



This roadmap presents a new model for education that reflects our quickly-changing world, preparing children to live as citizens of a diverse, decentralized, global society that is inclusive, equitable and open to all people, so that everyone can adapt, evolve, and contribute to the greater good, solving problems and creating new values that meet their needs and enrich their lives.

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An Age of Disruption

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the response of social distancing and quarantining that impacted society in 2020, we have entered an age of upheaval in which many of our social norms, conventions, and assumptions are being questioned, shifted, and in some cases, dismantled. Some of these forces were already in play prior to 2020, but the pandemic was the defining moment that set the Age of Disruption in motion.

This confluence of forces has aligned to form a perfect storm, destabilizing industrial-aged institutions that have been traditionally resistant to change. The coming together of these forces is potent enough to create conditions for change, and the institution of public education is not immune to their impact. There are six specific forces in play in society today, and public education must inform and reflect society in its responses.

Global Connectivity

Global connectivity has created a significant increase in the awareness of diversity and the availability of opportunity by expanding access to people, culture, information, and resources across the world, breaking down geographical barriers to education and skill development. Individuals and organizations can connect and collaborate across cultural and geographic boundaries through digital platforms, promoting a cross-pollination of ideas, perspectives, and experiences that provide access to different approaches to problem-solving, creativity, and innovation.

Global networks build strong international connections creating avenues for professional relationship building, wider visibility, and potential access to new markets and career paths. E-commerce enables businesses of all sizes to expand internationally without needing a physical presence in markets outside of their geographic region. At the organizational level, groups can tap into diverse talent pools worldwide, leading to a more diverse, skilled, innovative workforce as working remotely reduces operational costs by successfully onboarding talent from around the world. As companies adopt digital transformation initiatives, enabling them to be more agile and responsive to industry trends and emerging opportunities, they are more likely to outperform their

peers in achieving their metrics and outcomes. This is not to overemphasize employability and career success over the other ways education prepares students for a full and satisfying life, but the shifts in the economy and in the workplace in particular, warrant a fair assessment of how schools prepare children for future opportunities.

Personally, social media platforms and online communities enable interaction between people from different cultures and backgrounds, fostering mutual understanding and promoting inclusivity, while video services like YouTube facilitate the multimedial sharing of cultural content across borders, enriching experiences, and encouraging appreciation for diverse traditions. As a result, newer generations have learned to expect a breaking down of barriers and a more interconnected world, freeing them up to pursue a more personalized education, career, and work life as an adult.

Family Roles

The 21st century family is characterized by a greater emphasis on individual choice, equality, and flexibility in defining roles and responsibilities within the family unit. In keeping with these values, family roles have undergone a significant metamorphosis, shifting away from defined, traditional expectations to embrace greater flexibility and diversity. Gender-specific roles where men are primarily breadwinners and women provide childrearing and maintain the home are giving way to more flexible options regardless of gender. Both men and women are increasingly expected to participate in the labor force and share household and childcare responsibilities. A significant rise in women's participation in the workforce since the Second World War has been a major driver of this change.

As a result, there is an increased acceptance and occurrence of diverse family structures, including single-parent households, cohabiting couples, same-sex couples, and blended families. The proportion of adults living with a spouse and children has decreased, with a rise in other living arrangements like unmarried adults raising children. Within this shift, there is also a change in what is considered socially acceptable discipline practices. Families are moving away from strictly authoritarian approaches towards more empathetic, communicative, and intentional parenting styles, focusing on the child as an individual learning to make good choices and regulate their actions when interacting with others to support their emotional resilience.

These changes in family roles have prompted schools to adapt and take on broader responsibilities to support student success. The traditional model of parental involvement is evolving to encompass family engagement, recognizing the diverse structures of modern families. Single-parent households can experience gaps in their ability to support the developmental needs of children, and schools are being asked to

provide before and after-school programs, daycare options, affordable meal and tutoring services, and connection to community agencies and organizations that can provide supports to students and their parents. Schools are also being asked to offer flexible scheduling for events like parent-teacher conferences and school community events so that families have the opportunity to find the supports and services they need in ways that fit their busy home and work lives and provide resources for parents to better understand and support their child's learning at home.

Finally, schools are working to improve communication and collaboration with families, including those from marginalized communities, to build trusting relationships and ensure effective support for students. Some districts are exploring family-centered school models with extended hours, flexible scheduling, and technology-enabled communication to better support working families. In all cases, schools are becoming more comprehensive partners with families, acknowledging the varying needs of students based on their family circumstances and adapting their approaches to foster healthy, safe, engaged, successful learners..

Generation Acceleration

In the 21st century, the concept of "generation" has shifted from primarily focusing on the age when adults procreate to a more sociological definition based on shared cultural experiences and birth years. Traditionally, a generation occurred every twenty-five years, then every twenty years, and most recently every fifteen years, although this is not set in stone. Sociologists now often define generations as groups of people born around the same time who experience similar cultural influences while growing up. These generational groupings, such as Millennials and Gen Z, are increasingly recognized for their distinct behaviors, attitudes, and values shaped by their unique historical contexts.

Generations were traditionally understood within family structures, referring to parents, children, and grandchildren. In the last twenty-five years, we have become more aware of how the impact of shared historical events, technological advancements, and cultural trends on a group of people born within a specific timeframe can define specific groups. The specific years that define a generation are not officially set by dates, but by social consensus and popular usage. Changes in social norms, political landscapes, and cultural values impact how each generation perceives the world, as well as major historical events, like 9/11 for Millennials or the COVID-19 pandemic for Gen A, leave a lasting imprint.

Millennials (aka Gen Y) for example may be born between 1981 and 1996, but they are most often associated with the turn of the millennium and the rise of the internet.

Generation Z (Gen Z), born in the late 1990s and early 2010s, are defined as digital natives, deeply connected to technology and social media. Then there's Generation Alpha (Gen Alpha), the first generation to be born entirely in the 21st century, identified by its deep immersion in technology, its ability to adapt, and a strong sense of social and environmental awareness.

Understanding generational differences is crucial for effective communication and collaboration in schools and in the workplace. Different generations of students, teachers, and parents bring diverse learning styles, technological proficiencies, and communication preferences to schools, shaping the educational landscape. Understanding these generational differences is crucial for educators to create inclusive, effective learning environments. Schools can tailor teaching methods to better engage students and make the material more relevant, which requires established educators to acquire additional training and support to effectively integrate new strategies into the classrooms.

Recognizing the different needs and expectations of various generations can help create a more supportive and sustainable learning environment for everyone, potentially reducing teacher burnout while enriching the community with a wider range of perspectives, experiences, and ways to be successful.

Digital Life

The ushering in of the digital age has significantly empowered a generation of self-advocating creators and opened up personalized paths to success. The internet has removed traditional barriers to entry that previously existed in industries like media, music, and publishing. Anyone with a smartphone and a vision can now create and distribute their work to a global audience, and platforms provide user-friendly tools for content creation, editing, scheduling, and analysis, making it easier for creators to produce and manage their own work. Social media allows creators to bypass traditional intermediaries and connect directly with their audiences, building relationships and fostering loyal communities around their work.

At the same time, social platforms facilitate community building through groups and forums, enabling creators to connect with like-minded individuals and engage in meaningful discussions, exchanging skills and tools that provide artistic growth. These same platforms create a digital celebrity culture that amplifies a creator's brand to reach a wider audience, increase discoverability and expand their influence. As they build capacity, creators can monetize their work in various ways, including ad revenue sharing, sponsorships, merchandise sales, and direct audience support. They can also

use social media to sell products and services directly to followers, bypassing traditional retail channels.

A critical component of digital life is the cultivation of each person's personal brand, showcasing their expertise and building their reputation, highlighting their skills, experience, and professional accomplishments to attract potential collaborators and patrons. Beyond this, digital generations advocate for causes they believe in, raising awareness, mobilizing support, and influencing public opinion through their online lives.

For these reasons, schools are adapting to accommodate digital natives by embracing technology and shifting to more interactive, personalized, and flexible learning models. This includes incorporating digital tools for engagement, providing student-centered learning experiences, and fostering digital literacy. Artificial intelligence, virtual reality and gamified learning platforms are making learning more engaging and immersive, helping to tailor instruction to individual student needs and learning styles.

Digital natives thrive in environments where they have a say in their learning process, choosing projects, personalizing learning paths and providing feedback on their learning experiences. They also are highly collaborative learners, seeking out tools and platforms that allow students to work together on projects and learn from each other. These new approaches also provide quick access to information and immediate feedback. By adapting to these changes, schools can create a more engaging, relevant, and effective learning environment for digital natives that more appropriately prepares them for their digital future, working flexibly in collaborative virtual environments on short-term, task-oriented projects that require them to employ their creativity and critical thinking to solve problems and create products that offer new value in the marketplace of ideas.

Productivity Redefined

In the digital age, productivity is not solely about quantity of output or time spent working. It's increasingly defined as the ability to effectively leverage technology to achieve desired outcomes, focusing on efficiency, focus, and the strategic use of digital tools to enhance both individual and organizational goals. This includes managing distractions, optimizing workflows, and fostering collaboration to maximize impact and well-being. By 2030, the workplace will prioritize skills over degrees. Adaptability, continuous learning, and skills like critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving will be in demand.

Traditional definitions of productivity often focused on measuring output against time spent, emphasizing quantity over quality and efficiency. However, the digital age has

introduced new complexities. While tools like email, project management software, and collaboration platforms can boost efficiency, they also bring challenges like information overload and constant connectivity, which can hinder focus and increase stress. Therefore, a more holistic definition of productivity in the digital age includes effectively allocating time to prioritize tasks, set deadlines, and avoid procrastination, minimizing distractions and cultivating the ability to concentrate on important tasks, selecting and utilizing appropriate digital tools to streamline workflows and enhance collaboration, and achieving specific, measurable goals rather than simply logging hours or completing tasks.

In an age where artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly pervasive in the classroom and in the workplace, the human value add is becoming more and more central to being an effective contributor to product creation and problem solving. Recognizing the importance of breaks, work-life balance, and mental well-being for sustained productivity while being able to quickly learn and adapt to new technologies and changing work environments is essential.

By 2030, AI and automation will be handling repetitive tasks, allowing humans to focus on higher-value work requiring creativity, critical thinking, and innovation. AI-powered tools will assist with scheduling, data analysis, and skill development suggestions. Intelligent machines are expected to work alongside humans. The human skills of ethical decisionmaking, emotional intelligence, creativity, adaptability and the ability to factor in human intangibles in crafting successful outcomes that meet the needs of future society will become essential to successful productivity.

Ultimately, in the digital age, productivity is about leveraging technology to work smarter, not just harder, and achieving meaningful results while maintaining a healthy and balanced work life. Classroom productivity is changing to incorporate technology and prioritize student engagement and personalized learning to create more dynamic and effective learning experiences to equip students with the skills they need for future academic and professional success in a world that is quickly changing and not quite yet in focus.

Political Polarization

[Research](#) shows that politics has become increasingly polarized in the United States and in many other democracies around the world. The shares of Republicans identifying as conservative and Democrats identifying as liberal have both reached record highs in 2024. This ideological shift among partisans is reflected in the candidates they elect, leaving less room for compromise and negotiation. A majority of both Republicans and Democrats have a very unfavorable view of the opposing party, and this sentiment has

grown in recent years. Americans are also more likely to say they "hate" the opposing party than they are to say they "love" their own party increasingly since 1980.

Changes in social group relations and evolving norms of language and behavior have contributed to a more polarized political climate and a persistent "culture war" with increasing social and economic disparities that fuel divisions and contribute to this polarized climate. The media also contributes to this phenomenon, with people exposed to partisan news creating "echo chambers" where they primarily encounter information that aligns with their existing beliefs. Technologically, social media algorithms can expose users to increasingly extreme content, leading them to encounter fringe political views without realizing it, and the constant flow of partisan news on cable television and radio further deepens political divisions. Media often emphasizes emotional and identity-based aspects of political affiliations, fueling hostility towards opposing groups.

In this climate of extreme views separated by deep divides in public opinion, the institution of public education has become politicized to accomplish ideological goals beyond the moral imperative of what is best for children and for society, with efforts to provide school choice beyond publicly funded options, and a criticism of the longstanding federal role in education. For example, one party favors policies that expand school vouchers and charter schools, arguing that competition among schools, whether public or private, drives innovation and provides parents with more options to find the best educational fit for their children. Critics argue that these policies divert crucial public funds away from traditional public schools, potentially leading to budget cuts, teacher layoffs, and overcrowded classrooms, especially in underfunded districts.

In the same way, one political party platform is working to shift education policymaking to state and local government, with less federal intervention, emphasizing local autonomy and fiscal responsibility, while the other party supports the federal government's role in funding programs that support vulnerable and underserved students, and that reducing federal involvement could impact such programs and potentially exacerbate inequities.

Severe polarization makes democracy vulnerable to opposing sides treating each other as enemies, leading to political gridlock and a decline in trust in government institutions. As a cornerstone of American democracy, public education is susceptible to this kind of polarized public discourse, creating the conditions for reduced effectiveness and a lack of common ground to effectively address the issues around what is best for children and for the future of our nation.

The Industrial Age model of education valuing standardization, mass production and efficiency, served the world well for three hundred years, culminating in the American century of innovation and economic dominance, but it does not meet the needs of the

Information Age given the forces in play as described above. While institutions are slow to change, public education must be transformed to match the current and future needs of society. Retrofitting the old model to the contemporary world is a failed practice, leaving public education on the precipice of becoming irrelevant. The system is broken, and educators are in a unique position to not fix, but transform it.

Environmental Sustainability and Climate Literacy

Environmental consciousness is no longer an optional value — it is an urgent societal necessity. Climate change, resource scarcity, and environmental degradation are reshaping how young people understand their place in the world. This awareness has given rise to a generation determined to reverse damage and reimagine a sustainable future. As a result, public education must become an engine of environmental literacy, equipping students with the knowledge, tools, and agency to engage in climate resilience and ecological responsibility.

Sustainability must be embedded into the learning environment — not just as a subject area, but as a core value that informs practice. From school buildings designed for energy efficiency and outdoor learning spaces, to curricular initiatives that teach systems thinking and environmental science, schools must prepare students to understand the planet's limits and design solutions that promote regeneration rather than depletion. Service learning, environmental entrepreneurship, and hands-on conservation work give students practical pathways to contribute. Climate literacy also deepens students' understanding of justice and equity, as those most affected by environmental crises are often the most marginalized.

When schools act as models of sustainability, students graduate as empowered stewards of the environment, understanding that their future depends not just on what they know but how they live.

Ethical and Media Literacy in an Age of Misinformation

The 21st century has seen an unprecedented explosion in the amount of information young people encounter every day. But alongside this opportunity comes danger: misinformation, disinformation, deepfakes, and polarizing digital echo chambers have made it increasingly difficult to determine what is true. As students increasingly access the world through screens and platforms governed by algorithmic logic, they must be taught how to think critically, ethically, and independently in their digital lives.

Media literacy in this context goes beyond simply evaluating sources — it requires students to analyze the systems that shape what they see and believe. Understanding

how algorithms work, how bias is formed, and how to engage in civic discourse online are now core competencies for citizenship. Ethical technology use must be taught alongside skills in fact-checking, data analysis, and source attribution. Moreover, students must be empowered to take ownership of their digital identities and recognize the implications of their online behavior for themselves and others. It is important to keep in mind the difference between media literacy and digital citizenship. Whereas media literacy encompasses the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media with a critical lens, understanding the influences of commercial, political, or social messages, and how media shapes culture and beliefs, digital citizenship addresses the application of skills to navigate the digital world, including online safety, the prevention of cyberbullying, physical and emotional health impacts, intellectual property rights, and engaging in the online public sphere in a positive and constructive manner.

Education that fails to develop critical media and ethical reasoning, as well as the affordances of digital citizenship, leaves students vulnerable to manipulation and mistrust. By embedding ethical and media literacy across the curriculum, schools prepare young people to be informed, engaged, and responsible participants in a complex digital democracy.

Neurodiversity and Inclusive Learning Design

The traditional model of education, built on compliance and standardization, has long marginalized students whose cognitive profiles do not fit neatly into conventional molds. Today, growing awareness of neurodiversity challenges the assumption that learners must conform to a singular path. Students with ADHD, dyslexia, autism, anxiety, and other neurodivergent traits bring distinct strengths and perspectives. An inclusive, modern education system must be reengineered to support — not suppress — this diversity.

Recognizing and honoring neurodiversity means redesigning curriculum, instruction, and assessment through the lens of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This includes offering multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression to meet the full range of learners. Personalized learning plans can move from being an exception for a few to a framework for all, reflecting the unique ways each student absorbs information, solves problems, and expresses understanding. Trauma-informed practices and embedded mental health supports create the safety and belonging necessary for students to thrive academically and socially.

When schools embrace neurodiversity as a strength, they unlock the creative potential and innovation that come from cognitive variety. Inclusive learning design not only fosters success for neurodivergent students but also creates a more flexible, human-

centered learning environment for all.

The Guiding Principles

As a result of our Transforming Education panels, we have identified four guiding principles in mapping out the future of education. These principles address the forces of disruption permeating society, and empower students, their families, and the greater community of stakeholders in the shift of power in school governance. Here are the four principles in more detail:

Panel One: The Critical Role of Student Voice

Watch the Recording: September 17, 2024

Panelists: *Cynthia Jacquet, Donna Neary and Kati Pearson*

Schools should support students to achieve the goals they have for themselves. We build a new plane while we're trying to fly it every year. We need a longer, sustainable runway. What we're doing isn't working. This is an incentive for people to move to other school options.



We are steeped in tradition. We need to reimagine the paths to success. We are no longer an assembly line nation. Students need to be bolstered to make the decisions they need to make. We need systems not saviors.

The changes we made to accommodate students during the pandemic make it hard to argue that it's okay to go back to the way we used to track attendance, grades and success. While there has been backsliding, the window is still open to make substantive change.

Attendance remains a key issue post-pandemic. The pandemic shifted students' thinking on what they need and what they can live without in preparing for their future.

We need to reconfigure how it is we do school. Student focus groups can inform what schools need school to look like moving forward. Gone are the days where students go

off to college and find themselves - K12 has to be about helping students find their place by the time they graduate.

Students are receptors and creators with likeminded people all over the world. Our job is to make sure those experiences are legitimate and safe and something they can learn from. It vastly improves their connection to their learning.



Students need a space inside schools to be entrepreneurs. We need to connect students to people in the community who have skills, experience and knowledge to help them make a living and immediately contribute to society as creatives and employees.

Equity and access is key to every student's trajectory. It's our job to reduce the odds against student success. We must change the current system to ensure that trends of underperforming students do not continue.



Kids are demanding changes. Either we change it or they will change it for us. We have to end working in isolation to collaborate and adapt and show what this can look like moving forward. We can do this. If we say we need to be first in education, we can do it just like we put a man on the moon.

Panel Two: Lead with Community at the Core

Watch the Recording: Recorded November 5, 2024

Panelists: *Peter Badalament, Sawsan Jaber and Natalie Odom Pough*

Schools are broken and need fixing. There are pockets of excellence, but education needs systemic reforms. We are the profession. We need to see ourselves as the leaders. We need to have a voice at the table.



How many conversations are we having, and how aware are students of all of the issues? We are the gatekeepers of what schools look like. Teachers need to do a mind shift and co-construct with students and stakeholders.

What kind of world do we want? Do our students want? If we can't make change - if we're stuck - what do we have to do to change what's holding us back?

We get lost in competing priorities. Different things are important to different stakeholders. Then we play catch up when we see someone else doing good things without doing the foundational work necessary to be successful.

Too often students are not involved in decision-making around the life of schools. They need to know they have powerful voices, not when they grow up but now.

It starts with how we position ourselves. Schools need to be collaborative, transformative spaces in the life of the community. We need authentic ways of bringing community members to the table and have teachers be the facilitators of the conversation rather than gatekeepers.



We build trust by doing good work together. We need to be brave having uncomfortable conversations, and we need to unlearn in order to relearn.



The curriculum needs to break out of traditional boundaries. Shed the assumptions about what is valid learning. We need standards, but they shouldn't be telling us how to move forward. Free ourselves from the hidden curriculum that tells students they don't belong. This is the humanity of the work that we do. And we need the sustainability to keep going. We will never arrive at the pinnacle, so we can't get comfortable.

Schools need to be a safe place so when students want to find solutions to problems, they figure things out. They need to know how to "do" school so school does not "do" them.

Panel Three Summary: Schools as Incubators

Watch the Recording: January 23, 2025

Panelists: *Derek Pierce, Ramona Brown and Alexandra Laing*

The model of schooling needs to change because today's students are not empty vessels waiting to be filled. They are content creators before they ever walk in the school door.



To support this shift in how we educate our children, schools need to position themselves as incubators for student needs and interests and help them focus on problems they see and want to address.

Rather than acting as the experts leading the change, educators need to facilitate student voice as a critical lever of transformation, as well as the voices of stakeholders from across the community.

Think in terms of student advisory committees. Student councils are traditionally honorary bodies of select students and have been historically less impactful in the life of schools.



The business of teachers is making sure the work kids are doing matters. Successful schools create the conditions and cultures where kids KNOW they can do great, hard things. Not when they graduate, but while they are students. Advocate for friends and family. Address community issues. Propose solutions to local agencies and governments. Make a difference.

It's the schools responsibility to position themselves to get out of the way of the important work of students, and in order for any of this to happen, there has to be an internal willingness to challenge structures and practices that aren't working and don't meet the needs of the community.

This requires a willingness to change everything from teacher preparation programs and professional certification models to program and funding models that lock us into traditional approaches to public education. In many cases it's the bureaucracy of the institution of education that holds us back from adapting to remain viable and relevant.

As district and building leaders, educators have to give staff permission to ask questions, take risks and try new ways of re-engineering things that aren't getting results, and to provide the safety and support to try, fail, and start over so that the incubator metaphor becomes the working reality of how schools reflect the society we serve, even as it continues to morph right in front of us.



Panel Four Summary: Creating the Conditions and Cultures

Watch the Recording: March 10, 2025

Panelists: *Ryan Anthony Bell, Starr Sackstein, Aundrea Smiley*



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 in 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.

The Mandate for a New Way Forward

In May of 2025, our fifth Transforming Education Panel created the mandate for mapping the way to a new model of education, recognizing it is time to take action. While the roadmap targets 2030, the transformation begins now. There is no time left to dream and discuss. It is time to reclaim the narrative of our profession. Here are the takeaways from this substantive discussion:

Panel Five Summary: Designing a Roadmap for 2030

Watch the Recording: May 22, 2025

Panelists: *Rose Wan-Mui Chu, Benita C. Gordon, Mishkat Al Moumin*

We control the narrative of how we speak about ourselves and our profession. It starts with us. We are connectors, advocates, mentors and facilitators.



We must treat students as whole persons. They are our clients. We are tasked with setting students on paths to success, but we don't need to choose the paths for them. Young people today have exposure to so many choices, and whatever they choose isn't forever. They learn what it means to be an adult in the world, and then they are ready to go back to school with a sense of purpose knowing what they want. Have students write their own mission statements as snapshots in time of what they aspire to learn and do, contribute and achieve.

The transformation of education starts in the classroom, not from the top down. Chart a roadmap for the future that doesn't betray our own legacy:

Elevate of the professional beyond ourselves so stakeholders are part of the solution.

Inspire the next generation of educators because of who we are and what we do.

Unlearn those things we aren't even aware we have internalized.

Share and learn new strategies across public and private education.

Redesign teacher preparation and certification programs around how to facilitate learning.

Provide students with all the agency they need to see all their options for a way forward.

Run the technology so it doesn't run us. It's in every aspect of our life, but it isn't our life.



Humanize education, seeing students as whole persons.



Utilize social-emotional learning to address generational trauma.

Implement restorative justice to repair damage and keep students close.

Provide skills-based learning so students are prepared for adult life.

Implement these things with fidelity to the research so we get beyond pockets of success

Our First Meeting

Beginning on June 30, 2025, veteran educators began crafting the roadmap to this new way to educate children to prepare them for the world they inherit. Key points brought out from this first meeting are:

The roadmap starts now, not in 2030.

This is not an academic exercise in predicting the future. What we decide today clears the path forward to a complete transformation of education.

It won't happen if student voice isn't driving it.

The transformation puts students at the center of planning, implementation, and assessment of a personalized approach to learning.

Learners are recognized as independent agents, not recipients of standardized knowledge.

Students come to school already established as content creators in their own right. Schooling needs to honor this and engage them as unique learners.

This new era heralds in a proliferation of innovation.

The result of this era of disruption is the onset of new models of teaching and learning, breaking out of the industrial one-size-fits all standardization ideal.

Everyone has skin in the game: staff, students, and all community stakeholders.

Schools are local entities that need to take direction from the needs, interests, and goals of the local communities they serve.

A classroom is not a radio to tune in and listen.

It has a bigger role. We need to engage and empower learners to share their experiences and build learning based on what they bring to it.

Transformed education must rebuild trust and belonging.

This is especially true for marginalized populations that have not been included in the traditional model of schools.

We must transform with purpose.

There's no point just reacting to disruption by creating a wish list. The roadmap must build in metrics and timelines to hold us accountable.

Implement auditing practices to get rid of those things that no longer get results.

This is the first step in identifying efficiencies and economies of scale that allow for transformation to take place.

End the use of GPAs, credit hours, semesters and marking periods.

Change the focus to engagement and problem solving so that education is a meaningful process that reflects true learning and growth.

Personalized learning and student agency are the new standards of excellence.

Everything else grows from these goals for every student, so that traditional drivers of education no longer inhibit student learning.

Each student creates their own personal mission statement they carry with them and evolve over time.

This personal mission statement identifies what the student wants for their learning and for their lives beyond education. They keep it with them and let it evolve over time.

Real world exposure creates student agency.

Mentor-based and competency-based learning are provided with a project-based focus that empowers students to take charge of their learning.

Create learner-centered environments with a big picture learning model.

This model focuses on developing students' interests and passions, fostering deeper learning, and preparing them for college, career, and civic participation.

The three pillars of the new model are:

1. Social-Emotional Learning

So students understand and manage emotions, build positive relationships,

make responsible decisions, and achieve their goals.

2. Critical Thinking

So students actively and skillfully analyze, evaluate, and interpret information to form reasoned judgments and make informed decisions.

3. Civic Engagement

So students learn how to take individual and collective action to address issues of public concern and improve the well-being of a community.

Change the power structure of school governance.

For successful implementation, education transformed must shift leadership structures to make teachers leaders and decisionmakers, not just implementers.

Change the power structure of student leadership.

Student groups must form that are empowered to be a part of school-level decision-making and accountability.

Make leadership part of the learning.

For individual leadership development, every school offers a leadership class as part of the student experience to develop the skills and experiences necessary to lead.

Divergence and Diversity: The Personalization of Learning

Society has undeniably moved away from a "one-size-fits-all" approach towards a strong emphasis on personalization, driven by a combination of interconnected factors. First and foremost, modern societies, particularly in Western cultures, increasingly emphasize individual freedom, autonomy, and self-expression. This shift in values translates into a desire for a quality of life that is responsive to individual preferences rather than communal norms.

Standardized education often fails to address the diverse learning styles and needs of students, leading to disengagement and underachievement. Personalized learning paths reflect this societal move towards greater recognition of individual differences, powered by technological advancements that make tailoring experiences at scale possible.

Children are born with unique personalities, perspectives and abilities to contribute, and they are already creators and community members before they ever enter school. They bring different traditions and cultures with them that enrich the experience for everyone involved. And our emerging understanding of neurodivergence across the spectrum of humanity is a new dynamic in how we view and support each person as a learning emerging to become a contributing member to society.

Current school-aged generations think, feel and do things differently, identifying with communities and ideals that celebrate individuality, respect the distribution of distinct differences across the diversity of peoples, and demand access to opportunities and resources for everyone based in their individual abilities, needs and interests.

For all these reasons, education needs to divest itself of the confines of the industrial age ideals we inherited to make space for learning that is focused on the uniqueness of each individual, the value of generating answers to questions and solutions to problems, and the celebration of creativity and innovation in an age of digital possibilities. Classes, rankings, letter grades, standardized testing and grade point averages are all ripe for reconsideration and removal from the education landscape, if they no longer serve the

world in which we now live or the future for which we are preparing our children, so that we meet the expectations of the local community and the needs of a global society.

learning needs to shift to be competency based and student paced so that the unique learner profile of every child is honored and supported throughout their lifetime. As students, children are our partners, not empty vessels we fill. Instead of sorting students into different boxes based on standardized outcomes, educators can lead in creating safe and brave environments that are open and inclusive, so that students feel that they belong, challenging them to take charge of their learning and pursue their future on their own terms.

The community needs to be at the core of this transformation, engaging all stakeholders in the vision for its next generation of citizens. With input in this transformation of education at the local level, capacity is built to move forward with the buy-in of everyone involved. To be clear, this requires more than informational meetings that broadcast one-way communication from the school district out to the citizenry. Community at the core means an iterative process where all community members provide input and gain common understanding about what needs to be in place to prepare students to be contributing adults to the future of society.

Teachers are the architects, as the expert practitioners of teaching and learning, in leading this transformation, implementing the community vision and supporting children in pursuing their personalized paths to the future. Teachers serve as guides for each child's personal journey, and as academic coaches who do not compromise on rigor, but elevate it modeling practical, real world professionalism. We still have standards, but the learning is able to go off script to personalize the learning experience so each child has input into their pursuit of learning. To accomplish this, academic tools must catch up to accommodate the concept of personalization. Those tools are available now, and are beginning to be put into place.

The Personal Learner Profile

A personal learner profile is a collection of information that helps students understand themselves and how they best learn. It goes beyond traditional academic assessments to include a student's learning preferences, strengths, challenges, and goals. This profile can be used to personalize learning experiences and empower students to take ownership of their education.

Learner profiles capture a more holistic view of a student, including their learning behaviors, self-regulation, and overall wellbeing, and are a core component of personalized learning. It is not static. It evolves as they learn and grow. Because it is created by the student, it creates self-awareness and ownership of their learning.

Learner profiles can lead to increased agency and efficacy as students grow to understand and own their strengths and goals. Since learning is tailored to their needs, they become more motivated and engaged, leading to increased success and better outcomes. As their partners in learning, it also empowers teachers to design more targeted and effective learning that meets the needs of each unique individual.

Personalization v Differentiation v Individualization Chart (v3)

There is a difference between personalization, differentiation, and individualization.

One is learner-centered; the others are teacher-centered.

Personalization	Differentiation	Individualization
The Learner...	The Teacher...	The Teacher...
drives their learning.	provides instruction to groups of learners.	provides instruction to an individual learner.
connects learning with interests, talents, passions, and aspirations.	adjusts learning needs for groups of learners.	accommodates learning needs for the individual learner.
actively participates in the design of their learning.	designs instruction based on the learning needs of different groups of learners.	customizes instruction based on the learning needs of the individual learner.
owns and is responsible for their learning that includes their voice and choice on how and what they learn.	is responsible for a variety of instruction for different groups of learners.	is responsible for modifying instruction based on the needs of the individual learner.
identifies goals for their learning plan and benchmarks as they progress along their learning path with guidance from teacher.	identifies the same objectives for different groups of learners as they do for the whole class.	identifies the same objectives for all learners with specific objectives for individuals who receive one-on-one support.
acquires the skills to select and use the appropriate technology and resources to support and enhance their learning.	selects technology and resources to support the learning needs of different groups of learners.	selects technology and resources to support the learning needs of the individual learner.
builds a network of peers, experts, and teachers to guide and support their learning.	supports groups of learners who are reliant on them for their learning.	understands the individual learner is dependent on them to support their learning.
demonstrates mastery of content in a competency-based system.	monitors learning based on Carnegie unit (seat time) and grade level.	monitors learning based on Carnegie unit (seat time) and grade level.
becomes a self-directed, expert learner who monitors progress and reflects on learning based on mastery of content and skills.	uses data and assessments to modify instruction for groups of learners and provides feedback to individual learners to advance learning.	uses data and assessments to measure progress of what the individual learner learned and did not learn to decide next steps in their learning.
Assessment AS and FOR Learning with minimal OF Learning	Assessment OF and FOR Learning	Assessment OF Learning



Personalization v Differentiation v Individualization Chart (v3) by Barbara Bray & Kathleen McClaskey

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Download this chart and locate any updates at: <http://bit.ly/PDIchartv3>. For permission to reproduce and distribute copies, incorporate into a website or course site, include it in publications, please contact Kathleen McClaskey at khmccclaskey@gmail.com.

Read more at <http://kathleenmccclaskey.com/personalization-vs-differentiation-vs-individualization-chart/>. Shared here with permission of Kathleen McClaskey.

Using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles developed by the [Center for Applied Special Technology \(CAST\)](#) we can optimize how we meet the needs and interests of all children. The three principles of UDL are the Multiple Means of Representation, Engagement, and Expression and Action. A personal learner profile provides these UDL principles to create an awareness of how they understand ideas and concepts, make use of that content, and demonstrate their understanding and application in new and different ways. Since each child comes to school with their own unique combination of abilities, needs and interests, documenting them so that the learner and everyone supporting the learner is aware of these strengths as they lead us along their path to realizing their full potential. Here is one example of a personal learner profile provided by [Kathleen McClaskey \(2017\)](#):

	Strengths	Challenges	Preferences and Needs
Access	- I connect what I'm learning to what I know. - I can visualize what I hear	- I sometimes do not understand what I am reading. - I have trouble focusing.	- I need step-by-step instructions for better understanding. - I prefer to use video to learn concepts.
Engage	- I like to lead and teach others. - I work well with others.	- I have trouble organizing and planning. - I get confused if I am doing multiple tasks.	- I need tasks to be broken down into smaller tasks. - I prefer to work with a partner but like to do my artwork alone.
Express	- I like to draw what I am thinking. - I am a good speaker and presenter	- I find taking notes and summarizing difficult. - I have trouble putting thoughts to paper.	- I need to be able to take notes using sketching and drawing tools. - I prefer to present my understandings orally. - I need to use a speech –to-text tool for writing.
Words that describe me: creative, artistic, friendly, leader, presenter, thinker, designer			
Interests, talents and passions: I love drawing and want to take more art classes in different mediums. I am interested in helping others and maybe can see myself as a teacher or a business leader in the future. I am starting to learn about social media and may even look at starting to create a logo and website to showcase my artwork.			

View McClaskey's [Learner Profile Infographic](#) for a visual organizer of the components and process for developing a personal learner profile. This is one example. We encourage educators to identify the format that is best for their learners. You can contact Kathleen McClaskey directly at khmccclaskey@gmail.com.

The Personalized Mission Statement

In addition to a unique learner profile for each child, a personalized mission statement is an important tool in empowering each student to craft their own vision for the future they are working to achieve as it comes into focus. This is a living document composed by each child that is revisited by teacher and student every quarter of the year to ensure that it remains, fresh, vibrant, attainable and on-track. Key components included in the mission statement are:

- what are your values?
- what are your dreams?
- what do you want to achieve?

This statement empowers each student to envision and espouse their pathway, allowing teachers to explore their way forward alongside them.

Consider these examples students can include as part of their overall personal mission statement, to help you consider the possibilities for your children crafting their own living vision for the future they are working to create:

Focusing on Learning and Growth:

- To constantly seek knowledge and understanding, embracing challenges as opportunities for growth.
- To cultivate a lifelong love of learning and inspire others to do the same.
- To explore new ideas, develop critical thinking skills, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge.
- To learn from every experience, both inside and outside the classroom, and use that knowledge to make a positive impact.
- To embrace challenges as opportunities for growth and development, both academically and personally.

Focusing on Contribution and Impact:

- To use my education to make a positive difference in my community and the world.

- To contribute my skills and talents to creating a more just and equitable society.
- To inspire and empower others to reach their full potential.
- To be a force for good, using my skills and knowledge to help those in need.
- To dedicate my efforts to creating positive change and building a better future.

Focusing on Personal Development:

- To develop into a confident, compassionate, and resilient individual.
- To live a life of purpose, integrity, and meaning.
- To embrace challenges with courage and optimism, striving to become the best version of myself.
- To build strong relationships and make meaningful connections with others.
- To live each day with gratitude, kindness, and a commitment to personal growth.

Tips for Writing a Personal Mission Statement:

1. **Reflect on values:** State the principles most important to the learner.
2. **Identify goals:** Identify those things the learner wants to achieve.
3. **Consider impact:** Indicate how the learner wants to contribute to the greater good.
4. **Make it memorable:** Write it in a way that is easy to recall, repeat and inspire action.
5. **Review and refine:** Continually revisit, refresh and recalibrate it based on progress.

By crafting a personal mission statement, each student can gain clarity, direction, and motivation to make the most of their educational journey and their future. Most importantly, both the learner profile and mission statement help to create a culture where students advocate for themselves both now as children and later as adults.

Instructions for Teachers: Implementing the Personalized Learner Mission Plan

Purpose:

This form, designed by [Dr. Mishkat Al Moumin](#) and shared here with her permission, helps students take ownership of their learning by reflecting on their values, strengths, and purpose. It supports personalized learning, student voice, and social-emotional development.

When to Use the Form

- **At the start of the school year or semester** to guide goal setting and learner identity.
- **During advisory, SEL, or reflection sessions** to reinforce self-awareness.
- **Before or after student-led conferences** to help students articulate their goals and growth.
- **Prior to launching long-term or project-based learning.**

Step-by-Step Facilitation Guide

1. Introduce the Concept

Discuss with students:

- What is a *mission statement*?
- How do personal values shape our decisions and goals?
- Why does it matter to define your purpose as a learner?

Help students recognize that they are not just passive recipients of education—they are designers of their own learning journey.

2. Distribute the Form

Provide printed or digital copies of the *Personalized Learner Mission Plan*. Emphasize that this is a **live document** - not a one-time assignment. It should grow and evolve with each student throughout the year.

3. Guide Section-by-Section Completion

- **Section 1: My Core Values**
Ask students to reflect on three values that matter most to them. Use a value-sorting activity or brainstorming session for support.
- **Section 2: Reflecting My Values in My Learning Journey**
Students connect their values to their daily behaviors, choices, and mindset in school.
- **Section 3: My Learner Mission Statement**
Students craft a powerful 1–2 sentence statement expressing who they are as a learner and what they hope to become.
- **Section 4: Skills I Need**
Students identify personal or academic skills they need to strengthen in order to fulfill their mission.
- **Section 5: Resources I Need**
Students consider what tools, support systems, or environments will help them thrive.
- **Section 6: My Timeframe**
Students set a time-based goal and identify how they will track progress or celebrate milestones.

4. Revisit and Reflect Quarterly

- Treat this form as a **live, evolving document**.
- Schedule regular one-on-one check-ins (at least once per quarter) to revisit, reflect, and revise the plan.
- Ask: Have your values shifted? Have you made progress on your goals? Do you need new support?

- Use it during student-led conferences, progress reports, or personal learning reviews.

Optional Extensions

- Pair students to discuss and peer-review each other's mission statements.
- Display anonymized mission statements on a classroom wall of purpose.
- Use the form as a launchpad for goal tracking journals, digital portfolios, or capstone projects.

Teacher's Note:

This tool promotes learner agency, self-direction, and authenticity. When students see that their goals are taken seriously and regularly revisited, it reinforces their sense of purpose and belonging in the classroom.

Companion Lesson Plan for the Personalized Learner Mission Plan

Title: *Designing Your Learning Journey: Creating a Personalized Learner Mission*

Grade Level: Middle School, High School, or College Prep

Time Required: 45–60 minutes

Prepared by: [Dr. Mishkat Al Moumin](#), shared here with her permission

Lesson Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will:

- Identify core personal values
- Connect values to their learning behaviors
- Craft a personal learner mission statement
- Set actionable goals aligned with their mission
- Recognize needed skills and resources to support their growth

Materials:

- *Personalized Learner Mission Plan* (print or digital copy)
- Value cards or values list (optional)
- Pen or device for writing
- Whiteboard or digital display for examples

Lesson Flow:

1. Warm-Up (10 min)

Prompt:

“If you were designing your education from scratch, what would you want to learn and why?”

Invite students to journal or discuss in pairs.

2. Value Discovery (10 min)

Distribute a list of values (or project on screen). Ask students to circle or choose 3 values that reflect who they are or want to become.

Optional Activity: Use value cards for sorting (must-have, nice-to-have, not important).

3. Guided Completion (25 min)

Walk students through each section of the *Personalized Learner Mission Plan*:

- **Core Values**
- **Reflection on Values in Learning**
- **Learner Mission Statement** (show examples)
- **Skills and Resources**
- **Timeframe**

Encourage honesty and clarity—this is for them.

4. Sharing and Discussion (10–15 min)

Invite volunteers to share their mission statements.

Ask:

- How did it feel to write your mission?
- What did you learn about yourself?

Assessment:

This is a formative and reflective activity. No grades. Instead, check for completeness and offer personalized encouragement.

Follow-Up

Schedule quarterly reflection check-ins to revisit and revise their plan.

Reflection Activity: “Checking in With My Mission”

Timing: 15–20 minutes (ideal for advisory or mid-term check-in)

Instructions for Students:

Review your *Personalized Learner Mission Plan* and complete the reflection prompts below. Be honest—this is for you.

1. Re-read Your Mission Statement.

- Does it still reflect who you are and what you want to grow into?
- Would you like to revise it?
- ✎ Write a revised version here (or write “keep as is”):

2. Reflect on Progress.

- What have you done so far to live your values and mission?
- What has been challenging?
- ✎ Reflection:

3. Skills and Resources Check-In.

- Have you developed any of the skills you identified?
- Have you used the resources you listed?
- Do you need anything new?
- ✎ Update this section if needed:

4. Timeframe and Celebration.

- Have you met any milestones?
- What's something small you can celebrate today?
- What's next?

📌 *Your next step:*

Shared with the permission of [Dr. Mishkat Al Moumin](#). You can connect with Dr. Al Moumin at Mishkat@thelanguageofsuccess.net.

Personalization in Action

Rather than the traditional standardized approach, personalization customizes content, pacing, and learning activities to optimize student engagement, ownership for learning and achievement. This can include personalized learning paths with different resources, activities, and assessments, prioritizing student choice and voice in what they learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate their understanding, flexible learning environments that support varying methods, groupings, learning platforms and projects, ongoing formative and summative feedback as student progress is monitored to allow adjustment to instruction, and a focus on student interests and strengths.

Examples of applying personalization in learning include:

Students using digital tools that adjust to their skill level and learning pace, providing targeted practice and feedback.

Students rotating through different learning stations and activities that flexibly address different needs and interests.

Students selecting different learning activities from a menu of offerings related to a particular topic.

Teachers and students providing targeted feedback to one another to help everyone be optimally successful.

Students engaging in in-depth projects that allow them to explore topics in a meaningful way and demonstrate their learning in creative ways,

All of this is based on the understanding that students are active members of their community, and as such, they should be experiencing outreach into the town or city in which they live, working with artisans, employers and industries, and actively participating in addressing issues and solving problems with fellow citizens and neighbors. This honors their role as creators and problem-solvers throughout their learning journey, preparing them for their role as adult citizens who actively contribute to society.

Project-Based Approach

With learning profiles and mission statements in place, developing a project-based program aligned with established competencies, standards and outcomes is an optimal way to achieve the benefits of personalized learning optimally without having to individualize a scope and sequence for each learner. Project-based learning (PBL) is an active learning approach where students learn by investigating and responding to complex, real-world problems and challenges. It emphasizes hands-on, in-depth investigation and reflection, encouraging students to develop critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. Projects often involve students working in teams to develop and present a solution. This process allows students to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter while also honing valuable 21st-century skills like cooperation, creativity, and communication.

This approach to learning starts with a challenging, open-ended question or problem. This sparks students' curiosity and connects to real-world issues. For example, instead of learning about environmental issues, students might be asked, "How can we reduce the environmental impact of our school's waste?" Students take ownership of their learning by researching the problem, asking further questions, and exploring various resources, such as books, articles, websites, and experts. Working in teams, they brainstorm ideas, share knowledge, and develop solutions while learning to delegate tasks, respect different perspectives, and communicate effectively to achieve a common goal.

Students use their knowledge and skills to create a product or solution, including opportunities for students to receive feedback from peers, teachers, and experts and revise their work based on that input to improve the solution. They share their findings and solutions with an audience, which could be classmates, parents, and community members, and they are encouraged to reflect on their learning journey, assess the

quality of their work, identify what worked well, and consider how to approach similar challenges in the future.

Examples of project-based tasks include:

Social Media Influencer: Students learn about the power of social media and digital footprints by taking on the role of social media influencers advocating for a cause aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Food Truck Design: Students design a food truck kitchen, researching equipment, learning about scale drawing, and planning the layout, menu and staffing costs to run a successful restaurant on wheels.

Mars Wrench Design: Students are tasked with producing a new wrench for use assembling and repairing a rover on Mars, given the planet's gravity, climate and the limitation of only having a 3D printer on the mission.

Video Game Design: Students research popular gaming titles and then design and build an original video game using tools like Microsoft MakeCode Arcade and develop a marketing plan to sell the game to GameStop.

All-Terrain Wheelchair Challenge: Students design a wheelchair capable of traversing challenging terrains, integrating engineering and design principles, gain approval for the design, and build a prototype for testing.

PSA Video Project: Students research a local issue of concern and create a public service announcement (PSA) addressing the concern, developing communication and media production skills by creating a call to action.

Mock Trial: Students research a legal case currently in the press, develop arguments working with a local legal professional, and participate in a mock trial that vets the evidence and the legal issues.

Shark Tank Pitch: Students research and develop a product or service that addresses a community need and pitches it to a panel of judges to receive feedback on how to further develop, improve and market their solution.

Sustainable City Design: Students research the sustainability challenges and opportunities of their community considering environmental, social, and economic factors and then develop recommendations to present to local government agencies.

Waste Reduction Strategies: Students investigate the status of community waste management and develop strategies to reduce waste in their school and in their community and hold a press conference to announce their recommendations.

Of course, aligning project-based learning experiences with education standards and competencies is crucial to ensure the integrity of the learning that is taking place. This starts with going beyond the surface-level interpretation of standards to grasp their true intent, including its underlying cognitive demands and learning progressions, and then designing specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound learning objectives. By distilling the essential knowledge and skills students need to master within each standard, you can apply them to real-world learning scenarios.

With this alignment of standards and competencies to tasks, you can implement assessments that require students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts, using methods like portfolios, presentations, case studies, or projects. This evaluates students' ability to connect and apply knowledge and skills across different subjects, mirroring the interconnectedness of real-world problems while measuring critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and digital literacy skills that are vital for future success. Developing clear rubrics that align with learning objectives and provide students with constructive and specific feedback helps them to understand expectations against described criteria, reflecting on their learning and growth and encouraging peer assessment and feedback.

As in all professional practice, continuously monitoring and improving program quality and effectiveness based on quantitative and qualitative feedback helps to stay current with trends in fields, industries, and society and ensures the curriculum remains relevant and engaging, reflecting changing needs and incorporating new knowledge and technologies as they emerge. By implementing these strategies, educators can create a more relevant, engaging, and impactful learning experience that better prepares students to meet the demands of the future.

Mentoring

Student mentoring is a valuable personalization strategy that creates a supportive, one-on-one relationship between an older, more experienced person (the mentor) and the younger learner (the mentee) which offers guidance, encouragement and support as they continue on their pathway. This relationship can be formal with a teacher or counselor, or informal with an older student or a community member.

Key aspects of effective mentoring include a trusting and supportive relationship built on mutual respect and understanding, listening to students' concerns, providing encouragement and helping them solve problems, identifying goals, developing action plans, and tracking progress, positive role modeling of desired behaviors and attitudes and the sharing of experiences, providing guidance on learning, career exploration, and personal development as students set goals and navigate challenges, and connecting them with resources, networks, and opportunities that can support their growth.

Starting a mentoring relationship involves finding a good match for the mentee who aligns with their goals and values, defining common expectations, and establishing clear communication. It's crucial to understand and appreciate each other's backgrounds so that everyone involved has a hand in creating a supportive and trusting environment.

For the mentee:

Clearly articulate what you hope to achieve through the mentorship, including specific goals, areas for development, and what you expect from the mentor.

Be open to connecting with individuals who express interest in your guidance and who you believe you can genuinely help.

Seek guidance and take action on advice you receive.

For the mentor:

Be upfront about your strengths, areas of expertise, and the kind of support you can realistically offer.

Establish trust by ensuring that all shared information is kept confidential.

Encourage open dialogue and feedback to ensure the relationship remains productive.

For both:

Discuss boundaries, communication channels, and the give-and-take of the relationship.

Share background, interests, and experiences to establish common ground.

Show genuine interest in the other's perspective and listen without judgment.

Regularly review the relationship to ensure it's still meeting the needs of everyone and be willing to adjust the relationship as needs evolve. At the same time, celebrate

successes, acknowledge milestones and achievements and reset timelines and targets as appropriate.

Through regular meetings, networking opportunities, social-emotional supports, skills development, academic supports and career exploration, mentors build a relationship with learners that goes beyond the teacher-student relationship, leading to improved academic performance, increased self-esteem and confidence, stronger connections through networks and communities of practice, and a sense of belonging and improve overall well-being.

Internships

Student internships provide practical work experience, allowing the learner to apply classroom knowledge in authentic settings while developing skills and exploring career options. Their success is based on structured learning with defined goals, supervision, and feedback. They are a valuable learning option for students with an identified career interest and the prerequisite skills and preparation to be successful in real world working environments.

These opportunities can be matched to the age and maturity of the learner, such as government agency assistants, business office assistants, and retail assistants. More specifically, a marketing intern can learn social media management, content creation, market research, and campaign development. An engineering intern gets immersed in product development, construction, manufacturing, and supply chain management. A research assistant intern can learn about literature reviews, data collection, and data analysis, much like a data analyst intern gets hands-on opportunities formatting information, preparing reports, and supporting business projects. Software interns learn how to test applications and assist with app development, and graphic design interns gain experience in web design work and the creation of print materials.

Internships offer students the opportunity to gain practical experience in a chosen area of expertise, working on real-world tasks to acquire experiences, understandings and skills that help them inform their future as they gain better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different roles. In the process, participants build professional connections and network with experts in different professions, enhancing their resume. Most importantly, internships provide the kind of personalization of structured learning experiences with specific goals and outcomes that align with the student's mission statement. Receiving guidance and feedback from experienced professionals in the field is an added bonus for learners, expanding their growth through specialized expertise beyond the classroom.

Many schools have dedicated career centers that provide resources, guidance, and support for students seeking internships. These centers can help students with resume building, interview skills, and navigating the application process. School counselors and academic advisors can also play a role in connecting students with potential internship opportunities, particularly within their specific fields of study. School leaders, board members, administrators and teachers can use their connections with local business and industry professionals to get leads on potential internship opportunities. In the same way, leveraging alumni networks can be a valuable way to find internships through connections and relationships, as can career fairs where students meet with professionals and make valuable connections. Students can also reach out directly to companies and organizations that interest them, even if they don't have an established relationship or an internship opportunity posted publicly.

Student internship programs offer a multitude of positive outcomes, including enhanced experience, increased confidence, understanding of career options, and networking opportunities. They provide practical experience, allowing students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings and gain valuable skills. For local businesses, For employers, internships help identify and develop potential future employees who bring new ideas and energy to the workplace. Hiring interns can be more cost-effective than traditional recruitment methods, and internships can be a valuable tool for diversifying the workforce. Finally, partnering with schools in internship programs can enhance a company's reputation in the community

Apprenticeships

Student apprenticeship programs offer substantial value by providing practical work experience, especially in crafts and trades, with career-focused training, and pathways to employment with little to no student debt. These programs add on-the-job training on top of classroom instruction, even allowing students to "earn while they learn" in some cases, while gaining skills and practical experience. Apprenticeships also foster stronger employer connections, potentially leading to higher retention rates and positive impacts on the local economy.

By offering practical, real-world experience in a specific trade or profession, apprenticeships supplement the learning of knowledge and concepts in the classroom, fostering relationships with potential employers, increasing the likelihood of job offers and career opportunities, often culminating in industry-recognized certifications, enhancing the apprentice's value in the job market upon graduation. By providing skilled workers, apprenticeships contribute to the growth and vitality of local economies, catering to the needs of various career fields, including healthcare, information

technology, and engineering, in addition to traditional trades like electricians, plumbers, carpenters, HVAC technicians, and automotive technicians.

To establish a student apprenticeship program, begin by identifying a specific industry or occupation and the necessary skills. Then, connect with employers, training institutions, and workforce development agencies to build partnerships. Structure the program with on-the-job training, related instruction, and clear progression pathways, including wage increases as skills develop. Finally, register the program with the appropriate state or federal agencies and ensure compliance with all relevant regulations.

Determine if a degree apprenticeship or a traditional apprenticeship model is most suitable to identify specific occupations and the skills required, working with employers to define the needed competencies, and determine if the program will align with career and technical education (CTE) pathways already in place. Then outline on-the-job training with mentors who can help ensure that it is well structured, planned, and coordinated so that you can incorporate related instruction aligned with the on-the-job learning. As appropriate, also establish clear wage progression and skill benchmarks for student apprentices and consider how the apprenticeship program will integrate with existing high school or post-secondary programs.

Collaborate with local businesses, industry associations, and workforce agencies, along with colleges, and universities to integrate the program into existing programs and seek support from apprenticeship councils, advisory boards, and post-secondary partners. When the program is ready, work with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship or your State Apprenticeship Agency for registration to ensure the program meets national and state standards, including those for on-the-job training and related instruction. You should also familiarize yourself with program requirements for Federal student aid eligibility if applicable.

By establishing metrics to measure student, employer, and program outcomes, you can continuously evaluate and improve the program based on feedback and performance data, making the case for securing funding and resources that support the program's long-term sustainability.

Evaluating a student apprenticeship program can be done through a combination of regular feedback mechanisms, performance assessments, and program-level evaluations, including bi-weekly coaching sessions or progress reviews to gather feedback from apprentices and their employer. In addition, competency-based evaluations, on-the-job performance assessments, and knowledge assessments to evaluate theoretical understanding are all good snapshots of learning progress.

Alternatively, qualitative input from 360-Degree feedback supervisors and peers help inform a comprehensive view of the apprentice's performance.

Finally, conducting periodic reviews of the program as a whole, assessing its alignment with industry needs, the quality of training, and its overall impact on apprentices' career paths, is essential to ensure consistent quality. This includes feedback from employers on the program's effectiveness in preparing apprentices for their roles and their overall satisfaction with the program, engaging community stakeholders and advisory committees, to get their input on the program's relevance and impact, and analyzing the cost-effectiveness of the program by considering factors like the expense of training, the wages paid to apprentices, and the benefits gained by employers.

Microclasses

Microclasses are small, focused learning groups designed to foster deeper engagement and personalized learning experiences. They can be used in various educational settings, from traditional classrooms to online learning platforms, and are characterized by their smaller size, targeted content, and flexible approaches and facilitation. They concentrate on specific topics or skills, allowing for more in-depth exploration and application with more individualized attention and feedback to students.

By creating a more intimate and focused learning environment, microclasses can enhance student participation and interaction, allowing opportunities for students to lead their learning and develop leadership, communication, and teamwork skills that are valued in the future workplace. Microclasses can be offered in flexible formats, making learning more accessible to a wider range of students.

For example, a microclass on entrepreneurship must be offered in every school, bringing students together to share and explore the future of work and its shift in mindset from being an employee exclusively to one company to embracing entrepreneurial qualities, taking ownership of one's career development, adapting to change, leveraging technology and innovative thinking, and continually acquiring new skills to thrive in an increasingly independent and dynamic work environment as an independent contractor taking on multiple jobs with different organizations. The concept of future workers needing to be entrepreneurs that market themselves reflects the evolving nature of work through the rise of the gig economy and the increasing prevalence of independent contractors, freelancers, and consultants forming an on-demand workforce. This will help them prepare for a rapidly changing job market by developing the ability to be adaptable and pivot to embrace new opportunities as they become available.

The future workforce requires a combination of "hard" skills (like financial management, marketing, and technology) and "soft" skills (like leadership, communication, and critical thinking) and being entrepreneurial fosters flexibility, innovation and problem-solving essential for navigating a world facing complex societal and environmental challenges. By investing in this kind of continuous learning and staying updated on the quickly-evolving work world, students can learn and share the skills, dispositions and attitudes vital for remaining competitive and relevant in the dynamic future job market.

In the same way, a leadership microclass needs to be offered in schools so that learners can acquire, practice and model the skills, understandings and agility to actively contribute in future communities. Future workers need strong leadership skills to navigate a rapidly changing work environment, drive innovation, and adapt to new technologies. These skills are no longer limited to management roles; they are essential for everyone to succeed in the future of work, fostering teamwork, effective communication, and the ability to lead change. Leadership skills, particularly adaptability and resilience, enable individuals and teams to navigate these changes and thrive amidst uncertainty.

Modern leadership emphasizes collaborative approaches over hierarchical ones. Skills like effective communication, conflict resolution, and the ability to build trusting relationships are crucial for fostering cohesive and productive teams, especially with the rise of remote and hybrid work environments. These skills are essential for organizations to remain competitive and adapt to changing market conditions, and it directly impacts employee morale, motivation, and job satisfaction, helping address issues like burnout and employee retention.

By investing in student leadership development through a microclass, we provide a safe, supportive space for learners to acquire and practice for future roles and responsibilities, equipping them with the skills needed for their growth and success.

New Roles, New Rules, New Tools

The landscape of education is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by technological advancements and evolving societal needs. This shift necessitates new roles, rules and tools to effectively prepare students for their future.

In the classroom, teachers are learning architects, moving beyond traditional instruction to design engaging and effective learning experiences. No longer the primary source of information, they guide and support students in exploring and constructing their own path of learning that prepares them for their chosen future. Nurturing students' social-emotional skills, serving as mentors and coaches, and promoting self-awareness and resilience are all key teacher roles, as these things are highly valued in the workplace.

The future of productivity is shifting with the values of society, as nine-to-five jobs, longterm employment with a single employer, and the security and benefits that twentieth century careers provided are giving way to flexible workspaces, workdays, and career options. Employees entering the workforces see themselves as independent contractors, entrepreneurial in spirit, showcasing their abilities and learning through certificates and badges rather than degrees and resumes. They work for organizations that align with their personal values and goals, and only stay as long as their aspirations align with the employer. The way they think about sustainability, planning for the future, pensions and government programs is also tentative, relying more on their own plans for saving and being prepared for however retirement is defined in their later years. All of these factors are impacting the role of education in preparing students for their adult lives.

These new values and rules that need to be factored into education transformed include:

- **Personal Adaptability and Resilience:** The ability to embrace change, navigate uncertainty, and bounce back from challenges is paramount in a rapidly evolving work environment.

- Collaboration: Working together effectively, sharing ideas, and fostering an environment of mutual support are crucial for innovation and achieving shared goals.
- New Literacy: Proficiency in reading, writing, number sense, and utilizing digital tools to solve problems in ways that are valued in a global economy.
- Innovation and Creativity: The capacity to think beyond current conventions, generate new ideas, and develop novel solutions is highly valued.
- Well-being: Society is increasingly prioritizing work-life balance, mental health, emotional safety and a positive social life that serves individuals well in a fast-paced world.
- Inclusion and Diversity: A world where everyone feels valued, respected, and has a voice regardless of their family of origin, background, orientation and beliefs.
- Strong Communication: Effective communication across diverse people and thinking, including remote and hybrid settings, is essential for seamless collaboration and shared understanding.
- Continuous Learning and Growth: Fostering a culture of lifelong learning and upskilling is essential for individuals to remain relevant and for organizations to stay competitive.
- Integrity and Purpose: Employees are increasingly drawn to organizations with a strong identity a commitment to ethical practices, and a clear vision for the future.

These values inform new rules in how we teach, lead and leave our communities well-positioned for a world far different from the one in which we grew, emerged and succeeded throughout our lives. Openness to change, embracing the possibilities without being threatened by the ambiguity and the unknown, are important characteristics of educators who will lead our profession into this future state.

The role of Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI is revolutionizing our ability to personalize learning by adapting content and pacing to meet each student's needs. Adaptive learning platforms tailor learning experiences based on student performance and progress, automated grading and feedback systems streamline assessment processes and providing prompt feedback to students, and AI-enabled simulations coach teachers as they develop and practice skills and strategies in simulated environments. AI assistants are also automating administrative tasks and enhancing planning and record-keeping, allowing teachers to focus on instruction and student interaction.

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are immersive technologies that create interactive digital learning environments, facilitating experiential learning and deeper understanding of complex concepts by interacting directly with the learner. Virtual field trips, interactive simulations and collaborative online platforms extend learning beyond the physical classroom while promoting teamwork, communication, and peer interaction. Gamification, coding tools and STEM applications all help bridge learning, between human and virtual experience, across disciplines and physical boundaries, and beyond the confines of the traditional school day.

It is important to note that while technology offers immense potential for education, ethical considerations like data privacy, bias, and ensuring equitable access need to be carefully addressed. The successful implementation of these new roles and tools requires ongoing professional development for educators, robust infrastructure, and thoughtful integration into curriculum and pedagogy.

In her visioning of the future of education, [Javeria Rana](#) identifies three broad attainable goals in transforming education:

1. **Equity & Inclusion by Design**

Intentionally dismantling old systems and putting in place new ways of honoring everyone and the unique heritage and approaches they bring to the table

2. **Rethinking Classrooms as Dynamic Ecosystems**

Acknowledging learning takes place everywhere 24/7 and designing schools to engage learners and incorporate their learning experiences whenever and wherever they happen

3. **Enhancing Educator Agency and Efficacy**

Elevating educators as the architects of the transformation and empowering them to take charge of the narrative on public education and lead the implementation of change

Unlearning for New Learning

This shift from the industrial-aged, teacher-centered classroom to a student-centered, facilitative learning environment presents numerous challenges for educators, especially veterans who have been successful in the traditional model. They are accustomed to being the primary source of knowledge and may find it difficult to relinquish that role and empower students to take ownership of their learning, worrying that their expertise and experience will be undervalued in a more student-led environment. Also, deeply

ingrained beliefs and assumptions about how we learn can hinder the adoption of new, more interactive pedagogical concepts.

Effectively guiding student-led discussions, activities, and projects requires different skills, including working knowledge of technologies to create engaging and personalized learning experiences. Being skilled in the facilitation of learning for students with a diverse array of learning styles, needs, and backgrounds requires differentiated instruction strategies and a deep appreciation and understanding of individualized learning paths. Balancing student exploration with the need to cover specific curriculum requirements can be challenging, as can designing assessments that accurately reflect student learning in a student-centered environment.

The overall school culture, leadership style, and emphasis on standardized testing can either support or hinder the adoption of facilitative approaches. As educators, we may not receive adequate professional development, resources, or institutional support to successfully transition to this new role, and stakeholders whose frame of reference is their experience as students in past decades may be skeptical and resistant to change. Providing teachers with training and support on facilitation techniques, technology integration, and student-centered learning strategies, fostering a school culture that values innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement, supporting teachers in embracing new approaches, and clearly articulating the rationale for the shift to a facilitative is critical for this transformation to take place.

Cultivating a mindset that recognizes the need to constantly evolve methods and adapt to new possibilities, not because current methods are lacking, but because even greater improvements can be made, is the prerequisite to being an active participant in the creation of transformed education. By unlearning traditional teaching methods, educators can embrace this transformation by empowering students to become active participants in their own learning, fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and lifelong learning skills. We must move away from questioning students on what they can easily find online, and instead, pose real-world, messy, and unclear questions that encourage deep thinking and inquiry-driven learning.

To make this happen, we need to take charge of our own professional learning, networking with colleagues who are also transitioning to a facilitative role, learn new skills and earn certifications in areas such as digital literacy, conflict resolution, and group facilitation, and finding mentors who provide support, new ideas, and opportunities to practice and receive feedback on these new ways of leading the learning. By utilizing project-based learning, inquiry-based methods, and hands-on explorations that make learning relevant and engaging, we shift the focus of learning to students' needs and interests. Ask open-ended questions that stimulate deeper thinking and encourage students to explore ideas extensively, providing opportunities to transfer

learning to new settings and different applications. Allow students to self-select flexible working groups for idea-sharing, problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership opportunities. These approaches create contexts for students to give and receive feedback and participate in reflective sessions to deepen their learning and metacognitive skills.

For all of this to happen, teachers need to create a safe space for themselves and for students, where everyone feels comfortable taking risks and engaging deeply with one another and with content. Safety starts with acknowledging and valuing the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of students, promoting inclusivity and fostering a sense of belonging. With this in place, empowering students to take charge of their learning and make choices based on their needs and interests. While this transition requires effort and ongoing support, the positive impact on students, their future and the future of our society makes it a valuable and necessary evolution in modern education.

Agency and Efficacy for All

In education, agency and efficacy for teachers and students drives its transformation. Students with agency influence their learning, make choices, and voice their needs, while teachers with high efficacy create engaging learning environments and personalize instruction. Ultimately, agency and efficacy foster a sense of ownership and responsibility, leading to deeper engagement and improved outcomes for both students and teachers.

It starts by putting relationships first. Starting on day one, we need to get children talking about who they are as learners and understanding their role in owning their learning so that they have a say in what they learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate their understanding co-designing projects with teachers and peers, choosing learning tasks and strategies, and participating in discussions about and providing feedback on their learning. By utilizing digital portfolios or journals for reflection on their learning journey, revising their learner profiles and personal mission statements as needed, and engaging in peer feedback and self-assessment are all valuable approaches to empowering students.

Figuring out how we fill in the rest of the story for each child beyond test scores and grades and meeting them where they are to authentically map to their needs and interests keeps learning personal. The new technologies help, but this goes beyond digital tools. Teaching and learning in this metamorphosis of education is holistic. Feeling valued, respected, and connected to teachers and peers fosters a sense of belonging and community, and building strong relationships between teachers and students, acknowledging and celebrating student identities, and openly communicating

and addressing challenges or setbacks as they occur all help create an authentic learning environment for students.

For teachers, having the ability to make meaningful decisions about their classrooms, their professional learning, and contributing to school-level decision-making all contribute to their sense of efficacy. Teacher communities must extend beyond their local teams and departments so that they can learn, push each other, take risks and add to their skillsets, and expand their circle to shift beyond local contexts. When they feel more confident in their abilities, teachers continuously seek opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge, supporting the growth of colleagues, and seeking out leadership roles and opportunities to share their expertise. Teachers feel safe to become mavericks in their role, allowing students to show them the way and shift up assessment practices so that they are not confining when and how change happens. Administrators have a stake in this by flipping the walkthroughs they do in classrooms, having students show them their learning and how things work in the environment so that everyone builds a common working understanding of new approaches to learning. Working together to improve instruction, share best practices, and support each other's professional development creates effective teams with a shared mission.

Providing clear goals and regular, constructive feedback helps everyone understand their progress and identify areas for improvement. Offering choices in learning and how it is demonstrated allows for personalization so that teachers and students take ownership of their learning. And creating opportunities to work together, share ideas, and learn from one another fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility for everything teaching and learning can be. By providing ongoing support, learning opportunities, and the resources to make it happen, everyone moves forward together in the confidence that the future of education is not only possible, it is happening.

Through these efforts, teachers can reclaim the narrative about public education and how it is perceived and valued. By leading the transformation of how learning takes place in schools, they can share their personal stories of the positive impact they have on students and their future. In this way they showcase their professionalism and commitment to the work, openly discussing and dispelling common misconceptions or negative portrayals of public education.

Using social media to share positive stories, photos, and achievements, partner with community organizations and businesses to highlight the value and contributions of public schools, participating in school and community activities to share their enthusiasm and commitment, and hosting events that bring the community into schools all help create opportunities for the public to witness the positive environment and learning happening within public schools and redefine the narrative.

Technology as Literacy

AI is changing the world right in front of us, and schools need to reflect this change. It is fundamentally reshaping the concept of literacy by introducing new demands and skills essential for navigating world. This new kind of literacy encompasses various dimensions beyond reading and writing, to include machine learning, deep learning, algorithms, and neural networks, and how these foundational concepts help individuals make informed decisions about when to trust technology-generated information, recognize its limitations, and be aware of potential issues like bias and inaccuracies.

Interacting with AI-powered systems (from chatbots to recommendation engines) requires understanding how these systems process information and generate responses. The ability to formulate effective prompts (prompt engineering) for generative AI tools is becoming crucial for getting desired outputs. It also empowers individuals to generate new content, such as text, images, and videos, requiring skills in leveraging AI tools creatively and ethically. Successful use of generative technology also requires understanding how to delegate tasks, oversee its actions, and integrate AI outputs into creative and problem-solving processes.

AI models are trained on vast datasets, and these datasets can contain biases or inaccuracies that influence its output. AI literacy necessitates the ability to critically assess the information and outputs generated by AI, identifying potential biases, inaccuracies, or limitations, much like evaluating information from other sources. This also includes developing "literacy for truth," which involves employing strategies to verify and validate information generated by AI, especially considering the prevalence of AI-generated misinformation and deepfakes.

There are also significant ethical and societal implications, including privacy concerns, potential job displacement, and the need for accountability and transparency in AI systems. AI literacy involves recognizing and navigating these ethical issues, fostering responsible AI usage, and ensuring AI development and deployment align with human values. In these ways, we equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to thrive in an AI-powered world, not just as consumers of AI, but as informed participants who can leverage, evaluate, and even shape the future of this technology.

In embracing AI in learning, a key strategy is to have students critique the information they receive interacting with generative applications. Have them document when, where and how they acquire information, and fact-check everything through reputable and multiple independent sources. Be aware that AI can produce plausible-sounding but entirely fabricated information or sources (known as "hallucinations"), and compare the AI's output with human-generated content to gauge its overall quality and assess for subtle inaccuracies or inconsistencies. Most importantly, think critically about the

potential social impacts of the AI's decisions, especially in high-stakes areas like hiring, lending, or criminal justice, where biases can lead to discriminatory outcomes.

We need to emphasize that humans should remain "in the loop" to review and validate AI decisions, especially in critical applications where human judgment is essential to ensure ethical and fair outcomes. It's always helpful to ask, "What have I forgotten to ask?" in order to push for deeper understanding and inquiry into those things we don't know enough to ask. By adopting these critical evaluation strategies, we can assess AI outputs more effectively and ensure they are accurate, fair, and ethically sound in their use of information.

Leadership as Literacy

Leadership literacy is crucial in the future workplace because it equips individuals with the skills to navigate constant change, foster innovation, and build strong, adaptable teams. It's not just about managing others; it's about developing the ability to communicate effectively, make sound decisions, and drive positive change within an organization. Children learn to be leaders by watching, practicing and intentional experiences provided by adults.

Allowing students to make age-appropriate choices, like selecting their clothing or contributing to family meal planning, encourages critical thinking and boosts their confidence. Participation in group activities instills an appreciation for the value of teamwork and diverse perspectives listening, sharing responsibilities, and appreciating everyone's strengths.

Structuring experiences that guide children to identify solutions to challenges, rather than addressing problems for them, fosters independent thinking and problem-solving skills. Open-ended questioning, group conferencing, and individual coaching to help them work through options and solutions is a supportive way of building trust in their ability to lead. We can model leadership behavior through clear communication, approachability, tolerance, empathy, and patience. Acknowledging and celebrating each child's efforts in leading in their learning reinforces their growth and builds confidence.

Emotional intelligence and self-awareness are key leadership traits. Encouraging children to express their feelings, discuss different emotional experiences, and regulate their own emotions and how they influence behavior in others supports them in their growth. All of this can take place in a safe environment where everyone feels secure and empowered to express themselves freely and make mistakes, so that they will take initiative and learn. Taking charge of our own learning is the first step in our leadership journey.

In the learning environment, providing opportunities for children to succeed, offer praise and encouragement, and help them build confidence in their abilities in thoughtful and deliberate ways structures opportunities for success. Building leadership learning into a curriculum or even a designated class helps provide the skills, understandings and dispositions for grooming future leaders. A leadership class typically covers a range of competencies, including communication, conflict resolution, team building, decision-making, and adapting to change. Adding in the aforementioned self-awareness and regulation, emotional intelligence, and coaching strategies provides a well-rounded offering of leadership learning experiences.

Framing learning how to be a leader in practical experiences at the school, home and community levels provides a variety of ways for students to get involved in making a difference in their own lives and in the lives of others. During classroom time, learning frameworks and techniques for making informed, timely decisions, evaluating options, and assessing risks provides applicable strategies to try in everyday practice, fostering collaboration, identifying and nurturing strengths, delegating responsibilities, and inspiring others to contribute towards shared goals.

Other skills that can be instilled through leadership classes include anticipating challenges, analyzing information, making decisions aligned with larger group or school goals, and planning for future success. Providing structured learning with expert insights, group discussions, and hands-on activities analyzing real-world scenarios to understand effective and ineffective leadership approaches makes leadership skills come alive. Practicing in simulated scenarios to build confidence and refine responses to challenges, collaborating in hands-on experiences and opportunities, and making time for group and self-reflection build multiple ways to observe and assess and improve leadership effectiveness. Of course, educators can design leadership learning, whether in a standalone class or across the curriculum, so that it reflects the needs of learners and the values of the community.

Entrepreneurship as Literacy

Entrepreneurship can be taught as a form of literacy by emphasizing its foundational skills and mindset, rather than as business acumen. This involves cultivating skills like personal branding, flexibility and adaptability, problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication, which are valuable in various contexts, not just entrepreneurial ventures. By framing entrepreneurship as a life skill, educators can equip students with the tools to navigate uncertainty, innovate, and contribute to society, regardless of their chosen career path.

Developing one's personal brand is critical in establishing who we are in our community, online, and in today's workplace. Core values in personal branding are the fundamental beliefs that guide our actions and shape how others perceive us. They act as a compass, helping make decisions that are consistent with who we are. We identify our core values by what we are naturally good at and what we enjoy doing. Helping learners discover these things in themselves is the first step in entrepreneurial literacy. With this in place, helping children determine the influence they want to have on their world is the next core value. When they identify this, they are ready to develop their personal brand messaging to share who they are and what is important to them. Helping each child find and espouse their personal brand is necessary for success in the future world they are going to inherit.

An effective personal brand includes:

- Having a clear understanding of our purpose, niche, and our community.
- Being genuine and true to ourselves, our beliefs, and our experiences.
- Maintaining honesty and strong moral principles in our actions.
- Reliably delivering on our commitments.
- Maintaining a consistent presentation of our message across all platforms.
- Building credibility and reliability through our actions.
- Providing valuable content, insights, or services that benefit others.
- Being flexible and open to new ideas and approaches while staying true to our core.
- Fostering connections and building relationships across a wide network of people.
- Embracing continuous self-improvement and growth.
- Understanding our long-term impact of our brand.

Structuring entrepreneurial literacy in teaching and learning is a new dimension in education transformed. Consider how to implement using our instructional design expertise. Introduce modules for learners from diverse backgrounds, teaching them to handle uncertainty, build from existing resources, test and iterate, view failure as a

learning experience so that they develop the courage to solve problems and make a difference, and encourage them to identify issues around them and brainstorm potential solutions.

Tried and true hands-on activities can help develop the dispositions and experiences to understand how to market ourselves and our brands. Lemonade stands, bake sales, craft markets, and community services and supports provide real-world application of understanding stakeholder needs and the standards for excellent service to others. Project-based learning provides an excellent intersection of classroom learning experiences and extensions out into the community, both locally and globally, teaching the attitudes, beliefs, and values driving entrepreneurial actions: curiosity, creativity, resilience, self-efficacy, and risk-taking. This cultivates a growth mindset to help individuals and groups embrace challenges, learn from feedback, and persist through setbacks.

It is important to leverage community resources and build a supportive ecosystem. Connect students with experienced entrepreneurs and business professionals to provide guidance, support, and insights into real-world challenges. Partner with local businesses and community organizations to offer entrepreneurial opportunities and development initiatives. Through your connections, build a network of entrepreneurial-minded educators and administrators to foster collaboration and share best practices, and become proficient with technology tools and apps that allow students to manage businesses functions and track their progress.

Finally, create an environment where students feel comfortable taking risks and learning from their mistakes without the stigma of failure, understanding that it is a natural part of the entrepreneurial journey so that they internalize resilience and adaptability. Model and have them practice iteration and experimentation, and learning by refining ideas based on feedback and results. The concept of failing fast and then modifying next steps based on what is learned is an important lesson in entrepreneurship. As in all things, adapt the curriculum to suit the developmental stage of your learners, and apply the entrepreneurial mindset in different contexts, in the classroom, in the community, and even in each child's personal development.

By adopting these approaches, educators can empower individuals to think entrepreneurially, foster a sense of purpose and agency, and prepare them to navigate the challenges and opportunities of a dynamic and quickly-morphing future.

Relevancy is Everything

Education has to matter to students or we lose them. They can learn on their own in the networks and creative environments they have already developed before they ever set

foot in the classroom. They need to find their learning in what they enjoy to make it authentic and confirm their identity, and we need to provide lots of opportunities for them to retell their personal learning stories over and over in different settings and contexts to give it meaning and let it grow and evolve.

Relevance significantly impacts student engagement, motivation, understanding, and overall educational success. When students perceive learning content as relevant to their lives, interests, and future goals, they become more engaged and invested in the material. It fosters intrinsic motivation, inspiring students to actively participate in their learning rather than simply complying with requirements. And as already discussed, the connection to real-world scenarios sparks curiosity and genuine interest.

By connecting new information to existing knowledge and experiences, students develop a deeper and more meaningful understanding of concepts. They can see how theoretical concepts translate into practical applications, encouraging them to think critically, analyze information, and develop solutions. As a result, they learn to evaluate information, consider diverse perspectives, and apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. These kinds of relevant learning experiences equip students with the skills needed to thrive in the constantly evolving world they will enter as adults. They are better prepared to navigate future challenges, whether in their careers, further education, or personal lives. But it's important to recognize that students are engaging the world around them now while they are working with you. Childhood is no longer a separate experience from the rest of their lives. So relevancy is key to making learning personalized and equitable, tailoring learning to each student's interests and needs, creating a more meaningful path to learning for each child.

Relevance acts as a bridge between the abstract concepts learned in the classroom and their tangible applications in the real world. By making learning meaningful and connecting it to students' lives, educators can foster a dynamic and supportive learning environment that promotes engagement, deeper understanding, and ultimately, greater student success. To ensure our teaching methods resonate with students and enhance their learning experience:

1. Get to know students and build relationships

- Administer surveys, polls, questionnaires, or conduct informal chats to gather information about student hobbies, passions, goals, and learning preferences.
- Engage them in one-on-one conversations to learn about their backgrounds, interests, and experiences.
- Implement activities like morning meetings or daily temperature checks to foster a sense of community and help identify struggling students.

2. Involve students in the learning process

- Incorporate discussions, problem-solving, and hands-on experiments to engage students deeply with the material.
- Empower students to set goals, plan activities, choose resources, monitor progress, and evaluate outcomes, fostering self-directed learning.
- Allow students to choose tasks, materials, resources, or assessments based on their preferences and learning preferences.

3. Connect learning to the real world

- Design assignments that require students to apply and transfer knowledge in meaningful, realistic ways that simulate adult tasks.
- Relate lessons to local or global challenges, inviting guest speakers, showing videos, or using multimedia that illustrate connections between the subject and student interests.
- Provide opportunities for students to work on real issues in contact with organizations or participate in service-learning projects.

4. Gather and utilize feedback

- Gather formative assessments throughout and summative evaluations at the conclusion to monitor student understanding and adapt teaching strategies as needed.
- Share survey results and explain how the gathered data will inform decisions and actions, building trust and promoting student engagement in future feedback processes.
- Conduct whole-class interviews or surveys around the mid-quarter point to gather insights and make timely adjustments to improve student learning.

5. Be culturally responsive

- Recognize that students come from different cultures and experiences, and incorporate their perspectives and knowledge into the classroom.
- Design curriculum that reflects and celebrates the diverse cultural backgrounds of students, using books and media that highlight their heritage.
- Reflect on personal biases and work to counter them in the classroom, ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities for all students.

By implementing these strategies, teachers can make learning more relevant to students' lives, boosting engagement, promoting critical thinking, fostering a love for learning, and preparing students for success beyond the classroom.

Adaptive Empathy & AQ: The Operating System of Education Transformed

If equity is our compass and innovation our vehicle, **adaptive empathy** is the driving intelligence—and **AQ (Adaptability Quotient)** is the operating system. Together, they ensure schools don't simply survive disruption; they **humanize** it.

Adaptive Empathy is the disciplined practice of reading context (community, culture, capacity) and **responding with care at speed**. It moves us beyond “student-centered” as a slogan toward *student-honoring* design—where listening, safety, identity, and belonging are engineered into systems, not left to chance.

AQ (Adaptability Quotient) integrates IQ (cognitive rigor) and EQ (emotional insight) into a leader's and learner's ability to **pivot, prototype, and persist** ethically. In volatile contexts, AQ becomes the differentiator between performative change and **transformative learning**.

A Global AQ Playbook (system → school → classroom)

SYSTEM (Ministries/Networks)

- **Equity-by-Design Guardrails:** *Offline-first* access, multilingual resources, UDL-aligned materials, strong privacy protocols, and bias audits for all AI/analytics.
- **Adaptive Policy Loops:** Replace annual reforms with **90-day learning cycles**—pilot → evidence → scale or sunset.
- **AQ Capital Fund:** Microgrants for teacher-led prototypes; small bets, quick learning, transparent sharing.

SCHOOL (Leaders/Teams)

- **Scenario Sprints:** Monthly 60-minute rehearsals of “what if” disruptions (tech outage, heat wave, sudden enrollment shifts), with reflective debriefs.
- **Care Architecture:** Timetabled well-being blocks, peer coaching triads, and student co-design councils that make *belonging measurable*.
- **Ethical Tech Council:** Students + teachers + parents vet tools for equity, data use, and cultural relevance.

CLASSROOM (Teachers/Students)

- **Inquiry > Recall:** Replace “find the answer” with **messy, real-world prompts**; assess *framing, iteration, and reflection*, not just final products.
- **Learning Journals (AQ Logs):** Students document pivots, feedback used, and mindset shifts; teachers give micro-feedback on **how** learners adapt.
- **Co-Assessment:** Students co-create rubrics that include **resilience, collaboration, and ethical reasoning**.

AQ Mini-Index

Use as a **self-check** (1–5 scale) at system, school, or classroom level:

- **AQ-R (Reframe):** We re-describe the challenge from multiple lenses before acting.
- **AQ-P (Pivot):** We can change course mid-stream without stigma or delay.
- **AQ-L (Learning Velocity):** We capture evidence, learn, and iterate **within weeks**.
- **AQ-N (Networked Response):** We co-solve with students, families, and community partners.
- **AQ-E (Ethical Guardrails):** We test decisions for equity, dignity, and unintended harm.

20-Year Adaptive Empathy Roadmap (global framing)

- **2025–2030 | Foundation:** Universal **well-being standards**, AI/ethics literacy for all staff, offline-first digital equity, PLCs retooled into **innovation labs**.
- **2030–2037 | Scale:** Credential **AQ competencies** in teacher preparation and leader licensure; embed **scenario sprints** and AQ Logs in every school; public dashboards include **belonging** and **adaptability** indicators.
- **2037–2045 | Systems Shift:** Funding models reward **measured adaptability** and equity impact; student co-governance formalized; policy cycles run on evidence from **live pilots** rather than static plans.

Bottom line is that Adaptive empathy + AQ is how we make change deeply human and measurably effective—so every learner, educator, and community can adapt with dignity and advance with purpose.

Questions for Continued Discussion from our Third Panel:

- If you were in charge, what do we plug and play to get this transformation started?
 - I'd keep the first 30 days simple and humane. Every morning, each school runs a 10-minute "pulse"—what's working, what's stuck, what we'll pivot today. Once a week we rehearse a disruption (LMS outage, heat day, sudden staff absence), capture what helped, and turn it into a one-page protocol by day's end. We timetable belonging—class circles and staff check-ins—because adaptability collapses without psychological safety. And we publish two pages of ethical AI guardrails (human-in-the-loop, bias spot checks, offline options) so tech serves dignity. None of this needs new money—just leadership that values small, visible pivots. That's AQ in practice.
- Why do we prioritizing the specific things that we do in schools today? Is it safe to question those priorities? What are our priorities to facilitate the transformation of education?
- How are we getting support to make shifts and imagine new ways forward? Can we do the work from where we stand? Do we need to move to new or different situations?
- Problem solving tends to go better when there is a need and uncertainty and everyone works together rather than receiving a directive top-down. What is your current experience in this age of disruption where you currently work? Are the best voices and ideas rising to the surface?
- Teachers need to see themselves as resources. How do you take control of your own educator narrative so that colleagues and stakeholders see you as part of the solution?
 - We stop hiding the change work. Once a month, every teacher shares a short "change note": the challenge they reframed, the pivot they tried, and what shifted for learners (with a student

sample). Once a term, we open classrooms like studios. Families, colleagues, and partners watch learning live; students explain choices; teachers narrate their pivots. Appraisal focuses on *measured adaptation* (“show two practices you improved and the impact”), not performance theater. In my experience overseeing 500+ schools, this combination of evidence + voice flips the story quickly: teachers are seen—and see themselves—as architects of learning, not delivery machines.

- Sometimes going down to the bare bones is what is needed to see what's really important. How can you respond to disruption to break through institutional barriers and make changes in schooling that are truly best for children and the future society they will inherit?
 - I'd zero-base the school day into three big blocks—deep projects in the morning, literacy/numeracy studios at midday, community/arts/PE in the afternoon—fewer bells, more thinking. I am not sure how schools operate around the globe but keeping in mind my context I suggest this. Progress is by mastery, not minutes; micro-credentials replace “did my time.” A student council has real power to flag exclusion and veto irrelevant busywork. And we watch five dials weekly: how fast we reframe, how quickly we do , how fast evidence changes practice, how well we co-solve with families, and who benefits (or doesn't). If an activity doesn't move those dials, we redesign it or retire it. That's adaptive empathy: care at speed, with accountability. I know it sound cliché but really empathy and AQ has to be the center of gravity.

Community Buy-In and Leadership

One of the biggest challenges and opportunities we have is enlisting the support of community stakeholders in pursuing a new way forward for public education. The difficulty can be in resetting expectations, since everyone's frame of reference is their own school experience as a child. The reality is that we need to imagine a new education experience for children preparing to participate in a very different world as adults, so having these conversations with everyone in the community to bring thinking along and coalesce around a new model of what schools and classrooms look like is important.

Because adults' perspectives on schooling are often deeply rooted in their own experiences and memories of education, it can be difficult for them to fully grasp the changes and advancements in contemporary educational approaches. There's a tendency to romanticize or feel nostalgic about traditional education methods that can create resistance to adopting newer pedagogical approaches that emphasize critical thinking and problem-solving over rote learning of knowledge. Media portrayals and broader societal narratives can also influence perceptions of education, potentially reinforcing stereotypes or creating a disconnect between reality and how adults envision school life. However, it's crucial for all adult stakeholders to be open and receptive to ensuring that that public education mirrors the society it serves, preparing its children to acclimate to its quickly-changing nature as adults.

We can encourage a more nuanced understanding of today's educational landscape and foster greater support for its need to evolve by creating spaces for open discussion in the community, showcasing success stories that demonstrate how new approaches to student learning prepare children for future success, and involving teachers and community members working together on the design, implementation and operation of schools.

Community-Created Agreement

These same conversations need to first take place among ourselves as educators so that we espouse what [KnowledgeWorks](#) describes as “a community-created, common agreement about the preferred future that a learning community commits to realizing through its change efforts” to families, business owners, taxpayers, elected officials, and everyone in the community so that we can build consensus for a transformational model of public education that best serves children and the future of the community, providing the skills, understandings and experiences students will need to successfully contribute to the information age economy.

It's important for educators to come to agreement on a common vision for education because it provides a clear roadmap to which everyone can respond. providing a common understanding of what educational success looks like for students and how to work collaboratively towards achieving it. Without this shared vision, different segments of a faculty and a community frame their own expectations and pursue objectives to achieve those expectations, and can come in direct conflict with the aspirations of other community stakeholders. With one common vision, educators can align roles, resources, curriculum, and outcomes for the greater good.

When educators create a unified vision, it fosters a sense of shared ownership and commitment that leads to increased buy-in and a greater likelihood of successful implementation and long-term sustainability throughout the community. This reinforces everyone's sense of belonging and collective responsibility for embracing opportunities and challenges that help schools remain relevant and vibrant even in changing times. This shared vision also serves as a guide for decision-making after initial buy-in is achieved and everyone plays a part in moving forward together, as a "north star" that guides the entire community, fostering collaboration, driving improvement, and ultimately leading to better outcomes for everyone.

The Most Powerful People in the World

Teachers are the most powerful people in the world; By centering our focus on the humanity of the people right in front of us, we can transform education. This power comes from our profound and multifaceted impact on individual students, their families, and society as a whole through:

Shaping future generations

- equipping students with foundational understandings, critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, which are essential for success beyond the classroom.
- personifying curiosity and a love of learning that inspires students to pursue their passion, advocate for their needs, and explore their interests.

- fostering students' social and emotional development by modeling essential values and social skills like empathy, collaboration and conflict resolution.
- building confidence and resilience in safe learning environments that nurture their self-concept so that they can persevere through challenges and reach their full potential.

Driving societal progress

- promoting civic engagement and social responsibility so that students grow to be engaged citizens who advocate for social justice and equality.
- developing a skilled and adaptable workforce that contributes to national prosperity that leads to a better quality of life for everyone.
- impacting long-term outcomes that provide an elevated quality of life beyond school careers, providing for a lifetime of success and satisfaction.

Serving as mentors and role models

- guiding students through academic and personal challenges, helping them set goals, pursue their aspirations, and practice resilience throughout their journey.
- creating a positive and supportive, safe and inclusive spaces where students feel valued, respected, and empowered to learn and grow.
- impacting growth beyond academics, shaping students' values, character, and overall well-being in ways that last a lifetime.

We possess the power to shape individual lives and influence the trajectory of society by educating, inspiring, and mentoring the children in our charge, and it starts with putting their humanity first and foremost in everything we do. In doing so, we increase our reach and influence by building a broad, inclusive movement can mobilize more people, resources, and networks, amplifying our voice with policymakers and decisionmakers. By being inviting and inclusive, we assemble a diversity of backgrounds and experiences that leads to more innovative solutions and effective strategies for success and is more representative and legitimate in its representation of all segments of the community.

Building solidarity and resilience is critical for the long haul of transforming education. A sense of shared identity and purpose creates stronger bonds of solidarity and mutual support across the diversity of the population. Ultimately, this allows everyone to have a stake in achieving a more just and equitable society, including marginalized voices and perspectives, to help identify policies and solutions that genuinely address the needs of everyone.

Reclaiming the Narrative

In short, we begin a movement, bringing everyone along with us, reclaiming the narrative about our profession. This movement serves as a response to negative perceptions and stereotypes about teaching, replacing them with authentic stories and experiences of working in alignment with the community moving forward. Reclaiming the narrative highlights the rewarding and impactful aspects of teaching, making it a more attractive career choice for future educators and boosting morale to retain current staff, asserting our professional identity and integrity. We celebrate why we became teachers and leaders in education in the first place.

Reclaiming the narrative provides an opportunity to build trust and strengthen the relationship between schools, parents, and the broader community. By openly sharing our experiences and challenges, we can help address concerns and navigate controversial topics, fostering better understanding and support. This kind of authentic storytelling can bridge the gap between perceptions and reality, revealing the dedication and hard work involved in educating students.

Narrative inquiry and counter-storytelling also highlights the challenges faced by students from marginalized communities, informing policy and practice around issues such as equity, diversity, and inclusion, challenging the status quo, advocating for changes that improve the experience for everyone from wherever they sit in the community.

The image of teachers as superheroes, while seemingly well-intentioned, is harmful to our efforts to transform education. The superhero image suggests teachers should be able to overcome all obstacles, save all students, and work tirelessly without rest, resulting in excessive workloads, a lack of boundaries, and a sense of failure when these impossible ideals aren't met. It's emotionally and physically draining, leading to chronic stress, compassion fatigue, and burnout working excessive hours, taking on extra responsibilities, and ignoring our own needs, negatively impacting our well-being and job satisfaction.

The superhero image creates a climate where teachers may be put in the position where it's difficult to admit weakness and ask for help, as it might undermine their perceived capabilities. This leads to isolation and further exacerbates the potential for burnout. Besides, attributing responsibility solely to teachers to address everyday issues in education detracts from the need to address larger systemic issues, such as inadequate funding, staff shortages, and challenging working conditions. It's more beneficial to acknowledge the humanity of teachers and support us in ways that promote our growth and well-being, creating a more honest and productive conversation about the challenges and rewards of the profession that leads to a healthier and more sustainable school community for everyone.

Competing visions and agendas among education camps are another counterproductive dynamic historically plaguing progress in public education. Educators working together to plan, develop, and evaluate this new model for public education is the only way this will work. We need to agree on the way forward before we can paint a picture of the future, or we are part of the problem. Reflecting on our roles and the impact of our practices on student outcomes is a must, and soliciting input from stakeholders needs to inform this. Actively listening to and valuing diverse perspectives helps build a sense of community and mutual respect.

Alignment of Aspirations

Articulating future-facing aspirations and refining a shared vision in the context of the evolving society we serve is an important component of this communal alignment. Everyone experiencing and envisioning the future possibilities is crucial for widespread support and ownership for the new model. Developing a Portrait of a Learner is a good example of how this kind of alignment is taking place at the state level across the country. Also, the efforts to confront and challenge racism and discrimination within schools, implementing culturally responsive teaching practices and materials demonstrates how communities are coming together to fulfill the promise of a free and appropriate education for all citizens.

We also need to confront the lip service given to “student-centered learning” while the actual classroom practices continue to be what is comfortable for the adults in the conversation. This perpetuates our biases based in our past experiences, while hindering students from embracing the possibilities for their future. Moving away from the teacher-centered classroom requires a significant shift in our roles and responsibilities. Traditional approaches are familiar and less demanding in terms of classroom management and individual student attention, but they are no longer appropriate in preparing students for a more interactive, quickly-changing world in which they will live. Learning new approaches of personalized learning, active facilitation and coaching promotes student agency and choice, and is necessary in order for public education to remain relevant. Establishing routines for group activities, individualized support, and continuous monitoring of student needs requires a significant shift and investment from educators but it allows us to prioritize the diverse needs and active engagement of students in their learning journey. This proactive and adaptive approach moves beyond simply what feels comfortable and convenient.

Moving from being a gatekeeper of knowledge to a facilitator of information and opportunities requires a fundamental shift in our mindset and practices. The new teacher role must be to guide students to explore topics and discover knowledge independently, fostering a learning environment where each child is actively engaged in

discussions, collaboration, and project-based work. This honors how students learn differently by no longer inserting ourselves between them and their learning, providing a variety of activities and resources that cater to multiple paths to success. Encouraging students to ask questions, investigate their interests, and embrace the uncertainty of the learning process is a transformational approach to pedagogy.

We must create safe and inclusive spaces where students feel comfortable taking risks, making mistakes, and sharing their ideas without fear of judgment, and equip students with the tools, materials, and guidance they need to succeed, expanding their learning environment to include external resources and real-world experiences. This is where the teacher as coach comes into play, listening to student input, providing feedback, encouraging reflection and modeling a growth mindset. Digital tools and platforms aid in this diversification of our roles and personalization of their experience, providing diverse resources, enhancing learning experiences, and fostering greater collaboration. For ourselves, regularly assessing our effectiveness and modifying our practices to best meet the needs of students helps ensure continued calibration with the futuring of teaching and learning. The ultimate goal is to equip students with the skills and confidence to navigate the complexities of the 21st century and thrive in an ever-changing world.

To effectively acquire and internalize new thinking and practices, we may realize we need to unlearn those established methods that stand in of reaching our full potential. This can involve challenging assumptions, seeing new perspectives, and actively replacing old understandings with new ones. It's a conscious process of letting go of what no longer serves us and our students to make space for new ways of being viable and impactful in our work. We start by examining what we think we know and testing those beliefs to determine if they are still valid. Once we identify opportunities where we can think and do things differently, we can explore new ways of serving our stakeholders with an open-mindedness to learn and adapt.

Deliberately practicing new thinking and methods to replace the old ones helps them to become more routine until they become habit. As we put newly acquired understanding into action to solidify it, we can seek input on our progress and adjust our approach as needed. Unlearning and relearning can be challenging, and mistakes are part of the process, but in a rapidly changing world, it is essential for staying relevant and effective. It sparks creativity and innovation, encouraging us to question the status quo and explore new possibilities.

Transforming Relationships

Recently, society has become desensitized, and going backwards in the representation of all peoples in our communities is being normalized. In order to effectively lead this call for transformation, we must pay attention to the relationships in the different systems in which we live and work in our community. Transforming systems happens when we transform relationships. Systems are not just structures or policies. They are fundamentally built upon and influenced by the relationships among the people within. These relationships are the connective tissue that determines how resources flow, perspectives are shared, learning occurs, and new approaches are scaled. High-quality relationships enable people to collaborate and coordinate effectively, leading to better outcomes in complex systems. There are endless examples of how cultivating diverse relationships – bridging connections between different groups within a community or organization – can disrupt silos and create the necessary conditions for innovation and transformation.

Transforming relationships often necessitates individuals undergoing inner work, such as examining biases, letting go of the need for control, and developing a deeper understanding of themselves and others. This personal transformation, in turn, can shift the collective, leading to new insights, opportunities, and the potential for broader systemic transformation. Deepening relationships and fostering mutual respect and empathy can challenge and transform existing power imbalances within systems. When people with lived experience are brought into the decision-making process, particularly those traditionally marginalized, it can shift power dynamics and lead to more authentic, community-led solutions.

Strong relationships can create a fertile ground for "emergence," where new possibilities and solutions arise from the collaborative interactions of diverse individuals. Instead of top-down mandates, relationships can foster co-creation, where solutions are collaboratively designed and adapted to better fit the complex realities of the system. This involves moving beyond inclusion to genuine community ownership and leadership. Pay attention to the power dynamics and who's invited to sit at the decisionmaking table. Also, pay attention to the mental models that frame our unconscious beliefs that shape our understanding of the world. By becoming aware of these models, we can improve our thinking, relationships, decision-making, and interactions. Recognize the circular loops that reinforce erroneous thinking, identify where your thinking breaks down and no longer holds true, and generate alternative ways of looking at ways forward, considering both immediate and long-term consequences. In this way, we become more effective leaders and better partners in our personal and professional relationships.

Transformation is, by definition, a liberating force that involves a deep, authentic shift in individual and communal values, beliefs, and ways of doing things. It goes beyond merely checking off boxes, which focuses on superficial actions and appearances

without a genuine underlying shift in mindset or values. Veteran educators are all too familiar with initiatives that require us to jump through hoops and sign off on the completion of requirements for training and advancement without addressing the underlying issues that cause the issues being targeted. The emphasis is on demonstrating progress or compliance to others, rather than truly achieving meaningful and lasting impact. This long held approach fails to engage with the critical reflection and challenging of assumptions necessary for true transformation.

It is time to engage in the challenging work of deep-rooted change, embracing vulnerability, and ultimately create a more authentic, fulfilling, and impactful model of public education. This involves fundamental shifts in beliefs, perspectives, and behaviors as leaders, triggered by the current era of disruption forcing us to question our deeply held assumptions and embrace new ways of understanding the work. It's about shedding old patterns and limitations, embracing our true selves, and aligning our leadership actions with deeply held community convictions and a sense of shared purpose. It requires us to take ownership of our choices and actions, rather than reacting to superficial symptoms, and leading a reshaping of education culture to achieve long-term, sustainable, positive changes that address the root causes of issues of the industrial age model.

Addressing Trauma

Education touches everyone in the community, which can present challenges since not everyone's schooling experience was positive. In order to lead forward, educators must be resilient enough to let everyone unpack their trauma. This may not be the work we originally signed up for, but it is the work at hand if we sincerely want to morph public education into a more responsive, relevant institution preparing children for a much different future than the present. To accomplish this, we must implement a multifaceted approach centered on trauma-informed practices and healing-centered engagement, receiving training on the basics of trauma, including [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#) and their potential effects on learning, behavior, and relationships. We need to be equipped to identify potential trauma responses, understanding they may manifest in diverse ways across different students and age groups, and avoid judgment so we can recognize when challenging behaviors stem from past trauma.

First and foremost, we need to come to terms with the reality that traditional practices in schools can cause harm to students, depending on their past trauma and emotional needs. While we strive to foster a positive learning environment, various behaviors and practices can cause unintentional or deliberate harm to students, including public shaming, minimizing or denying past experience, and the use of sarcasm in interaction. These things lead to lasting psychological and emotional damage, impacting self-

esteem, confidence, and overall well-being. In the same way, failing to provide necessary accommodations for students with disabilities, ignoring requests for help, or not creating an inclusive learning environment can add to a student's struggle and hinder their healing and growth.

Preconceived notions based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, or appearance can lead to unfair treatment, lower expectations, and unequal opportunities, negatively affecting a student's self-perception, academic performance, and future aspirations. Showing preference to certain students over others also leads to resentment, feelings of inadequacy, and reduced motivation to try and achieve. Discriminatory comments, unjustified criticism, lack of support, and allowing bullying to persist unchecked all create a hostile environment that hinders a child's ability to focus, participate, learn and grow. Even basic ineffectiveness in competencies like communication and classroom management can negatively impact student motivation, academic performance, and overall interest in learning. Schools have a responsibility to implement policies, provide training, and foster a culture of accountability to mitigate the risk of harm to students. We must recenter the school experience to acknowledge that so many of our stakeholders are fighting for survival every day.

To create the conditions for unpacking and healing from trauma, actively listening, showing empathy, being honest and reliable, and empowering students are crucial for establishing trusting relationships where everyone feels comfortable to express themselves. We need to be adaptable and meet students where they are, acknowledging others' feelings and providing space and time for them to respond without demanding extensive answers or dwelling on potentially re-traumatizing details. And it doesn't all fall on our shoulders. It is also important to facilitate opportunities for people to connect with each other, share experiences, and build a supportive community of their own. Rose Chu emphasizes that healing takes place in intergenerational (across age groups), intercultural (across ethnic backgrounds) and interfunctional (across job roles) contexts that builds understanding and common purpose. It forms microcommunities of authentic learning with real world connections that create strong bonds and expanded capacity.

As leaders we need to prioritize staff wellness and provide resources for educators to manage their trauma and burnout, through professional development and resources that support self-care and mindfulness. Educators also need to feel comfortable sharing experiences, debriefing, and seeking support from colleagues and mental health professionals.

Educators should work to engage parents and caregivers in understanding and applying trauma-informed practices at home. Building partnerships with local agencies and organizations can enhance student and family support and build a more holistic model of

support. School counselors and other mental health professionals can provide specialized support to students and families impacted by trauma, beyond school-based resources. By systematically integrating these trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches, educators create the conditions for the elevation of the profession and the transformation of the institution.

Addressing all of these existing practices and circumstances as prerequisites for leading education transformation, there are five steps in building community buy-in:

Bring people together

Bringing a community together to solve problems and create new systems requires a multi-faceted approach centered around collaboration, empowerment, and building on existing strengths using an [Asset-based community development \(ABCD\)](#) approach, which utilizes these strategies:

- Focus on strengths: Identify and leverage the existing assets within the community (e.g., individual skills, local organizations, businesses, institutions) rather than solely focusing on problems or needs.
- Empowerment through co-production: Recognize and reinforce community members' existing gifts, ideas, and decisions, positioning them as active participants and co-producers of solutions, not just recipients of services.
- Relationship building: Focus on building and strengthening relationships between individuals, community organizations, and institutions within the community to foster connections and collaboration.
- Asset mapping and mobilization: Make an inventory of available assets, build relationships between them, and mobilize community members to act on shared interests, potentially through a core group developing a shared vision and plan.

Involve members from across the community in participatory planning:

- Engage stakeholders at all levels: Involve community members, local organizations, government agencies, and other relevant stakeholders throughout the entire planning process.
- Promote inclusivity: Actively seek out and include marginalized and underrepresented groups to ensure diverse voices are heard and considered.

- Transparency and trust: Maintain an open and transparent planning process, sharing information and goals with the community to build trust and legitimacy.
- Utilize varied methods: Employ a mix of approaches like community meetings, workshops, surveys, focus groups, participatory mapping, storytelling, design charrettes, and online platforms to gather input and facilitate participation.

Build a collective impact framework:

- Common agenda: Establish a shared vision for change with a common understanding of the problem and agreement on primary goals.
- Shared measurement systems: Develop consistent measures and indicators to track progress and hold participants accountable.
- Mutually reinforcing activities: Encourage each participant to contribute their specific expertise and actions in a coordinated and supportive manner aligned with the overall plan.
- Continuous communication: Foster a culture of ongoing dialogue and collaboration through regular meetings and communication channels.
- Backbone organization: Establish a dedicated team to guide and support the collective impact initiative.

Organize and mobilize the community:

- Identify allies: Connect with natural, unexpected, and tangential allies to build trust and rapport.
- Educate and inspire: Raise awareness about the issue, educate the community through various channels (forums, media, social media, etc.), and choose spokespeople who resonate with the audience.
- Provide leadership opportunities: Identify potential leaders within the community, offer training and resources, and create clear pathways for them to assume roles in the change process.
- Generate action: Translate strategies into tangible actions, whether it's through rallies, lawmaker engagement, or media outreach.

Use technology where it can expand your capacity:

- **Leverage digital platforms:** Utilize project management software, cloud sharing services, social media, virtual meeting tools, and online forums to facilitate communication, information sharing, and real-time collaboration.
- **Enhance accessibility:** Supplement in-person meetings with virtual options (videoconferencing, webinars, phone calls, etc.) to address potential barriers to participation like travel costs, limited internet access, or childcare issues.
- **Ensure comfort and training:** Provide training and support to community members on how to use chosen technologies effectively, minimizing resistance and maximizing adoption.

By combining these strategies, communities can harness their collective power to address challenges, develop innovative solutions, and create sustainable systems that improve the quality of life for everyone through education transformed.

Share Human Interest Stories

Sharing human interest stories within a community can be a powerful way to foster connection, understanding, and empathy, and to inspire action. Consider these steps for success:

Define your strategy

- **Clarify Goals and Audience:** Determine the purpose of sharing these stories (e.g., build connection, raise awareness, inspire volunteers) and identify the target audience.
- **Establish a Consistent Approach:** Decide on the frequency of sharing, the channels to utilize, the desired tone and style, and the types of photos and visuals that align with your community.
- **Emphasize Authenticity and Relatability:** Focus on genuine, human-centered narratives that resonate with the audience's values and experiences, building trust and fostering a sense of togetherness.
- **Adhere to Ethical Guidelines:** Always obtain informed consent before sharing stories, respect the privacy and dignity of individuals, be transparent, and avoid

stereotypes and misrepresentation.

Select the right venues and formats

- **Go Personal:** Make use of one-on-one meetings, public gatherings, and even community events to connect with different segments and sizes of the community.
- **Leverage Diverse Platforms:** Employ various channels including in-person sharing, blogs, social media, newsletters, videos, podcasts, and even in-school digital displays to reach a wide audience.
- **Adapt to Each Platform:** Tailor the format and length of the story to suit the specific channel (e.g., short, visually rich posts for social media vs. longer narratives for blog posts).
- **Embrace Visuals:** Utilize photos, videos, and infographics to enhance engagement, convey complex information quickly, and leave a lasting impression.

Engage the audience

- **Invite Participation:** Encourage community members to share their stories, testimonials, and feedback through surveys, comments, contests, and user-generated content campaigns.
- **Foster Dialogue:** Create opportunities for interaction and discussion through in-person events, online forums, Q&A sessions, and live chats.
- **Acknowledge and Respond:** Show appreciation for audience participation and feedback, responding respectfully and in a timely manner.
- **Incentivize participation:** Consider offering incentives or rewards for sharing stories and participating in campaigns.

Measure and adapt

- **Set Measurable Objectives:** Define clear goals and indicators to track the effectiveness of the storytelling efforts.
- **Analyze Data and Feedback:** Collect and analyze data and gather qualitative feedback through surveys, interviews and focus groups to identify what

resonates.

- **Iterate and Refine:** Based on your findings, make adjustments and continue sharing stories to build connections across your community.

By thoughtfully implementing these strategies, communities can harness the power of human interest to build stronger relationships, inspire action, and create positive change.

Make the Case with Street Data

Street data refers to qualitative information intentionally gathered from the lived experiences and perspectives of those directly impacted by a particular issue or system. It's about capturing the stories, observations, and narratives that traditional data collection methods often miss.

Intentional collection and grounding

- **Focus on the margins:** Prioritize gathering data from individuals and communities who have been marginalized or whose voices are typically excluded from decision-making processes.
- **Employ diverse methods:** Utilize a variety of qualitative methods such as:
 - Audio-recorded focus groups and interviews.
 - Ethnographies of groups or subcultures.
 - Shadowing individuals (e.g., a student through their day).
 - Listening campaigns, capturing anonymous quotes and themes from interviews.
 - Equity participation trackers within specific settings (e.g., measuring student participation in classrooms).
 - Home visits to families.
 - Structured observations of meetings or community interactions.
 - Student-led community walks.
- **Define "Look Fors":** Before collection, clarify what constitutes effective practice in alignment with your goals. This helps in pinpointing what to observe, listen for, and gather as evidence.
- **Center on lived experiences:** Ensure the data collection reveals specific misconceptions, mindsets, and the real-world experiences of the target group.

- Establish a strong data infrastructure: Build community-led data collection methods and collaborate with stakeholders to ensure equitable data governance and use.

Present a compelling case

- Visualize the data smartly: Translate qualitative data into impactful visuals like:
 - Placement maps, showing location-based patterns (e.g., where students sit in a classroom and their participation levels).
 - Timeline Ticks, illustrating frequency or timing of experiences.
 - Sliders, representing the extent to which something is true.
 - Charts, infographics, and word clouds to highlight themes and insights.
- Summarize key insights: Clearly articulate the most striking themes, trends, and takeaways in a simple, digestible manner.
- Provide real examples and narratives: Incorporate representative quotes, stories, and case studies to give context and illustrate the human element behind the data.
- Organize logically: Structure your findings systematically (e.g., summary, key themes, supporting data, conclusions) to guide understanding.
- Make it action-oriented: Clearly connect insights to overarching objectives and propose specific, actionable steps based on the findings.

Create engagement

- Weave narratives: Create compelling stories around your data to engage stakeholders on an emotional level and foster deeper understanding.
- Consider interactive techniques: When sharing findings, use engaging methods beyond traditional presentations. This could include interactive exercises, Q&A sessions, or discussions based on the collected data to encourage active participation and reflection. A "Data Walk", as outlined by the [Urban Institute](https://www.urbaninstitute.org/), is an excellent example of an interactive engagement technique.
- Collaborate on analysis and interpretation: Involve community members and stakeholders in the process of understanding and interpreting the data, identifying themes, and exploring potential solutions. This collaborative approach builds trust and ensures that actions are grounded in lived realities.

- **Transparency and mutual benefit:** Be clear about the purpose of data collection, what's expected of stakeholders, and how their input will be used to achieve shared goals.

Address challenges and promote continuous action

- **Recognize potential biases:** Ensure the team collecting and analyzing the data is aware of potential biases and engages in critical self-reflection, especially when dealing with issues related to equity.
- **Create a culture of self-care:** Acknowledge the potential for burnout in intensive qualitative research and establish strategies for stress management and team well-being.
- **Focus on long-term value:** Ensure that the insights gathered from street data contribute to sustainable, impactful actions that address the root causes of issues and create lasting change.
- **Make learning public:** Share the findings and the resulting actions with the broader community and stakeholders to foster ongoing engagement and accountability.

By intentionally collecting, presenting, and engaging stakeholders with qualitative street data in a compelling and collaborative way, you can move beyond simply informing to actively prompting action for positive change.

Identify Trends that Inform a Pathway to Consensus

Shared stories, particularly their underlying trends and themes, can offer a powerful pathway to achieving consensus, especially when dealing with complex or emotionally charged issues. Let the storytelling and sharing of lived experiences guide you:

Uncover shared values and beliefs

- **Emotional Connection:** Stories connect with people on an emotional level, revealing their hopes, fears, values, and beliefs in a way that dry facts and arguments often fail to do.
- **Common Ground:** By analyzing trends in shared narratives, we can identify recurring themes, ideals, and experiences that resonate across different

individuals and groups.

- Common Uniting Story: As suggested by research, identifying and building upon a unifying story, while also valuing individual experiences, can be crucial in building bridges across a polarized community.

Frame issues and build a narrative

- Setting the Stage: Understanding the dominant narratives and how they frame a particular issue is vital. This involves identifying the underlying assumptions, perspectives, and emotional triggers associated with those stories.
- Challenging Opposing Narratives: By analyzing trends in opposing stories, you can strategically reframe the issue to emphasize shared values or goals, potentially reducing resistance and fostering a more open dialogue.
- Creating a New Narrative: Trends in desired outcomes or solutions can inform the development of new, compelling narratives that highlight a path forward that aligns with the broader aspirations of the group.

Promote empathy and understanding

- Filling in Gaps: Stories can help individuals step into the shoes of others, understanding different perspectives and experiences that might be driving their positions.
- Sensemaking and Shared Reality: In times of uncertainty, shared stories facilitate collective sensemaking, helping people interpret events and understand how they fit into a larger context.
- Building Trust: When individuals feel their stories are heard and respected, it fosters trust and open communication, which are crucial for constructive dialogue and ultimately, consensus.

Call for collective action

- Shared Vision: Trends in stories can reveal the collective desire for a particular future or solution. This shared vision can motivate individuals and groups to collaborate and work towards a common goal.
- Empowering Collaboration: [Co-creation workshops](#), where individuals contribute their stories and perspectives, can empower citizens and lead to a more inclusive

and representative understanding of shared history and possible solutions.

- **Adaptive Management:** Understanding how narratives shift and evolve over time can inform an adaptive approach, where solutions are evaluated and adjusted based on emerging trends and feedback.

Paying close attention to the stories people share helps us move beyond surface-level disagreements and delve into the deeper values and emotions that drive individual and collective behavior. Analyzing trends in these narratives allows us to create a path forward that not only addresses the immediate issue but also fosters understanding, builds trust, and ultimately leads to a more lasting and meaningful consensus.

Factor in the Humanity of Public Education

Honoring the humanity of students and stakeholders profoundly shapes how we lead and serve as educators. Instead of viewing them as mere inputs or outputs, engage in meaningful dialogue, involve them in the decision-making process and value their perspectives. This goes beyond simply gathering information; it involves fostering active collaboration and partnership.

Strive to understand not just what stakeholders say, but also the underlying emotions, needs, and concerns driving their actions. Recognize that they have lives outside of school, and that they may face personal challenges impacting their orientation to the work. Pay full attention, paraphrase to confirm understanding, and ask open-ended questions to encourage deeper sharing. Know how to acknowledge feelings and perspectives even when you're not necessarily in agreement to create a safe space for open communication.

Treat stakeholders as individuals with inherent worth by ensuring decisions are fair and transparent, and that practices respect the rights and dignity of all stakeholders. By promoting inclusivity and diversity, we create psychologically safe spaces where everyone feels comfortable sharing their ideas and providing input, strengthening relationships beyond short-term goals. Over time this builds our reputation for reliability and integrity, especially when we acknowledge mistakes and take responsibility for our actions.

Understanding the human dimension allows for the creation of more effective and sustainable solutions. By considering stakeholder journeys, identifying pain points, and seeking diverse perspectives, we can design solutions that truly meet their needs. Honoring the humanity of stakeholders moves us beyond viewing them as mere "resources" or "clients" and instead emphasizes recognizing their multifaceted identities,

needs, and the value of their contributions, leading to a more compassionate, effective, and sustainable model of public education.

How do we keep the community involved, hands-on and actively engaged in the transformation of education past their initial approval for a new approach to teaching and learning? We need to become and remain agile and responsive. With connections made and consensus built, bring the community together to rewrite and inform the curriculum. Cultivate local interest in education as a profession so that you can develop your own educator pipeline and grow your own next generation of educators right in your community.

Everyone needs to see themselves as part of the solution for change to be successful. When we feel involved in the solution-finding process, we are more likely to accept and embrace the changes being implemented. This sense of ownership reduces resistance and fosters a greater commitment to the change initiative, whether it's within an organization, a community, or a broader social movement. This sense of shared ownership encourages everyone to take responsibility for making the change happen, leading to more effective and sustainable implementation. Also, when many individuals contribute to the solution, their combined efforts can create a more powerful and impactful force for change than individual actions alone could achieve. This is particularly crucial for addressing complex issues that require large-scale engagement, like the transformation of education.

The Role of Effective Leadership

A crucial piece of getting community buy-in is effective leadership. Leaders play a vital role in building trust, communicating the vision, fostering collaboration, and empowering community members to take ownership. We must be able to articulate a clear and compelling vision that resonates with the community's needs and aspirations. This vision should be inclusive and address the diverse needs within the community. Trust is foundational, and leaders build it through transparent communication, consistently following through on commitments, and demonstrating genuine concern for the community's well-being. Authenticity in communication and actions is key for establishing credibility and rapport. At the same time active listening and empathy demonstrates respect and understanding.

Rather than dictating, leaders must act as facilitators, guiding the process and empowering community members to take responsibility and lead different tasks within collaborative efforts. By creating opportunities for community members to participate actively in decision-making and project implementation, we foster that sense of ownership and commitment. Leaders also ensure clear, consistent, and frequent

communication about the project's goals, progress, and how it aligns with the community's needs. Since communities are dynamic, leaders need to be adaptable, adjusting strategies based on feedback and changing circumstances, while also acknowledging and learning from challenges on the fly. By embodying these leadership qualities, we can foster an environment of trust, engagement, and shared purpose, ultimately leading to greater community buy-in for the transformation of public education.

Ultimately, the community has to own the movement for it to be successful, ensuring its effectiveness, sustainability, and empowerment. Community members have a deep understanding of their local context, including unique challenges, resources, cultural norms, and historical factors. This knowledge is invaluable for designing solutions that are truly relevant and effective for the specific needs of that community. Engagement ensures a wide range of voices, including marginalized or underrepresented groups, are heard and integrated into decision-making. This leads to more comprehensive solutions and avoids overlooking important considerations. When people are involved in shaping decisions, they are more likely to support and participate in implementing the changes, leading to greater success. This shared sense of responsibility fosters a collaborative environment where people work together towards common goals that reduces resistance to change.

Furthermore, initiatives developed and implemented with local ownership are more likely to be sustained over time because they are driven by the community's priorities and ingrained in its context. As community members become the changemakers, they can continue to implement and maintain the actions needed to improve their conditions. Community-led initiatives strengthen local skills, knowledge, and social networks, empowering communities to manage resources effectively and adapt to challenges independently, fostering trust and cooperation, building social capital that can be leveraged for future work. Finally, community involvement supports adaptive governance, allowing communities to experiment, learn, and adjust their strategies based on experience and evolving circumstances.

Building Local Ownership

Local ownership provides residents with the ability to influence policies and shape their own destinies, leading to a greater sense of agency and empowerment. This fosters self-sufficiency and reduces reliance on external support. Working together on common goals strengthens community bonds and fosters a sense of unity and shared responsibility. By involving marginalized groups and ensuring their needs are addressed, community ownership can promote social justice and more equitable distribution of benefits and resources. For these reasons, community ownership is not

merely a desirable outcome but a fundamental necessity for achieving truly impactful, sustainable, and equitable change that resonates with the needs and aspirations of the people it aims to serve.

The questions to ask are: What can we do together? What can we act on? What can we do to get the future we want? And the resulting transformation needs to be equitable. What does this transformation look like for the superintendent? How does it look for board members? Teachers? Parents? Students? It is one shared vision, but it looks different for different stakeholders. Awareness and ownership of this makes it work for everyone. It's the small things. Take time to check in with everyone. Find out how they are doing. Build relationships. Sawsan Jaber terms this "The Underground Railroad work," meaning it is the small, ongoing, incremental difference we make in the lives of those we serve, often unnoticed in the larger overarching vision of the work, but making the most difference in effecting change.

Consider the [Precious Knowledge](#) documentary as an example of how the Mexican American Studies (MAS) program (a.k.a. "Raza Studies") was a groundbreaking educational initiative within the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) in Arizona. Founded in 1998 from a grassroots community movement aimed at empowering Chicano students who were often marginalized in conventional school studies. It aimed to deepen the understanding of their history, culture, and address the academic needs of the their community in Tucson, encouraging academic achievement and engagement by connecting history with current events and ethnic identity.

The program focused on Mexican American history, literature, and art. Courses included titles like "American Government/Social Justice Education Project" and "American History/Mexican American Perspectives". Students explored themes of social justice, critically analyzing history and literature through a culturally relevant lens. The program used a Xicano paradigm with four key concepts: Tezkatlipoka (self-reflection), Quetzalkoatl (history and identity), Huitzilopochtli (will to act), and Xipe Totek (reshaping oneself). It encouraged community engagement and student activism. At its height, the program enrolled over 1,300 students with 90% identifying as Hispanic, demonstrating improved test scores in reading and writing with 100% of students in the MAS classes at Tucson High graduating and 85% of them going on to college, compared to their peers not enrolled in the program. A study found that

The MAS program faced significant controversy, and in 2010 an Arizona law banned the MAS program by prohibiting courses that "Promote the overthrow of the United States government" or "Promote resentment toward a race or class of people". However, a federal judge eventually ruled that the Arizona law banning ethnic studies was driven by "racial animus" and violated students' First and Fourteenth Amendment rights, paving the way for a return of culturally relevant courses in TUSD. The impact of this program

resonated beyond Arizona, showcasing the positive impact of culturally relevant curricula on student achievement and engagement. The Tucson Unified School District now has a Mexican American Student Services Department to support Mexican American/Latino students. ([Wikipedia](#)) You can view a video clip from the PBS documentary [[VIDEO 19:40](#)] to hear from stakeholders at the time of this movement.

DRAFT

Pre-Service and In-Service Educator Professional Learning

Educator professional learning is shifting from a standardization model to a differentiated, student-centered approach that addresses the diverse needs of modern society. This evolution includes the embracing of new technologies, the honoring of cultural competence, and the implementation of trauma-informed practices in instruction. It moves beyond a focus on academic content to prepare educators to facilitate deeper learning and key competencies; from memorizing facts to fostering skills like critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving through project-based learning that keeps students actively engaged. Teachers' roles are shifting to be guides and mentors rather than just the gatekeeper and dispenser of knowledge.

With increasingly diverse classrooms, educator professional learning focuses more sharply on cultural competence to promote equity and inclusion. Proper training helps educators recognize their own cultural biases and adapt their teaching methods and materials to be culturally responsive, integrating students' unique cultural backgrounds and perspectives into the curriculum, validating their experiences and building trust to form strong, positive relationships.

In the same way, trauma-informed teaching practices help to create safer and more supportive learning environments. Teachers must understand how trauma can affect a student's ability to learn and manage behavior, shifting the focus from "What's wrong with you?" to "What happened to you?" Training emphasizes the importance of establishing consistent routines, clear expectations, and predictable structures to help students feel secure, as educators learn to respond to challenging behavior with compassion rather than punishment.

Educator professional learning must also address the importance of social and emotional growth as key to a student's holistic development. Students are given more voice and choice in their learning to help them build confidence in their decision-making skills, fostering a growth mindset in students that values resilience and effort over innate ability. For both teachers and students, learning to practice self-care is key for adaptivity

and resilience in the fast-paced, quickly-changing world in which we live today. It is only going to morph faster in the future.

Technology is accelerating these shifts, creating more intuitive, interactive and personalized learning experiences for every student. Digital tools and AI platforms help to create customized learning paths that adapt to individual learner needs, interests, orientation and pacing. Learning management systems (LMS) are now modeling blended and flipped learning techniques that empower educators and students alike in their learning.

Key Components

In order for professional learning in pre-service teacher preparation programs and on the job in schools and districts, our profession needs to develop a consistent language for all educators:

- **What is good instruction?**

For the purposes of Roadmap 2030, good instruction is engaging, clear, and relevant learning experiences that build on students' prior knowledge, fostering deep understanding and authentic application of acquired skills. Key components include well-defined learning goals, personalized learning pathways, active student engagement in their learning, opportunities for input, feedback and correction, and multiple ways to demonstrate understanding through real-world uses of the learning that is taking place.

Instruction should establish explicit, understandable learning goals that align with standards and guide both teacher and student actions.

It is learner-centered, taking place in engaging, interactive learning environments where students are actively involved in solving problems and creating solutions.

It must intentionally connect new content to what students already know and can do, making the learning more meaningful and effective.

It incorporates varied methods and materials to accommodate the full diversity of learner needs, interests and orientations to learning, providing multiple pathways to success.

It is activity-based, providing practical opportunities to apply new concepts and practice new skills through student choice of varied activities.

It provides clear, timely, and constructive feedback that reinforces learning and sharpens the appropriate selection and use of skills and strategies in authentic settings.

It honors the unique contexts in students' lives, their local communities, and connections across global learning communities to promote deeper learning.

It benefits from ongoing cycles of improvement by education professionals who continuously reflect on their practice, incorporate student responses to instruction, and make adjustments to evolve as guides, coaches and mentors.

– **What is learner success?**

In education transformed, learner success consists of internal qualities like self-discipline, growth mindset, motivation, and resilience, as well as external behaviors including active participation, task commitment, time management, clear communication, effective decisionmaking and short term and long term goal setting. They are open to feedback, learn from risk taking and outcomes, display resilience through challenges, and take charge of their learning journey.

They see learning as an ongoing process of discovery and learning by trial and error, rather than being factually correct.

They develop a drive to learn out of innate curiosity, an aspiration to grow and improve, and a desire to achieve personal goals.

They manage themselves, remain focused, regulate emotions, and complete tasks through an internal locus of control.

They demonstrate grit and persistence, sticking with difficult tasks, not getting discouraged by setbacks, learning from mistakes, continuing to move forward.

They actively engage in learning tasks, asking questions, pursuing understandings and collaborating with others.

They show a commitment to high-quality work both in the learning process and in demonstrating outcomes.

They manage time, tasks and resources responsibly, setting realistic learning goals and monitoring their progress in achieving them.

They create, advocate for, and work to accomplish a unique personal learning journey aligned with their interests, needs and abilities.

They seek and accept constructive criticism from others to calibrate their perceptions, internalize feedback and optimize their learning journey.

– **What is effective community engagement?**

Effective engagement of education stakeholders in a diverse community involves strong, inclusive, multi-directional communication channels and collaborative partnerships that respect and leverage diverse cultural perspectives. Rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, successful engagement values personalized outreach and culturally sensitive programs that bring all stakeholders to the core of school life, including management and decisionmaking, to inform planning and allocation of resources and create a community-wide commitment to its schools.

It moves beyond the pushing out of information to the creation of ongoing dialogues that involve everyone in informed discussion of schools as a cornerstone of the community.

It leverages community expertise, honoring diverse backgrounds and the cultural capital and experiences that contribute to the rich tapestry of school life.

It utilizes culturally responsive approaches to communication, providing translated materials, interpreters, and advocates to support a school's diverse population.

It maximizes accessibility, accommodating stakeholder busy schedules through flexible scheduling, synchronous digital communication, and asynchronous digital portals.

It makes use of multiple methods for delivering information, using multimedia resources, visual aids, and digital tools to support differing styles of communicating.

It maintains a welcoming environment, creating a sense of belonging, establishing standards of the acceptance of a diversity of culture, beliefs and thought.

It establishes schools as hubs of connection, bringing together students, families and all members of the community around common interests, needs and goals.

It promotes a positive image of the community where everyone feels comfortable engaging in open, respectful discussions, where everyone learns from one another.

It celebrates community history, contributions and traditions, hosting events that showcase its achievements, customs and future.

It amplifies stakeholder voices, welcoming everyone's expertise in managing school policies and programs, creating buy-in from all facets of the community.

It welcomes and makes the most of stakeholder expertise, to foster transparency and build support among community members who do not have school-aged children.

It hires a diverse faculty and staff that reflects the demographic composition of its community, celebrating its unique social and cultural values.

It promotes a collaborative culture with a team dynamic where everyone participates in the life of the school and everyone feels like they are on the same team.

It builds partnerships with community-based organizations, local businesses, and cultural groups to create mutually beneficial relationships.

It proactively solicits input from the community, engaging them as active partners in leading schools into the future.

With common language and understandings in place, higher education institutions of pre-service teacher preparation and in-service educators as a profession can design professional learning that aligns with the world for which we are preparing our students.

Know Who Your Learners Are

In the industrial age where standardization was the ideal, teaching the curriculum was the standard. The entire textbook industry came out of the need to efficiently disseminate information to soldiers in the second world war. The goal was to create a citizenry that acted and thought alike, and were ready to participate in the life of the country. Society was less mobile, and schools were less concerned about anything that did not blend in on their local landscape.

The second half of the last century was characterized by economic, transportation and communications booms that allowed everyone to experience life beyond their own backyards. Our country began to grapple with deeply entrenched stereotypes and forms of discrimination that kept different demographic backgrounds separate. As mobility increased, so did our awareness of human diversity. Today, the metaphor of America as a melting pot is more aptly represented by that of a salad bowl or an intricate mosaic capturing the light through its varying shapes and colors.

As a result, the demographic distribution of the United States has become increasingly racially and ethnically diverse, with the Hispanic/Latino population experiencing the largest growth and becoming the largest minority group. As of the 2020 census, the White alone, non-Hispanic population was the largest single group but saw a decrease in its share of the population, while the Multiracial population grew significantly, with the Asian American population the fastest-growing racial group and a notable rise in the Multiracial population:

White (Non-Hispanic): 60-61%
Hispanic or Latino: 18-19%
Black or African American: 12-13%
Asian: 5-6%
Multiracial: 2-3%
American Indian/Alaska Native: 1%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: 1%

Immigrants and their descendants are expected to drive future population gains, with a large portion of immigrants coming from Latin America and Asia.

Likewise, the U.S. age distribution shows a median age of 39 years old as of 2024. We are becoming an aging population, with a growing proportion of older adults and fewer children compared to past decades, leading to a more balanced, rectangular population pyramid shape.

0-14 Years: 17% of the population.
15-64 Years: 65% of the population.
65 and Over: 18% of the population

The proportion of people 65 and over growing rapidly, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, with fewer children under age 5, contributing to a narrower base in the population pyramid.

Because families are having fewer children, they are able to provide more material advantages and early life experiences to each child, including travel, technology, and

participation in multiple sports, clubs and classes. More and more, children are becoming full-fledged digital natives using technology in daily life for communication, education, entertainment, and social interaction, often displaying a natural fluency with devices and online platforms from a young age.

Through digital platforms, children can voice their opinions, take action on issues they care about, and work to create positive change in their communities and the world. They expect and take part in opportunities for creativity, learning and group discussions, breaking down the barriers of traditional learning environments. Generation Alpha (born from 2010 to 2025) plays and learns through highly integrated, interactive, and tech-driven approaches. Their experiences are shaped by ubiquitous screens, global connectedness, and a preference for visual, personalized, and hands-on methods of engagement. They use devices like tablets and smartphones for learning from a very early age, including educational games and apps that make learning interactive and engaging. AI-powered learning apps, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) are integrated into their earliest learning experiences, creating personalized and immersive experiences.

For all these reasons, today's students are more likely to engage with learning that is meaningful and applicable to their personal lives. Instead of rote memorization, they want to understand how a topic connects to their worldview, often questioning why they are learning what is being presented. They value collaborative, group-based activities and the freedom of independent work, using digital tools and platforms to work together virtually. They thrive when given choices in their learning. They also benefit from place-based learning, using the local history, culture, and environment to create hands-on, child-led, and community-oriented projects.

A key driver in their play is the desire to build and create. This involves mastering challenges, customizing characters and worlds, and experiencing a sense of ownership over what they create. In addition, children today also consume a large amount of video content, watching and learning from others to get ideas, learn new skills, and share their own talents and artifacts with a global audience. In short, children come to school today full of learning and experiences well beyond past generations. They have their own personal brands, and they are digital consumers and creators in their own right, belonging to large, connected networks of likeminded digital creators of their own generation.

With all of this data in hand, we make the case that the future of education shifts from teaching curriculum to teaching children as unique learners who need and expect personalization of content and experiences to meet their individual learning needs. As a result, teachers need to acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions that equip them to:

- Create and design learning that helps children as individuals, based on their unique learner profiles, personal learner mission statements, interest inventories, and other strategies and tools that customize the experience and empower each child to take charge of their own learning path forward.
- Provide learning based on competencies with real-world applications of skills and concepts, opportunities for problem-solving and solutions-development, and authentic ways of demonstrating new understandings and mastery with teachers and community experts serving as guides, coaches and mentors.
- Build schooling around goals and realities that meet the world children are going to inherit as adults. Align learning with the kinds of competencies that democratic societies, employers and global communities are embracing, given the expanding influence of iterative and agentic AI for completing rote and routine tasks.
- Align each child's educational career with their working career goals, armed with the understanding that they will operate as free-agent entrepreneurs who move from company-to-company, role-to-role as independent contractors who contribute value based on their skills and interests in each presenting opportunity.
- Create and embrace the portrait of a learner, indicating the essential skills, knowledge, and human qualities that all students should possess by the time they leave school to be successful in life as a stakeholder-driven vision for the entire educational experience that the community wants for each child.
- Shift from learning conceptual understandings to what learning looks like in actual practice to get to deep learning and true understanding through the transfer of knowledge to new situations, making abstract ideas concrete, improving problem-solving and critical thinking, and allowing flexibility in selecting solutions.
- Provide real-world experience through opportunities to participate in community service activities, acquiring practical life skills, practicing decision-making and conflict resolution, developing empathy and a sense of purpose, fostering civic responsibility, and applying classroom learning to tangible community issues.
- Hosting community clubs as leadership programs by offering roles for children to coordinate activities, serve on committees, organize projects, and make decisions, promoting teamwork, and practicing communication and the

delegation of roles and responsibilities while learning to be responsive to community needs.

Implications for Educator Preparation and Professional Learning

To meet these needs of our quickly-morphing society, educator professional learning needs to evolve from its focus on traditional subject matter expertise and learning methodologies to a broader more practical, proactive role as a learning agent that supports a broad array of learner profiles. It must prepare us for future challenges, providing us with adaptability so that we are ready for quick change through critical thinking, and problem-solving. This can be achieved by fostering a culture of continuous learning, incorporating interactive and dynamic formats, and aligning training with broader education goals. Schools and schools of education must foster growth mindsets and cultures of lifelong learning. Much like the vision we are building for our children, educators must be allowed to grow and thrive in an environment of caring and belonging without judgement. This new narrative must end talking down to teachers, and instead engage them in uplifting dialogue that communicates that everyone expects their best.

Starting in college and university teacher preparation programs, professors, lecturers and instructors must expand their expertise beyond research and publishing to include active roles in the public school classrooms in the communities in which they serve. This expanded role helps to ensure that they are involved in current classroom challenges and opportunities, modeling relevant, effective instruction based on valuable, real-world experience and hands-on involvement that creates vital connections between theory and practice. This firsthand experience allows professors to support preservice teachers in applying teaching strategies in authentic classroom settings that are appropriate for today's students.

University professors with recent K-12 experience and a working understanding of pedagogy are better equipped to teach teacher candidates specific, practical skills and strategies necessary in today's classrooms. They can also speak firsthand about the current state of education, new trends in teaching and learning, and the realities of working with diverse student populations and engaging with the larger community that schools serve. This builds in processes for teacher education programs to stay in sync with the needs of public schools, and creates the context for conducting action research that tests and documents promising practices in the classroom. This creates a mutually beneficial cycle where university research informs K-12 education and K-12 experience strengthens teacher preparation.

In the same way, active involvement in public schools deepens the partnership between university teacher training programs and K-12 districts. This collaboration can increase college matriculation for high school students and create a potential pipeline for hiring future educators within the local region. University faculty and staff can also act as in-house professional development resources for K-12 teachers by sharing new research and instructional strategies with their partner schools. Engaged university professors can provide a fresh perspective to a school and its teachers, creating a symbiotic relationship where K-12 teachers learn from the university, and the professor gains valuable new insights.

Educator professional learning needs to shift to a more Inclusive pedagogy in the classroom, intentionally designing and implementing learning experiences that allow all students to feel valued, supported, and successful. It creates a psychologically safe learning environment, diversifying course materials, and using multiple teaching methods to accommodate varied learning styles. Rather than lowering standards for students with different needs, inclusive pedagogy challenges every student to achieve at high levels. It focuses on growth and providing support so that every child can succeed, and it begins with teachers examining their own implicit biases, assumptions, and teaching preferences, helping identify and address practices that may unintentionally disadvantage students.

Inclusive pedagogy utilizes a range of instructional techniques such as interactive discussions, collaborative group projects, and hands-on experiments, scaffolding instruction to provide a framework of support for all students accessing the same high-quality learning, giving them multiple ways to participate. Likewise, allowing for different options for demonstrating learning, such as presentations, podcasts, and other performance tasks, so that we can offer specific and actionable feedback that can be incorporated in ongoing learning so that students embrace high standards and believe they can achieve them.

Trauma-Informed Teaching

Trauma-informed teaching is another critical component to educator professional learning moving forward, creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all students by recognizing and responding to the widespread effects of trauma. Many students have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as abuse, neglect, community violence, and natural disasters that can significantly affect a child's brain development and ability to function in school. Without this training, an educator may misinterpret a student's behavior as defiant or apathetic, rather than as a coping response to trauma.

By understanding the link between trauma and student behavior, educators can shift from a punitive mindset to one of compassion and support. By removing the emotional and psychological barriers to learning, a trauma-informed environment helps students improve their concentration and engagement, leading to better outcomes. Restorative practices, which focus on healing rather than punishment, can be particularly effective, building safe, trusting relationships with students, helping them feel secure, connected, and heard while providing opportunities for them to learn social-emotional skills like self-regulation, empathy, and resilience that will serve them throughout their lives. This benefits all students, not just those who have experienced trauma, by fostering a more empathetic and compassionate school environment.

Teachers need to be able to promote predictability and consistency, establishing clear routines and expectations that helps students feel secure, reducing their anxiety. Instructionally, we need to provide options for assignments to establish a sense of agency that trauma may have taken away. In addition, learning how to avoid power struggles and deescalate conflicts by giving clear directions, offering respectful choices, and maintaining a calm presence are all important tenets to trauma-informed teaching. Finally, restorative justice practices help to repair harm and teach accountability, rather than relying on punitive discipline that can actually be retraumatizing. This also extends to teacher wellness: Acknowledging the risk of "secondary trauma" and providing support is critical for maintaining a caring and effective school culture for everyone. We have to address our own traumas before we are truly ready to help others with theirs.

Personalized experiences sharing formative growth can help teachers identify their triggers and develop their own unique success scripts. This is a two-part process of self-reflection and proactive strategy. A trigger is any situation, person, or event that causes an intense emotional reaction, such as anger, frustration, or anxiety. By recognizing what activates these feelings, teachers can gain control over their responses instead of reacting impulsively. By becoming aware of your triggers, recognizing and naming the emotions that are felt, and recognizing the physical responses to them, educators can learn to regulate how they respond.

With this self-awareness and ability to regulate your reactions, teachers can develop a success script as an intentional response designed to replace the automatic, triggered reaction. Instead of giving a snap reaction to a student behavior, we become prepared with a response that gives everyone involved time and space to maintain their dignity and peace of mind. For example, a success script may be to remind ourselves "This child may be seeking attention or need clarification, and my role is to maintain a positive, safe and calm learning space," and then respond to the student, "Thank you for asking. I'd like to finish my thought, and then we'll open it up for discussion." In the same way, dealing with difficult parent communication, a success script may be, "Thank you for reaching out. Let's discuss a plan together for moving forward."

If we are overwhelmed by a full workload, responding to a request for additional responsibilities by saying, "I'm sorry, but I cannot responsibly take this on right now." And if we're experiencing a bout of self-doubt, tell ourselves, "I can handle this challenge, and I will learn from this experience". Success scripts help create new, more effective neural pathways in our brains through repetitive practice.

Active Participants in Our Own Learning

Finally, like students, teachers need to actively participate in their professional learning. Observing a class is not the same as teaching it, and it's not like teaching a class every day. Traditional sitting, listening, notetaking, and acquiring rote knowledge does not adequately prepare teachers for the realities of working on today's classrooms. Hands-on activities, role-playing, and problem-based learning enable teachers to fully engage with new concepts and achieve deeper, more meaningful understanding. As educators develop new skills and gain fresh perspectives through active engagement, they build confidence in their own expertise. This sense of accomplishment and empowerment can increase job satisfaction and reignite their passion for teaching.

Active professional learning also involves working with colleagues in professional learning communities (PLCs), fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose. Educators more likely to stay if they have a best friend in their building. By collaborating, teachers can exchange promising practices, brainstorm solutions, and collectively work to improve classroom practices. It helps teachers stay current with new educational trends, technologies, and emerging student needs by learning from one another without the anxiety of being evaluated or judged for not already knowing and possessing everything they need to be successful. By actively participating in their own development, teachers model a crucial "growth mindset" for their students. This shows students that everyone, even the teacher, is a lifelong learner, which can inspire them to take risks and embrace their own learning journey. It's all about building relationships.

These new approaches require us to end compliance training and move to adaptive training scenarios. traditional "check-the-box" approach prioritizes mandatory completion over meaningful learning, which can leave knowledge gaps and fail to change behavior. Traditional compliance training is rigid and fails to address the individual needs of educators, which makes it an ineffective tool for fostering genuine behavioral change. It disregards individual knowledge gaps and doesn't provide the targeted support that's needed, resulting in minimal knowledge retention. Ultimately, when training is seen as a formality, it can contribute to a culture of non-compliance.

By moving toward adaptive training, schools can empower educators with professional development that is more effective, engaging, and directly relevant to their work.

Adaptive professional learning personalizes the learning path, assessing an individual's existing knowledge and tailoring the content and pace to specific needs, ensuring every educator is appropriately challenged and supported. By focusing on the most relevant information it keeps educators challenged and motivated, as they can skip over topics they have already mastered, focusing their energy on areas where they have need. This can reduce seat time significantly, allowing teachers more time for classroom preparation and instruction.

By focusing on knowledge gaps and reinforcing concepts through repetition and practice, adaptive professional learning leads to a higher level of understanding and mastery. This ensures that the learning is fully integrated into everyday practice. Technology-driven professional learning, in particular, can deliver personalized learning to large numbers of employees simultaneously, allowing schools to provide high-quality, customized experiences without a strain on resources.

Leading the Learning

By the year 2030, effective leaders will be defined by their ability to balance technological fluency with deeply human-centric skills. Traditional hierarchical management is being replaced by agile, adaptive, and purpose-driven leadership that can navigate a rapidly evolving and complex community landscape. With routine tasks increasingly managed by AI and automation, 2030's leaders will focus on uniquely human skills to inspire and connect with their teams, listening deeply, understanding diverse perspectives, and fostering psychological safety to cultivate a sense of belonging and resilience for everyone.

As global and intergenerational workforces become more common, leaders will need to actively champion diversity, equity, and inclusion. The most effective leaders will lead with humility, listen to a variety of voices, and create environments where differences are celebrated to fuel innovation. Much like the shifting role of teachers, leaders will act as coaches who empower their teams by delegating responsibility, encouraging experimentation, and trusting staff to get their work done. They will need to understand how to responsibly leverage technologies like artificial intelligence, data analytics, and automation to drive strategy and innovation.

A key skill is knowing when to trust AI-driven insights versus when to rely on human judgment.

As technology raises new questions around data privacy, bias, and intellectual property, leaders will need a strong ethical compass, and integrity and transparency are essential for building trust with staff and stakeholders. This will be critical to leadership success,

because society will be in a state of continuous evolution. Leaders will need to be comfortable with ambiguity and demonstrate a flexible, resilient mindset.

Instead of having all the answers, leaders will excel at asking the right questions and fostering a culture of curiosity and learning within their organizations, anticipating and shaping the future rather than simply reacting to change. This requires a balance of short-term agility with a long-term strategic vision. In a world where authenticity is highly valued, leaders will earn trust through honest communication, ethical practices, and a clear vision that aligns with broader societal values.

In education, leadership sets the tone, expectations and outcomes of professional learning.

Individuals and teams require trust in order to take risks, learn and grow. By rolling up their sleeves and delving into the work side-by-side with teachers and students, leaders build that trust while seeking genuine input. This is a double-pronged role in our profession, because leaders wear both managerial and instructional hats. Regardless of the challenges and opportunities inherent in the work, the first measure of an effective leader is providing those in their charge with every opportunity to grow, thrive and succeed.

Leadership is contextual; what works in one situation won't necessarily work with another, so leaders on campus and at the district level must model the kinds of agility, adaptability and resilience they expect from their students and faculties, exhibiting a variety of leadership styles. Much like for students, one size does not fit all. By showing how to navigate challenges and embrace change, they set a positive example for everyone on staff. They should prioritize training that builds core, transferrable skills that prepare educators for a wider variety of roles and helps them reskill more effectively, and create opportunities for educators to practice handling difficult situations through simulations, real-world scenarios, new projects, and cross-training. This helps to build psychological safety so that everyone feels safe sharing new ideas, asking questions and making mistakes without repercussion. Open communication and encouraging feedback are crucial in this process.

Educators are already wearing multiple hats working at full capacity, so it is essential that professional learning not be an add on, but be embedded into the actual work whenever possible, by integrating personalized, skills-driven experiences into everyday tasks as opposed to separate training events, allowing for authentic application and increased retention. The new generation of AI-based tools can help to create personalized learning experiences that reflect the world in which our students function, available asynchronously whenever educators seek access.

In today's world, there are pressures everywhere, and educators need to be insulated from sales and marketing influences so that they are free to focus on their work. Leaders can insulate workers from commercial influences by balancing transparent communication with a focus on achievable, value-driven goals. By emphasizing mission over metrics and emphasizing how educator work contributes to the mission of public education, everyone can value what they are building together. Instead of letting raw data cause anxiety and put pressure on staff, create an environment where everyone feels comfortable discussing challenges without fear of judgment or retribution.

Even when budgets are tight, school leaders must continue to invest in educator training and development. This demonstrates a commitment to their future, boosts confidence, and improves outcomes in meeting community expectations for schools. Work as a team to establish clear and achievable goals, as unattainable targets are a primary driver of stress and burnout. Breaking large objectives into smaller, manageable milestones helps maintain focus and build momentum. Open discussion across the board helps to inform planning, anticipate conflicts, and gives everyone a voice at the table.

Investing in Professional Capital

Professional capital is a framework developed by [Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan \(2012\)](#) that defines our profession's collective expertise. Investing in professional capital means developing the qualities of individuals, fostering collaboration, and cultivating collective experience within the field. Human professional capital focuses on the individual qualities of professional educators developed through investments in individual education, training, and the recruitment of skilled professionals. This includes specialized skills, subject matter expertise, and formal degrees and certifications. For organizations, this requires attracting high-quality talent and investing in the ongoing development of each team member.

Social professional capital is the quality and quantity of relationships within a professional organization that allows individuals and groups to share knowledge, skills, and opportunities.

Individual social capital is the network of colleagues, mentors, and industry contacts an educator relies on for support and insight. As an organization, it is the level of trust, communication, and collaboration across staff and teams that elevates the entire school.

Decisional professional capital is the growing wisdom and expertise educators gain over time, enabling them to make effective diagnoses and sound judgments in complex

situations, built through extensive experience, reflection, and peer collaboration. Individual decisional capital is the practical wisdom gained from learning how to make effective decisions through a wide variety of experience. For an organization, it is the collective institutional knowledge that allows the entire faculty to make better, more informed decisions over time.

To invest in professional capital, organizations must provide robust professional development through targeted training programs as well as ongoing continuous learning among staff, as well as providing resources for certifications and advanced education. Leaders must dedicate time and space for colleagues to share ideas, reflect on challenges, and learn from one another, building social capital and collective expertise. Establishing formal and informal mentoring programs that connect less experienced professionals with veterans helps build decisional capital, and leaders serving as both experts and apprentices, learning with their teams shows the commitment to continuous improvement. Supporting educator professional learning is a long-term investment that yields returns in productivity, innovation, and retention of staff.

To grow, thrive, and flourish, educators need this investment to be tangible and reliable. Supportive leaders, professional autonomy, and a collaborative, positive learning culture promote personal and professional well-being, positive engagement, and an expansive view of each educator's professional value as crucial contributors to each child's success, and the success of public education. When school leaders treat teachers as valued, trusted professionals, it boosts morale and promotes motivation, creating conditions for everyone to benefit, from staff to students to stakeholders.

Valued educators have the freedom to make professional judgments and adapt their teaching methods to best meet student needs. Ongoing, high-quality professional learning that focuses on educator well-being, new strategies, and continuous improvement is crucial for growth. Meaningful collaboration, peer coaching, and mentoring allow teachers to exchange ideas, get support, and learn from each other. And when educators are given opportunities to lead and participate in decision-making, they are more invested in the outcomes of the work.

Personal and professional well-being

Educators thrive when they feel connected to their purpose and can engage in meaningful, joyful work. Their idealism and altruism are powerful intrinsic motivations rooted in a profound desire to make a difference in the lives of students and in the life of society. Unlike extrinsic motivations such as high pay and prestige, these ideals focus on the inherent meaning in the act of teaching itself. But teachers are not superheroes, and they require the support of the school system and the community it serves in order to be successful. Effective teaching does not happen in isolation, and student success stories do not occur alone.

While powerful, this altruism can be drained by the realities of the profession. Administrative challenges, low pay, stressful demands on time and resources, and the threat of burnout can make it difficult for any educator to sustain their idealism. Providing meaningful, appropriate professional learning that meets immediate needs and builds capacity for future career options is a powerful way to sustain that sense of commitment to the cause, from leader to teacher, from teacher to student. In tight fiscal times, professional learning dollars are often the first to be cut, and once they are gone, they are hard to bring back into the budget. Both in K-12 and in higher education, a commitment to ongoing, sustained professional learning for pre-service and in-service educators will be critical for education transformed to take root. Educators need to take care of themselves and each other in order for Roadmap 2030 to become a reality. If we do not succeed, other alternatives for the future of education will fill the void we leave. This is our chance to not only reclaim the narrative, but demonstrate what education transformed can be for all citizens, all families, all children.

Students Leading the Way

Students should lead the way in transforming education because they are the central stakeholders in the enterprise, and they can provide invaluable, first-hand experience and insights regarding their needs, interests and aspirations. This shifts education from a top-down model, which is necessary to break away from longstanding processes and practices in the classroom, and at the building, district, state and federal levels, in order to be able to work towards a more responsive, collaborative, and effective preparation of students for in Information Age future. By elevating student voice, schools can improve outcomes, increase engagement, empower learners, and more accurately meet the needs of a rapidly evolving society.

When students have a say in their learning, they become more invested in the outcomes. This sense of ownership and autonomy boosts motivation and can lead to improved attendance, greater commitment to mapping their unique pathway in their learning, and higher academic achievement. By providing feedback to schools, students help educators align the curriculum with their needs and interests and optimize the teacher-learner relationship, shaping a more meaningful and dynamic learning environment, making education more applicable to their future in the real world.

Today's students come to school shaped by a world of instant information and interconnected technology, bringing a new and hands-on set of skills to the classroom. Unlike past generations, their inherent digital fluency and access to global resources foster advanced abilities in problem-solving, information analysis, collaboration and content creation. Growing up as "digital natives," today's students are highly comfortable and intuitive with a wide variety of digital devices, software, and tools, and with massive amounts of information available online, students are increasingly skilled at finding, evaluating, and synthesizing digital resources for research. They are accustomed to sorting through articles, videos, and multimedia to find information, and many are practiced at identifying reputable sources.

They have learned to teach themselves online before they ever enter the schoolhouse doorway, moving beyond the confines of traditional curricula with a strong sense of self-direction and a sense of being self-starters in their learning, pursuing interests and answers to questions anytime, anyplace. They are pragmatic and focused on real-world application of skills, content and new experiences, possessing an entrepreneurial spirit that goes beyond the limits of the traditional classroom, and they are drawn to interactive content that effectively conveys ideas through digital formats.

This constant, global connectivity exposes students to people and perspectives from all over the world, building in an appreciation for diverse cultures and a greater understanding of international issues. Because they are accustomed to fast-paced, interactive, and personalized content, they expect the same kinds of learning opportunities during school hours.

Valuing student voices challenges traditional power structures within education, requiring an environment of safety, support, mutual respect and trust that establishes a climate where risk-taking is a part of the learning process. Students and teachers must work together to co-design learning, and students must become a part of school decision-making bodies to help inform next steps in advancing the goals of resilient public education. Through these channels, students can investigate and propose solutions for issues affecting their school and their community. In addition, learning projects focusing on issues of interest, from environmental protection to social justice, allow students to drive positive change while developing leadership skills. Students can also gather and communicate the diverse needs of their peers as part of the process.

Students at the Center of our Humanity

First and foremost, education transformed will view students as people first, with practices and processes in place that support educators in understanding what students know, how they feel, and how they relate to others. In this way, education shifts from viewing students as vessels to be filled and statistics to be tracked, and honors their humanity and who they are as individuals.

It is the educator's responsibility to set the table for learners wherever they meet, from the classroom to the boardroom, so that they are included, engaged and heard with respect and deference for their opinions, needs and interests.

When we value students as the center of both democratic and global societies, our centering of students goes beyond teaching the traditional curriculum to emphasize empowerment, critical thinking, problem solving, value creation and social responsibility, fostering both local civic engagement and a global perspective that reflects their interconnected and complex world.

As a cornerstone of democracy, public education must provide students with a meaningful voice in their own education and school governance. This includes formal structures like student government and committees, as well as informal opportunities for students to shape school policies and practices by building an inclusive, high-trust environment where everyone feels safe to express diverse and differing perspectives.

Facilitating respectful discussions on current events and community challenges teaches students how to engage with one another expressing diverse viewpoints, finding compromise, and tolerating varying perspectives. Beyond the classroom, schools will offer opportunities for real-world civics applications practice through community-based problem solving, leading service-learning projects, and participating in political debates and authentic democratic processes.

A critical component of this work is students developing a critical consciousness, studying and analyzing the existing power structures that produce social inequities, learning to ask difficult questions and challenge the status quo when it does not serve the goals of society, recognizing that systemic problems require collective solutions. To provide context, learning should include the historical and contemporary factors that contribute to unequal outcomes for marginalized groups, empowering students to become agents in positive social change.

In the same way, students must engage their learning as responsible global citizens. Rather than treating this as a separate subject, these experiences should be embedded throughout the curriculum, including a global context for all areas of study to help students see the connections between local issues in their community and larger global challenges we face worldwide.

Fostering Empathy, Respect, and Global Awareness

Education for global citizenship empowers students to become proactive contributors to a more just and sustainable world. Exploring the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can serve as a concrete framework for students to understand major global challenges like poverty, environmental degradation, and peacebuilding. From this vantage point, schools can guide students to move from understanding global issues to taking meaningful action, locally, nationally and internationally through their existing networks.

By centering on humanity, we broaden the function of schools from places of learning to places of being where everyone feels welcome, heard and engaged in their learning, their personal growth, and their responsibilities to society. Humanizing the schoolhouse

also extends to teachers and staff. Democratization does not stop with the end recipients of our efforts. Indeed, if education professionals do not also have their humanity honored and provided for, they cannot realistically offer such considerations to those they serve. Schools as centers of humanity are ecosystems of interdependence; the symbiosis created in the connection between everyone involved must be nurtured and flourishing in order for this shift to not only take place, but to sustain itself into the future.

Students at the Center of Relationships

In order for this evolution of education to take root, we must operate from a place of humility, honoring what students bring to school in terms of knowledge, culture and identity, building genuine connections between students and authentic relationships with us as their partners in their learning journey. This requires truly engaging students in meaningful work and not just involving them in seat time, face time, and checking off boxes of requirements. Students can take charge when we give them room.

To realistically create the conditions for this to happen, we need to be mindful of the existing power dynamics in place, institutionally, between leaders and staff, between staff and students, and with stakeholders in the communities that schools serve. We also need to be realistic about what we can and cannot control. Society today is much more fluid and quickly-changing, requiring schools to be agile and responsive as traditional norms and mores fall by the wayside in the face of new approaches to learning, productivity and value creation. For all these reasons, we must understand we're not just rolling back how we think about power structures, but our approaches to the curriculum, as well. Schools will be more relevant to students and the world they are inheriting

Centering relationships is crucial for preparing students for the future workplace, which will value adaptability, collaboration, and social-emotional resilience. Beyond improving traditional academic outcomes, strong relationships foster the foundational emotional and cognitive competencies necessary for success in a rapidly evolving, technology-driven world. We model and encourage skills like empathic listening, allowing students to feel heard and respected, creating the climate for better self-regulation and goal-setting abilities. These are key traits in a workplace with less structure that requires more self-direction. A supportive classroom environment, facilitated by a strong teacher-student bond, helps students develop better conflict resolution strategies vital for navigating complex team dynamics in their future careers.

The shift from rote learning to dynamic problem-solving is central to the information age, and strong learning relationships fuel this by enhancing internal personal and

interpersonal resources. When students feel connected to others, they develop a greater love for learning as a social process, engaging in critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are critical to future career success.

In the information age, career paths are rarely linear. Positive learning relationships provide a "secure base" from which students can take academic and creative risks. Feeling psychologically safe allows students to overcome the fear of failure and embrace the kind of growth mindset essential for innovation with new technologies. Positive relationships also come into play as coaching and mentoring that provides lasting future career benefits. Teachers can even be lifelong mentors and advocates, writing powerful letters of recommendation for college and job applications, and make real-world professional connections that help students connect with master craftsmen, seasoned professionals, and content area experts that expand their learning capacity. Establishing rapport based on empathy and respect normalizes the dynamics of workplaces that will rely on strong teamwork, communication and consensus building. Students who learn in relationship-rich learning environments that respect them as unique individuals, and honor their learning journeys and career goals, are better prepared to enter the adult workplace as confident, contributing coworkers who adapt to change as needed.

Students at the Center of Decisionmaking

In education transformed, students participate in board meetings and leadership meetings, not as a token gesture or an honorary tip of the hat, but as recognized participants with actionable roles and takeaways that serve the future of schools. Students will expect and must be supported in selecting issues and problems for which they can investigate, generate solutions, and implement them in authentic ways that address their root causes.

In order to create the conditions for this to happen, there must be balance inviting students to participate at decisionmaking convenings. Rather than identifying a token selection of the best and the brightest in terms of grades and behavior, everyone should have opportunities to engage, provide input, and work to carry out decisions that impact the functioning of their schools. This will include students who may not have the background or experience to immediately participate and contribute, but we set expectations for them that "We give you our best and we expect the best from you" so that they understand we are setting them up to succeed, not to fail.

Placing students at the center of decisionmaking takes place by establishing structures for student representation, empowering student leadership roles with actual authority, and forming student-led committees to research and address specific school and

community issues. In addition, creating voting student seats on school boards, and allowing students to serve as members of subcommittees and as liaisons to community agencies are real-world ways to grow their leadership experience and inform our responsiveness to their school needs.

School and district leaders can also create formal advisory councils made up of diverse student representatives who meet regularly with administrators to provide input on policy development and implementation. While traditional student councils often only provide lip service regarding serious school matters, schools can expand their role to include more meaningful responsibilities like advising school leadership on critical issues, and providing them with a dedicated budget to carry out results of their recommendations.

In the classroom, teachers can jointly make decisions with students on expectations, instructional decisions, and conflict resolution to build a culture of collaboration and empowerment in their everyday lives, much like they will need to be able to do in the adult workplace. This ensures that the school climate is "owned" by the students themselves. In all things, we must ensure that student input is genuinely valued and acted upon, building trust by demonstrating that their input influences decisions. We must be vigilant to not unintentionally shut down student voice by reverting to traditional assumptions and attitudes about student voice and role in schooling. Through self-awareness and intentional discourse, student voice informs our learning experience, as well.

Beyond participating in school decisionmaking, schools can open up the possibilities for student centering around global issues. Consider [The World Peace Games](#), originated by John Hunter, a teacher in Charlottesville, Virginia, wherein groups of students divide into self-created countries, take on specific leadership roles, and work together to address real-world problems like hunger, war and the environment. Today the program has evolved into its own foundation as it has grown and sustained itself as an optimal model for engaging students as stakeholders in genuine problem solving.

Likewise, in the [Model United Nations](#) (Model UN or MUN) program, students serve as delegates of different countries to debate global issues, following a structured process of research, debate, negotiation, and resolution-writing to generate solutions to real-world problems. They come together at an MUN conference, attending committee sessions and caucuses, working with others who have similar ideas to collaborate and draft working papers and, eventually, a formal draft resolution. By the conclusion of the conference, awards are given to recognize delegates who demonstrate strong diplomatic skills, research, and speaking ability.

In an era of education transformation, a national assembly of students advising and informing the future of education can be created bringing together students at the K-12, undergraduate, and graduate levels from across the country, operating as a formal, student-led organization designed to provide policymakers with direct, evidence-based insights into the educational system from the perspective of students as the primary stakeholders. The assembly would include students from every state and U.S. territory, representing the diversity of the national student body. Special efforts would be made to ensure representation from marginalized groups, students with disabilities, and those from different socioeconomic backgrounds and urban, suburban, and rural areas. It could be stratified into groups representing different stages of education. For example, a K-12 board, a higher education board, and a unified national council to synthesize findings could coexist.

Members can be selected through an application and interview process or through election by their peers at the school or district level, in partnership with state boards of education, student unions, and educational nonprofits. Once seated, the assembly would have a student-elected leadership team and committees to focus on specific issue areas, such as curriculum, technology, school climate, mental health, and equity. It would hold an annual, high-profile national summit to present its findings and recommendations to the public and federal officials, and throughout the year it conducts work remotely through regular virtual meetings and collaborative online platforms. Committees would design and distribute surveys to students nationwide to gather qualitative and quantitative data, and assembly members would analyze this data and produce a comprehensive annual report outlining the most pressing issues and student-led solutions.

The assembly would have formal avenues to advise the U.S. Department of Education, the White House, and Congressional education committees. For example, student leaders could present their findings in private meetings with officials, mirroring existing state-level student advisory boards. Through this set up, students would be engaged as true partners in governance, and policymakers and administrators would provide meaningful feedback, fostering a dialogue of mutual respect. Consider the assembly also publish concrete policy recommendations covering a wide range of issues, such as advocating for more relevant, engaging curricula and better career and technical education pathways, advising on the ethical use of artificial intelligence in the classroom and proposing more effective digital learning tools, sharing student perspectives on mental health services and proposing ways to address the current mental health crisis, and identifying issues related to school safety, bullying, and creating more inclusive and supportive school environments.

This process serves as a powerful exercise in civics education, teaching how to organize, conduct research, and advocate for change, building the next generation of

engaged citizens and leaders. By amplifying student voices, the assembly helps ensure that education policy is informed by the lived experiences of those it directly impacts, leading to more responsive and effective reforms. While students may advise on policy, its input must be demonstrably considered in the decision-making process in order to build authentic, real-world application of participation the decisionmaking process.

Students at the Center of Community

To build student learning experiences as the center of their community, we have to help them understand they have a voice in the life of their neighborhood, district and town. This is internalized by providing opportunities for them to meaningfully participate in the work of their community as an extension of their influence in school leadership. We do this by modeling civic engagement and leading by example. Student and community stakeholders watch us and believe what they actually see us follow through and do. We can show what engagement looks like and how to use our voice to contribute to the greater good. How are we authentically engaged in the communities in which we teach? How can we become more and better engaged as role models?

First of all, we must be partners with community members, engaging them in open dialogue and allowing them the freedom to explore. Micromanaging is not leadership, and it shuts down the openness and trust necessary for true engagement. We also need to allow students the space to get involved and learn by doing. Our role is not to protect them from the realities of engaging with diverse peoples who bring different ideas and proposals to the work. Whatever age, students are resilient. They can ask and process and learn from the responses and experiences they gather through being actively involved.

Likewise, we need to bring in parents and stakeholders in the community, understanding the vast array of backgrounds, challenges and trauma that we all bring into the school community, with the expectation we can all adjust and accommodate one another's unique orientation to the work for the good of everyone. Schools can accomplish this by using culturally responsive teaching methods, trauma-informed practices, and deep community partnerships. These things build strong, trusting connections and a culture of inclusion that ensures everyone feels they are valued as an integral part of the community, and as valued partners who participate in decision-making.

The flipside of this community value proposition is also true. Bringing the community in to be the center of school life and leadership improves both the student learning experience, the success of schools, and the overall well-being of the communities they serve. It starts by shifting from community involvement to community engagement so

that community members are treated as equal partners and co-leaders. Educators can meet community members on their own turf, such as at local churches, community centers and other recreational areas to meet and work with stakeholders. Considerations for providing information in multiple languages and offering workshops and meetings at convenient times and locations will address barriers like work schedules, childcare and transportation.

Likewise, transforming the school campus into a multi-use facility provides a centralized place for learning, services, and gatherings above and beyond school functions. Integrate health clinics, mental health services, nutrition support, and resource libraries within the school to address the holistic needs of everyone, and build a visual resource map of skills and services available to the community. This helps schools identify valuable resources, from local law enforcement for internet safety talks to local businesses for mentorship.

We can also equip students with the skills and experiences to become effective leaders both inside and outside the classroom. Incorporating service learning into the curriculum also adds value through projects that address community needs, like maintaining a neighborhood garden, running food or book drives, or cleaning up local parks, and engaging students in real problem-solving. Service learning allows students to see how their education can directly benefit the community, fostering a sense of civic responsibility.

Developing leadership programs that teach students effective communication, adaptability, resilience, empathy and inclusivity to foster a sense of belonging. Partner with local businesses for internships, mentorship programs, or career days to give students hands-on experience and insight into different fields, and give students meaningful roles in creating positive change within their school and neighborhood. Budget to offer micro-grants and resources for student-initiated community service projects, so that they can drive the change they want to lead. Finally, showcase student-led initiatives and achievements to inspire other students and the wider community.

Students at the Center of Problem-Solving

At the core of the school program, the focus needs to shift from an emphasis on standardized testing to exploration, testing, implementation and learning from outcomes. While formal accountability structures may not go away, educators have the expertise and the moral imperative to blend together what students need and what government oversight and licensing agencies require. The key is to find ways to empower educators to empower students, so that they can say, "This is what we need."

The [International Baccalaureate](#) (IB) Foundation has at its center approaches to teaching and learning that focus on the learner as self-advocate, reflecting on themselves as learners, which is woven throughout its curricula. This focus is embedded in the Learner Profile, Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills, and key projects that require students to direct their own learning process. Students must document their experiences in a Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)

Portfolio and demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. Through these kinds of structured approaches, students can benefit from the scaffolding of supports that allow them to personalize their learning and advocate for themselves and their impact as problem solvers.

Regardless of any specific model, to make student problem-solving and solution generation a central focus, we must transition from a teacher-centered model to a student-centered one based on the kinds of real-world engagement rich with opportunities to research, take risks, and learn from the results. Instead of learning through memorization, students investigate authentic, complex problems relevant to their lives and communities. This shift begins by presenting open-ended driving questions that stimulate student curiosity and require them to seek answers independently, rather than just delivering information. Using projects that integrate multiple subjects so students can see how different fields of knowledge connect help to generate holistic solutions, create a classroom culture where "getting stuck" is an expected and valuable part of the learning process, with multiple iterations building tolerance for risk-taking and resilience, showing students that solutions are often refined through trial and error.

The availability of educational technology and digital tools to help students conduct research, collaborate with peers, and showcase their solutions in creative and authentic ways opens up possibilities for implementation that were heretofore unattainable within the school walls. Using these resources, we can incorporate varied activities and student-centered strategies like case studies to examine complex issues critically, role-playing to experience different perspectives on a problem, simulations that mimic real-world issues, and debates to articulate, probe and defend positions based on evidence.

To make this possible, we also need to rethink approaches to providing assessments and feedback, implementing performance-based assessments that focus on the process, not just the outcome, and build in opportunities for students to reflect on their own learning, identifying challenges they faced, and what they would do differently in the future. This will require an investment of time and resources in teacher professional learning, to provide them with a strong foundation in project-based learning and appropriate assessment practices. In these ways we empower teachers to be innovators, learning new methods starting with small, manageable changes that build

towards the transformation we envision. Like our students, we need to become the best self-evaluators we can be.

Redefining Student Success

All of this points to our redefining student success, not in a semester or an academic year but over time. If we are committed to this shift in education, we are committing to the longterm success of our students; not just while they are in our charge, but as they begin and build their lives as adults. Longitudinal studies are needed to track students 5 and 10 years down the road. Educational technology platforms can integrate with existing student information systems (SIS) and learning management systems (LMS) to collect and monitor student data so that over time we can track data on career-specific outcomes, such as entry into desired professions, progression in their careers, and successful up-skilling for new demands in the workforce, as well as success in adaptability, and resilience over time, and metrics related to holistic well-being, including mental health and overall quality of life.

Beyond traditional metrics, we can use "street data" - a more human-centered and asset-based model - to track student success into their adult lives, collaborating with students and the wider community to collect qualitative information over time. Unlike academic records, which end at graduation, "street data" focuses on lived experiences using qualitative tools to collect rich, narrative data that follows students' development into adulthood. We can utilize alumni interviews periodically to conduct qualitative interviews to understand career paths, personal growth, challenges, and what resources from schooling were most (and least) valuable. Community feedback loops use a community-based approach to get input from graduates, employers, and local leaders on how effectively the education system is meeting the community's needs. This provides a broader perspective on alumni success than individual data alone. And asset-based alumni networking helps to build a profile of success that highlights how graduates are using their skills, cultural knowledge, and experiences to thrive, creating a more holistic view than traditional metrics.

Of course, this kind of long-term collection and storage of personal information about former students requires careful ethical planning and design. We must define and stick to a narrow, educational purpose for tracking alumni data, ensuring it is not misused for commercial or other unauthorized purposes. We also need to protect sensitive personal information from breaches is critical to protect everyone's privacy. Also, we need to be mindful of the power dynamics that exist between former students and schools, ensuring that participation is genuinely voluntary and not implicitly coerced. While this kind of longterm analysis of individual journeys from student to adult citizen can be

invaluable, we must acknowledge that the definition of success is unique and relative to each individual subject.

Students leading the transformation of education provides invaluable benefits to public education and our profession, transforming the role of the educator through the processes of feedback and co-creation, making teaching and learning more dynamic, collaborative and effective.

Students leading the way creates continuous, real-time professional growth opportunities for teachers that are directly relevant to our work. When students make self-directed choices, we gain insights through a direct feedback loop. We can observe students exploring topics at their own pace and depth, providing a clearer view of individual needs so that we can provide more sophisticated, differentiated instruction, and we can connect student learning to real-world applications and see the results firsthand. This practical experience is often more impactful than abstract training.

Furthermore, when students are active collaborators, our role becomes more meaningful and energized as students take ownership of their learning. A reciprocal feedback loop where students and teachers learn from each other helps build trust and stronger relationships, as well, creating a more positive and affirming classroom culture. In short, by distributing the responsibility for learning, teachers can manage their workload more effectively and focus their expertise where it is most needed, providing one-on-one support to students who need it most, and giving students the opportunity to teach and learn from each other.

This shift is already underway. Students are showing up in classrooms expecting an engaging, relevant, real-world learning experience, and they are not showing up when they realize they can learn more and succeed outside of traditional schooling. It's up to us to facilitate this change, rolling back the impediments and bureaucracy that support a bygone era of society that no longer exists, and supporting students in leading the way. By empowering students with greater agency and autonomy over their educational journey, we can cultivate a learning environment where students actively construct and demonstrate their knowledge in ways that are most meaningful to them.

Roadmap Metrics

In the Information Age, measuring progress and success is shifting away from traditional, tangible metrics toward more holistic, intangible factors that prioritize human elements like engagement, impact, and well-being. For both organizations and individuals, this involves adapting to a data-driven environment while focusing on meaningful outcomes, not just output.

In the digital economy, a positive personal experience is measured by key indicators of success that drive brand loyalty and growth. Examples of these new age measures include:

- **Net Promoter Score (NPS):** Measures how likely followers are to recommend a program, product, or service. A high score suggests strong brand loyalty.
- **Customer Effort Score (CES):** Assesses how easy it is for customers to interact with new digital systems or resolve an issue. A low effort score generally correlates with higher satisfaction.
- **Customer Lifetime Value (CLV):** Predicts the total revenue a business can expect from a single customer throughout their relationship. Increasing CLV indicates a successful, long-term customer engagement strategy.
- **User Engagement Metrics:** Measures how users interact with a digital product through metrics like Daily Active Users (DAU), Monthly Active Users (MAU), session duration, and feature adoption rate.

At the same time, tracking innovation is valued to measure success as the landscape continues to rapidly evolve. Sample measures of the creation of new value include:

- **Innovation rate:** The number of new products, features, or services brought to market as a result of digital initiatives.
- **Innovation adoption speed:** The rate at which users adopt and utilize new technology or features, indicating their value.
- **Revenue from digital channels:** The growth of income brought in directly from new digital business models.

Success in the mid-twenty-first century also depends on human capital and culture. Consider these examples of human-centered metrics:

- **Digital Skill Index:** Measures the proficiency of individuals using new digital tools and technologies through training assessments and usage analytics.
- **Engagement and Satisfaction Metrics:** Gauges morale and happiness through surveys and participation rates in projects. Engaged participants are more likely to contribute to successful initiatives.
- **Talent Acquisition and Retention:** Assesses an organization's ability to recruit and keep top talent, which is critical for innovation and continued growth.

The "Beyond GDP" movement is developing new measures of society's well-being and sustainability. These sample metrics demonstrate how to think about human capacity:

- **Human Development Index (HDI):** Created by the United Nations, the HDI measures a country's progress based on human capabilities, combining indicators of life expectancy, education, and income.
- **Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI):** Adjusts a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by factoring in both the environmental and social costs of economic

activity, such as pollution and crime, and the benefits of unpaid work, like volunteering.

- **Happy Planet Index (HPI):** Ranks countries on how well they produce long and happy lives for their citizens while minimizing their ecological footprint. It combines life expectancy, experienced well-being, and ecological footprint.
- **Wellbeing Economy Frameworks:** Groups like the Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo) partnership (including Scotland, Iceland, and Finland) are developing their own holistic metrics that prioritize environmental sustainability, social equity, and human flourishing.
- **Social Progress Index (SPI):** Measures the extent to which countries provide for the social and environmental needs of their citizens, looking at basic human needs, foundations of well-being, and opportunity.

Then there are measures for personal growth and success, including personal fulfillment, social impact, and well-being, moving past career advancement and wealth alone. Consider these metrics for the next generations of global citizens:

- **Well-being:** Measures of mental and emotional health, stress levels, and overall life satisfaction. Tools for this can include self-reflection, journaling, and regular introspection.
- **Impact and Contribution:** The positive difference an individual makes in their community or on society. This can be measured through contributions to social causes or the success of people they mentor.
- **Lifelong Learning and Growth:** Evaluating the acquisition of new skills, knowledge, and personal evolution over time, rather than just formal degrees.
- **Resilience in Adversity:** Success is measured by the ability to recover from setbacks. It reflects strength of character and commitment to personal growth.

Then there are productivity metrics for individuals contributing to an organization or to the general economy through creativity, problem-solving, and value creation:

- **Brand Influence Score:** For professionals and content creators, this score quantifies their impact in their digital sphere. It considers factors like social media following, content virality, and influence on industry trends.
- **Network Strength:** A leader's or professional's success can be measured by the quality of the relationships they build both inside and outside their organization, which indicates their ability to collaborate and influence.
- **User Trust and Privacy Index:** For those in public-facing roles, this metric reflects how a brand or individual handles user data and prioritizes transparency and privacy.
- **Team Autonomy:** For leaders, success can be measured by how well their team operates independently and makes decisions without constant supervision. This indicates effective delegation and trust.
- **Leadership Pipeline:** A leader can also measure their success by how many team members they prepare to step into leadership roles, which showcases their ability to mentor and develop talent.

In the same way, education must enhance traditional metrics and develop additional new measures of success as it evolves into an institution that reflects the needs of this new age. While there is still use for the measurement of attendance and absenteeism, behavior and discipline referrals, formative and summative assessments, graduation rates, and other longstanding metrics of student and school progress, there are evolving ways schools are measuring student growth and success:

- **Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs):** Measure how much a student's test scores have grown compared to their "academic peers" with similar prior test performance, indicating their relative growth compared to that of similar students nationwide. This provides context for understanding how a student has grown over time, regardless of their absolute achievement level, and is also used to track teacher effectiveness and school performance.

- **Value-Added Models (VAMs):** Assess how much instruction contributes to a student's progress by comparing their performance on assessments over multiple years, relative to their prior performance, statistically predicting how much a student should have grown, then comparing that prediction to the student's actual performance. The models adjust for student background factors and prior achievement to isolate the "value added" or growth attributable to a specific teacher, which is then averaged across their students to determine their VAM score.
- **Postsecondary Outcomes:** Track student success after high school, including college attendance, career paths, and other related outcomes, provides a long-term measure of school effectiveness. For example, leveraging the National Student Clearinghouse's StudentTracker service to access data on graduates' college enrollment, persistence, and completion, supplemented with data from state education agencies, FAFSA completion, internal tracking of college applications and industry credentials, and partnerships with local employers for work-based learning data, education agencies can track the longterm impact and effectiveness of their services.
- **Social and Emotional Skills Inventories:** Assessments that measure non-academic skills like self-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, recognizing their importance in overall success based on growth in CASEL competencies like self-awareness and relationship skills. By comparing scores over time, educators identify specific areas of development, inform instructional strategies, and evaluate the effectiveness of SEL programs. These inventories provide data-driven insights for educators to create supportive learning environments and ensure students develop the whole-child approach that supports academic success and career readiness.
- **AI-Powered Tools:** Artificial intelligence can flag struggling students early, allowing for timely intervention and support to improve retention and graduation rates. using predictive analytics and machine learning to analyze large datasets of student information. By continuously monitoring key academic and behavioral indicators, these systems can detect patterns associated with academic risk long before problems escalate. This proactive approach allows for timely intervention and personalized support, which can significantly improve student success, retention, and graduation rates.

These are some examples of how approaches to metrics in education over time. We do not advocate for any of these examples in particular, but offer them to reset our thinking for Roadmap 2030.

Metrics that Add Value

In order to identify new, effective metrics for education transformed, we must first agree on the role of education in this new era. Beyond learning for the love of learning itself, education provides a wide range of personal, social, and economic benefits to individuals and society as a whole. It helps us develop into well-rounded, resilient, and engaged citizens who are better equipped to navigate life's challenges and contribute positively to our communities. First and foremost, education empowers us with a greater understanding of ourselves and our world, leading to increased confidence, well-being, and personal fulfillment. Beyond learning facts, education improves higher-level cognitive abilities, such as critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving. Higher levels of education are strongly linked to healthier lifestyles, better-informed health choices, and greater longevity. Research has found that each additional year of education can correlate with an increase in life expectancy. Education also cultivates resilience by teaching us to view failures as learning opportunities, creating a requisite growth mindset that is essential for personal and professional growth.

Education builds a more engaged and inclusive society by strengthening social ties, promoting civic participation, and fostering greater understanding among diverse groups. We are more likely to vote, engage in political discourse, volunteer, and participate in community activities, creating a more informed and active citizenry that holds elected officials accountable. It exposes us to different ideas, cultures, and ways of thinking. This exposure fosters empathy, breaks down stereotypes, and strengthens social cohesion. In addition, higher levels of education are associated with increased character development, lower crime rates and more ethical leadership, leading to a better quality of life for everyone.

Finally, education is a powerful pathway to well-being, security and upward mobility. Educational institutions serve as research hubs that foster innovation and technological advancement, and provide a skilled, educated workforce with increased productivity and economic growth. Higher education levels lead to more opportunities to contribute and make a difference, fueling innovation, economic growth and stability. This is not to relegate education as a mechanism for incentivizing human capital, but preparing students for success as citizens and contributors to the greater good, including in the workplace, is an important role of education transformed.

For all of these reasons, education transformed must be measured by authentic learning related to real work in the classroom, in communities, and across global contexts. Education must serve students, envisioning a world we can't yet see, providing real-world courses and application of skills, and aligning with the work of society in the new economy. Schools should engage students in their plans after graduation, providing opportunities for them to actively contribute to their communities through community service projects while in school, and to learn and keep up with industry trends and employment projections. Likewise, bringing in community-based agencies and businesses to work with students can extend and enrich their educational experience. In this way, schools can connect students with local organizations and help them follow up with those entities that align with their learning interests as part of their career planning.

The progress of Roadmap 2030 also needs to be measured in the effective teaching of transversal skills that can be applied in any chosen path in life. These skills are universally applicable abilities and attributes, such as critical thinking, teamwork, communication, and self-management, that are valuable in many different contexts, from education to work to personal life, enabling us to adapt to change, learn effectively, and succeed in diverse situations, promoting personal development, social inclusion, and career readiness in a rapidly changing world. These are the skills that bridge the teaching of content and skills with the new age emphasis on human engagement, effectiveness and well-being as the acceleration of advancements through artificial intelligence and automation continue.

Finally, these new metrics must measure how well education meets the needs of students and teachers, gauging their mental and physical health and well-being, as well as their overall satisfaction in the education experience, for schools provide a cascading effect of new teachers rising from the ranks of students year after year. When education transformed truly matches the needs of next generations preparing to take their place as leaders of a morphing society, it will also create a new generation of teachers who are connected and responsive to the needs of that society transformed.

The Equity Index

Education transformed must create a culture where every learner understands themselves and owns their personal learning path, becoming more inclusive of marginalized, nontraditional, and neurodivergent learners as a moral imperative that benefits all students, strengthens communities, and fosters innovation. Every child, regardless of background, disability, or identity, has a fundamental right to quality education. Research consistently shows that students with disabilities in inclusive settings have better academic outcomes than those in segregated environments.

Inclusive classrooms expose all students to diverse perspectives and experiences, which helps them develop stronger social skills, empathy, communication, and collaboration. In fact, students in inclusive settings have demonstrated increased empathy and lower anxiety and depression. A more inclusive school fosters a culture of patience, respect, and peer support, where people of all abilities, backgrounds, and learning styles work and live together. Inclusive education teaches children to navigate a complex, varied world with thought and compassion.

In the Industrial Age model of education, atypical and marginalized students did not have their needs met, and were often pushed out of the mainstream of the one-size-fits-all classroom. Society today insists that it is not okay to not meet the needs of traditionally marginalized students. With the new tools and strategies made available to us in the Information Age, it is both expected and possible to track students individually, honoring their unique differences and personalized learning preferences. Authentic instruction and assessments provide for all students to connect into learning and demonstrate their growth, much in the way metrics for the profession must account for the wide range of pathways to success.

The question an equity index must measure is, “Are historically marginalized students thriving in these new systems, not just surviving?” To answer this in the affirmative, education must move away from aiming for the middle, the typical student, and provide for a wide range of orientations to learning, backgrounds, experiences and abilities. This requires the use of qualitative data to measure progress, in addition to quantitative data:

- How are students demonstrating growth over a period of time?
- Who are the marginalized and diverse learners, and how are we meeting their needs?
- What are their genuine interests?

The answers to these questions track progress in implementing equitable education practices.

The Belonging Index

In a more inclusive society, education transformed must ensure that all students feel a sense of identity and belonging within the school community, as a reflection of the larger community. This is vital for students' mental health, academic success, and future civic engagement. It fulfills the fundamental human need to feel valued and included in one's community, which is crucial for healthy development. When students feel like they

belong, they are better equipped to build healthy relationships and navigate the world as engaged and empathetic citizens. A strong sense of belonging in the school environment directly impacts a student's educational outcomes and well-being. When students feel accepted and respected, their motivation, engagement, and attendance increase. We should not be quick to punish and change how we address students who violate expectations for behavior. Restorative justice projects hold students accountable while providing alternative ways to positively engage and regulate feelings so that they do not feel rejected or banished. In addition, holding community circles to enlist student input on their experience of belonging helps us keep a finger on the pulse of the school community. Feeling connected to teachers and peers serves as a protective factor against loneliness, anxiety, and depression, especially for underrepresented students and students of color. Inclusive learning communities encourage empathy, communication, and collaboration as students learn to work with and appreciate peers from different backgrounds.

Student's sense of belonging extends beyond the schoolyard and shapes their future interactions and contributions to society. Schools act as a "rehearsal space" for democratic participation. A strong sense of belonging early on predicts future involvement in community activities, volunteering, and public affairs. **Strong** connections within families, schools, and communities help young people build resilience and manage stress throughout their lives. This social capital also equips them for navigating social relationships and becoming active, informed citizens. The mental and behavioral health benefits of belonging persist long after graduation. Promoting a sense of belonging in public schools creates civic connection and commitment, which is crucial for a diverse society. By embracing differences and building collective strength, schools can help students combat prejudice and work toward a more inclusive and respectful world.

The question a belonging index must answer is, "Do students feel seen, valued, safe and happy?" To measure the degree to which these things exist, we must first build relationships across staff and students to create a rich climate of belonging. This necessitates the use of anecdotal data to document its status and progress being made:

- Do we accommodate multiple cultures, rather than one dominant culture?
- Does the faculty composition reflect that of the community?
- How well do students willingly participate in school life beyond the classroom?

The answers to these questions paint a picture of the sense of belonging that is in place.

The Agency Index

Feeling a sense of agency is crucial for student academic, emotional, and social development, both in school and in life. To do this, education transformed must shift from an exclusive focus on the formal curriculum to include more emphasis on life skills and empowering them in their learning. When students feel they have control over their learning and their future, they become more engaged, motivated, and resilient. Educators facilitate this by modeling how to be a learner, discussing both their learner strengths and where they can strengthen themselves as learners. They need to have a voice and choice in their learning; they become active participants rather than passive recipients of information. Agency invites them to set goals, track their own progress, and see challenges as opportunities for growth rather than limitations. They learn that their abilities can be developed through effort and practice. By taking charge of their learning journey, students develop critical skills like time management, perseverance, and problem-solving, helping them navigate difficulties and become more resilient. Successfully navigating their educational path builds a student's belief in their ability to achieve their goals. This self-confidence, or self-efficacy, enables them to take bigger risks and persist through setbacks. An environment that values student voice and choice also makes students feel respected and heard. This increases their sense of belonging, which is foundational for growth and for feeling safe enough to take risks.

Student agency is not just for the classroom; it equips young people with the essential skills for navigating an ever-changing world. By learning to make decisions and be accountable, students develop the mindset and capabilities needed for future challenges in their careers and personal lives. Giving students meaningful roles in their school communities helps them see themselves as capable, impactful individuals who can contribute to a better world. By having a say in classroom policies and activities, students learn to navigate and contribute to a democratic environment. They understand that their voice matters and can be used to effect positive change. An unpredictable future requires individuals who can think independently and adapt to complex, changing environments. Agency helps students develop these skills, preparing them to respond thoughtfully to future challenges.

The question an agency index must answer is, “Can students articulate their goals and act on them?” To measure the degree to which these things exist, we must first build relationships across staff and students to create a rich climate of belonging. This necessitates the use of anecdotal data to document its status and progress being made:

- Measure student engagement: How do they participate, speak up, and volunteer?

- How well do students advocate for themselves and their peers?
- Do they launch and lead active campaigns to help make a difference in the community?

The responses we collect indicate how far along we are in empowering students.

The Impact Index

Measuring impact is the ultimate metric for schools, as it informs improvements, ensures accountability, and provides students and families with information to make informed decisions. Tracking student journeys both in school and after graduation offers a comprehensive view of how well we prepares students for their future, career, and life. Early and ongoing assessment, such as monitoring grades, attendance, and behavior, helps schools identify struggling students before they fall too far behind. Interventions like tutoring or counseling can then be implemented to help these students get back on track. By disaggregating in-school metrics like grades and graduation rates by student demographics, schools can uncover and address achievement gaps among different groups. Targeted strategies can then be developed to ensure all students have equitable opportunities to succeed. When students are involved in assessing their own progress, they develop critical thinking skills and take more ownership of their learning. This process reinforces an academic mindset and increases engagement.

Standardized tests and graduation rates offer only a limited view of our effectiveness. Tracking long-term outcomes, such as employment rates, earnings, and manageable debt, gives a more complete picture of how an education translates to a successful life. To accomplish this, we must connect with students while they are with us and build relationships through which they share how they are doing, while in our charge and as adults. Post-graduation data helps us understand if our programs are relevant to society and its future. This feedback can guide curriculum updates to ensure graduates are equipped with the skills employers demand. By sharing transparent data on post-graduation outcomes, schools can empower prospective students to make informed choices, influencing their decisions on which career paths they pursue. Reliable data on student success is also critical for our accountability to our community. A strong track record of successful alumni can attract more students, strengthen alumni engagement, and improve employer relationships, ultimately boosting the institution's reputation.

The question an impact index must answer is, “Are students contributing meaningfully to their community and learning environments?” To assess this in our students, we need to demonstrate what impact looks like and sounds like so they can make things happen for themselves and their community, acquiring the life skills to successfully advocate for

their own success. This requires us to document both short-term and longer-term evidence of how education aids student growth and success:

- Are students able to stand on their own and lead their learning?
- Where do students go in their lives one year after graduation? 5 years? 10?
- What does the data tell us about students landing entry-level STEAM work?

This data builds the baseline and the arc of impact of education transformed.

A Valid and Reliable Transformation

Assessing whether education meets the needs of future society requires a holistic and long-term perspective that goes beyond traditional metrics like test scores. An effective educational system prepares students not just for specific jobs, but for a world of rapid technological, social, and environmental change, and a future-ready education system prioritizes skills that complement, rather than compete with, technological advancements like AI. Success is measured by how well students demonstrate:

- **Adaptability and resilience:** The ability to navigate change, recover from setbacks, and be flexible in uncertain times.
- **Complex problem-solving and critical thinking:** The capacity to analyze information objectively, identify assumptions, and arrive at sound, ethical judgments.
- **Creativity and initiative:** The skills to generate innovative solutions and take initiative, which are increasingly valued in the modern workplace.
- **Social and emotional intelligence:** Skills like empathy, collaboration, and leadership that help individuals work effectively with others.
- **Lifelong learning:** Cultivating curiosity and the agility to acquire new skills continuously throughout a career.

In addition, education transformed addresses social and economic inequality by providing high-quality learning opportunities for all students, regardless of background, measuring student success through a broader lens than just grades and test scores, accounting for engagement, social-emotional development, and diverse learning styles. While the future of work is uncertain, education transformed prepares a workforce that can adapt to changing demands by responding to employer needs, instilling the skills to

create solutions and solve problems, and tracking the career paths of students post-graduation.

This new iteration of education must be flexible, adaptable and responsive to change, effectively incorporating new tools like AI, virtual reality (VR), and online platforms to improve learning and access, employing blended and hybrid learning models to cater to different student needs and new learning formats, providing ongoing educator professional learning, and tracking longitudinal data over time. Moving forward, evaluating education's success requires a transition from using static, standardized tests to a more dynamic, multi-faceted approach using lagging metrics, such as civic engagement rates, adult health and happiness, and career advancement to assess our long-term impact in meeting the needs of future society.

16 Value-Added Points to Develop in the Next Draft based on Educator Input

What is worth keeping and measuring from past practice?

How adults will ensure that students aren't put in performative or unsafe positions. Some mentions of structures to make participation safe, authentic, and sustainable would strengthen this vision.

How feedback loops use metrics to cycle back into teaching practices. The roadmap outlines what good instruction is, but it stops short of addressing how teachers will know that learning is translating into student growth, equity, and belongingness. Teachers thrive on knowing their efforts matter. What does that feedback loop look like?

Connect each metric to its larger purpose, whether it's about learning, belonging, or future readiness. That way, everyone sees the "Why".

How educators track their own growth journeys with examples of portfolios, peer coaching cycles and rubrics that help teachers envision how to make their progress visible.

Develop a more distributed leadership model that uses mentorships and PLCs to co-design curricula and guide policy conversations with formal leaders. See the Teacher powered school movement - <https://www.teacherpowered.org/>

Community engagement is described well for schools, but less as part of teacher professional learning. Embed learning opportunities with families, elders, and local organizations will strengthen cultural responsiveness.

While equity is named, the practices lean more toward inclusion in spirit than in guardrails. Marginalized families, multilingual communities, and students without economic or digital access could still be sidelined. Share explicit strategies for representation, access supports, and anti-tokenism.

Qualitative and street data are rightly elevated, but the framework stops short of addressing how these become measures of progress. Add how indicators and review cycles demonstrate real change beyond symbolism.

Discuss strategies for navigating controversy, mediating conflict, and creating psychological safety when challenges arise.

The focus on the local is an incredible strength. The roadmap slightly underplays how district, state, and federal policy constraints can shape and limit what communities can decide. Add how grassroots energy to systems-level levers translates to more durable change.

Focus on systems transformation, both the scalability of innovation and the ecosystem of partnerships necessary to fully integrate and embody this kind of learning, citing how universities, employers, nonprofits, and governments from the local to the global can and must work together to seat the learner at center.

This is a wonderful document. I would like to see it address scalability in relation to the following:

- Funding models that support flexibility and innovation.
- Policy reforms for assessments, accreditation, and teacher licensure.
- Competency, micro-credentials, and AQ indexes (how do these interface with higher education admissions, workforce pipelines, and global comparability?)
- What structures ensure validity, reliability, and portability of new forms of credentials?
- How to prevent inequities in recognition (e.g., “badges” from elite schools valued more than others)?

Address the realities of teacher workloads. Teachers are described as “learning architects” and “mavericks,” but the roadmap underplays some considerations that could really bolster it if it were to meet them head-on:

- Practical workload: Managing AI tools, portfolios, co-created rubrics, and continuous pivots requires significant time.
- Wellbeing supports: Mental health, community care, and protections against burnout for educators themselves.
- Career pathways: How teachers’ evolving roles are recognized and rewarded over time.

Develop the path forward for teacher and leader capacity, specifically:

- professional learning (how adults should be trained and supported to use new tools and pedagogy) and
- leadership models (how principals, district A-teams, and policymakers can shift to empower, rather than block innovation efforts).

What are the next steps for putting the roadmap into action?

DRAFT