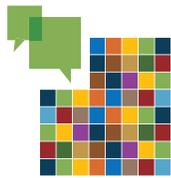


Choosing Your Tomorrow Today



WHOLE CHILD
.....
SYMPOSIUM
.....
The ASCD Whole Child Initiative

A Report on the
Spring 2014 ASCD
Whole Child Symposium

*How Today's
Decisions Will
Affect Our Youth,
Economy, and
Society Tomorrow*





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About ASCD

ASCD is the global leader in developing and delivering innovative programs, products, and services that empower educators to support the success of each learner. Comprising 125,000 members—superintendents, principals, teachers, professors, and advocates from more than 138 countries—the ASCD community also includes 56 affiliate organizations. The nonprofit's diverse, nonpartisan membership is its greatest strength, projecting a powerful, unified voice to decision makers around the world. Learn more about how ASCD supports educators as they learn, teach, and lead at www.ascd.org.

Whole Child Initiative

Launched in 2007, ASCD's Whole Child Initiative is an effort 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. Through the initiative, ASCD helps educators, families, community members, and policymakers move from a vision about educating the whole child to sustainable, collaborative action. ASCD is joined in this effort by Whole Child Partner organizations representing the education, arts, health, policy, and community sectors. Learn more at www.ascd.org/wholechild.



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Choosing
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Introduction

We find ourselves entwined in a global reform conversation with numerous parties taking interest in and, often, control of education processes, policies, and systems. Education is garnering attention and scrutiny from a range of audiences including politicians, media, parents, and private companies. Increased awareness and support for education is undoubtedly a good thing, but the lack of consistent educator involvement in the education reform debate has been disconcerting. It is time to put educators back in front of the education debate.

ASCD's Whole Child Symposium (WCS) is a forum to discuss today's pressing education issues. It aims to elicit varied viewpoints and provide actions that each of us, regardless of our areas of influence, can take to improve education systems, processes, and outcomes. In spring 2014, ASCD hosted its inaugural symposium, a series of in-person and online events in which experts, policymakers, teachers, and students discussed education policies, processes, and practices and their influence on children, societies, and economies in the future.

The 2014 Whole Child Symposium Events

Discussions took place across three events in three separate settings, with each of these events seeking different voices, audiences, and perspectives.

WCS Town Hall

March 16, 2014
Los Angeles, CA

69th ASCD Annual Conference and Exhibit Show

Are we educators or advocates? The town hall introduced the symposium theme and focused on the key words that make up the phrase *Choosing Your Tomorrow Today*.

WCS Live

May 8, 2014
Washington, DC

Knight Studio at the Newseum

The live event elevated the discussion started at the town hall in Los Angeles to a systems and global level.

WCS Virtual

May 14–15, 2014
online

Four online panels collected reactions and action steps for those on the ground: the changemakers.

Background

Everything I'm hearing is making me think ... of a phrase in French that essentially translates to, *"If you don't 'do' politics, then politics will 'do' you."*

—Chris Thunnes

Our Theme: Choosing Your Tomorrow Today

Why this theme? Why *Choosing Your Tomorrow Today*? Because the decisions we make today—for our systems, our schools, and our classrooms—will affect what all of our tomorrows will become. We are, either purposefully or inadvertently, determining our future—as individuals, our economy, and our society—at each step.

What does the theme mean? For most people, their first thought is that it conveys an understanding that what we decide today affects what we become tomorrow. Obviously skills, behaviors, and knowledge learned today increase or decrease the potential for us all to do things in the future. But is there more to this phrase? Can it be parsed out? Take each word one at a time. Which word stands out as having the most effect, meaning, and resonance? Each conveys a message and brings with it specific actions and ideals.

- Choosing: ownership, responsibility, empowerment
- Your: autonomy, voice, personalization
- Tomorrow: future society, future economy
- Today: 21st century; 2014

The phrase was chosen so that varied interpretations and meanings were possible. It provided the potential for a broad and unobstructed dialogue framed by an issue, but open to interpretation.



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/x4bei9rz>

Our Starting Point: The Future of Schooling

In 2001, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released a report titled *The Future of Schooling*. The report identified scenarios for where education could find itself in the not-too-distant future.

- **Status Quo** is described as either “status quo extrapolated” or “extending the market model” in which there would be little change in the public systems, but an expansion in private interest in education. School image would suffer, driven in part by private industry interest in the sector. The report foresaw a continuation of strong bureaucracies, robust institutions, and vested interests, with a resistance to fundamental change. Much of the dissatisfaction with public education would be driven by the middle-class parents and political parties.
- **De-Schooling** is characterized by an abandonment of schooling institutions, increased dissatisfaction, and even dismantling of school systems. While there is an increase in distance-learning opportunities, there is also an increase in inequity and a widening of the digital divide. Widespread public and media dissatisfaction, teacher retirements, and shortages all play their role in the decline of the education system.
- **Re-Schooling** presents a different outlook. It is defined as “schools as core social centers” and “focused learning organizations.” These centers would be characterized by a high level of public trust and funding, with schools becoming the hub of the community and seen as key to developing each community’s social capital with greater priority given to the social and community role of schools. These schools would be aided by greater autonomy where experimentation and innovation would be the norm.

Throughout the symposium, panelists were asked whether they believed that these predictions are coming true and, subsequently, whether or not these predications are what we want to happen, need to be aware of, and need to counteract or support.

Are we as a society already making decisions or having decisions made for us that will restrict or increase the potential of our next generation?

Status Quo	De-Schooling	Re-Schooling
Continued maintenance and even expansion of both bureaucracies and also private vested interests.	An exodus from the education system by both families and teachers as support and morale plummets.	A reinvention of “schools” as hubs of the community serving more than just youth and more than just academics.
<p><i>... fueled by a substantial sense of dissatisfaction with established provision among ‘strategic consumers,’ especially articulate-middle class parents and political parties...</i></p> <p><i>...substantial interest in market approaches... [including] parental choice... vouchers...the involvement of the private sector in the running of schools...</i></p> <p><i>... the corporate promotion of the e-learning market...</i></p>	<p><i>Widespread dissatisfaction with the institution called ‘school’—its bureaucratic nature and perceived inability to deliver learning tailored to complex, diverse societies...</i></p> <p><i>... abandonment of school institutions ... further stimulated by the extensive possibilities opened up by the Internet...</i></p> <p><i>...the result is the radical de-institutionalisation, even dismantling, of school systems.</i></p>	<p><i>Strong distinct schools reinvigorated by new organizational forms, less bureaucratic, more diverse...</i></p> <p><i>...strengthened, creative school institution available to all communities, meeting critical social responsibilities while silencing critics...</i></p> <p><i>General erosion of ‘high school walls.’ Wide diversity of student body; greater inter-generational mixing and joint youth-adult activities.</i></p>



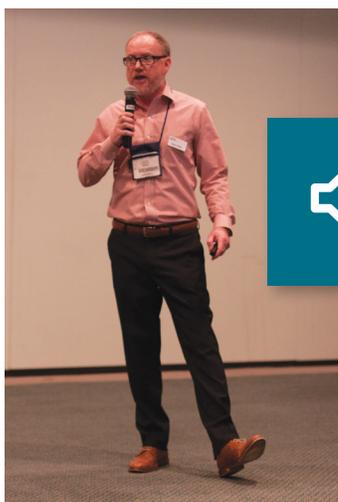
Choice: By Whom and for What?

The dilemma of choice—choice by whom and for what—was an important discussion topic at the Whole Child Symposium town hall held at the 69th ASCD Annual Conference and Exhibit Show in Los Angeles, California, on March 16, 2014. The town hall brought together a diverse group of panelists that included principals, education editors, authors, teachers, and university professors, all of whom work closely in or with schools.

The conversation began with a general discussion of the overarching theme *Choosing Your Tomorrow Today*. What words stand out, and what meaning do they convey? The answer—*Choosing* and *Your*—the idea that if we are to change education, then it must change systematically to not only allow greater youth *choice* and *voice*, but to develop those skills and attributes. We need to both engage and empower youth in their decisions and the decision-making process overall to prepare them for future success in higher education, employment, and civic life.

The concept of choice evolved into further distinct discussions that continued across the symposium events: Do we have *the right to choose for others*? If we need to choose, then we must *choose with the child and their empowerment in mind*.

This was not, however, a discussion of choice in terms of school vouchers; rather, this was a discussion of *choice* in regards to student voice, ownership of learning, and teacher empowerment.



Podcast mp3

<http://traffic.libsyn.com/ascdwholechild/wcstownhall-31614.mp3>

PLAY ▶

The Right to Choose

Do we have the right to choose for others? The debate at the town hall (and throughout the later symposium events) generated compelling perspectives around the issue.

[I]t assumes we have the ability to decide what the future holds for us... instead... how do we really make decisions for what's happening today and how do we really empower students and give them the freedom to really express themselves, honor their culture, and honor their background... and really make sure that they are making choices that are their own choices, instead of what someone else has decided is the appropriate choice for them.

—Liz Dwyer

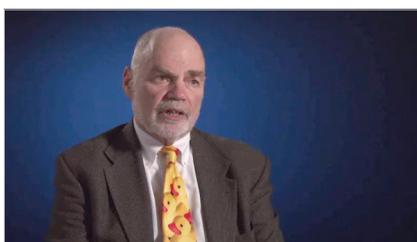


Video clip

<http://bcove.me/vredr64c>

“Choosing Your Tomorrow Today” really appeals to me because all the words are powerful. I really like “choosing” because it means that we educators need to be assertive, we know what’s good for kids. [W]e need to be vocal and aggressive and do what’s right for kids, not what’s right for politicians.

—Thomas Hoerr



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/lkomq92d>

If we decide that we do not have the right to choose for others, then perhaps we are abdicating that responsibility to others. Ensuring student *choice* and *voice* in the classroom is one thing; relinquishing the education systems debate to others is another. Although several panelists were adamant that no one should be deciding for others, an equal number were adamant that we, as educators, must step into that role.

I'm concerned about disengagement and apathy ... that comes [with] suggestions ... that somehow we should keep the "politics" out of what we do in the classroom, when every moment in a classroom at the end of the day is a political choice and a political opportunity.

—Chris Thinner

If educators do not own their profession and take an important stake in its evolution, then the vacuum will be filled by another entity. It will be filled by stakeholders who have a valid interest and role to play in the development of a strong, robust and dynamic education system, but who may lack the day-to-day experiences and background in the craft of education.

Keep Children and Their Empowerment in Mind

Empower students and give them the freedom to really express themselves, honor their culture and honor their background ... and really make sure that they are making choices that are their own choices.

—Liz Dwyer

The second theme in the *choice* discussion at the town hall in Los Angeles was that of *choosing with the child in mind*. If choice is necessary in order to expand and enhance learning (and learning systems), then what are our boundaries and what should be our framework?

The first thing which come to my mind with this question is a poem—the famous poem of Khalil Gibran, “Your Children” ... your children are the souls of the house of tomorrow, but you cannot visit this house even in your dreams. So the first thing with this question is humility, because I do not have any idea of what tomorrow will be. So it means the key idea is to give the means to the students today, to be able in the future to decide themselves, to be able to choose their future in a free and responsible way.

—Didier Jourdan



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/8oexzv3r>

Town hall participants built consensus on the idea that education must be more holistic—a more *whole child* approach—but also developed to allow or require *student empowerment* and *choice*. Providing choice for students dilutes any apprehension about whether it is our role to choosing for others and it develops conditions more geared toward personalization, decision making, and taking ownership.

We don't know what tomorrow is going to look like. It's no longer about preparing students about "a job"—it's about preparing students as whole, complete individuals that have a sense of contribution; a sense of independence; a sense of gratitude; an awareness of respecting themselves, others, and the world

—Sara Truebridge

Student choice supported and encouraged by teacher voice (and in turn supported by policy), changes how many schools would operate and function. It places ownership back onto those who are at the center of the debate—the students—and redefines the roles of teacher and student to collaborators in learning. *Choice* isn't choosing *for* someone; rather, it is allowing choice to be an integral part of education and each individual's learning process.



Choice and Equity: The View from Above

What became clear though throughout the 2014 symposium event was that choice is key. Not only *choice* in terms of student choice and voice, but also teacher choice and the teacher's ability to be able to plan, prepare, and craft the most effective learning experiences for students.

We think we're giving students choice in school—"Oh you've got three or four possibilities." That's not choice. You're giving them your choice. Students need to understand that the choices that they make impact their learning down the road so that they can become better citizens, so that they can make better choices outside of those contexts in schools.

—Steven Anderson

And yet there is also another aspect to choice as identified during the symposium live event: choice also occurs between schools, standards, and systems.

Choice

By imposing upon our students, our parents, our school leaders, a different way of accountability, we are also confining our people's possibility to choose. So there's nothing for you to choose—basically this is like a Hobson's Choice: you can pick any horse as long as it's the first one I give you.

—Yong Zhao



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/y94pv9en>

Choice—student voice—is an important step toward personalizing the learning process and making it meaningful. It allows individuals to be more engaged in the experience and be empowered to make decisions. But does, or should, the same apply to educators and systems? Educator choice in developing lessons and activities allows a more crafted and nuanced learning environment. The same logic can be used for varying focus or types of schools, but can it be applied to systems? A set of mandatory standards can provide both a framework and a set of restrictions; they can provide a path but also potentially restrict true choice. Given the timing of this symposium, the influence of the Common Core State Standards figured prominently in the discussion. Is choice that is weighed down by mandatory policy true choice?

Taking *choice* broader to mean *freedom*, several panelists argued that schools must be places to learn, develop, and express freedom of choice.

We don't want freedom for the future, that's not the tomorrow I want—to have freedom. I want freedom that's done well. I want speech that's used well. I want people to follow their conscience and have their conscience shaped in a way that makes them make the right choices. And that takes a lot of work. So to think that after 12 years of being in a prison-like system, they're suddenly going to go out be free, democratic and engaged . . . is a false hope.

—Charles Haynes



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/1c771iy4>

True choice and true ownership come without constraints and restrictions. Yet we have developed a society in which we live with rules, regulations, and some restrictions all the time. Is there a role for policy to support rather than restrict choice and ownership?

The Role of Policy

Choices that we make, choices that young people make ... policy can really affect outcomes not just [for] five years for people, but 55 years and 60 and 65 years.

—David Osher



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/hguc2cgz>

The second theme of the symposium's live event was the discussion about the role of policy and the supports that it can and should deliver. Although there was enough skepticism about the effect that poor policy can have on education, there was also an understanding that policy plays a role in ensuring access to effective education, determining what our systems become. To leave everything up to chance and to hope for the best may not provide adequate opportunities for each child, in each of our schools, in each of our communities.

We continue to be faced with the challenge of how you take what you see in those isolated pockets and make it systemic. And that is something that we have not chosen to address head on ... We still as a nation are not serving all of our kids well, and we have the resources to do so, but we have chosen not to take on that challenge.

—Gene R. Carter



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/3p1o85lf>

Policy—effective, proactive policy—plays a role in determining adequate resource allocation, whether that be financial, infrastructure, or human, and it plays a role not just today but also for tomorrow.

This is a country that is very inegalitarian if you look at current data and issues of race; [it] has had historic problems that have not fully resolved. And this is really reflected in the distribution of resources and experiences that take place for young people in schools and what they have opportunities to do or not. And I think that while on the one hand it's really important to make sure that bad choices are not done on people, it also has to be informed by the fact that if we just say, "Let things flow," given the distribution of resources and given the distribution of dispositions, things may actually get worse rather than better.

—David Osher

Equity

The conversations around choice and policy came together as the conversation centered on equity, and for many present the issues of equity raised larger concerns than even that of choice. Equity (or the lack thereof) has been and still is a defining issue for many students.

Yes, education in this country is a state-driven responsibility, but states are not created equal. And it's easy to say that you can leave it up to the states, and all of the challenges, "problems," will be resolved within the confines of that geographical entity. We've been through that historically and we know that that doesn't work.

—Gene R. Carter

How do we juggle the key concerns of both equity and choice? How do we use policy to best achieve these outcomes?

I think we need to think about ... holding accountable as a society the input we give to our schools. Now we're talking about outcome measures. Anytime you talk about any outcome measure, you can only pick a few, a very narrow few. If you only pick a few, you homogenize people—so that's the issue.

—Yong Zhao

It could be as simple as refocusing the paradigm to ensure the opportunity for choice.

Let's go back to Maslow's Hierarchy ... in that basic way, "freedom from" is freedom from the things that get in the way at the bottom of that hierarchy (safety, basic needs, and structure). ... People need to be free from hunger and violence ... then we need to move up. "Freedom to" moves up to freedom to engage, freedom to choose things that you're interested in, all the way up to the self-actualization space.

—Karen Pittman



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/60hu6cti>

When does providing for choice—at the systems level down to the classroom level—promote equity and when does it hamper equity? Ownership and engagement can be further developed through choice, but, as we have seen in even our recent history in the United States, choice can also alienate and marginalize.



Choice, Equity, and Advocacy: Action on the Ground

There's a kind of magical thinking that if we just optimize schools and make them better through any of the school reforms ... [education] is going to overcome huge and growing income and opportunity disparities that exist in the surrounding society. It just doesn't pass the common-sense test.

—Paul Reville



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/33l60fu6>

The symposium convened four virtual panels of education policymakers, school administrators, classroom teachers, and students to reflect on the discussion and gauge their perspective of how choice, equity, and the future of schooling play out on the ground. We wanted to find out their thoughts on choice, equity, the role that policy can and should play, and the role that each of us—regardless of our role—can do to support and ensure effective schooling in and for the future.

Equity (Policymakers)

Equity—in supports, resources, and opportunities—must be a driving force in the education policy decisions we make for the future. It is the role of policy and responsibility of policymakers to ensure this equity. Although there are schools that can appear or grow regardless of what happens at the legislative level, supportive and equitable policies allow for sustainable, long-term growth.

Along with equity, society as a whole—not just the education sector—must have a common vision of what we want and what success looks like. Successful education systems around the world may be different in structure or processes, but they have in common a unified vision and policy. In combination, policy and a common vision can move not only an individual school, but also an entire system.

The flip side of the debate is that although schools can prosper without effective policy, they can also suffer from poor, or a lack of, responsive policy. Policy that separates, siloes, or fails to provide safeguards can be detrimental to a population and a society.

It's time to stop being reactive and put in place what we already know works ... quality teachers, quality tools, and quality learning environments.

—David Edwards

The problem we often have with these kinds of discourses where people want to show the handful of schools that are able to do great things regardless of the conditions or policies, the problem is that it's pretty easy to build a successful school ... but we do not know what to do with an entire system.

—Pasi Sahlberg

I really love the notion of local control, I like the notion of state sovereignty, but I'm emphasizing here I like the notion because in so many ways they do not play out well for those who are marginalized.

—Joyce Elliot

Good policy is not enough, good strategies are not enough; it takes leadership and shared political leadership.

—Pasi Sahlberg

Choice and Advocacy (School Administrators)

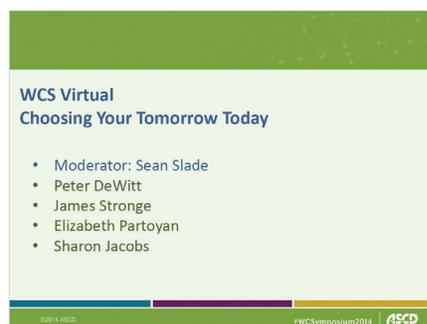
The symposium panel comprising school administrators was adamant that schools were successful and achieved more for their students when they were closely aligned and integrated into their communities. Successful schools echo their communities' values, needs, and desires; they are microcosms of the communities in which they reside. The ability of schools to have more control—empowered to *choose* their direction, management, mission, and educational philosophy—can serve to strengthen this school–community alignment.

Schools that work to become hubs of their communities often have greater ability to choose and to make key decisions. Effectively done, this provision to choose can strengthen supports (both philosophical and financial), garner greater respect, and increase stakeholder input and ownership. Where the school is able to foster and grow relationships based on a common mission and needs, the school as an entity frequently grows and flourishes. This growth can be as a response to community input into the school or as a result of the school forging links into the community, but ultimately it is a result of the school's ability to *choose*.

The conversation also encompassed the role of teachers in advocating for education reform and change. The panelists commented that teachers change constantly and are accustomed to it. The change often takes the form of self-directed professional development to better teach the students and suit the conditions, but can also happen as a reaction to policy imposed upon them.

Are teachers and principals there to teach, or are they there to advocate? Many are asking for greater teacher input in the education reform debate, but is that what we should be expecting from our educators, or should we only be expecting them to teach? And even though the panelists expressed the need for educators to advocate, they also expressed the need for society to allow them to do what they were called to do: help children learn.

At the same time, principals and teachers are positioned in society and schools to make their voices heard and call for change. Educators need to be a part of that debate, even if that debate is taking place outside the school walls. Schools are changing—though the change may not be what educators—and students need or have requested. Schools also change daily to suit situations and requirements. The discussion needs to shift to how we engage schools in the process of systems change and how to ensure educator input is heard.



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/kzy1cg4z>

Schools mirror the community and what is taking place in the community ... what comes inside the building is part of what is outside the building.

—Sharon Jacobs

[E]ducation, policy and change doesn't occur at the White House, it doesn't occur at the State House, it occurs at the schoolhouse—one classroom at a time virtually every reform that we have attempted and implemented runs through a classroom.

—James Stronge

I don't think schools have "allowed" this happen. I think a lot has been done to public schools without a lot of public school voice involved.

—Peter DeWitt

Why do and should young people learn? What do and should they be learning? How do and should they be learning? When and where should they be learning? And if you ask those fundamental questions ... it catalyzes the schools role in the betterment of the community itself: economic development, civic well-being, and any number of societal outcomes.

—Elizabeth Partoyan

Don't be afraid to speak up and to speak out. You have the position that you have for a reason, and you're around the table and in the discussion for a reason. Don't let the opportunity pass you by.

—Sharon Jacobs

Advocacy for Education and by Educators (Classroom Teachers)

Interestingly, the classroom instruction panel took up and strongly supported the idea that educators are and should be advocates for effective education. Teachers have responsibility over not only what and how they teach in the classroom, but also the way they promote effective pedagogy and describe themselves and their role.

The words we use matter and underpin—inadvertently or not—a philosophical stance on the purpose of education. Describing a teacher as a content specialist first and an educator of children second states that the content is more important than the individual. Conversely, describing the teacher's role as a guide in learning and student growth supports what the teacher and school deems important.

“Hi, my name is John, and I teach math.” Sound familiar? This is a typical introduction we hear when we go to a meeting attended by teachers, especially secondary level teachers. So ... what’s the problem? It is 2014 and John misunderstands his role. John should say, “Hi, my name is John, and I help facilitate kids’ ability to learn. I do this by engaging students in meaningful, real world projects that engage students in the application of mathematics.” I realize it’s a longer introduction, but it’s much closer to what the teacher’s role must become.

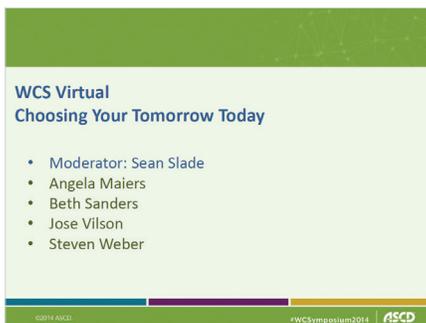
—Stu Silberman in “A New Definition for Teaching,” Education Week



Teachers need to ask who “owns the learning.” Is learning still being delivered to students, or is it being developed with collaboration between the student and the teacher? And how do teachers move their practice toward a more guided facilitation of learning while at the same time showing and advocating for the productive pedagogy that works?

Teachers can promote their own practices and to make the learning process overt: create learning spaces, either physical or online, that allow and promote collaboration, exploration, and personal learning. Learning spaces can be created in atriums, spare rooms, or converted classrooms, or they can be online spaces such as Genius Hour that can grow not only in a school, but also across continents. This process is effective pedagogically and also highlights to the school community what effective, collaborative learning looks like.

What we do and say matters. It matters in what and how our students learn, and it also matters in the promotion of effective education. Close the doors of the classroom and you cease promotion and communication—you become one teacher as opposed to a community. Open the doors, both figuratively and literally, to create open spaces where the community can see what effective education looks like, and you develop not just a community that’s more aware, but also a community of stakeholders.



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/4y50d7xu>

We are not just teachers; we are agents of change, and we need to own that genius. . . One thing that has to shift in the dialogue of educators today is how we’re choosing to define ourselves or label ourselves. One of the most frustrating conversations I keep running into with people is that they are still labeling themselves as content educators . . . I think we’ve got to start shifting to a different type of label and definition.

—Beth Sanders

There are ways to speak out without being negative. There are ways to speak out without going rogue ... This panel [for example]. These are leaders who have a voice through their website or their blog.

—Steven Weber

I think one thing to share with teachers is that (I hear this all the time) the word “just” is very dangerous. “I’m just a teacher.”

—Angela Maiers

I think it’s critical for teachers to have almost an equal role [between teaching and advocating], I would say almost an equal role to the policymakers.

—José Vilson

The Student Perspective (Students)

It is imperative to hear how students—the subjects of these discussions around choice, equity, and voice—feel about the future of education and the decisions we are making today for *their* future. We asked the students on our panel their perspectives on several points made throughout the symposium to gauge their reactions.

Owning Their Own Education

Students need to own their education and take a leading role in making sure that it suits their needs and their desires. They need to be supported as they determine what *they* want from their education and how to motivate themselves. In order for this to occur, students need teachers to plan for and provide avenues for ownership.



Video clip

<http://bcove.me/6f941rk8>

Education is the only thing that every person can have that can't be taken away from them. Your knowledge is your own, and I think if students understand that, then they can really feel the power that an education can bring.

—Rose Diauto

Choice

Choice was an important facet in the discussion among the students: choice in classes, topics, extracurricular activities, extension courses, leadership opportunities, and self-directed studies. Choosing the classes—the structure—is one part of choice. There also needs to be choice inside the class or the learning environment by personalizing instruction to suit learning styles, presentation options, and activity preference. Learning has to be considered important and valuable by the student, and that is more likely when the student has made or been a critical part of the decision of what to study and why.

We have a lot of freedom in what we want to get out of our education and what we need to get there.

—Zahra Haq

The Future of Schooling

Learning is and will be expanded outside of the traditional building, classroom, and time constraints. It should allow for personal choice and cater to personal needs. Analogous environments that were mentioned include a café layout (a welcoming, relaxed environment where people can be engaged and collaborate), a museum model (in which teachers are guides and students each have separate learning paths), and nontraditional settings outside the school.

Interestingly, the students believed the most important aspect of “schools of the future” was not the structure or physical space, but rather the relationships developed between teachers and students.

The students echoed many of the suggestions and recommendations put forward throughout the symposium, and given the schools where these students study, many are experiencing opportunities for choice and voice firsthand. However, the students' emphasis on relationships and the corresponding climate or environment at the place of learning differed from previous discussions. These relationships would center on the collaboration between adults and students and joint ownership of the learning experience in addition to the fundamental need for a trusting adult or mentor.

It is a cliché to have trust-based relationship with a key adult. But it's a cliché for reason because it's a basic element that every child needs.

—Rose Diauto

Confidence comes with experience as well as having a good role model ... having some kind of a role model or mentor is very important to finding inner confidence.

—Amen Mesfin

[A school for the future should be] based around acceptance ... and feeling comfortable in your own skin and in your environment.

—Jacki Ammons



Summary

The spring 2014 Whole Child Symposium began by asking panelists what we want from our schools in the future. It took the theme of *Choosing Your Tomorrow Today* because we all can, and some would say must, have a say in the education of our youth.

We also selected this theme because each word can convey different meanings, place different emphasis onto the phrase, and also allow the dialogue to move without undue constraint. Neither the phrase nor the subsequent conversation disappointed.

What was clear from the discussion was that any effective school or education system for the future has to first take into account the issues of *choice* (student voice, ownership of learning, and teacher empowerment) and *equity*. These are topics that need to be the cornerstones of the debate. Until both are discussed, schools cannot progress to serve their constituents, their communities, or their societies.

The secondary, though linked, discussion revolved around the importance of *advocacy*. Change will happen, but it may not be the change wanted. Educators must voice concerns and be prepared to be both exponents of and advocates for effective, well-rounded education. To do less of either presents a vacuum which will be filled.

Choice, equity, and advocacy: the path toward the future of education.

Actions

The following are policy and action recommendations from ASCD in reference to the themes that arose during the 2014 Whole Child Symposium: choice, equity, and advocacy.

As multiple participants emphasized during ASCD's inaugural Whole Child Symposium, education policy matters. When done poorly, it can impede collaboration, stifle innovation, and create disincentives for supporting the whole child. When done well, it has the power to reduce inequities and turn pockets of success into widespread and systemic improvement. At its best, education policy can transcend politics and personalities to establish a coherent and constant vision that guides and supports sound education practices over time.

At the national level, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is an important opportunity to reset the country's approach to education policy. Although the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has highlighted disparities in student achievement and heightened awareness of the urgent need to serve all children, its punitive and test-based focus has led to damaging unintended consequences, including a narrowing of the curriculum and an overemphasis on testing. These consequences are especially acute in low-performing schools with students who often lack well-rounded and engaging learning opportunities. A reauthorized ESEA could make whole child education a national priority and emphasize the need for schools and communities to work together to support the whole child.

Fortunately, with ESEA reauthorization long overdue, many states and districts have forged ahead on their own to develop policies that both better reflect the broader outcomes we want for our students and better support educators' efforts to prepare their students for successful tomorrows. Policymakers in Arkansas, Illinois, and Rhode Island, for example, have passed resolutions that affirm their support for a whole child approach to education.

Building on ideas shared during the symposium as well as our longtime work to help schools and communities support the whole child, ASCD highlights the following successes and opportunities for how education policy—at any level—can help our students thrive.

Align and Coordinate Efforts to Support Children

As former Massachusetts Secretary of Education and Harvard University professor Paul Reville emphasized during the symposium, schools alone can't erase the inequities that children face and get all students ready for success. Policy must underscore the importance of working beyond the boundaries of schools—and even education systems—to create coordinated systems of child support and development. Such systems should integrate resources, staffing, and goals so that children receive an interconnected web of support, from physical and mental health services to out-of-school learning opportunities, that enable them to take full advantage of their time in school.

Massachusetts has begun to take steps in this direction with its Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet, which works to streamline and improve services for children, youth, and families across state agencies with the goal of closing persistent achievement gaps and ensuring that all students come to school ready to learn. In Arkansas, new legislation has been created to inspire local schools and communities to support the whole child and to officially recognize those communities that meet this goal.

Support Next Generation Accountability

We need a new accountability model that is grounded in our ultimate college-, career-, and citizenship-readiness goals for students. This means moving away from strictly test-based systems to a new approach that reflects a more comprehensive definition of student success, incorporates multiple measures of student performance, and considers conditions such as school climate and safety that influence learning.

Some states and districts have already begun this work. Kentucky's accountability system, for example, moves beyond the typical focus on English language arts and math by incorporating student performance in subjects such as the arts and humanities and practical living and career studies. And in place of traditional assessment results, Kentucky's system uses program reviews of these subjects that consider everything from instructional practice and student work samples to formative assessments and professional development.

Washington State's Tacoma Public Schools has strategically aligned its accountability system with its overall goal of supporting the whole child. Its system includes indicators that range from typical accountability metrics such as student assessment results and graduation rates to less-common measures such as student participation in extracurricular activities, school climate and discipline data, and information about expanded learning opportunities.

Education policy also needs to drastically change how accountability systems are used to improve school performance. We must shift from our current punitive and consequence-based accountability system to an approach that drives continuous improvement and builds district and school capacity. This transition goes hand-in-hand with rebuilding trust in the teaching profession and improving the preparation, ongoing development, and support of educators.

Cultivate Educator Leadership and Advocacy

Educators are essential advocates for their schools, their students, and the profession. They must use their intimate knowledge of how students learn—and the conditions and care that students need in order to thrive—to raise awareness among the public and policymakers about the crucial need to support the whole child. Educators must also help to translate that awareness into action by advocating for equity in supports, resources, and opportunities for children; the flexibility for students to pursue their interests and shape their learning; and effective collaboration on behalf of kids. In doing so, they will be leaders of their own communities' efforts to meet students' comprehensive needs.

ASCD has a longstanding commitment to helping educators grow as leaders. Our Emerging Leaders program helps educators in a variety of roles forge their own leadership paths. Our ASCD Educator Advocates are given opportunities to understand and influence education policy so that it better supports their work in schools and classrooms. ASCD's publications and resources allow educators to share their expertise and questions with their colleagues. And earlier this year, the association hosted an online conversation with educators from across the globe that examined what it means to be a teacher leader, how an educator becomes one, and the necessary elements of professional development needed to support aspiring leaders. Participants agreed that the schools and districts that provide their teachers with relevant ways to lead will be well positioned to address challenges, sustain growth, and prepare their students to become leaders in their own right.

There is no single roadmap for supporting the whole child. Each district, school, and community needs to determine its own route based on its unique mix of priorities, circumstances, and student needs. However, each path should be developed with a commitment to equity so that all children—regardless of their backgrounds, interests, and abilities—are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Additionally, each path should be developed with input from multiple stakeholders and provide autonomy in shaping learning opportunities and support. Only by meaningfully involving educators and communities will we be able to approach education improvement through what Arkansas legislator, whole child advocate, and symposium panelist Joyce Elliott describes as “a culture of inspiration rather than fear” that will help to “put the joy back into learning.”

Appendix A: Spring 2014 Whole Child Symposium Participants

WCS Town Hall

March 16, 2014
Los Angeles, CA

69th ASCD Annual Conference and Exhibit Show

Are we educators or advocates? The town hall introduced the symposium theme and focused on the key words that make up the phrase *Choosing Your Tomorrow Today*.

Town Hall

- **Steven Anderson**, *Winston Salem/Forsyth County Schools, Winston-Salem, N.C., USA*
Anderson is the director of instructional technology for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools in Winston-Salem, N.C. He is an ASCD Emerging Leader and expert on the integration of technology and social media in learning.
- **Goof Buijs**, *Dutch Institute for Healthcare Improvement (CBO), Utrecht, Netherlands*
A senior consultant at the Dutch Institute for Healthcare Improvement (CBO) and manager of the Schools for Health in Europe network (SHE), Buijs is a networker, trainer, and expert in school health promotion.
- **Liz Dwyer**, *GOOD Magazine, Los Angeles, Calif., USA*
Dwyer is the education editor at GOOD magazine in Los Angeles, Calif. She has more than 15 years' experience in education, including teaching in Guangzhou, China, and Compton, Calif., and working for Teach For America in Los Angeles.
- **Thomas Hoerr**, *New School, St. Louis, Mo., USA*
Hoerr is the head of the New City School in St. Louis, Mo., where the theory of multiple intelligences has been implemented since 1988. He facilitates the ASCD Multiple Intelligences Professional Interest Community; is a columnist for *Educational Leadership* magazine; and has written books for ASCD on multiple intelligences, leadership, and grit.
- **Didier Jourdan**, *University of Auvergne, Graduate School of Teaching and Education, Clermont-Ferrand, France*
Jourdan is a professor at the University of Auvergne in Clermont-Ferrand, France. He is the dean of the faculty of education in the School for Teaching and Education (ESPE) at Clermont-Auvergne. He is one of France's leading health promoters and health educators and is a member of the National High Council of Public Health.

- **Chris Thinnes**, *Center for the Future of Elementary Education at Curtis School, Los Angeles, Calif., USA*
An independent school leader and public school parent, Thinnes is the head of the Upper Elementary School and academic dean at Curtis School and founding director of its Center for the Future of Elementary Education. He is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools' advisory council on diversity, a member of the EdCamp Foundation's public relations committee, and a fellow of the Martin Institute for Teaching Excellence.
- **Sara Truebridge**, *Educating the New Humanity, San Francisco, Calif., USA*
Truebridge is an education consultant, author (*Research Begins With Beliefs: Building on Student Strengths for Success in School*), and researcher at the nonprofit organization Educating the New Humanity. She has more than 20 years' classroom experience and serves as an education consultant on documentaries, including *Race to Nowhere* and *Love Hate Love*.
- **Sean Slade (moderator)**, *ASCD, Alexandria, Va., USA*
Slade is the director of Whole Child Programs at ASCD. His work focuses on the ASCD Whole Child Initiative, which promotes the development of each child socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.

WCS Live

May 8, 2014
Washington, DC

Knight Studio at the Newseum

The live event elevated the discussion started at the town hall in Los Angeles to a systems and global level.

Live Event and Webcast

- **Gene R. Carter**, *ASCD, Alexandria, Va., USA*
Carter is Emeritus Executive Director of ASCD. He is a veteran educator with experience as a private and public school teacher, public school administrator, superintendent of schools, and university professor. He has written numerous articles and book chapters concentrating on education issues and topics and is the coauthor of *The American School Superintendent: Leading in an Age of Pressure*.

- **Charles Haynes**, *Religious Freedom Education Project, Washington, D.C., USA*
Haynes is director of the Religious Freedom Education Project at the Newseum and senior scholar at the First Amendment Center. He is a founding board member of the Character Education Partnership and serves on the steering committee of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools and as U.S. advisor to Face to Faith, a schools initiative of the Tony Blair Foundation. He is best known for his work on First Amendment issues in public schools.
- **David Osher**, *The American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C., USA*
Osher is the vice president, an AIR Institute fellow, and a senior advisor to the Health and Human Development Program at The American Institutes for Research. His research interests include conditions for learning and development, school climate and discipline, cultural competence and disparity reduction, collaboration, social emotional learning, and implementation science. He is the principal investigator of National Clearing House on Safe and Supportive School Discipline and three major federal research and technical assistance centers.
- **Karen Pittman**, *Forum for Youth Investment, Washington, D.C., USA*
Pittman is president and CEO of the Forum for Youth Investment and a respected sociologist and leader in youth development. Prior to cofounding the Forum in 1998, she launched initiatives at the Children's Defense Fund, started the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, and served as senior vice president at the International Youth Foundation. Pittman was involved in the founding of America's Promise Alliance and directed the President's Crime Prevention Council during the Clinton administration.
- **Valerie Strauss**, *The Washington Post, Washington, D.C., USA*
Strauss is an education columnist for the *Washington Post*. She writes about everything that matters in education and is known for her blog *The Answer Sheet*.
- **Yong Zhao**, *University of Oregon, Eugene, Ore., USA*
Zhao is an internationally known scholar, author, and speaker focusing on the implications of globalization and technology on education. He has helped design schools that cultivate global competence, developed computer games for language learning, and founded research and development institutions to explore innovative education models. He has published more than 100 articles and 20 books, including the ASCD book *Catching Up or Leading the Way: American Education in the Age of Globalization*.
- **Sean Slade (moderator)**, *ASCD, Alexandria, Va., USA*

WCS Virtual

May 14–15, 2014
online

Four online panels collected reactions and action steps for those on the ground: the changemakers.

WCS Virtual: Education Policy

- **David Edwards**, *Education International, Brussels, Belgium*
Edwards is the deputy general secretary at Education International, where he is responsible for their work in the areas of education policy, employment, and research. He is dedicated to promoting, strengthening, and defending the teaching profession, ensuring quality education for all students, and building a strong and vibrant labor movement focused on social justice and human rights.
- **Joyce Elliott**, *Arkansas State Senate, Little Rock, Ark., USA*
Elliott is a former teacher and current member of the Arkansas Senate, representing the 31st District. She chairs several important committees, including the Whole Child–Whole Community Program, and is the vice chair of the Senate Education Committee. Formerly, she was the Senate majority whip and a previous member of the Arkansas House of Representatives from 2000 through 2006.
- **Paul Reville**, *Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., USA*
Reville is the Francis Keppel Professor of Practice of Educational Policy and Administration at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education and the former Massachusetts Secretary of Education. He is particularly interested in matters of federal and state education policy and is now concentrating his work on the design of 21st century learning systems, braiding schooling, health/social supports, and enrichments to close learning gaps.
- **Pasi Sahlberg**, *Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., USA*
Sahlberg is a Finnish educator and scholar and a current visiting professor of practice at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. He has experience as a school-teacher, teacher educator, and policy advisor in Finland and has studied education systems and reforms around the world. His expertise includes international educational change, the future of schooling, and innovation in teaching and learning.
- **David Griffith (moderator)**, *ASCD, Alexandria, Va., USA*
Griffith is ASCD's director of public policy. He leads the development and implementation of the association's legislative agenda, as well as efforts to influence education decision making at the local, state, and federal levels. He has more than 20 years of legislative and campaign experience

WCS Virtual: Schools

- **Peter DeWitt**, *Albany, N.Y., USA*
DeWitt has taken a leave of absence as a principal in New York and is currently facilitating workshops in schools around North America. The 2013 School Administrators Association of New York State's Outstanding Educator of the Year, he is known for his work as a blogger, writer, editor, and visible learning trainer. His work focuses on creating inclusive school environments, teacher evaluations, and connected leadership.
- **Sharon Jacobs**, *Washington Montessori School, Greensboro, N.C., USA*
Jacobs is a public school educator with more than 20 years of experience and the founding principal of Washington Montessori School, the 2014 Vision in Action: ASCD Whole Child Award winner. She is passionate about the learning process and committed to service, change, social development, and above all, children.
- **Elizabeth Partoyan**, *Forum for Youth Investment, Washington, D.C., USA*
Partoyan is a senior fellow at the Forum for Youth Investment. Formally trained as an educational psychologist, she has been working for social justice in American public education and communities for more than 20 years. Her work has focused on expanding learning opportunities that support the needs and maximize the assets of each and every young person.
- **James Stronge**, *Stronge and Associates Educational Consulting, LLC, Williamsburg, Va., USA*
Stronge is president of Stronge and Associates Educational Consulting, LLC, which focuses on teacher- and leader-effectiveness projects both internationally and in many U.S. states. He is also the Heritage Professor of Education, a distinguished professorship in the educational policy, planning, and leadership area at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va.
- **Sean Slade (moderator)**, *ASCD, Alexandria, Va., USA*

WCS Virtual: Classroom Instruction

- **Angela Maiers**, *Maiers Educational Services, Clive, Iowa, USA*
Maiers is an educator, author, and speaker whose passions include literacy, learning, and the power of social media. She believes that learning is a lifelong journey and that the words “you matter” can change the world.
- **Beth Sanders**, *Tarrant High School, Tarrant, Ala., USA*
Sanders is a high school social studies teacher and connected educator in Birmingham, Ala. She is passionate about education reform, social justice, 21st century skills, purposeful technology integration, and genuine equity in education. In 2013, she was named an Apple Distinguished Educator and a Tarrant City Schools Teacher of the Year.

- **José Vilson**, *New York, N.Y., USA*
Vilson is a math educator, writer, and activist in New York City. His publications include the book *Teaching 2030: What We Must Do For Our Students and Public Schools... Now and In The Future*, and the recently released *This Is Not A Test: A New Narrative on Race, Class, and the Future of Education*.
- **Steven Weber**, *Hillsborough, N.C., USA*
Weber is the principal of Hillsborough Elementary School, Orange County Schools (N.C.). He is a former board member of North Carolina ASCD, featured guest on the Whole Child Podcast, and blogger on ASCD EDge®.
- **Sean Slade (moderator)**, *ASCD, Alexandria, Va., USA*

WCS Virtual: Students

- **Jacki Ammons**, *Milwaukie High School, Milwaukie, Ore., USA*
Ammons is an honor roll student at Milwaukie High School, the 2013 Vision in Action: ASCD Whole Child Award winner. She has more than 150 community service hours and is the CEO of Pulse Media Productions, a student-run video production company at the high school. She is planning to study premed at the University of Oregon next year.
- **Rose Diauto**, *Aquinas College, Nashville, Tenn., USA*
Diauto is currently a junior at Aquinas College in Nashville and serves as its ASCD Student Chapter president. She was inspired to become a secondary English teacher after experiencing a lack of rigor in her rural Arizona public high school.
- **Zahra Haq**, *Byrne Creek Secondary School, Burnaby, B.C., Canada*
Haq is a 12th grade student at Byrne Creek Secondary School, winner of the 2012 Vision in Action: The Whole Child Award. She is the vice president of the student government, copresident of the sustainability council, and extremely passionate about environmental and global issues.
- **Amen Mesfin**, *Quest Early College High School, Houston, Tex., USA*
Mesfin is a junior at Quest Early College High School, winner of the 2011 Vision in Action: The Whole Child Award. She attributes the school staff with helping her accomplish her education goals and making her dreams of becoming a doctor a reality. By the time she graduates, she will have enough credits to earn her Associate Degree of Science.
- **Kevin Scott (moderator)**, *ASCD, Alexandria, Va., USA*
Scott is Strategic Advisor of Constituent Services at ASCD. He helps facilitate programs and initiatives created for younger educators, such as the Emerging Leaders and ASCD Student Chapter programs, and focuses on providing services and consultation to ASCD affiliates.

Appendix B: ASCD POSITION STATEMENTS

Since its beginning in 1943, ASCD has been a strong voice in the debate about education issues that affect learning and teaching. As a nonpartisan education association, ASCD continues to advocate for policies and practices that ensure each child has access to educational excellence and equity. Below are position statements (and the years in which ASCD adopted them) on issues discussed during the spring 2014 Whole Child Symposium.

Choice

- **Choice of Schools (1972, 1976, 1978)**

When considering choice programs, authorizing agencies must balance concern for individual benefit with concern for the community as a whole. In accord with democratic principles, schools of choice must provide equal access to students.

- **Public Education in a Democracy (1996)**

The maintenance and enrichment of public education is critical to sustaining democracy. Democracies depend on public schools for the education of active citizens through equal access to a free, high-quality public education.

Democracies depend on public schools for the education of active citizens through equal access to a free, high-quality public education. Schools are critical public sites for nurturing the hope of democracy by preparing students to participate fully in civic life and in the building of a better society.

The reduction of resources at the federal, state/provincial, and local levels and the potential of public funding for private schools underscores the importance of reconnecting democratic purposes to the functions of schools. Policy leaders are responsible for maintaining the resources for equal access to commonly good schools for all children. In return, educators are responsible for creating the best possible conditions for teaching and learning. This process requires ongoing inquiry into the aims of education. In the discourse on school reform, teachers and students, in combination with families and community members, must have a voice in how decisions are made that affect the educational lives of children and educators.

Equity

• **Equity in Education (1959, 1982, 1984, 1991, 1997)**

In accord with democratic principles and basic fairness, ASCD supports policies and practices necessary to achieve equity in education. Public policies should ensure equity in education. All children, including those from low-income families, are entitled to safe, healthy, and comfortable school facilities; well-qualified teachers and other staff members; high-quality curriculum and learning materials; and adequate supplies and equipment, including computers and other technology. Funding for education should be allocated equally, except for the reasonable extra cost of educating students with special needs.

Equity also depends on organizational and instructional factors, including teacher expectations, grouping, testing, and grading. Educators should support efforts to ensure that all students learn well, including initiatives to reduce long-term ability grouping and make classrooms more inclusive. In this information era, it is especially important that students have equal access to computers, and that they learn to use them for composition, investigation, and problem solving.

Equity in schools is closely related to adequate housing and economic development in the surrounding community. To support teaching and learning, parents and other adults must have jobs, safe streets and homes, and stable living conditions.

The Whole Child

• **The Whole Child (2004)**

The current direction in educational practice and policy focuses overwhelmingly on academic achievement. However, academic achievement is but one element of student learning and development and only a part of any complete system of educational accountability. ASCD believes a comprehensive approach to learning recognizes that successful young people are knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, motivated, civically inspired, engaged in the arts, prepared for work and economic self-sufficiency, and ready for the world beyond their own borders.

Together, these elements support the development of a child who is healthy, knowledgeable, motivated, and engaged. To develop the whole child requires the following contributions:

Communities provide

- Family support and involvement.
- Government, civic, and business support and resources.
- Volunteers and advocates.
- Support for their districts' coordinated school health councils or other collaborative structures.

Schools provide

- Challenging and engaging curriculum.
- Adequate professional development with collaborative planning time embedded within the school day.
- A safe, healthy, orderly, and trusting environment.
- High-quality teachers and administrators.
- A climate that supports strong relationships between adults and students.
- Support for coordinated school health councils or other collaborative structures that are active in the school.

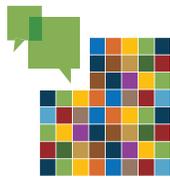
Teachers provide

- Evidence-based assessment and instructional practices.
- Rich content and an engaging learning climate.
- Student and family connectedness.
- Effective classroom management.
- Modeling of healthy behaviors.

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WHOLE CHILD
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SYMPOSIUM
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The ASCD Whole Child Initiative

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