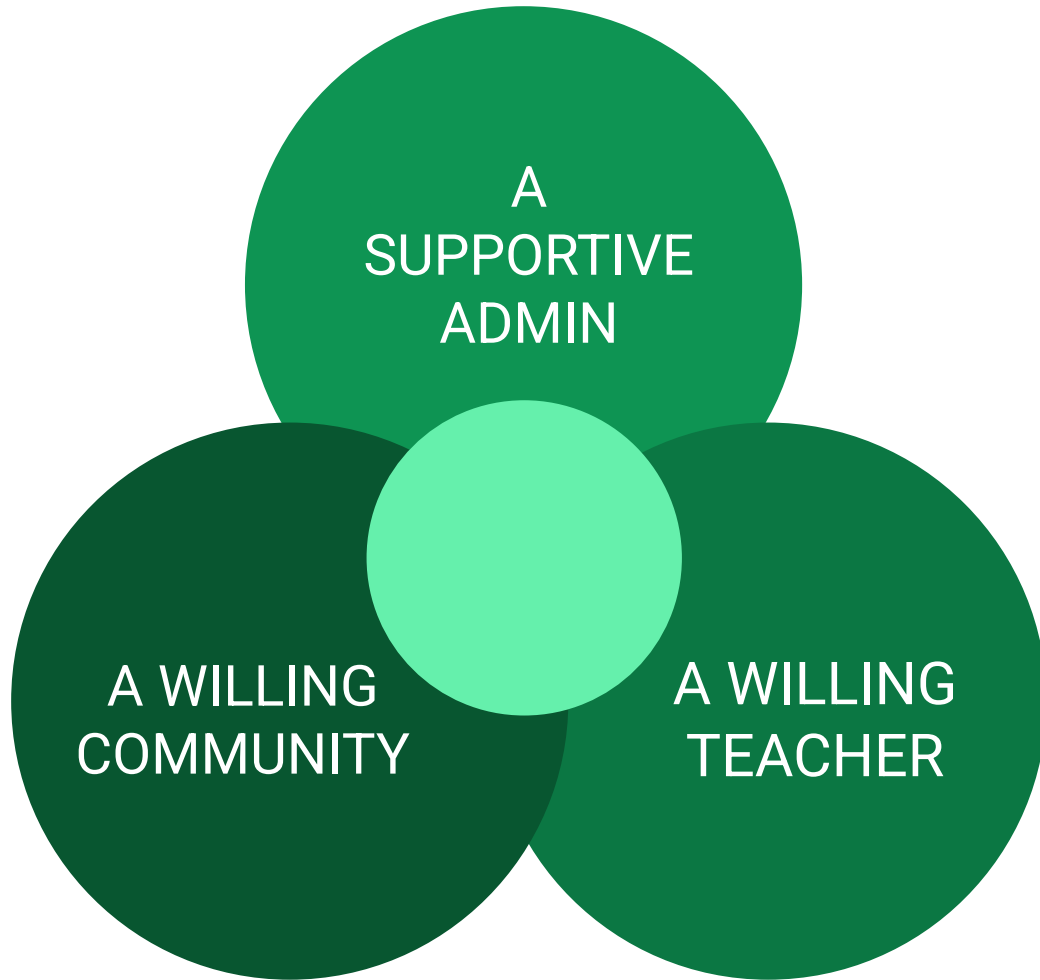
C & CIZZ BIZZ

ITEM	PRICE
1 lb Pure Honey	\$10.00
Gift Pack	\$17.00
Half-gallon Honey Mustard	\$7.00

\$5

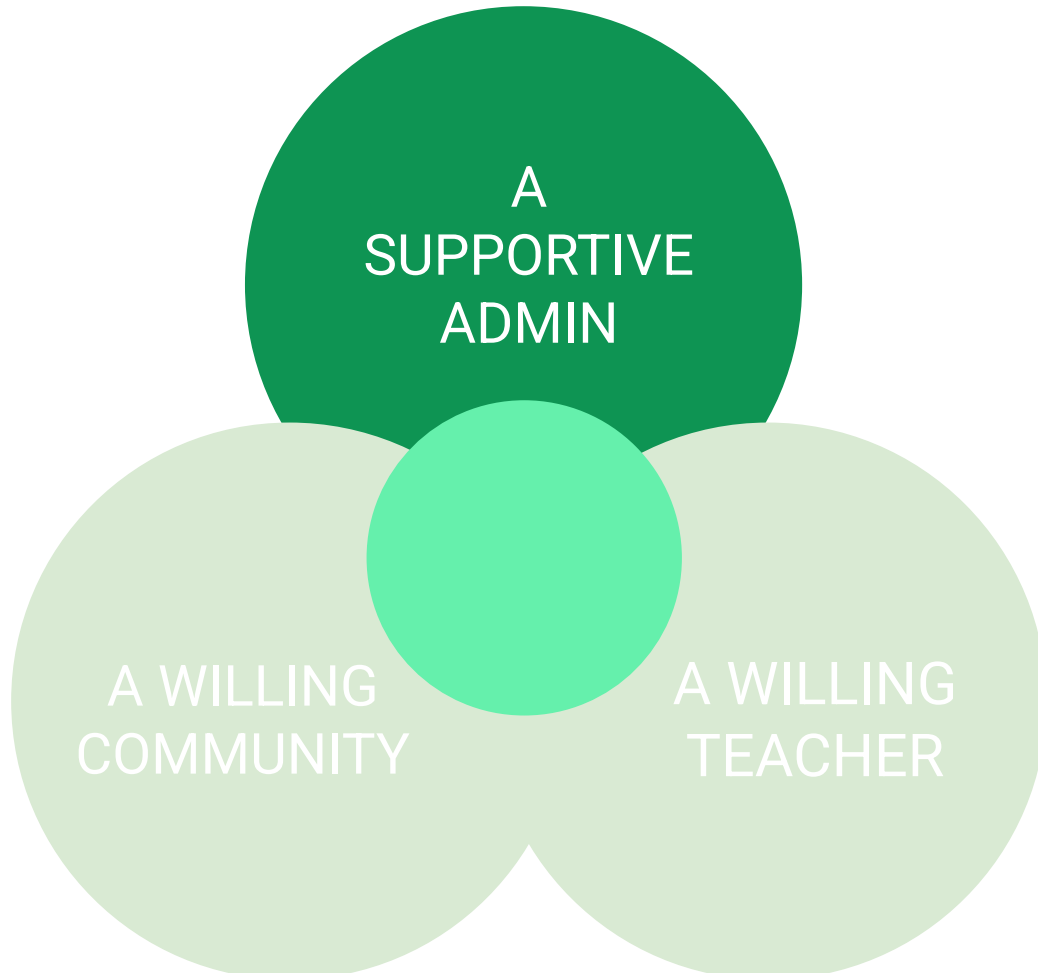
3D FILGELS

# **HOW TO BRING THIS MODEL TO YOUR DISTRICT**

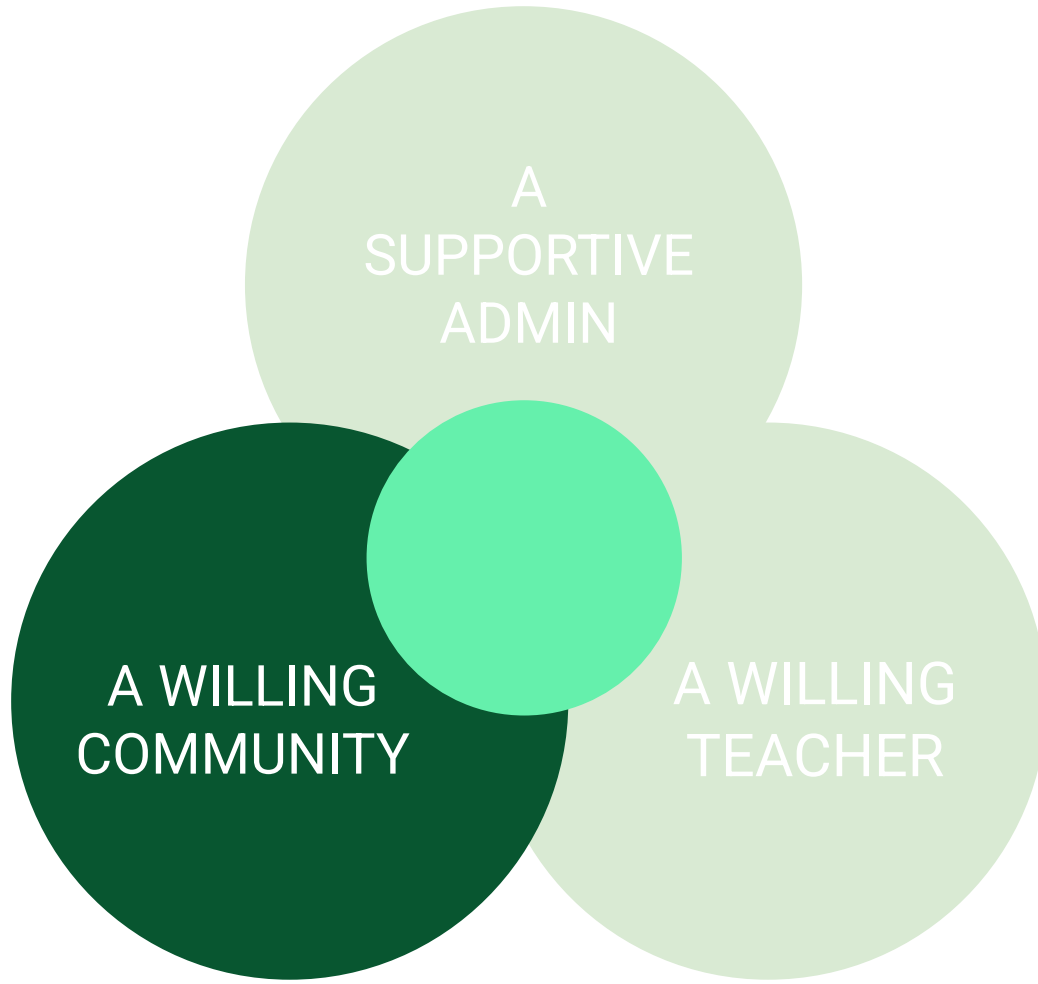


# 3 THINGS YOU'LL NEED

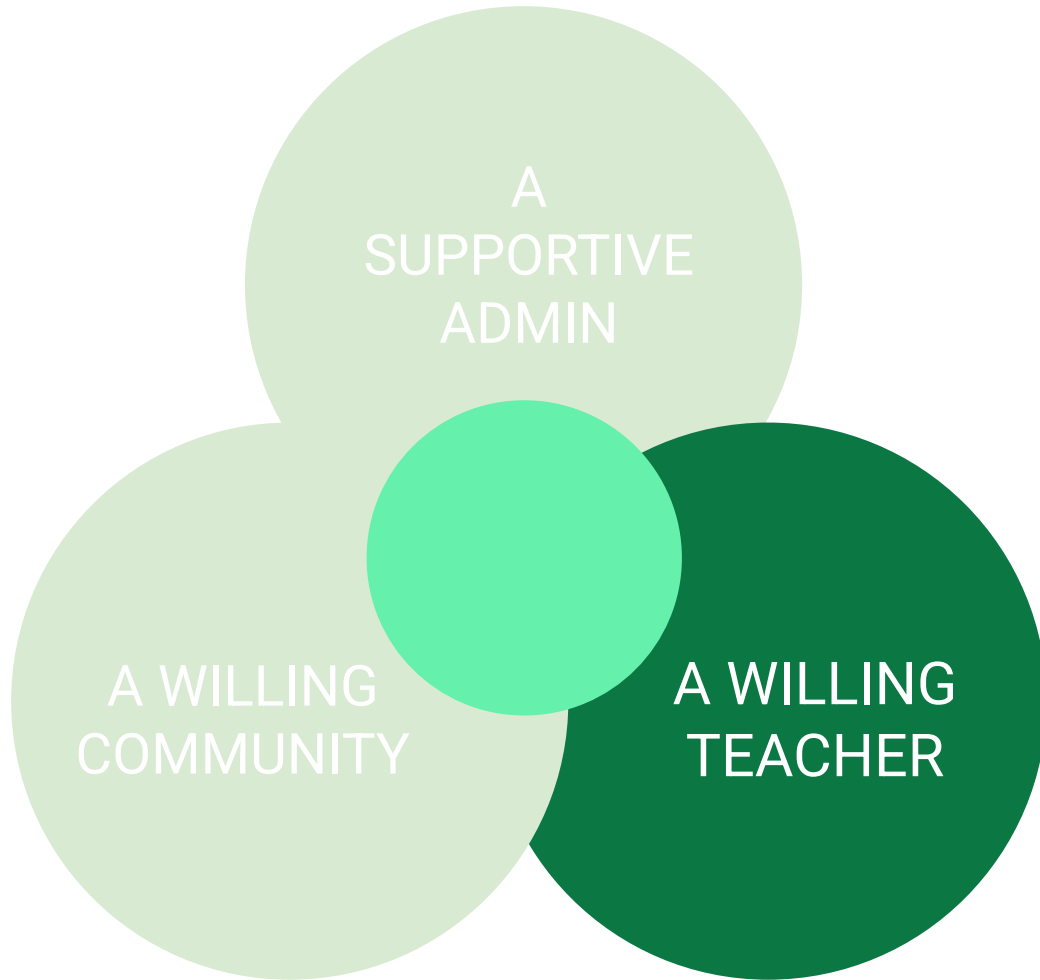
*(and probably  
already have)*



*THIS IS A NEW  
WAY TO LOOK AT  
EDUCATION...  
DOES YOUR  
PRINCIPAL  
SHARE THE  
SAME VISION?*



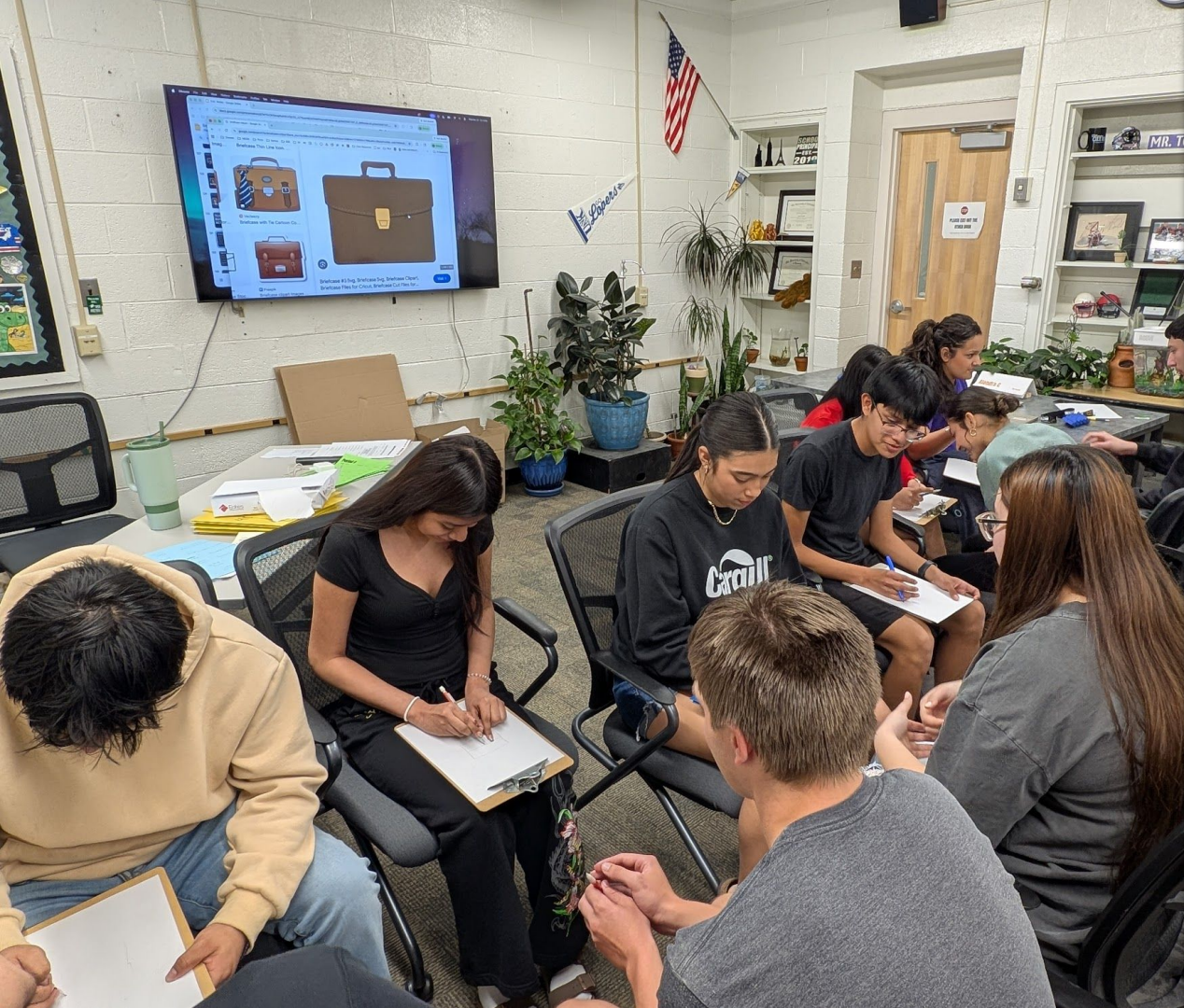
*IT DOESN'T HAVE  
TO BE GIFT  
SHOP... JUST A  
BUSINESS  
OWNER THAT  
WANTS TO  
PARTNER*



*You need to be  
creative, flexible  
and be willing to  
try and fail*



“I’ll never forget the grand opening. I remember looking around at all the people and saying to myself....this was me”



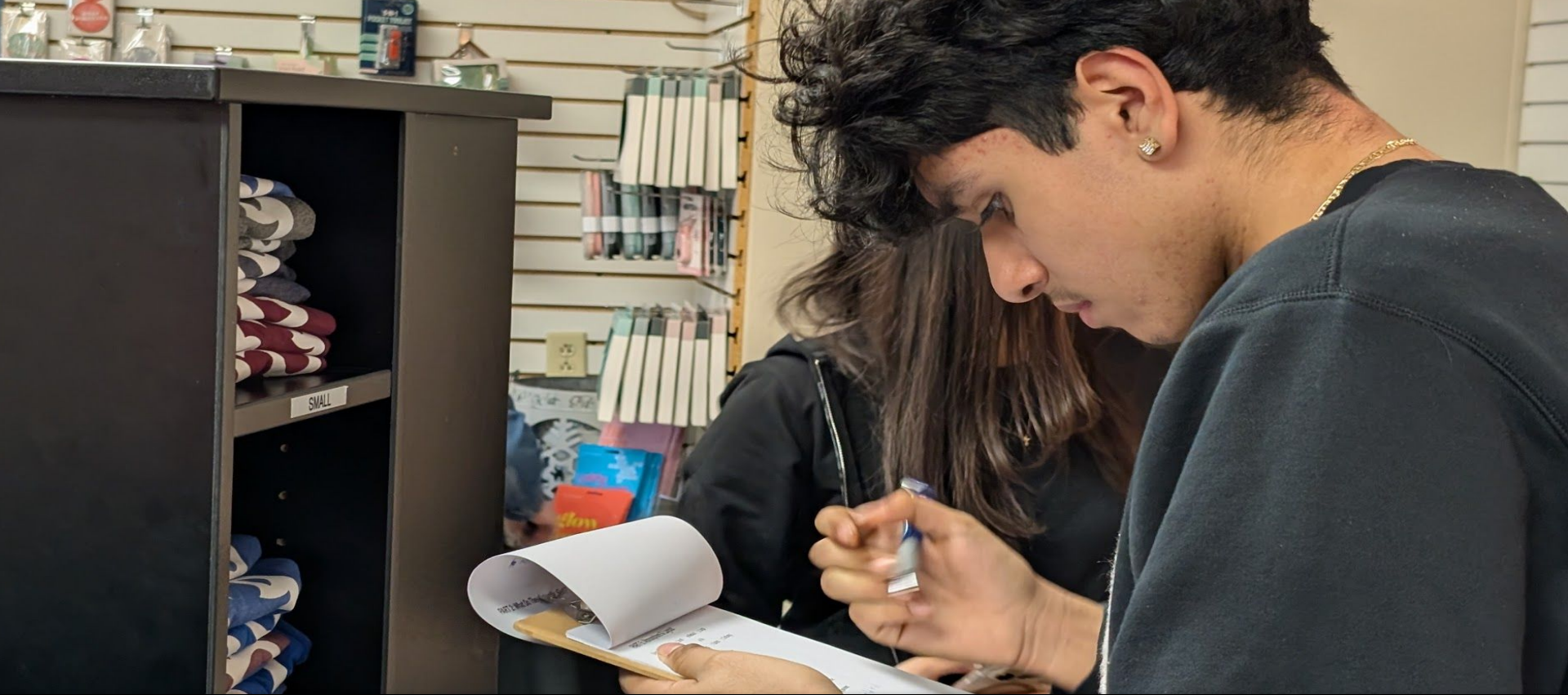
“This is the only class  
I actually look  
forward to each day”



“I can’t wait to come back to town in 10 or 15 years and see the gift shop running and knowing that this wouldn’t be here without the things we did ”



“I felt that what I was  
doing each day  
actually mattered”



“In most classes they talk about business....but here we’re actually running one”

**Students don't need another  
simulation. They need  
something real.**

**Questions?**