

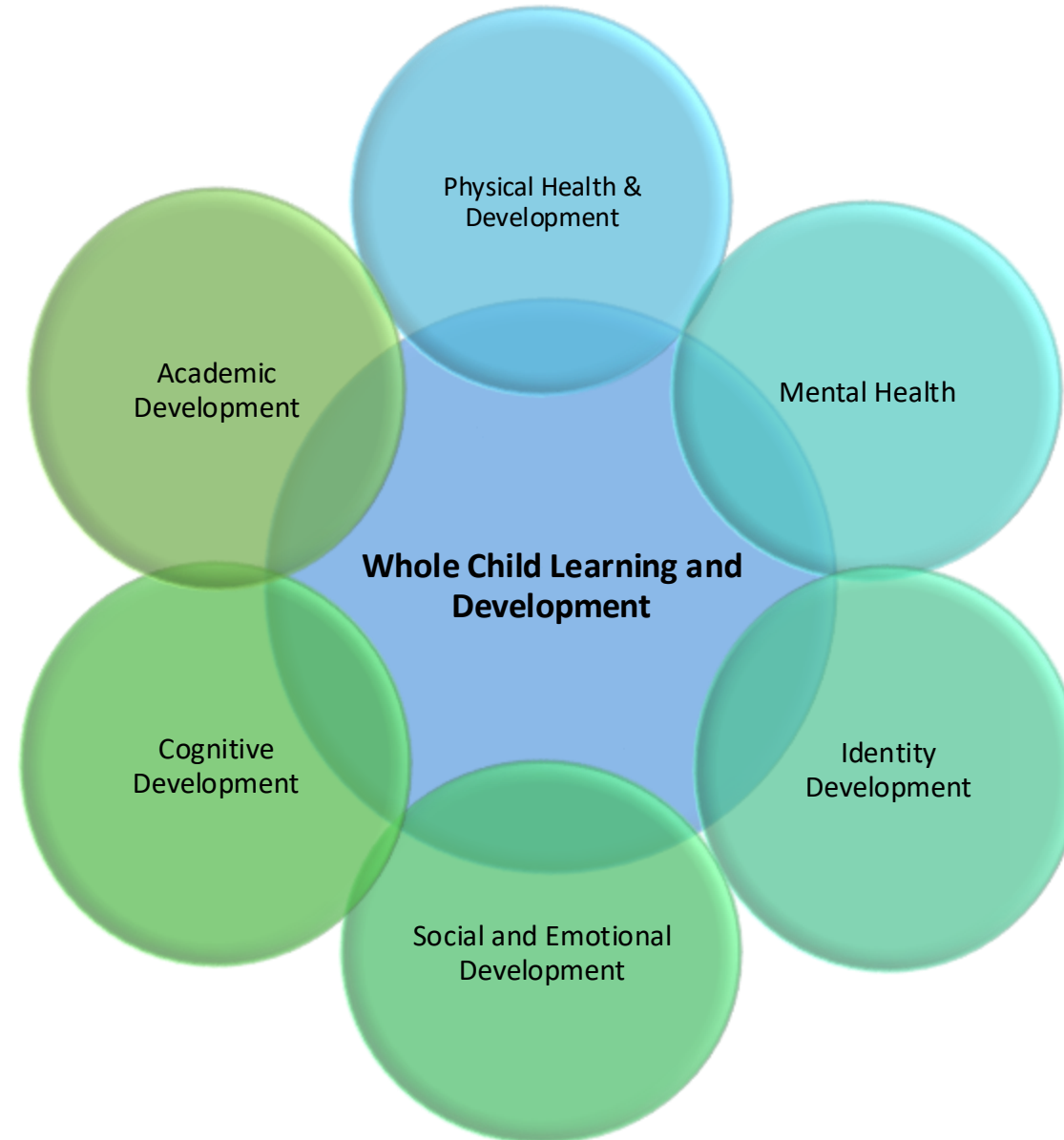
Policy for Whole Child Education:

*Creating Schools for
Thriving*

Linda Darling-Hammond,
Learning Policy Institute



What Do We Mean by Whole Child Education ?



Whole Child Education Supports Brain Development

The Development of Neural Networks

Is enhanced by:

- ▷ Social interaction
- ▷ Rich environments for inquiry
- ▷ Physical activity
- ▷ Music & art
- ▷ Language
- ▷ Emotional well-being
- ▷ Cultural well-being

Is impaired by:

- ▷ Constant stress
- ▷ Anxiety
- ▷ Loneliness
- ▷ Sleep disruption
- ▷ Dietary deficiencies
- ▷ Toxins
- ▷ Identity threats

Principles from the Science of Learning & Development

- All the domains of development interact.
- Learning is social, emotional, and academic.
- The brain is always developing as a product of relationships and experiences. ***The quality of those relationships and experiences matters greatly.***
- Children actively construct knowledge by connecting what they know to what they are learning within their cultural contexts. Inquiry and connections jumpstart thinking.
- Trauma and adversity affect learning. Relationships are key for healing as well as learning.
- A child's best performance occurs under conditions of low threat and high support in settings where they are accepted, respected, and enabled.

How Well Are Today's Schools Serving The Whole Child?

A national survey of more than 148,000 6th to 12th graders found that

- Only 29% felt their school provided a caring, encouraging environment;
- Most did not feel there was an adult who knows them well in school
- A survey of 21,000 high school students by the Yale School of Medicine found that 75% of their reported feelings about school were negative. Most common were: tired, stressed, and bored.

Why Is This?

- “A 120-year-old industrial (school) structure is radically ill-equipped for the challenges (of today) Our present situation calls for flexibility, relationship-building, and deep engagement with the broader world, but our school systems are bureaucratic, transactional, and insular. *The problem is not the people — teachers are working heroically, and students are persevering under highly adverse circumstances. The problem is that they are working within a structure that is working against them.*”

- Jal Mehta, [Possible futures: Toward a new grammar of schooling](#)).

Why Reinvent?

Current schools, designed in the early 1900s, were not designed to support:

- Relationships
- A whole child approach
- 21st century skills or deep learning
- Personalized supports
- Equitable opportunity or achievement



Restarting and Reinventing School

Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond

Linda Darling-Hammond, Abby Schachner, and Adam K. Edgerton

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How can we use this time to support systemic change for whole child thriving?

The System We Inherited

“One cannot understand the history of education in the US during the 20th century unless one realizes that E.L. Thorndyke won, and John Dewey lost.”

-- Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research*

Schools Designed in the Early 1900s Adopted the Factory Model

- Large schools were designed to pass students along an efficient assembly line
- Scientific managers adopted the Prussian “age-grading” system and the “platoon” system to create efficient processing of students
- Teachers were placed as individual workers on the assembly line to plan & teach alone
- Standardized curriculum was prescribed based on time and motion studies
- Tracking was designed to create different conveyer belts for students by race & class
- Schools were explicitly designed to “select and sort” rather than to develop talent



(Tyack, *The One Best System*; Callahan, *The Cult of Efficiency*)

Schools' Testing and Tracking Systems Were Designed to Select and Sort, Not to Develop

Ellwood P. Cubberley, Stanford University Education School Dean, 1909

“[New immigrants are] a very different type from the north Europeans who preceded them. Illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative, and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order, and government Our city schools will soon be forced to give up the exceedingly democratic idea that all are equal . . . and to begin a specialization of educational effort.”

Lewis Terman, Stanford University Professor and IQ test developer, 1922

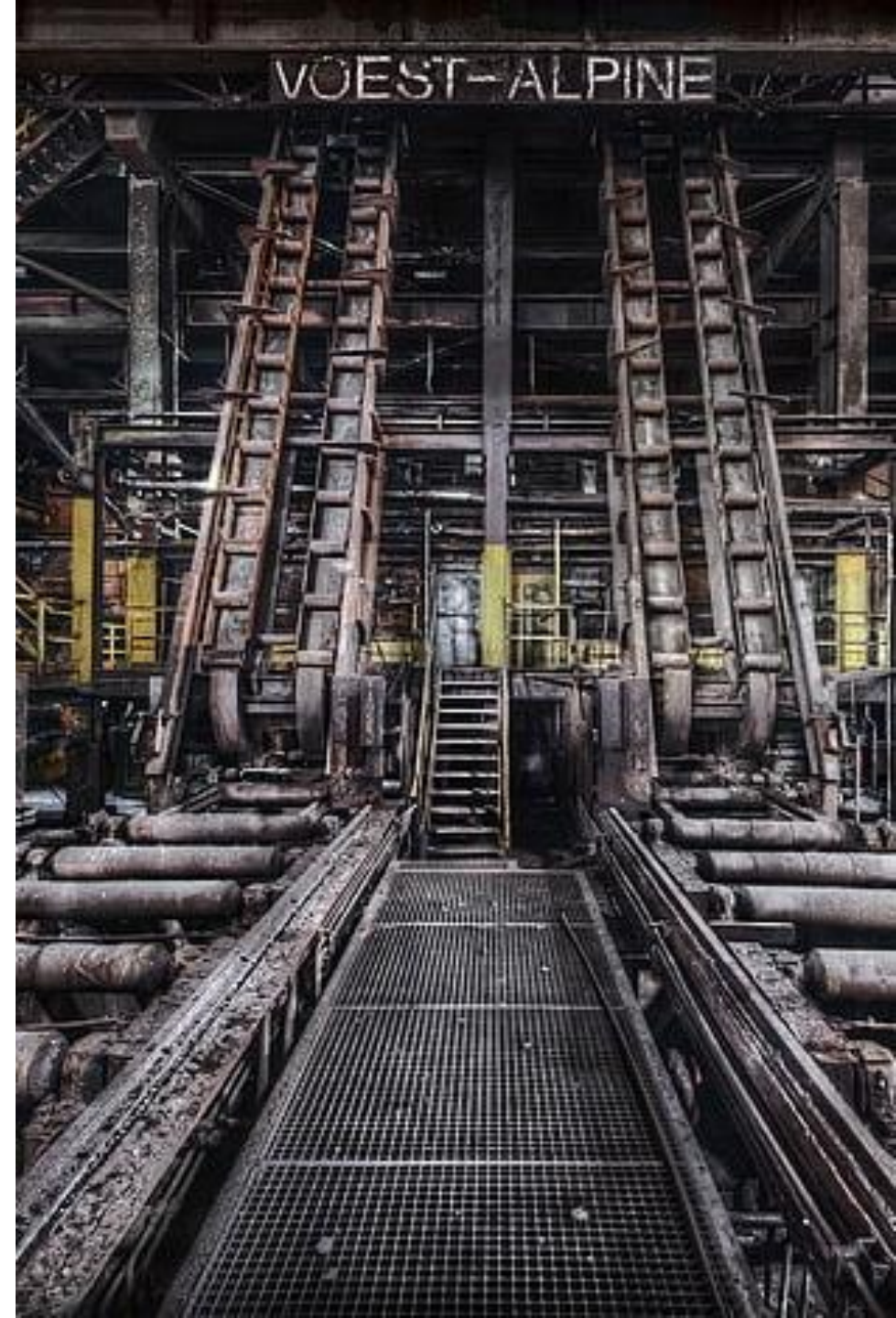
“80% of the immigrants tested appear to be feeble-minded....Indians, Mexicans, and negroes . . . should be segregated in special classes. . . . They cannot master abstractions, but they can often be made efficient workers.”

W.B. Pillsbury, U. of Michigan Professor of Psychology, 1921

Schools should take on the role of “selecting the men of best intelligence from the deficient and mediocre.... The incapable are soon rejected or drop out. . . and pass into the ranks of unskilled labor, [while] the more intelligent who are to be clerical workers pass into the high school.... Only the most intelligent enter the universities whence they are selected for the professions.”

The Results are Deeply Problematic Today

- Structures do not allow students to be well-known or well-supported – or teachers to work with each other
- Teachers with large pupil loads are isolated in egg-crate classrooms; students rotate through to be stamped with a standardized curriculum
- Rigid pacing guides mapped to grade-level standards often prevent teachers from meeting student needs
- Focus on narrow tests undermines powerful, engaging learning & whole child development
- Punitive rules to achieve compliance lead to student exclusion and teacher exhaustion
- Unequal treatment is baked into the system



Meanwhile, the world has changed
dramatically

Around the world, we have faced
A public health crisis
An economic crisis
A climate crisis
A civil rights crisis
An education crisis

All of which manifest in ways that
reflect deep inequalities in our society

Pandemic effects on
health & mental health

High rates of childhood
poverty, food & housing
insecurity, and trauma

Growing number of
students opting out of
school

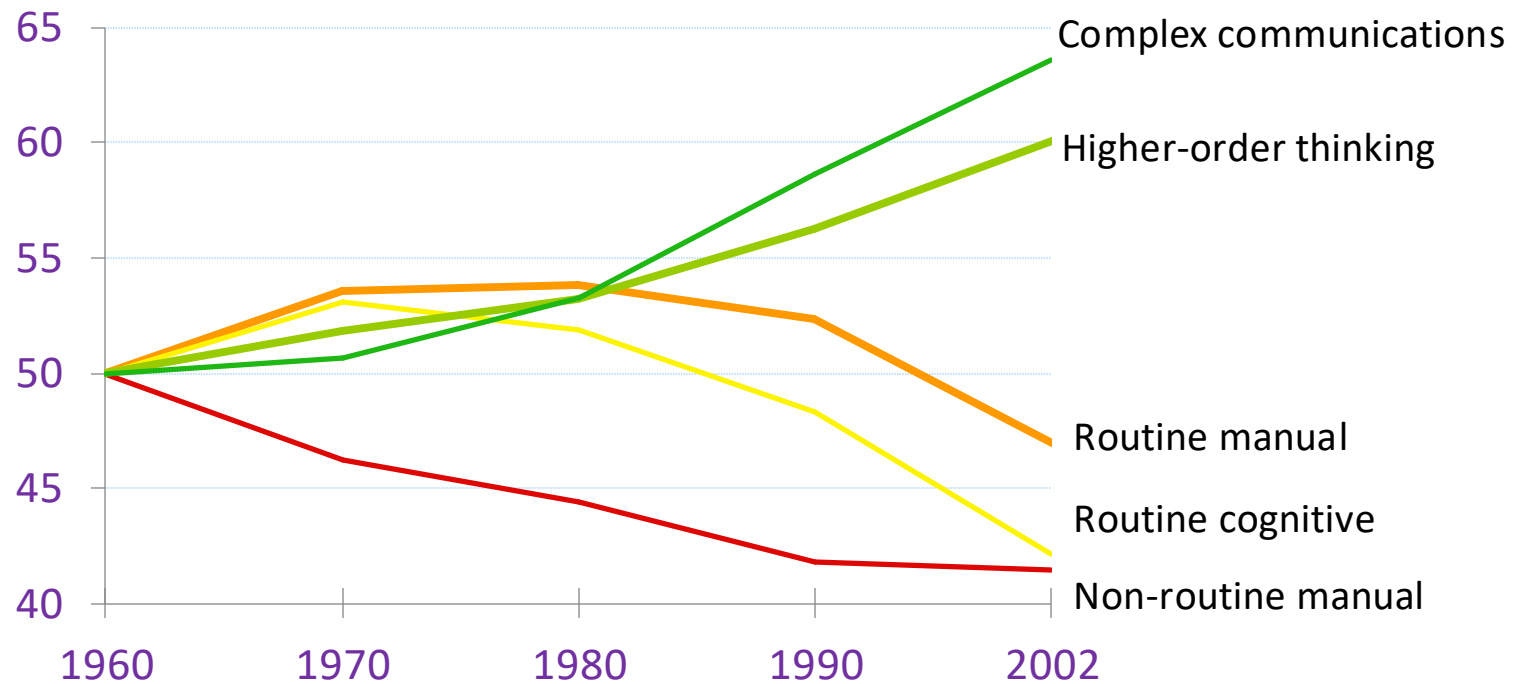
Educator shortages

Disruption to every
aspect of the status quo

Such Moments Often Lead to Generational Social Changes

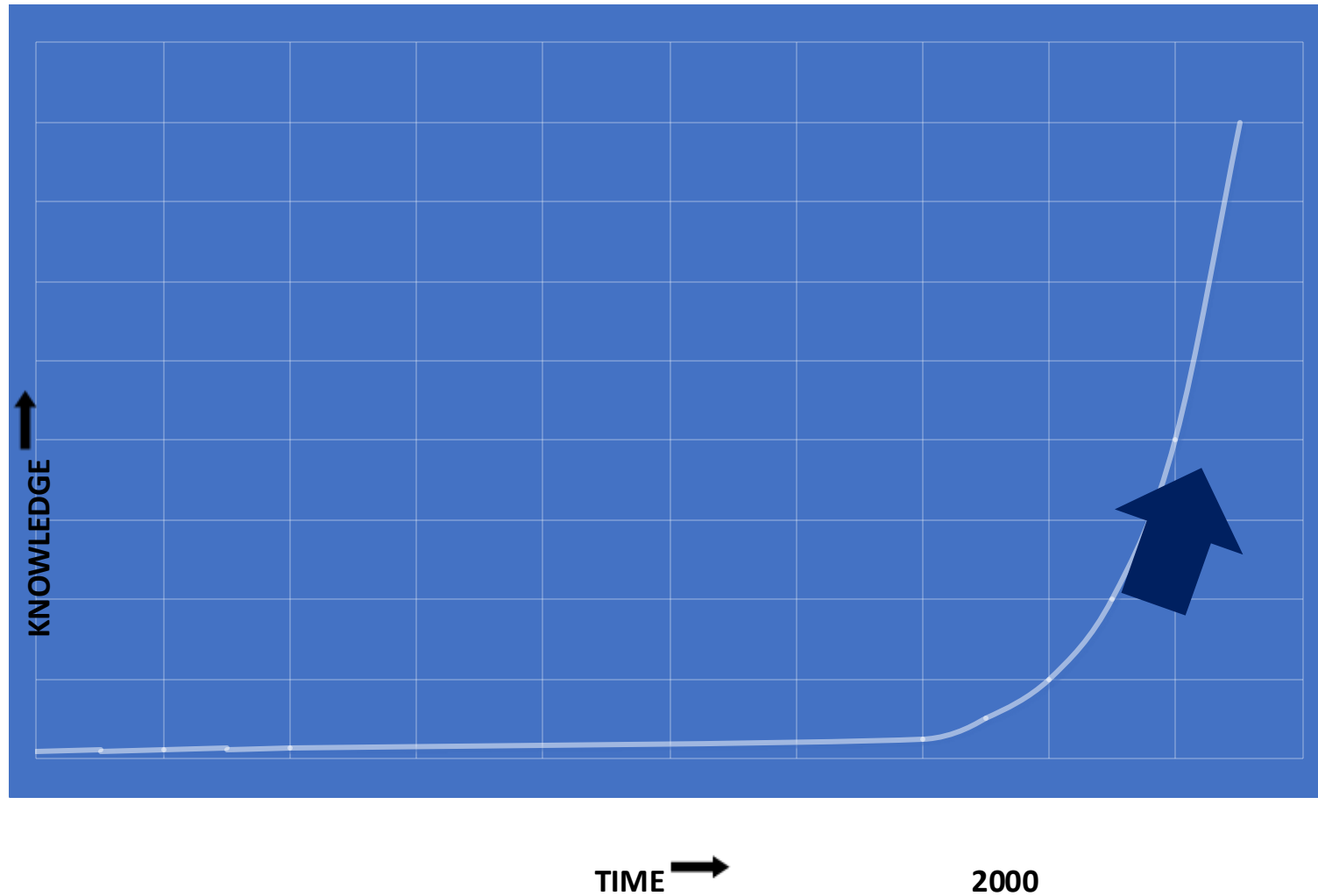


And Demand for Skills Has Been Changing Faster than Our Education System Has Responded



The dilemma of schools:
The skills that are easiest to teach and test are also the ones that are easiest to digitize, automate, and outsource

Knowledge is Growing Exponentially





Teaching for Learning Ability



- The abilities to:
- Transfer and apply knowledge
- Analyze, evaluate, integrate
- Communicate and collaborate
- Take initiative
- Find and use resources
- Plan and implement
- Self-manage and improve
- Learn to learn



Restarting and Reinventing School

Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond

“Reinventing school means focusing on authentic learning and equity and harnessing the knowledge of human development, learning, and effective teaching accumulated over the last century and needed for the next.”

[Restart-reinvent.learningpolicyinstitute.org](https://restart-reinvent.learningpolicyinstitute.org)

What Kind of Schools Do We Need?





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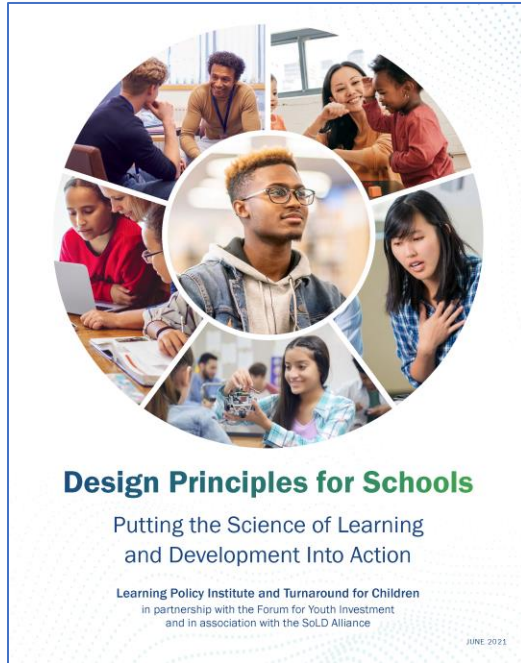
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The Three “R’s” For Thriving Schools

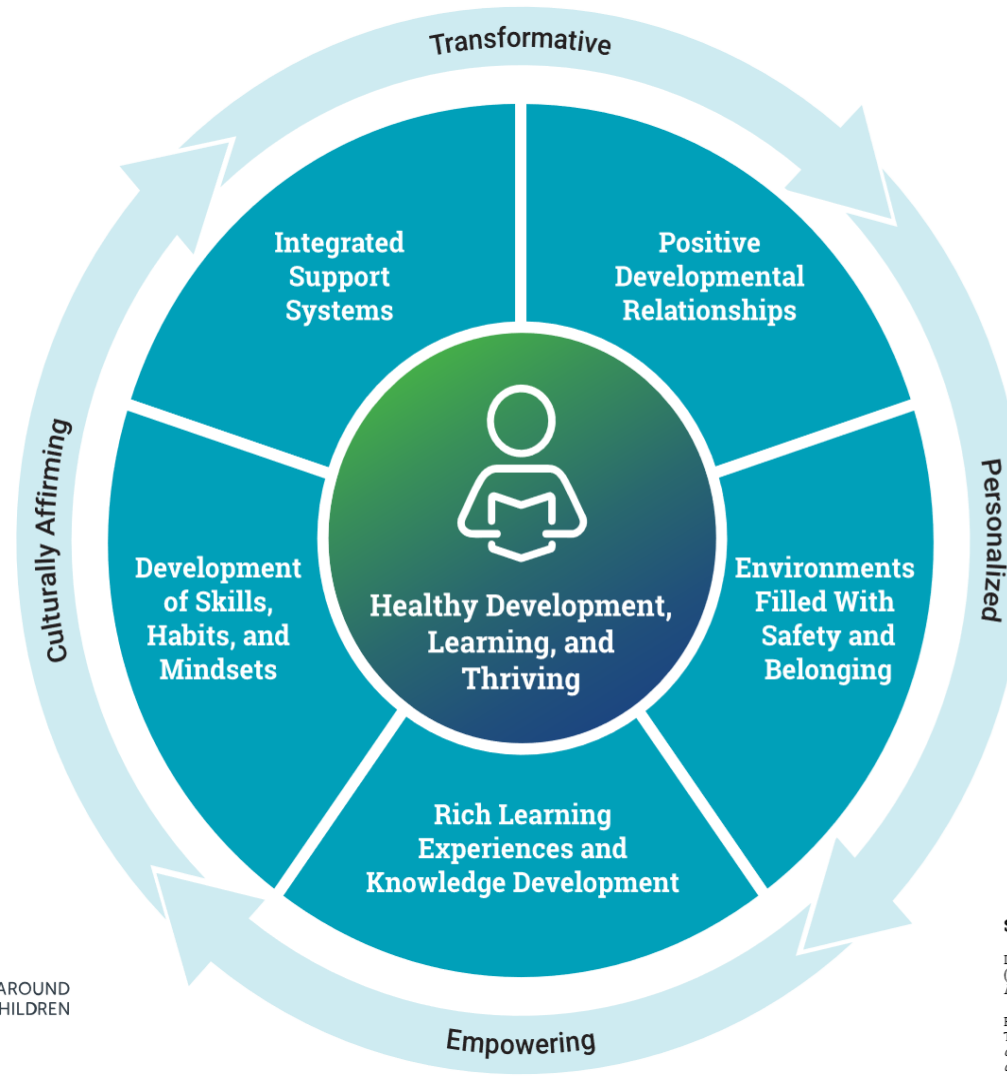
- Relationship-Centered
- Restorative and
- Responsive to
 - Children’s interest and assets
 - Cultural funds of knowledge
 - Ways of learning and
 - Academic, social, & emotional needs



Using the Science of Learning and Development to Design Schools



Essential Guiding Principles for Equitable Whole-Child Design



Sources:

Learning Policy Institute & Turnaround for Children. (2021). *Design principles for schools: Putting the science of learning and development into action.*

Forum for Youth Investment (with Learning Policy Institute & Turnaround for Children). (2021). *Design principles for community-based settings: Putting the science of learning and development into action.*

Policy Areas to Consider



Transforming Learning Environments

- ▶ **Support school redesign that enables relationships, including:**
 - **Looping**
 - **Advisory systems**
 - **Small learning communities**
 - **Teaching teams that plan together**
- ▶ **Adopt social-emotional learning & restorative practices**
- ▶ **Establish integrated support systems & community school models**
- ▶ **Provide expanded & enriched learning time that supports joy (+ neural connections) & personalizes learning**

Actions leaders can take:

- ▶ **Promote rich, experiential, inquiry-oriented learning**
- ▶ **Support authentic systems of assessment**
- ▶ **Adopt whole child accountability systems that include measures of school climate; engagement; inclusion; college, career, and civic readiness; family and community engagement**

**Redesigning Curriculum,
Instruction, Assessments,
and Accountability Systems**

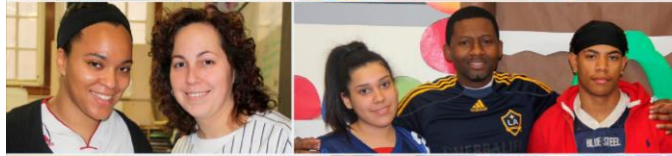
Actions states/leaders can take:

- ▶ Design educator prep systems (licensure / accreditation) around whole child learning & development
- ▶ Invest in high-retention strategies for recruitment and preparation
- ▶ **Support high-quality mentoring and induction**
- ▶ Promote high-quality professional development & evaluation that values whole child practices
- ▶ **Support educator and staff well-being**

Building Adult Capacity and Expertise

What
Happens
When you
Put it All
Together?





Teaching the Way Students Learn Best Lessons from Bronxdale High School

Jacqueline Ancess, Bethany Rogers, DeAnna Duncan Grand,
and Linda Darling-Hammond

- learningpolicyinstitute.org



Social Justice Humanitas Academy

A Community School Approach
to Whole Child Education

Marisa Saunders, Lorea Martínez, Lisa Flook, and Laura E. Hernández



MAY 2021



Teaching for Powerful Learning

Lessons From Gateway Public Schools

Channa M. Cook-Harvey, Lisa Flook, Emily Efland,
and Linda Darling-Hammond



OCTOBER 2020

What Will be the History of 21st Century Education?

“What the best and wisest parent wants for his or her child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other goal is narrow and unlovely. Acted upon, it destroys our democracy...Only by being true to the full growth of all the individuals who make it up, can society by any chance be true to itself.”

-- John Dewey

