



ASCD
WHOLE CHILD
NETWORK™

THE LEARNING COMPACT
RENEWED

WHOLE CHILD FOR THE WHOLE WORLD





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A Letter from the Commission on the Whole Child Cochairs

Stephanie Pace Marshall and Hugh B. Price

In 2006, ASCD took a bold and even prescient step when it issued a call to action and convened the Commission on the Whole Child to redefine the learning compact. In 2007, ASCD's Whole Child Initiative was launched in order to "change the conversation about education from a focus on narrowly defined academic achievement to one that promotes the long-term development and success of children."

A dozen years ago, we cochaired the ASCD Commission on the Whole Child. In 2007, the commission issued its pathfinding report, *The Learning Compact Redefined: A Call to Action*. Today, we can truly proclaim that the conversation about what constitutes a successful student, school, and education has changed.

Issued in the eye of the storm over high-stakes tests, tough academic standards, and stiff accountability for educators and students, the ASCD report clearly arrived years ahead of its time, challenging and shifting the dominant national narrative and context of learning and schooling at the time. Largely defined by the assertions and goals of both *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983) and the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, titled No Child Left Behind, the narrative of learning and success focused primarily on accountability for prescribed academic standards and structural systems reforms. Yet it was truly prescient in arguing that the fundamental role of education is to nurture the whole child and foster personalized engagement. The commission contended that the prevailing focus on

one-size-fits-all education has marginalized the uniqueness of our children and eroded their capacity to learn in whole, healthy, creative, and connected ways. The commission envisioned a new learning compact that situates children and their learning needs at the center of every education program and resource decision. If anything, the core tenets of the whole child philosophy espoused by the ASCD commission resonate more powerfully today than they did in 2007.

Fast forward more than a decade and voices like the Aspen Institute's National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development have advanced a compatible, if not identical, view of the essence of schooling. As the introduction to its report noted, "To reach a child's mind, we must be concerned for the whole person." The introduction continues: "The promotion of social, emotional, and academic learning is not a shifting educational fad; it is the substance of education itself." Clearly, what was set in motion by ASCD in 2006 has now become the central grounding for educational transformation as the commitment of our renewed learning compact.



ASCD's Position on the Whole Child

For more than a decade, ASCD has advocated for education systems that support holistic development so that each child is healthy, knowledgeable, motivated, and engaged, and has a solid foundation for long-term success. A whole child education requires that teachers, schools, families, communities, and governments work together to ensure that



Each student enters school **healthy** and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.



Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally **safe** for both students and adults.



Each student is actively **engaged** in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.



Each student has access to personalized learning and is **supported** by qualified, caring adults.



Each student is **challenged** academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

Foreword

In 1981, United States secretary of education T. H. Bell created the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The commission was charged with “examining the quality of education in the United States and to make a report to the Nation and to him within 18 months of its first meeting.” In 1983, the commission published *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, which opened with the following:

All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgement needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself.

Some 37 years later, educators and education thought leaders find ourselves grappling with the very same, if not an even greater, challenge of delivering on this promise—and it’s not for lack of valiant effort. We’ve invested heavily in textbooks, reading fluency, standards-based education, standardized testing, evaluations, curriculum and instruction, instructional technology, and research. What we haven’t done yet is craft and solidify a shared vision for our approach to education that will provide the critical framing from which to align our assets and efforts by providing a coherent path forward.

This vision must be broad enough to ensure that we are designing for the future and, at the same time, it must be clear enough so that everyone dedicated to improving education knows exactly what we are engineering for and how we can best achieve the vision. *The Learning Compact Redefined*, a report written by the ASCD Commission on the Whole Child in 2007, was an admirable first step to focus the conversation about teaching and learning on the holistic needs of every child. Now, with *The Learning Compact Renewed*, we have an opportunity to harness our collective effort; galvanize a strong commitment to doing what’s right for kids; and, ultimately, set our country and the world on a path to a bright and prosperous future.



Introduction



“If we concentrate solely on academics and on narrowly measured academic achievement, we fail to educate the whole child. We short-change our young people and limit their future if we do not create places of learning that encourage and celebrate every aspect of each student’s capacity for learning. We can do more, and we can do better.”

—*The Learning Compact Redefined* (ASCD, 2007)

We are at a crossroads in education today. After several decades of education reforms focused on narrow measures of student success, more and more educators, students, parents, and community members are saying, “Enough is enough.” Education is the cornerstone of participatory democracy and a key for igniting economic development and personal success in a global marketplace. It is also our best hope for devising solutions for the myriad problems threatening the sustainability of our planet and the diverse people, plants, and animals who call it home. The knowledge, skills, values, and mindsets that will allow children to flourish and contribute great things to local and global communities address cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and behavioral aspects of development.

An education system that best serves our students, our communities, our countries, and our world needs to place equal value on these domains of human development and learning—in words (e.g., mission statements, stated curriculum goals) and deeds (e.g., changes to teaching practice, school resources, government funding streams).

There can
be no keener
revelation of a society’s
soul than the way
in which it treats
its children.

Nelson Mandela

ASCD has been at the forefront of this important conversation about realigning classrooms, schools, communities, and governments to support a whole child approach to education. We remain committed to advocating for and supporting schools as they embark on the important and urgent work of putting the student at the center of the education system and intentionally aligning resources to meet their unique, multiple needs.



We are reinvigorated by a recent surge of commissions and organizations locally, nationally, and internationally that recognize the importance of this holistic vision of education. For example, the Aspen Institute’s National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development released the 2018 report *A Nation at Hope*, a culmination of input from researchers, educators, youth, parents, and community partners across the United States that provides recommendations for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers on how to educate the whole child.

Additionally, in 2019, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization with 36 member nations, launched the OECD Learning Compass 2030 as a framework to navigate students toward future well-being. This framework highlights an array of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and transformative competencies—representing physical, mental, social-emotional, and cognitive domains of learning—as foundational for children’s ability to “fulfill their potential and contribute to the well-being of their communities and the planet.”

Teachers, however, cannot do this work alone. It will continue to take a whole community effort of educators, district leaders, community organizations, governments, parents, and students to support schools as places where each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

“There is a striking confluence of experience and science on one point: Children learn best when we treat them as human beings, with social and emotional as well as academic needs. As one teacher put it, ‘I don’t teach math; I teach kids math.’ To reach a child’s mind, we must be concerned for the whole person.”

A Nation at Hope





The Whole Child Compact: A Decade into the Work

In 2007, the Commission on the Whole Child published *The Learning Compact Redefined: A Call to Action*. In the words of commission cochairs Stephanie Pace Marshall and Hugh B. Price, this report provided “the impetus for educators, policymakers, parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders to change the conversation about learning and schooling from reforming its structures to transforming its conditions so that each child can develop his strengths and restore his unique capacities for intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual learning.”

ASCD has worked hard to fulfill the commitment of ensuring each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Over the past decade, the organization has been at the forefront of whole child initiatives that have led to changes in policy and practice.

Whole Child Programs and Resources

Since the launch of the Whole Child Initiative, ASCD has created an array of resources to support educators in understanding, advocating for, and implementing a whole child approach to education. Over the years, these have included the Whole Child Blog, Whole Child Podcast, Whole Child Newsletter, Healthy School Report Cards, Whole Child Snapshots, and publications such as *Educating the Whole Child: An Action Tool* (2008) and *Making the Case for Educating the Whole Child* (2012). ASCD has also hosted five Whole Child Symposium events on topics such as teacher leadership, poverty and education, and the engagement gap.

In 2011, ASCD released the [Whole Child Indicators](#). Each tenet has 10 indicators that delineate how

schools should embed that tenet in their school climate and culture, curriculum and instruction, community and family, professional development and capacity building, and assessment. The indicators were followed by the launch of the [ASCD School Improvement Tool](#) in 2012, a free, online needs assessment for schools and districts that measures the Whole Child tenets and indicators. Additionally, and as a result of our commitment to the whole child, ASCD in collaboration with the



“Too many of our children are growing up unprepared to participate in our increasingly diverse society. Many have inadequate knowledge about the diverse racial and ethnic groups that now make up our country, and they are not gaining experience in how to live and work successfully in a society where soon no racial or ethnic group will constitute the majority.”

—Pedro Noguera (2019)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model (WSCC) in 2014. This model, now the leading school–community health and well-being model in the United States, incorporates the components of a coordinated school health program with the tenets of a whole child approach to education and provides a framework to address the symbiotic relationship between learning and health.

Two programs have provided insight into how schools are using the tenets and indicators to implement a whole child approach. First, from 2009 through 2018, the Vision in Action: The ASCD Whole Child Award annually recognized schools that have gone beyond a vision for educating the whole child to actions that result in the development of the whole child: a child who is health, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Multiple ASCD state affiliates have launched similar awards, including Arkansas, Alabama, Illinois, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Wisconsin.

Second, the Whole Child Network of Schools pilot study illustrated the effect of a whole child approach on students’ social-emotional and behavioral outcomes. From 2012 to 2015, 10 schools in the United States, including one in Guam, were selected to participate in a school improvement process focused

on the five whole child tenets and their indicators that involved strategic training and support from ASCD. An independently commissioned research study found that the schools that participated in the network saw increased attendance rates, decreased suspensions and disciplinary actions, a greater value in family and community partnerships, staff and students perceiving that their voices were more respected, and positive changes across the five whole child tenets.

Whole Child Policies

ASCD has successfully advocated for state and federal policies that support the whole child. Multiple states have passed resolutions in support of a whole child approach to education, including Illinois (2012), Arkansas (2012), Rhode Island (2013), Washington (2017), and Texas (2017).

At the federal level, ASCD first introduced the Whole Child Resolution to Congress in 2010, and it was successfully passed by both houses in 2014. During the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ASCD successfully advocated for accountability systems that assess students beyond math and reading, use multiple measures, and include nonacademic factors (e.g., school climate, school safety, parent engagement). The 2015 passage of the

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides states and districts greater flexibility in how they measure student success. Whereas ESSA's predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) explicitly focused accountability on math and reading achievement, ESSA requires states to include a nonacademic indicator under their accountability plans. As of 2018, 12 states have explicitly incorporated ASCD's Whole Child approach or the WSCC model into their ESSA plans.

Whole Child Partnerships

ASCD has not accomplished all this alone. It has worked in partnership with a multitude of organizations to make a whole child vision a reality for each and every student. Between 2007 and 2017, 75 domestic and international Whole Child Partners have signed on to support the movement. Partners include an array of nongovernmental organizations in the education and noneducation sector and educator associations. The breadth and depth of partners in itself reflects the whole child approach of bringing education and community organizations together in order to best serve the needs of students.

A Compact Not Quite Fixed

Although important strides have been made in advancing a whole child approach to education

over the past decade, an urgent need remains to continue and expand this work. As was the case a decade ago, we live in a global economy driven by both competition and collaboration across borders. The jobs of tomorrow don't yet exist. As technological advances in automation and artificial intelligence make today's jobs obsolete, the jobs of tomorrow will require more complex cognitive and social-emotional skills, such as critical thinking, complex problem-solving, innovation, creativity, the ability to work with others, and emotional intelligence.

Schools today and the local communities they serve are even more diverse than they were a decade ago, and this trend is only projected to continue. Half of U.S. students enrolled in public schools today are minority. One in four students is Hispanic; one in six students is black; one in 20 is Asian/Pacific Islander (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Some 4.6 million U.S. students are classified as English language learners, with one in four speaking a language other than English at home (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

As was the case 10, 20, and 65 years ago (*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 1954), students of color and those living in low-income communities attend schools with fewer resources and higher proportions of underqualified teachers, which leads to real gaps in economic and civic engagement opportunity (Putnam, 2015). Pedro Noguera (2019) explained that most children of color today experience



“double-segregation” by race and class, resulting in the poorest and most disadvantaged students concentrated in particular schools. He argues, “Even though it is widely known that many of these schools struggle because they are overwhelmed by the wide variety of problems that frequently afflict poor families and communities (including violence, homelessness, hunger, and trauma), education policymakers often ignore and fail to address these issues or the academic challenges that accompany them.”

We are a world in motion. The movement of people, products, services, and ideas and the rise of unforeseen disasters, both natural and manmade, are affecting students and communities at a pace even more dizzying than a decade ago.

A whole child approach to education remains a multifaceted solution to help youth address the multitude of issues that they face at home, at school, and in their communities. It calls for challenging students and engaging them in learning experiences that will prepare them for the future of work and societal changes; creating healthy and safe environments where students feel physically and emotionally nourished, respected, and treated with dignity; and caring for *each student* by supporting their unique academic, social, and emotional needs. Reiterating the words of the ASCD Commission on the Whole Child in *The Learning Compact Redefined*: “We do not argue for a diminished focus on academics. We do call for increased attention to the conditions that evidence makes clear are essential to learning. We know that students are more

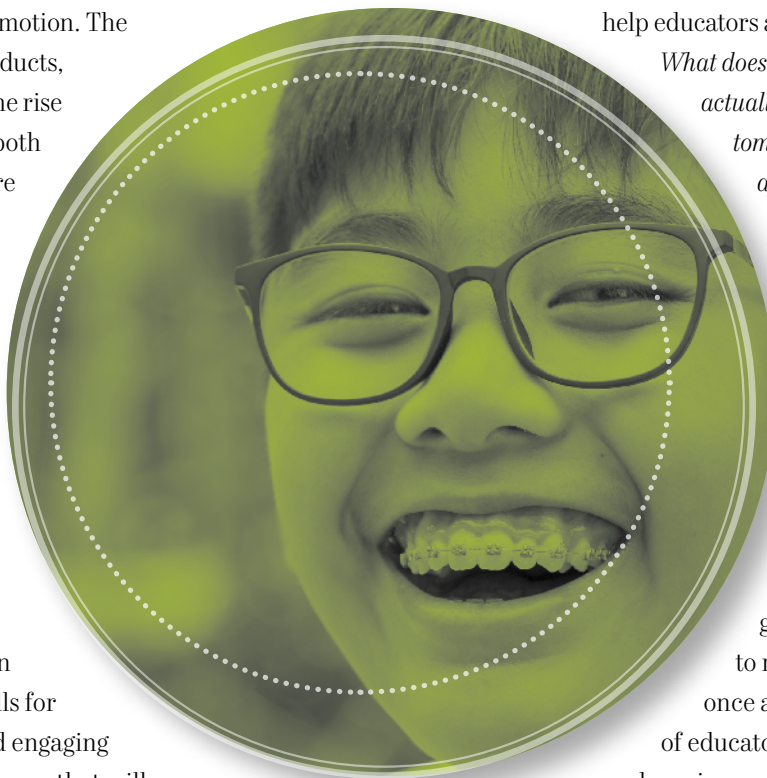
successful when they experience a broad, challenging, and engaging curriculum; when they feel connected to their school and broader community; when they are healthy physically and emotionally; and when schools are safe and trusting places.”

The broader education community may agree with these words. Now, educators urgently need to know how to operationalize a whole child approach in their classrooms and schools. At ASCD, we are diligently working to provide frameworks and tools that help educators answer vital questions:

What does a whole child approach actually look like in my school tomorrow? How will this approach specifically help the students in the specific community where I work? And how will this approach support and affect our students, communities, and societies into the future?

As the adage goes, it takes a village to raise a child. We once again ask that village of educators, families, health and service providers, businesses, community organizations, and policymakers to continue to join us and we forge ahead with the compact we made a decade ago to ensure the whole and healthy development of each child, everywhere.

We must continue to work to align policy, practice, and resources so that the learning and development of each and every child supports their holistic health, motivation, engagement, knowledge, and agency to actualize into their own best self and contribute to the betterment of the wider world.





The Whole Child Tenets

A whole child approach seeks to address the distinctive strengths, needs, and interests of students as they engage in learning. It recognizes the importance of and interrelationships among all areas of development and designs school policies and practices to support them. These include access to nutritious food, health care, and social supports; access to strong relationships; educative and restorative disciplinary practices; and learning opportunities that are designed to activate and engage students, while supporting their motivation and self-confidence to persevere and succeed. All aspects of children's being are supported in an effort to ensure that learning happens in deep, meaningful, and lasting ways.

—Linda Darling-Hammond

The research is resoundingly clear: A holistic approach to education improves students' academic success and overall well-being. As *The Learning Compact Redefined* (2007) emphasized, "When students' basic physiological and psychological needs (safety, belonging, autonomy, and competence) are satisfied, they are more likely to become engaged in school, act in accord with school goals and values, develop social skills and understanding, contribute to the school and community, [and] achieve academically" (p. 12).

Children's physical and mental health, sense of safety, and social-emotional development are all related to their cognitive development (*Learning Compact Redefined*, 2007). Learning interventions focused on the development of social-emotional skills (e.g., self-regulation, self and social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making) improve social-emotional

skills and students' attitudes, behavior, stress levels, depression, and achievement. School belongingness and self-efficacy are associated with perseverance and academic success. Environments where students feel safe, valued, and capable regardless of their cultural identities free up students' cognitive loads and allow for greater academic growth. Conversely, extreme stress, anxiety, fear and other physiological concerns can impair cognitive capacity. Because physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development is mutually reinforcing, a whole child approach to education meaningfully integrates each of these dimensions into the educational environment.

Who should be responsible for fostering this learning environment? The research is clear on this point as well. It takes a whole community to educate the whole child. A child's cognitive brain development does

not turn off when she steps outside the school doors. A child's emotional capacity is not shaped solely by his immediate caregivers. "Children do not develop and learn in isolation, but rather grow physically, socially, emotionally, ethically, expressively, and intellectually within networks of families, schools, neighborhoods, communities, and our larger society" (ASCD, 2007, p. 11). As such, *The Learning Compact Redefined: A Call to Action* called on entire communities—educators; parents; businesses; health and social service providers; arts professionals; recreation leaders; and local, state, and federal policymakers—to "redefine learning to focus on the whole person" (p. 8).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the Whole Child Tenets

Five tenets underpin our whole child approach: healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. These five tenets are based on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. According to Maslow, "Human needs arrange themselves on

hierarchies of pre-potency. That is to say, the appearance of one need usually rests on the prior satisfaction of another, more pre-potent need." This hierarchy illustrates the foundational requirement of one need in order to successfully strive and obtain the next. At the base of the pyramid are physiological needs, followed by the need for safety. These are prerequisite for love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Each is predisposed upon the formation of the other.

The ASCD Whole Child tenets of healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged reflect Maslow's hierarchy. If a child is not healthy, then how can that child be expected to be engaged or challenged in classroom activities? If a child does not feel physically or emotionally safe, then how can that child truly be expected to think freely, collaborate with others, explore, and reach new heights? One tenet does not need to be perfected before the next one is addressed. Focusing on only one, however, may hamper or unwittingly restrict a child's growth.





HEALTHY

Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

This includes addressing the physical and mental dimensions of health through school culture, physical education facilities and environments (i.e., spaces for kids to run around), wrap-around health services (e.g., mental health, dental services), food programs. It also includes addressing the well-being of staff members.

Physical health is strongly connected to academic performance. Healthy dietary and physical behaviors are associated with higher grades, standardized test scores, attendance, and graduation rates, whereas unhealthy diets and substance use are associated with lower grades and test scores (Centers for Disease Control, 2017). The 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that students with higher academic grades were more likely to eat breakfast seven days a week, eat fruits and vegetables at least once per day, drink one or more glasses of milk a day, engage in physical activity for at least an hour a day for five or more days a week, sleep

eight or more hours a night, and see a dentist regularly. Students scoring higher academically are also less likely to watch television for three or more hours a day, play video games or on the computer for three or more hours a day, drink soda, use tobacco products, and drink alcohol.

There is a clear connection between a child's health, cognitive development, and educational outcomes. Yet, national youth health trends in the United States suggest that many students are coming to school with health risks. More than 13 million youth live in food-insecure households in the United States (Child Trends, 2016), while nearly 20 million Americans live in food deserts; that is, geographic areas with limited access to healthy, affordable food such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains (United States Department of Agriculture, 2017). Furthermore, according to the Centers for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (2017):

- 51.4% of high school students did not participate in 60 minutes of exercise on five or more days per week.
- 17.7% seriously thought about suicide.
- 20% were bullied on school property, and 15% were electronically bullied.
- 25.6% hadn't seen a dentist in the last 12 months before the survey.
- 72.7% did not get eight or more hours of sleep each night.

In addition, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2008) reports that one out of four children attending schools has been exposed to a traumatic event that can affect learning or behavior, including abuse, neglect, violence, death of a loved one, accidents, having a loved one incarcerated, bullying, life-threatening health situations, and acts or threats of terrorism.

Schools and communities can work together to support the physical and mental health of children.

HEALTHY INDICATORS

1. Our school culture supports and reinforces the health and well-being of each student.

2. Our school health education curriculum and instruction support and reinforce the health and well-being of each student by addressing the physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of health.

3. Our school physical education schedule, curriculum, and instruction support and reinforce the health and well-being of each student by addressing lifetime fitness knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills.

4. Our school facility and environment support and reinforce the health and well-being of each student and staff member.

5. Our school addresses the health and well-being of each staff member.

6. Our school collaborates with parents and the local community to promote the health and well-being of each student.

7. Our school integrates health and well-being into the school's ongoing activities, professional development, curriculum, and assessment practices.

8. Our school sets realistic goals for student and staff health that are built on accurate data and sound science.

9. Our school facilitates student and staff access to health, mental health, and dental services.

10. Our school supports, promotes, and reinforces healthy eating patterns and food safety in routine food services and special programming and events for students and staff.

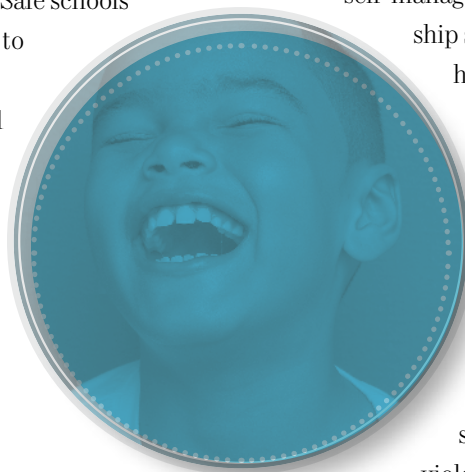
SAFE

Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.

A safe school environment adheres to physical safety regulations and protects students from bodily harm. It is also a place where students are emotionally safe, where students feel a sense of belonging, welcomed, and cared for; a place that validates and respects students and staff from all backgrounds and in whatever ways they identify: race, ethnicity, gender, native language, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and more. Safe schools also foster in students the skills needed to effectively manage behavior and form healthy relationships. Social-emotional learning, character education, conflict resolution, and restorative justice fit squarely under this tenet.

Unfortunately, turning schools into physically and emotionally safe havens for students remains an uphill battle. School lockdown drills and the pervasive threat of gun violence have become a horrific new normal in elementary, middle, and high schools. Since the school shooting at Columbine High School in 1999, more than 210,000 students across 213 schools have experienced gun violence in schools. According to school safety experts Amy Klinger and Amanda Klinger (2018), during the 2015–16 school year, 1,267 bomb threats were directed at schools, and in the 2016–17 school year, more than a dozen threats of violence against schools were made *every day*.

Safety remains a particular concern for non-white students, exceptional students, and students who identify as LGBTQ (Kutsyuruba et al., 2015). The National Center for Education Statistics (2017) found that in the 2014–15 school year, 20.8% of students ages 12 through 18 reported being bullied at school. The most common basis for harassment and bullying in schools is based on sex (41%), race (23%), sexual orientation (16%), disability (11%), and religion (8%).



Disciplinary policies that criminalize students adversely affect students of color. Black students make up 15% of student enrollment, yet they make up one-third of all students arrested at school or referred to law enforcement (Sparks & Klein, 2018). Perhaps it is unsurprising that, according to the Gallup Work and Education Poll, one in four parents fear for their child's physical safety while at school (Jones, 2017).

Promising practices for making schools emotionally safe for students abound. At the classroom level, explicit teaching, practicing, and modeling of social-emotional competencies (e.g., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making) helps make schools safer places by improving socially competent behaviors and reducing aggression, bullying, disruptive behavior, and antisocial behaviors (Osher et al., 2010). At the school level, a positive school climate with supportive norms, structures, and relationships reduces instances of bullying, violence, punitive disciplinary action, and absenteeism (Thapa et al., 2013) while proactive behavior management, caring relationships, and restorative justice programs that use non-punitive approaches to handling conflict rather than punitive measures such as suspensions, expulsions, or arrests contributes to a safe school climate and decrease in harmful behaviors (Fronius et al., 2016; Kutsyuruba et al., 2015; Wang & Degol, 2016). As stated by the National Commission for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (2018), "When schools embrace educating the whole student, young people learn the skills and character that help them take responsibility for their actions and treat others with respect and compassion; this leads to safer, better organized, and more purposeful learning environments for everyone" (p. 38). We know what works when it comes to making schools safe. It is a matter of having the drive to apply what works.

SAFE INDICATORS

1. Our school building, grounds, playground equipment, and vehicles are secure and meet all established safety and environmental standards.

2. Our school physical plant is attractive; is structurally sound; has good internal (hallways) and external (pedestrian, bicycle, and motor vehicle) traffic flow, including for those with special needs; and is free of defects.

3. Our physical, emotional, academic, and social school climate is safe, friendly, and student-centered.

4. Our students feel valued, respected, and cared for and are motivated to learn.

5. Our school staff, students, and family members establish and maintain school and classroom behavioral expectations, rules, and routines that teach students how to manage their behavior and help students improve problem behavior.

6. Our school provides our students, staff, and family members with regular opportunities for learning and support in teaching students how to manage their own behavior, and reinforcing expectations, rules, and routines.

7. Our school teaches, models, and provides opportunities to practice social-emotional skills, including effective listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, personal reflection and responsibility, and ethical decision making.

8. Our school upholds social justice and equity concepts and practices mutual respect for individual differences at all levels of school interactions—student-to-student, adult-to-student, and adult-to-adult.

9. Our school climate, curriculum, and instruction reflect both high expectations and an understanding of child and adolescent growth and development.

10. Our teachers and staff develop and implement academic and behavioral interventions based on an understanding of child and adolescent development and learning theories.

ENGAGED

Each student is actively engaged in learning and connected to the school and broader community.

What does engagement look like? Teachers use active learning strategies such as cooperative, project-based, and inquiry-focused approaches that pique students' interests, experiences, and curiosities. Communities partner with schools for internships, service-learning projects, field trips, and other experiential learning opportunities that allow students to develop and practice the competencies they will use in the workforce and in civic life. Student voice is respected and amplified through democratic decision-making processes. In short, students see the purpose and relevancy of their education as it is connected to real-world issues that students face and real-life dreams to which students aspire.

Engaging students in the curriculum and engaging the curriculum in the community has a positive

ripple effect. Higher levels of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement are associated with higher academic performance and with positive health indicators, such as lower levels of depression and substance use (Wang & Degol, 2014). Conversely, when students are not motivated and engaged in learning, there is an increased risk of academic under-performance and dropping out. Unfortunately, the state of student engagement leaves much to be desired. According to recent Gallup surveys of more than 5 million of students in grades 5 through 12, just under half of students reported being engaged with school: 29% reported being "not engaged" and 24% stated that they were "actively disengaged." Furthermore, student engagement seems to decline as students get older: three-quarters of 5th graders reported high levels of engagement as compared to only one-third of high school students (Hodges, 2018). All students deserve to attend a school that makes learning relevant to their lives and holds meaning beyond the classroom walls.



ENGAGED INDICATORS

1. Our teachers use active learning strategies, such as cooperative learning and project-based learning.
2. Our school offers a range of opportunities for students to contribute to and learn within the community at large, including service learning, internships, apprenticeships, mentorships, and volunteer projects.
3. Our school policies and climate reinforce citizenship and civic behaviors by students, family members, and staff and include meaningful participation in decision making.
4. Our school uses curriculum-related experiences such as field trips and outreach projects to complement and extend our curriculum and instruction.
5. Each student in our school has access to a range of options and choices for a wide array of extracurricular and cocurricular activities that reflect student interests, goals, and learning profiles.
6. Our curriculum and instruction promote students' understanding of the real-world, global relevance, and application of learned content.
7. Our teachers use a range of inquiry-based, experiential learning tasks and activities to help all students deepen their understanding of what they are learning and why they are learning it.
8. Our staff works closely with students to help them monitor and direct their own progress.
9. Our school expects and prepares students to assume age-appropriate responsibility for learning through effective decision making, goal setting, and time management.
10. Our school supports, promotes, and reinforces responsible environmental habits through recycling, trash management, sustainable energy, and other efforts.

SUPPORTED

Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults.

Caring relationships are the cornerstone of positive school experiences. Without getting to know each of our students as complete human beings—their likes and dislikes, family and friends, interests, favorite activities, and developmental levels—how can we properly make curricular, instructional, and school improvement decisions that meet students where they are and provide the right supports that will help them climb up the ladder of academic and social development? All adults in the school contribute to creating a nurturing environment for students: teachers, school counselors, administrators, nurses, and support staff. These relationships extend beyond adult–student relationships. Relationships between schools and families are vital in supporting each child’s unique learning and development needs (Wilder, 2014).

A cumulative body of research points to numerous beneficial outcomes of supportive relationships for youth of all ages. For example:

- A meta-analysis of 99 studies covering preschool through grade 12 on how teacher–student relationships influence student school engagement and achievement (as measured by grades and test scores) found that for primary and secondary school students, positive relationships were associated with higher levels of student engagement and achievement, and negative relationships adversely affected engagement and achievement. Effects were even greater for samples with secondary school students, ethnic minority students, and low-SES students (Roorda et al., 2011).
- A meta-analysis of 119 studies, including more than 350,000 students from preschool through higher education in 2,400 schools, found that positive teacher–student relationships were associated with holistic learning (Cornelius-White, 2007).

“When children believe that the adults around them care about who they are and what they know and what they can do, they are more likely to respond to what those adults value and take those values as their own.”

—*The Learning Compact Redefined*

- A longitudinal study of 2,616 students from 23 high schools found that declining support from classmates and teachers as students advanced to higher grade levels was associated with worsening self-esteem and depression (De Wit et al., 2011).

The Aspen Institute National Commission for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (2018) aptly summarized brain research on this topic: “Positive, supportive relationships and rich stimulating environments spur the brain to form, prune, and strengthen connections that promote further development and learning. A lack of social and emotional support and stimulation can hamper development and growth” (2018, p. 19). These studies suggest that supportive relationships benefit all students and especially help adolescents, minority students, and students from low-income backgrounds.

The student-to-school counselor ratio in the United States remains higher than the 250-to-1 ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association. Nationally, the ratio is 464-to-1, and as of the 2015–16 school year, only five states and territories have approached the recommended ratio: Hawaii, New Hampshire, Vermont, Wyoming, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (American School Counselor Association, 2016). The silver lining to this is that students can be cared for by any adult in the school, and that taking the time to get to know a child and ask how a child is doing doesn’t cost a thing.

SUPPORTED INDICATORS

1. Our school personalizes learning, including the flexible use of time and scheduling, to meet academic and social goals for each student.

2. Our teachers use a range of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment tasks to monitor student progress, provide timely feedback, and adjust teaching-learning activities to maximize student progress.

3. Our school ensures that adult-student relationships support and encourage each student's academic and personal growth.

4. Each student has access to school counselors and other structured academic, social, and emotional support systems.

5. Our school staff understands and makes curricular, instructional, and school improvement decisions based on child and adolescent development and student performance information.

6. Our school personnel welcome and include all families as partners in their children's education and significant members of the school community.

7. Our school uses a variety of methods across languages and cultures to communicate with all families and community members about the school's vision, mission, goals, activities, and opportunities for students.

8. Our school helps families understand available services, advocate for their children's needs, and support their children's learning.

9. Every member of our school staff is well qualified and properly credentialed.

10. All adults who interact with students both within the school and through extracurricular, co-curricular, and community-based experiences teach and model prosocial behavior.

CHALLENGED

Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

As was the case a decade ago, the skills needed for success in the workforce and in civic life are complex, requiring critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, flexibility, and cross-cultural skills. The OECD Learning Compass 2030 articulated: “As trends such as globalisation and advances in artificial intelligence change the demands of the labour market and the skills needed for workers to succeed, people need to rely even more on their uniquely human capacity for creativity, responsibility and the ability to ‘learn to learn throughout their life’” (2019). In today’s global economy where goods, services, and ideas travel frequently and speedily across borders, interpersonal skills, higher-order cognitive skills, the ability to work with people from diverse cultures, and multilingualism remain in high demand (Tichnor-Wagner & Manise, 2019).

In parallel surveys of 500 business executives and 500 hiring managers conducted in 2018 by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, more than 75% of respondents rated the following skills as “very important skills” when hiring: the ability to effectively communicate, critical thinking/analytical reasoning, ethical judgement and decision-making, able to work effectively in teams, able to work independently,

proactive with ideas and solutions, and able to apply knowledge and skills to real world settings (2018). These human-centered and cognitively complex skills are best taught through a well-rounded education that builds disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge through the humanities, STEM, and the arts.

According to the Civic Enterprises and Everyone Graduates Center at the School of Education at John Hopkins University 2018 report, between 2002 and 2016 the number of high school graduates in the United States rose to an all-time high of 84.1%, in part due to increased graduation rates of students of color. The number of students participating in rigorous coursework and taking and achieving on the corresponding exams has risen as well. Yet, graduation gaps remain too prominent for students of color, students from low-income households, English language learners, and students with disabilities. As the report found: “Young people who do not graduate high school are less likely to be employed, earn less income, have worse health and lower life expectancy, are less likely to be civically engaged, and are more likely to be involved with the criminal justice system and require social services. Without some training beyond high school, securing a stable, well-paying job is very unlikely.” Beyond the economic imperative, challenging students to develop a range of cognitive and social-emotional skills is vital for participation in civic society, where communities filled of people with different backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives must come together to find solutions to complex challenges.

Over the past decade, the need to embrace and implement a holistic education has not diminished, nor has ASCD’s focus changed. Although important strides in implementing a whole child approach to education have been made, important work remains. We must continue to view schools and communities as partners in educating and nurturing the whole child. And we must continue to work until each child, in each community around the world receives an education that supports their individual physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development.

CHALLENGED INDICATORS

1. Each student in our school has access to challenging, comprehensive curriculum in all content areas.
2. Our curriculum and instruction provide opportunities for students to develop critical-thinking and reasoning skills, problem solving competencies, and technology proficiency.
3. Our school collects and uses qualitative and quantitative data to support student academic and personal growth.
4. Our curriculum, instruction, and assessment demonstrate high expectations for each student.
5. Our school works with families to help all students understand the connection between education and lifelong success.
6. Our curriculum and instruction include evidence-based strategies to prepare students for further education, career, and citizenship.
7. Our extracurricular, co-curricular, and community-based programs provide students with experiences relevant to higher education, careers, and citizenship.
8. Our curriculum and instruction develop students' global awareness and competencies, including an understanding of language and culture.
9. Our school monitors and assesses extracurricular, co-curricular and community-based experiences to ensure students' academic and personal growth.
10. Our school provides cross-curricular opportunities for learning with and through technology.



Whole Child for the Whole World

The communities in which children live today are increasingly more interconnected with the rest of the world. Global economic production and consumption chains, human migration, and the ease of Internet connectivity, and the proliferation of social media have broken down geographic and cultural boundaries. Our local actions—what we purchase or sell, who we vote for, how to get to work—can have ripple effects around the world. Likewise, an action that takes place halfway around the globe can affect our lives. As our world becomes smaller, local communities face challenges such as famine, violent conflicts, climate change, economic inequality, and human rights that threaten the health and safety of children and require complex global solutions. Therefore, an important facet of attending to the health, safety, engagement, and support of a child, and to ensuring that a child is challenged academically, is infusing the mindsets, knowledge, and skills needed to thrive in an interconnected world.

In this second decade of the ASCD Whole Child approach, we understand that teaching students how to engage in the world will help them both in their careers and in life pursuits. It will also help our communities understand that they are part of the broader world and have a role to play in working for the common good. Abraham Maslow, 26 years after introducing his Hierarchy of Needs, added a sixth stage: self-transcendence. As Maslow defined it, “Self-transcendence seeks to further a cause beyond the self... This may involve service to others, devotion to an ideal (e.g., truth, art) or a cause (e.g., social justice, environmentalism, the pursuit of science, a religious faith), and/or a desire to be united with what is perceived as transcendent or divine” (in Kotko-Rivera, 2006).

In Maslow’s hierarchy, youth develop their potential to be the best they can be and to assist

others—to serve humanity. Improving oneself is admirable, but improving oneself for the betterment of those around you is desirable. We define this stage as *altruism*—reaching beyond oneself to take actions that improve one’s own community and communities around the world. We see altruism as a vital output of a whole child education.

In 2007, ASCD declared that that our education system should serve the whole child so that each child, in each community, is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. As we look toward 2020 and beyond, we affirm that a fundamental part of educating the whole child asks education systems and communities to ensure that each child is an active maker and shaper of the world they will inherit. This stage is about helping each and every child recognize that they are part of, and inextricably connected to, the rest of the world and

empowering them to make our world a better place for themselves, one another, and the planet. To do anything less is to shortchange our youth and their futures.

The following series of essays is from invited authors and leaders in education around the world. Together they highlight our urgent need for a more human approach to education for the betterment of all.

Learning to Live for Universal Well-Being

Ross Hall, Jim Playfoot, and Gabriel Rshaid

To thrive in the modern world, everyone must be equipped and inclined to live for universal well-being. This approach requires us to develop a wide range of knowledge, skills, and ways of being. To do so, we must provide empowering learning experiences inside and outside of school. Achieving this status will mean transforming every neighborhood into an empowering learning ecosystem. Educators have a crucial role in leading this change.

The VUCA World

We live in a time of unprecedented volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). Children born today enter a world that is radically different to that of their parents—a world of relentless challenge and fleeting opportunity.

For centuries, human life has been ordered by tradition, routine, and repetition. But this order has now given way to perpetual disruption and a life in which it is increasingly difficult to thrive simply by following the rules or by doing what we have always done.

To thrive in today's world, people need to think for themselves and continually seek to create a better world.

Distributed Power

Despite a widening polarization of economic wealth, the established idea of small elites governing the rest by way of rigid hierarchies and monolithic institutions is

now being challenged by highly decentralized, widely networked, shape-shifting organizations that distribute everything and grow from the edges. This is an age of mass empowerment.

And, increasingly, people *want* to be empowered. People want autonomy and self-expression, to be creative participants, and to be heard and respected as valuable contributors. Cultures of mass participation and do-it-yourself are spreading fast.

To fit in—and thrive in—the modern world, everyone must be ready to take responsibility, take the lead, form a team, and create value together.

Hyperconnectivity

This is also an age of hyperconnectivity. Fueled by explosions in human population, urbanization, and globalization and by a proliferation of new technologies, we have more choice than ever before and a greater ability to affect others. Never before in human history have so many people been so interconnected, so interdependent, and so widely influential. Today, more than ever, even the smallest of actions can have a fast and vast effect on the world.

A child born today inherits an unprecedented responsibility for our *collective* well-being. To thrive in this new world, a person must become empowered to *be well* and *do well*. With every person's well-being inextricably entwined with the well-being of all, each of us must become empowered to manage our own personal well-being while also contributing positively to our shared social, economic, and planetary well-being. In other words, everyone must become a changemaker—someone who is equipped and inclined to live for the common good.

Living for a better world involves understanding the deeply interrelated human and environmental problems that undermine our collective well-being—problems that are, today more than ever, everyone's problems. Changemakers sense that we live



in a world that is plagued by suffering, hunger, thirst, poverty, inequity, polarization, loneliness, depression, anxiety, fear, violence, slavery, unemployment, corruption, resource depletion, climate change, pollution, and extinction. And they do something about it.

Living for Universal Well-Being

Living for universal well-being means acting from moment to moment to optimize personal (physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual), societal (economic, social, political), and planetary (ecological/environmental) well-being together.

Living for universal well-being involves paying attention and sensing the ever-changing realities of the world.

It involves solving problems—and creating opportunities.

It involves taking responsibility, taking the lead, and taking positive action.

It involves thinking for yourself, finding your agency, and expressing your purpose.

It involves working with others to better the world.

It involves adapting and bettering yourself.

“Tis not too late to seek a better world!”

—*Ulysses*, Lord Tennyson

This is, indeed, a better world. That instead of protecting our learners from the negative effects of a flat, globalized, infinitely interconnected world in constant flux, we should give them wings to embrace the dazzling opportunities that this better world—this better future—offers.

- It is the best time in history to be alive.
- We have access to all accumulated human knowledge, anywhere and all the time.
- We can learn anything we wish.
- We are connected with the entire world. Distances have been forever obliterated.
- We can travel anywhere without leaving our seats.
- We are live witnesses to injustice, unfairness, and inequality, making us sensitive and empathic with others' plights. And we have the tools to mobilize and respond.
- We can learn by playing and have lots of fun while doing so.
- We catch glimpses of other cultures and understand what makes us and our communities truly unique.
- We can be in touch and interact with our friends and loved ones all the time, regardless of where they might be.
- We can trust that the good guys will win because our lives are out there, online, for everyone to see.
- We can share what we know, literally, with the rest of the world.
- We can pursue our dreams and our passions. Uncertainty, this same future that is unknown, frees us to seek lives that we love.
- We have a voice. We can make ourselves heard to denounce injustice and to celebrate beauty. To join a cause and indulge in our whims. To express ourselves in our uniqueness.
- We can overcome war, hunger and poverty, we can cure illnesses, and we can solve the problems that have plagued us since the beginning of time.
- We educators will be called upon, once more, to make the best of this brave new world and guide our students to become the generation that we've been waiting for.

It is about the way you live your life, your intentions, and the decisions you make from moment to moment.

Living for universal well-being involves being empathic and self-aware; being curious and open-minded; being growth-minded; being imaginative and creative; being conscientious, courageous, and resilient; being thoughtful, ethical, and wise.

Becoming Empowered to Live for Universal Well-Being

Becoming empowered to live for universal well-being is a lifelong process of becoming equipped with and inclined to use a wide array of profoundly interconnected knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and states of being—potentialities that we too often oversimplify and overlook. Academic attainment alone is not enough. Living for universal well-being requires the empowerment of the whole child for the whole world.

The extent to which we become empowered to live for universal well-being—the extent to which we develop our knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and ways of being—is determined by the experiences we have in life: the environments we spend time in; the people we spend time with; and the things we sense, feel, think, and do.

There are many actors who influence the experience—and therefore the empowerment—of young people: families, health and social workers, community and religious leaders, policy makers, employers, advertisers, culture makers, and more. In order to provide everyone with empowering learning experiences, all these actors must work together with educators and schools. We need to weave these actors together into empowering learning ecosystems.

The Role of the Educator

Educators have a special opportunity to redefine the idea of success in growing up, to directly empower their learners to live for universal well-being, and to weave the whole community into a thriving learning ecosystem. And with the advent of increased connectivity

and new technologies like augmented reality, artificial intelligence and big data, educators are redefining the way we teach and learn and are better equipped than ever to weave learning ecosystems.

Educators are vital agents of change. Many educators intuitively understand that we now have an unprecedented opportunity to transform learning experiences, to weave learning ecosystems, and to empower everyone to live for universal well-being.

A Paradigm Shift in the Purpose of Education

Yong Zhao

The purpose of education, more precisely an education system, is to ensure opportunities for all children to discover and develop their unique profiles of passion and talents so that they can become healthy human beings and productive members of a society. A healthy human being is one who is physically fit, psychologically sound, socially capable, and economically productive. A productive member of a society is one who is capable of contributing to the betterment of local, national, and global communities, creating values to others locally and globally, and actively participating in defending and improving social institutions that protect rights of all individuals (especially the marginalized ones) and promote justice.

This purpose is not new, but it has often been split into multiple conflicting ones. There has always been a divide between development of children as unique individuals and members of societies because



it seems that the interest of individuals conflicts with the interests of communities. There has also been the divide between attending to the whole child and imposing the same content on all children in order to prepare them for careers because it seems that the individual passions and talents do not fit the demand of jobs that require similar qualifications. Furthermore, there has been the divide between fostering social, emotional, physical, and psychological well-being and transmitting core academic knowledge.

The divides may have been enforced out of necessity in the past, but given the transformational changes in recent years, it is possible to remove the divide and have one unifying purpose of education in the future. The divide between developing individuals and citizens can be at odds with each other when societies demand uniform thinking, homogenous beliefs and values, and identical abilities and knowledge for all citizens, while individuals possess different interests and passions, diverse beliefs and values, and distinct talents. However, this divide is removed when a society cherishes differences, values diversity, and respects individuality. Today, diversity and differences are not only an ideal pursuit but, more important, a necessity for any society to advance in the face of technological advances that are increasingly rendering sameness, homogeneity, and uniformity in thinking, beliefs, and abilities obsolete. Talent diversity in human societies is as vital to social prosperity as biodiversity is to ecological sustainability. In other words, an education system that aims to enhance and enrich individual differences is at the same time creating a better society with diverse citizens.

The same logic applies to the divide between attending to the whole child and imposing standardized similar content on all children. As societies require more diverse talents and ways of thinking, uniquely talented students with different interests and passions are more economically productive. When smart technologies displace human beings with identical skills from repetitive mechanical jobs, people with unique, jagged profiles of qualities are in demand and rewarded. Thus,



an education that aims to cultivate individual uniqueness is also one that produces productive workforce for the society.

Similarly, the divide between attending to the social, psychological, emotional, and physical well-being of children and transmitting core academic content should be removed because there should be no uniform core academic content for all children. The negative effect of excessive academic pressure on children's well-being is well documented. Such pressure may have been necessary in a narrowly defined meritocracy when only a narrow spectrum of skills, knowledge, and talent is deemed as "merit." In such a meritocracy, children have to compete for limited opportunities of social mobility and thus have to endure the anxiety and pressure resulting from fierce competition. Additionally, education systems built to serve a meritocracy artificially inflate the value of a limited number of pathways and opportunities, such as elite colleges, which adds to the pressure, luring children to join the academic horse race. But in reality, especially today, every talent and interest is valuable and worthwhile in a society that demands diversity. There are resources widely available for children to develop expertise in areas they are interested in, and there is no need for them to be bounded by one pathway to social mobility or economic prosperity. Children can pursue their dreams and interests; when they do so, they do not need to compete with others. Instead, they seek to create value for others and collaborate with others. In other words, we want people to have complementary talents and skills. As a result, children pursue their unique pathways and content. When they do what they are interested in and talented in, when the learning is intrinsically motivated, they experience flourishing and joy, rather than pressure and anxiety.

The unifying purpose of education to develop both individuals and citizens, attending to both the whole child and to economic productivity. Ensuring well-being and abilities necessary for social mobility and economic prosperity calls for a new paradigm of education. Underlying the new paradigm of education is the recognition that uniqueness is much more



important than sameness and diversity is far more valuable than homogeneity.

This new paradigm of education requires complete rethinking about every aspect of the entire education system, from the definition of quality to accountability measures, from curriculum to pedagogy, from learning settings to evaluation and assessment, and from selection to credentialing. The goal of the existing paradigm is about ensuring all students achieving the same outcomes. All aspects of the education system have been built around that goal. Therefore, this new paradigm requires transforming the education system so that it becomes capable of perceiving and educating children as unique individuals.

Systems Change for the Whole Child

Dennis Shirley and Andy Hargreaves

How do we create systems that will enable all young people to be successful and fulfilled in their learning and their lives?

One answer is top-down change. This approach can be effective when goals are simple and results are transparent. Improving test scores in literacy and math, or boosting high school graduation rates, have been attained when systems have given them pride of place in their reform strategies and backed this up with strong support.

Top-down change can also be effective when educators are in systems characterized by official or *de facto* one-party rule. Cuba, Vietnam, the People's Republic of China, and Singapore are well-known for their

high-ranking academic achievement results on international tests. So, there are times when top-down leadership really works, at least in terms of conventional metrics.

But when a goal is more complex—such as educating the whole child—then top-down change cannot deliver. It's just too hard for those at the top of the school system to keep in touch with everything that is going on in every classroom and every community to meet every child's needs. No leader can know everything about everything.

But this doesn't make bottom-up change the obvious alternative either. Exceptional schools that break the mold and beat the odds make media headlines over and over again and tempt us into thinking many more schools would be like them if government just gets out of their way. But they're exceptional. That's the point. At the same time, getting out of people's way gives them freedom to do bad things as well as good ones, like narrowing the curriculum down to the basics in an over-tested atmosphere where everyone is relentlessly driving children upwards in a race to the top.

So, what is the best way to move forward?

One evidence-based strategy to shift the system toward educating the whole child to engage with the whole world is "leading from the middle" (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2018). Leading from the middle means three things. First, it is about putting young people's learning and well-being—not test scores, curriculum coverage, or accountability—at the center of everything. Second, teachers and other educators work together in multidisciplinary teams across and within schools in order to help stretch and support every child to be successful and fulfilled. Last, leading from the middle expects and enables educators to take the initiative and lead together for the children they share in common and know best. In this sense, leading from the middle is not just a level that connects the top of the system to the bottom in policy and program implementation. It's a way for leaders in the system to get closer to every child's learning and development.

What does leading from the middle look like in practice? In the United States, educators in the Northwest Rural Innovation for Student Engagement

(NW RISE) network link students in remote locations with one another via technology to do peer editing and coaching in language arts and mathematics classes. Leading from the middle here is also manifested in how the educators themselves work across their schools to develop cross-school curricular units. Across more than 30 schools, an activated profession that is stimulated and guided by NW RISE helps to create lasting, sustainable improvement and transformation in young people's learning and development (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018).

In Ontario, Canada, educators no longer focus on data-driven decision-making but now identify and support what they call "students of mystery" or "students of wonder" who are both wonderful and also make their teachers wonder why they struggle in some aspect of their learning or development. Interdisciplinary teams of educators bring together their knowledge of these students so that they truly know them and are able to make effective interventions on their behalf.

In Scotland and Wales, school districts based their strategies on practices that were once pioneered in England and have formed themselves into collaboratives. These collaboratives take shared responsibility for improved student equity, each one takes the lead on a particular aspect of school improvement, and "challenge advisors" push the districts to pursue this work together in earnest.

In each of these cases, educators pay increased attention to the actual learners who are in front of them every day and ask themselves what can be done to help these children to engage with the whole world. This kind of leading from the middle respects policymakers at the top and grassroots advocates for reform as well, but recognizes that in the end, it is the classroom teacher, supported





by school and district administrators and auxiliary staff, who is responsible for improving students' learning and well-being. The top plays an inalienable role in promoting leadership from the middle by establishing a vision and broad direction of travel, keeping close contact with local regions and districts, allocating and reallocating resources to support cross-school and cross-district initiatives, and being prudent about the number of initiatives that it generates of its own.

When examining whether the education system is working to address the whole child, the key question educators need to ask themselves now isn't "Is the system better, more coherent, or more efficient?" or "Are the performance results going up?" Instead, educators should ask, "Are we collectively making the world, including the lives of our children in it, significantly better?", and "How are we supporting the people closest to our students to bring this about?"

Why Now?

Rebecca Winthrop

Today, perhaps more than ever before in human history, education is a key determinant of an individual's place in society. Education is a major determining factor in social mobility and economic status for individuals, communities, and, by extension, countries. How long a child attends school and the quality of their learning experiences influence their lives' trajectory. Social mobility and economic inequality are on the rise globally. The ability for education systems to provide all people, both the poor and the rich alike, with the competencies and skills they need to thrive in life, work, and citizenship is a crucial lever for a more just world.

But skills inequality is just half of the story. Education needs to provide all children, even those accessing good schools today, with the ability to navigate an increasingly uncertain future. Young people need educational experiences that develop their capacity for lifelong learning, and to do this, they need schooling to focus on the full breadth of skills. Academic rigor is no longer sufficient, and in some cases such a focus can be detrimental if it reduces the emphasis on

learning how to learn, how to communicate, how to problem solve and how to develop your own self. This is, therefore, a problem of not just skills inequality but also of skills uncertainty – of knowing what to teach.

These twin problems of skills inequality and skills uncertainty plague most education systems around the globe. Yet unfortunately, many reforms merely focus on the former. Even if implemented successfully, reforms focused on skills inequality prepare youth and the communities where they live for a world that has already passed them by.

We can do better. But in order to do so, we must tackle the skills uncertainty debate. We must determine what we want our youth and our societies to learn and achieve from an education system. It is time to leapfrog over reform efforts that have not succeeded and learn from global missteps.

A rapid, nonlinear progress that accelerates the current pace of change is needed. In many ways, such leapfrogging in education is a mindset shift. In order to more rapidly get us where we need to be, we need to think much differently about our existing approaches. This includes changing what and how children learn to transform both the teaching and learning process.

Not Just Why, But Also How

Esther Care

The focus on teaching these more holistic skills—educating the whole child—must also take into account how we can do so. These transferable skills are important in school and life. They are adaptive; relevant across discipline areas, in the workplace, and in the

community; and draw on both cognitive and social competencies. The development of these skills is continuous.

Capabilities that are adaptive and nonroutine are difficult to define and even more difficult to teach and assess. What is of most interest is whether individuals can apply the skills in unfamiliar contexts and in response to unfamiliar situations, and so we refer to them as “transferable skills.” Education in the past has been dedicated mainly to transmission model of teaching, wherein information deemed relevant to traditional learning goals is made available to students. Knowledge is prioritized, so content is specified, and then learning is assessed through tests that identify whether the content has been memorized.

Demonstration of transferable skills acquisition is not as easy to capture in a standardized way as is memorized content. Skills may be developed through many different types and styles of learning experiences, and they will similarly be demonstrated in a multiplicity of ways. This implies that there is no one single teaching or assessment technique that will be most effective. The best strategy for developing and integrating these skills will need to be determined by the teacher—the person who knows their students best—although guided by a standardized course or curriculum. The teacher will need to become more of a child and youth developer and less of a content knowledge dispenser.

Effective teaching will need to include expertise in a broad range of teaching techniques. These may include explicit teaching, modeling, listening, dialogue, and cocreating or presenting curricular materials in a way that will naturally develop skills. This will inevitably shift the structural dynamics in the classroom between students and teachers, and among students.

When education systems embed these skills as aspirational outcomes in their vision and mission statements, it indicates only awareness of the importance of these learning goals. Implementation is another story. Teachers need to be able to teach the skills, which implies that they have sufficient understanding of what the skills are. Assessment divisions and bureaus must understand the nature of the skills sufficiently to be able

Knowledge is
power. Information
is liberating.
Education is the
premise of progress,
in every society,
in every family.

—Kofi Annan
World Bank Conference, 1997



Two of the most important transformations needed are in what children learn—that is, schooling must focus on a breadth of skills, including but going beyond academics—and how children learn—that is, schooling must put students' curiosity at the center of the teaching and learning process and make room for hands-on, playful, and experiential learning.

—*Leapfrogging Inequality: Remaking Education to Help Young People Thrive*
by Rebecca Winthrop with Adam Barton and Eileen McGivney

to develop authentic measures of the skills, which also implies that they have sufficient understanding of the skills.

Implementation of a shift in learning goals toward transferable skills requires four levels of action. First, we need to understand these skills: how they develop, how they are demonstrated, and how to nurture them. Second, decisions need to be made by educators about curricular structures that can carry the skills. Third, teachers need to be equipped to nurture and develop student competencies within discipline-specific teaching and learning. Fourth, teacher training institutions need to consider new approaches to teacher training, in which the teacher as both learner and guide is acknowledged.

Adoption of such a perspective needs to acknowledge that we do not have solutions to big problems. In order to encourage our youth to explore options and possible solutions, they need to experience educative activities where solutions are not known, where there are many pathways, and where generation of ideas and testing of those ideas is paramount. Both preservice and inservice teacher training needs to acknowledge this global shift, get some practical research underway in the higher education and teaching communities, and rethink perspectives on subject-specific teaching.

Teaching with and for the World

Dennis Shirley and Pak Tee Ng

Those now being educated will have to do what we, the present generation, have been unable or unwilling to do: stabilize world population; stabilize and then reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, which threaten to change the climate, perhaps disastrously; protect biological diversity; reverse the destruction of forests everywhere; and conserve soils... They must begin the great work of repairing, as much as possible, the damage done to the earth in the past 200 years of industrialization. And they must do all this while they reduce worsening social and racial inequities. No generation has ever faced a more daunting agenda.

—*Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect* by David Orr

Educators around the world are confronting a tsunami of change forces today like never before. The prospects for us all are changing with breathtaking speed as a result of new technological capacity, population mobility, political turbulence, economic volatility, and environmental fragility. The very definition of what it means to teach, live, and learn with others in ways that promote the common good is transforming before our eyes.

To meet these interrelated challenges, educators can no longer focus just on their immediate location or even solely their own country. Rather, the world now needs educators with global reach who understand the nature of human interdependence in a world characterized by the acceleration of change. Educators today are tasked with preparing a rising generation to seize the opportunities available to secure peace, enhance prosperity, and promote better understanding and harmony among different peoples.

The knowledge, skills and aptitudes need for such a challenge are different from the content knowledge and basic education skills focused on over the past quarter century. Rather the skills in need are those too frequently and mistakenly described as “soft skills,” “21st century skills,” or skills taught via the hidden curriculum. The role of the school and the educator must become more attuned to the complexity of current global and social challenges. These skills unfortunately have received inadequate attention from educators in recent years due to a relentless academic press by policymakers on measurable results in literacy, math, and science. Fixation with raising achievement results in these areas has resulted in a global narrowing of the curriculum away from knowledge, skills, and aptitudes that previously been considered essential for the young to acquire the requisite skills of good citizenship. We therefore call for a reconsideration of the importance of a rigorous and balanced curriculum with new priority to be given to those disciplinary and cross-curricular areas that can help the young to understand their

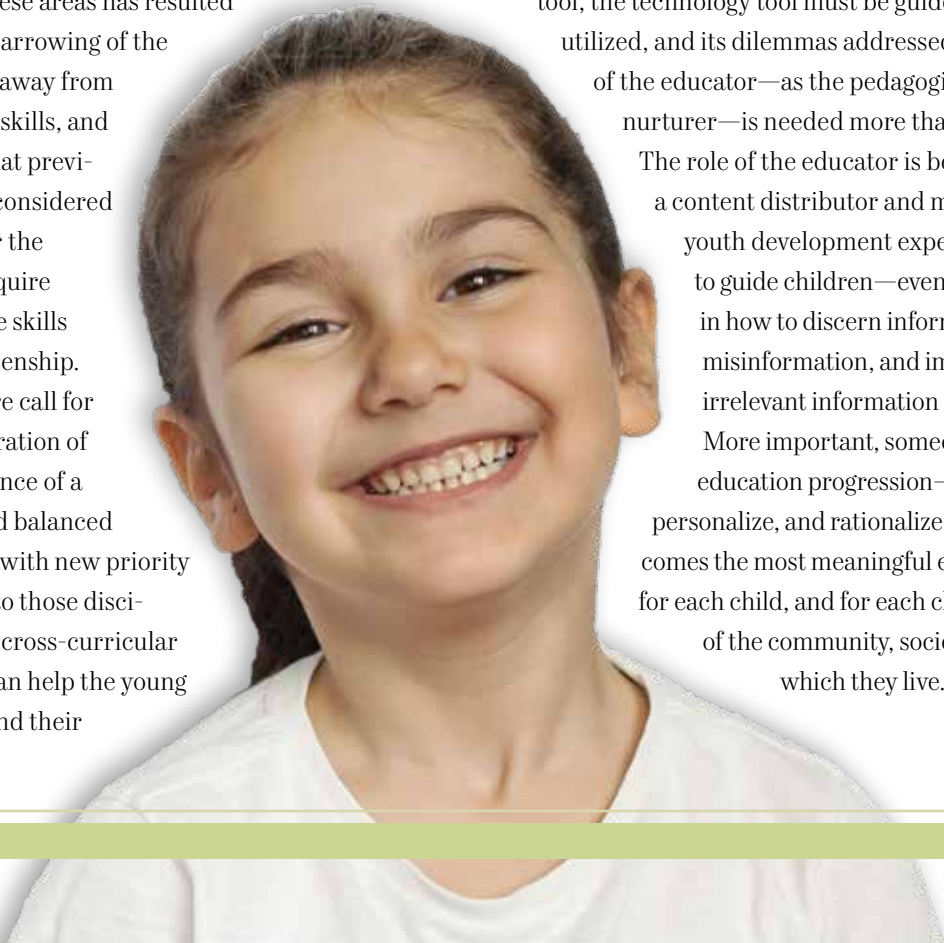
growing responsibility to assume leadership in such areas as environmental stewardship, global citizenship, and cross-cultural engagement and learning.

At the same time, we acknowledge that there are many populations around the world that are seeking reassurance from the challenges of globalization. As educators, we understand that our responsibility is to teach all our students and to address the diverse and legitimate concerns of parents and community members.

In addition to this increase in physical movement between countries and across cultures, we are also witnessing a rapid, almost unbridled growth in the role technology is playing in our societies and into our everyday lives. As such technology—its use, as well as an understanding of its ever-increasing influence and potential—must play a core role in education.

This advent of technology brings a wealth of information to our doorstep—or rather to our laptops and mobile phones. Information is now accessible literally with the click of a button. There are direct and immediate benefits of this availability, spanning from immediate autocorrection to a wealth of content knowledge on myriad of topics and subjects. Yet as with any tool, the technology tool must be guided, its potential utilized, and its dilemmas addressed. As such the role of the educator—as the pedagogical guide and nurturer—is needed more than ever before.

The role of the educator is becoming less of a content distributor and more of child and youth development expert. Someone has to guide children—even foundationally—in how to discern information from misinformation, and important from irrelevant information on the Internet. More important, someone has to craft the education progression—contextualize, personalize, and rationalize it—so that it becomes the most meaningful education process for each child, and for each child in the context of the community, society, and world in which they live.



Students at the Center

Russell Quaglia and Peter DeWitt

Within this paradigm shift toward a whole child approach to education, students play a central role in formulating a whole child education paradigm as cocreators and cocurators of their education. How can schools cultivate an environment where student voice is authentically valued?

Student empowerment is fostered when school leaders and teachers create a school climate that values student voice. This collective empowerment of student voice comes to fruition and thrives when students can share their genuine thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and opinions, and contribute realistic solutions for the good of the whole, in an environment built on trust and respect and where students demonstrate a willingness and ability to listen and learn from others.

Perhaps most important, student voice includes students being responsible for both what they say and what they do. This responsibility encompasses taking action to make a difference beyond oneself.

When student voice is truly present, students are engaged in the following ways:

- They ask questions to strengthen their understanding.
- They offer suggestions to help develop action plans.
- They believe that ideas are stronger in partnership.
- They listen to and learn from peers and adults.
- They reflect, take action, and accept the responsibility that comes with being part of the solution.

Over the course of more than three decades of working with students and educators, we have learned the value of listening to student voices. In the process, we have learned a great deal not only about what is important to the students who are in schools every day, but also about the importance of respect. We have learned that a process that honors the voices of



others simultaneously fosters respect, creates lasting partnerships built on trust, and develops a sense of shared responsibility. With respect as a foundation, every stakeholder in education will be poised to work collaboratively—whether at the school, district, state, or national level—to lead in a united way to improve our education system. In short, student voice in its purest form, where all voices are heard, respected, and valued, will provide a platform for the whole child to mature, thrive and reach their fullest potential.

Unfortunately, we know that not all students feel as though their voices are valued, nor do they feel respected when they enter into school. In schools around the world, students from historically marginalized backgrounds (e.g., indigenous groups, immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities, members of the LGBTQ community) are underrepresented in the curriculum, literature, and everyday classroom discussions. These students often don't see their faces represented in the pictures in the hallways or murals that are on the outside walls of the school. They don't get to learn from curriculum where they see themselves represented, and they don't see themselves represented in books—or if they do, those representations are not always positive or accurate.

If school leaders are to foster school climates that care about equitably empowering students, then they need to make sure that their actions actually match their words. School leaders need to work collaboratively with their school community to make sure that *all* students are represented in the curriculum being taught in schools. We do this by offering stories that have positive depictions of marginalized populations

and engage in conversations regarding the narratives of those students. This begins with gaining an understanding of the different groups that students identify with that make our schools so diverse.

Important enabling conditions make sure all students feel included in school discussions:

- School board policies and student codes of conduct that protect students being bullied or harassed due to their sexual orientation, gender expression, religion, and race.
- Literature where all students see themselves represented.
- Curriculum that is representative of all students in the school community.
- Images and language that students can identify with when they walk in the door.
- Common language that adults use and understand (e.g., LGBTQ, minoritized, underrepresented, etc.)
- Training for the adults in the school so that they understand how to include all students (DeWitt, 2017).

These conditions provide the foundation for schools to be a place where students feel valued and where there is a shared respect of student voice.

We have found in our vast research that students from all backgrounds and underrepresented groups who affirm they have a voice in school are *five times* more likely to be engaged in learning (Quaglia, in press). When students believe they are being heard and influencing decisions, schools become more relevant to their lives. We need to always make sure that we stay relevant to the lives of those students we serve.

Additionally, students have shown us that their voices are incredibly influential during a time of crisis. We have seen students walk out of school in protest of gun violence, budget cuts, and a lack of equity in the facilities where they learn. This gives us hope that we are experiencing a time when students are standing up because they believe they deserve a better education system to prepare them for the future.

However, that should not be the only time their voices are valued. Their voices should influence school choices every day: course offerings, instructional strategies, hiring processes of teachers, development of school policies, lunch menus, and cocurricular opportunities, to name a few. In short, student voice needs to become a natural part of the school experience, whose influence can be observed every day.

Encouraging students to have greater voice in schools and preparing



teachers and administrators to be genuinely open to listening to, learning from, and leading with those voices is the key to meaningful and sustainable whole school change.

We must realize that student voice does not happen in isolation but is dependent on the entire educational community working together to create equity within the learning environment. When the school community displays a readiness and willingness to learn from one another, the following is evident on a regular basis:

- Clear and honest communication
- Ability to learn from mistakes and make adjustments
- Mutual respect and collaboration
- Shared trust
- Belief that students have something to teach adults
- Opportunities for students to make meaningful decisions

We must remember to first listen with an authentic intent to learn from the voices of students, and then lead by taking action with students to cultivate their self-worth, increase engagement, and achieve with purpose as a school community.



The Partnership for 21st Century Learning says that schools should be a place where students focus on the 4 Cs: collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking. We believe there should be a 5th C:

climate. Without a positive and inclusive school climate, students will never feel empowered to participate authentically in the other 4 Cs.

A positive and healthy school climate exists where the voices of all students are recognized, respected, and celebrated because of their diversity. Student voice is not a singular voice but rather a chorus of ideas representing the multiplicity of thoughts, ideas, hopes, and dreams of each and every student.

The potential of student voice to effect change in schools should not be underestimated. Students are unequivocally saying that they want to be heard, valued, and respected. They are not waiting to find exactly the right words or to know all the answers. They are not pausing to assess exactly the “right” time to take action. They want to be empowered, they want to be engaged, and they want to be part of the solution. Adults must join them, lending their own voices and working collaboratively to create an environment underpinned by mutual respect and equity.

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Summary

A SCD's call to action today echoes our first call in 2007. Educators and the public have long agreed that education must both include and go well beyond the academics of reading, writing, and mathematics. Yet for our education system and communities to develop whole children who act to better themselves, their communities, and the whole world, we must act, not talk; act in fundamentally different, not marginally different, ways; and act together as schools, communities, and nations to ensure a deservedly brighter future for our children. We must adopt a new mindset for education, one that sees its role in developing individuals ready to engage in the world and ready to change the world.

We are calling for a simple change that will have radical implications: Put the child at the center of decision making, and design the education system—the resources allocated, the skills students learn and how teachers teach them, and the ultimate outcomes that schools strive for—to ensure each child's success.

We urge action on the policy recommendations in the next section for educators, schools, districts, communities, states, provinces, and nations.



Learning Compact Policy Recommendations



HEALTHY

Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

Educators and Schools

1. Support and reinforce the health and well-being of each student by addressing lifetime fitness knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills.
2. Recognize and identify student and family needs and refer to appropriate resources and community-based services.
3. Teach, model, and advocate for healthy eating and lifestyle patterns for students in the school and across the community.
4. Offer in-school mental health and counseling services.

Local School Districts

1. Collaborate with local health and social service agencies to ensure access to health services, including mental health services, and advocate for on-site staff such as school nurses and counselors.
2. Provide healthy food options for breakfast and lunch and at school-sponsored events and activities.
3. Incorporate physical education programs, daily recess for elementary students, and health education programs into the core curriculum.
4. Provide an environment that enables and supports students and staff in practicing healthy behaviors.
5. Reconsider school schedules to help meet the sleep needs of students.

Communities

1. Collaborate with school districts and health and social service agencies to ensure access to health services for children and their families.
2. Offer incentives for schools to purchase healthy food products.
3. Coordinate community recreation programs with schools to maximize facility usage and to ensure broad and equitable access to those programs and facilities.
4. Adopt the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model as an effective, coordinated school health approach and support schools that promote healthy school communities.

States and Provinces

1. Encourage schools and health and social service agencies to collaborate to provide necessary services to children and their families.
2. Provide incentives for schools to eliminate food and snacks that lack nutrition.
3. Create and fund preschool programs that include health, nutrition, and academic programs for all children.
4. Provide incentives and funding for schools and communities to create healthy school communities.

National Governments

1. Provide incentives for schools and health and social service agencies to collaborate to provide comprehensive services through flexible use of funding programs.
2. Eliminate high-fat, high-sugar, and non-nutritious foods from the federal lunch program.

3. Provide incentives and funding for effective health, nutrition, and school readiness programs.
4. Require schools to have comprehensive plans for fostering healthy school communities.



SAFE

Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.

Educators and Schools

1. Create and promote a school climate that is socially, emotionally, physically, and academically safe.
2. Encourage and advocate for student voice and agency.
3. Teach, model, and provide ongoing opportunities to practice social-emotional skills.

Local School Districts

1. Conduct and publicize regular school climate surveys of students, staff, and parents.
2. Adopt and develop school-based programs that involve students and staff, such as peer mediation and conflict resolution, to ensure a positive school climate.
3. Incorporate social and emotional development into the district's education program.
4. Do not rely on the criminal justice system as a school disciplinary solution.

Communities

1. Collaborate to ensure young people have a variety of safe options for recreational and cultural activities outside of school.
2. Collaborate with districts to support opportunities for student employment, internships, and involvement in community-based activities.
3. Work with the school to establish and ensure safe routes to school for students.

States and Provinces

1. Develop and implement policy that incorporates social-emotional learning into state standards and licensure requirements.
2. Provide resources and incentives for communities to create comprehensive youth development plans that incorporate social and emotional development.
3. Ensure student access to mental health supports and services at every school.
4. Prohibit civilian possession of firearms in or on school property and discourage the arming of teachers.

National Governments

1. Promote and support collaboration between all sectors that serve and support child and youth development, such as education, health, social services, and law enforcement.
2. Provide resources and incentives for communities to create comprehensive youth development plans that incorporate social and emotional development.



ENGAGED

Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

Educators and Schools

1. Use evidence-based practices and strategies that reflect student interests, goals, and learning profiles and actively engage students in their learning and provide opportunities for students to lead their own learning.
2. Support a range of extracurricular and intramural activities for students and encourage them to participate.
3. Infuse inquiry-based, real-world learning across the curriculum to help all students deepen their understanding of what they are learning and why they are learning it (e.g., through examining global

relevance and application of learned content, field trips, service learning, internships, apprenticeships, volunteer projects).

Local School Districts

1. Develop student-centered academic plans and a process for students to provide input throughout their academic careers.
2. Ensure a full complement of extracurricular activities and ensure equitable access.
3. Develop processes for student input and participation in school decision making and governance.

Communities

1. Collaborate with school districts to provide learning opportunities in both schools and the community.
2. Help schools develop extracurricular and after-school activities that incorporate community experiences.
3. Provide opportunities for community-based learning through apprenticeships with local businesses.

States and Provinces

1. Support districts and communities that provide community-based learning experiences for students.
2. Fund comprehensive before- and after-school, and vacation opportunities and ensure access to these programs for all preK–12 students.
3. Provide resources and flexibility for schools and communities to establish school–community programs that encourage out-of-school experiences for students.
4. Create multimetric accountability models that incorporate all subjects, include nonacademic factors, use multiple measures of performance, promote continuous improvement and support, and report community-level data to highlight a shared responsibility for student success.

National Governments

1. Support personalized learning programs and multimetric accountability systems to evaluate student success through a variety of measures.

2. Provides funding and resources for after-school, weekend, and summer programs.
3. Promote locally developed school improvement plans that take local school and district context into account.



Each student has access to personalized learning and to qualified, caring adults.

Educators and Schools

1. Personalize student learning experiences to meet each student's academic, social, physical, and emotional needs.
2. Use a range of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment tasks to monitor student progress, provide timely feedback, and adjust teaching–learning activities to maximize student achievement.
3. Develop positive relationships with students to support and encourage academic, social, and emotional growth.
4. Establish culturally relevant and identity-affirming curricula and learning environments.

Local School Districts

1. Ensure that every student has an adult mentor who is a consistent advisor.
2. Redesign school schedules to ensure adequate time for mentoring.
3. Ensure that funding is sufficient, sustained, and equitably distributed to all schools and for all students.

Communities

1. Collaborate with schools to provide qualified mentors to students.
2. Work with schools to develop out-of-school learning opportunities for students.
3. Work with schools to provide meaningful, community-based learning opportunities and partnerships.

States and Provinces

1. Provide flexible scheduling options for schools to provide mentoring programs.
2. Support and fund professional development for mentors.
3. Provide resources and support for professional development, autonomy, flexibility, and leadership training opportunities that are essential for educators to continue to meet students' ever-changing needs.
4. Ensure that education funding is robust, equitable, and recognized as an investment priority.

National Governments

1. Provide financial incentives and support for community and school mentoring programs.
2. Fund and disseminate information about effective mentoring programs.
3. Provide funding increases to meet the needs of every student—ensuring a well-rounded education, personalized learning, and high-quality teachers and principals.



CHALLENGED

Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

Educators and Schools

1. Provide access to challenging comprehensive curriculum in all content areas with opportunities for students to develop critical-thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills; global and cultural competence; and technology proficiency.
2. Hold high expectations for each student.
3. Prepare students for further education, career, and citizenship.

Local School Districts

1. Develop policies to ensure academic support and customized learning options for both college and workforce preparation.
2. Create flexible pathways to high school graduation.
3. Provide access to rigorous arts, foreign language, and social studies programs.

Communities

1. Collaborate with school districts to provide learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships and internships, outside the classroom.
2. Support flexible pathways to graduation by providing community-based opportunities to demonstrate achievement.
3. Identify and develop community arts resources.
4. Include community-level data in school system report cards to highlight the shared responsibility for student success.

States and Provinces

1. Support educators at every stage of their professional careers—from inservice training to induction, leadership development through retirement.
2. Never use standardized tests alone for high-stakes purposes, and do not rank or rate students, educators, or schools based on test scores.
3. Adopt multimeric accountability systems that support student growth and a well-rounded education.

National Governments

1. Provide adequate and equitable funding to meet the higher expectations set for students and educators as a result of government-imposed mandates and school goals. Investments in special education, educator professional development, and safe and supportive learning environments should be paramount priorities.
2. Support students by investing in and providing accountability and oversight for a coherent education system that develops the whole learner.



A Global Policy Perspective

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015 the United Nations General Assembly ratified 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) to provide a blueprint for advancing peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. Goal 4 was a stand-alone goal focused on education—in particular, a quality education.

In conjunction with Education International, ASCD released a statement in support of this goal that reemphasizes the need for a whole child approach to a quality education:

There are those who argue that the threshold of quality is literacy and numeracy. But the SDGs are a recognition that this definition is insufficient and outdated. Education is not simply a content delivery system; rather, it is a system designed to help all children reach their full potentials and enter society as full and productive citizens. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon set the SDG process in motion in 2012 by declaring that every child must be in school, and the quality of those schools must improve so that students are prepared to be productive citizens, ready to lead the future.

A quality education is one that focuses on the whole child—the social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development of each student regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location. Based on the pillars of providing excellent teaching; utilizing and providing access to developmentally appropriate and effective learning tools; and establishing supportive learning environments, a quality education provides the outcomes needed for individuals, communities, and societies to prosper.

Our ASCD Whole Child Policy Recommendations fit with this global goal and with our call to renew our learning compact focused on the whole child. In turn, we understand that our role as educators requires us to prepare our children for the world that they are part of and the world they will inherit.

Find out more at www.ascd.org/wholechild and join the ASCD Whole Child Network™, a global network of schools focused on the same vision, at www.ascd.org/wholechildnetwork.

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