

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

Panel Three Summary: Schools as Incubators

Watch the Recording: January 23, 2025

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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.

