

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

Panel Four Summary: Creating the Conditions and Cultures

Watch the Recording: March 10, 2025

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We can help everyone become active participants in the life of the school, but we need to be aware of the power dynamic in institutions. This work is not easy, and part of Restorative Justice in Education is providing encouragement. Make it a collaborative effort.



This holds true for students, too. All kids have things going on in their lives we know nothing about. Creating the conditions for kids to be successful goes far beyond instruction.

Involve families, fathers especially, and provide them with the information and tools they need to participate meaningfully on schools. Invite them to be partners in the work.

Leaders set the tone for transformation, moving from compliance to collaboration. We need to change the flow from a trickle down to a ripple that extends out to everyone. No one should be left out or made to feel they do not belong.



What stops us? Mandates that take time and priority, the way we are trained to follow the system, and the resulting stress, anxiety, and fear. The system is the impediment to change. Leaders need to do more and say less. Create a safe place to do things differently, learn and grow as professionals just like we expect of students. We have to show up and lead by example!

Prioritize the humanity of everyone involved. Every child needs at least one adult with the knowledge and willingness to advocate for them. Attend school board meetings. Speak up. Vote for candidates who espouse transformation. End the mandate of standardized testing. Teachers will feel relief not being held accountable for student test scores. Use qualitative assessment data, portfolios and student conferences to teach them to advocate for their own learning. Shift to a four day instructional week, with the fifth day focused on relationships with students, engaging with families and community building.

What does transformation look like? Students show up ready and willing to learn, accountable to themselves and each other, meeting each other's needs, and resolving their own conflicts. They are part of the leadership of schools, participating in decision-making and with voices and votes at the building and district level. As a result, schools are welcoming, providing learner autonomy that leads to their success.

