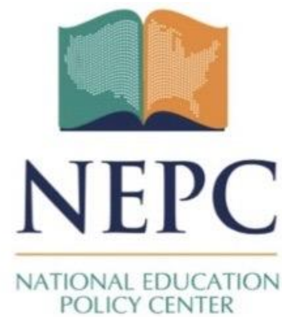


# Shared Systems 2021:
# Education Reform in Response to the Pandemic

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**January 2021**

In September 2018, the Partnership for the Future of Learning ('Partnership') launched the Shared Systems Work Group to center the perspectives of community members and educators alongside district leaders in re-imagining and enacting an education system aligned with the Partnership's Vision and Values. By 2018, schools and school districts in the United States–especially those in urban areas–had experienced forty years of reform pendulum swings between the arcs of centralization and decentralization, small schools and larger ones, charter schools and traditional schools, elected and appointed school boards, state takeovers and local control, and between standards-based curricula and those more responsive to the racial, ethnic and religious diversity in our nation's public schools (Southern Education Foundation, 2018). As aptly captured by Sarason (1993), the tremendous churn at the surface of system reform has been propelled by local and state leadership turnover (e.g., mayors, superintendents, governors, chief state school officers), changes in federal policies, and by the shifting agendas of education philanthropies, all of which are marked by five-year life spans.

Over the past twenty years, these abrupt shifts in education reform strategies and governance have occurred in the midst of federal policies that produced high stakes accountability tests (e.g.; No Child Left Behind, 2001; and its successors, Race To The Top, 2009; and the Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015) that penalized students, schools, and teachers for poor performance while doing little to increase the resources and capacities systems need to address yawning achievement gaps. Moreover, by eschewing investments in the infrastructure (research, professional development, community engagement and partnership, technology, data systems, facilities, etc.) needed for new systems to emerge from old ones, accountability-centered reforms have fed a narrative of failure that has undermined confidence in public education while leaving students, practitioners, and communities with systems that are ill-equipped to meet their needs and aspirations.

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## Governance Crisis

Over the past 30 years, debates about school governance have become a replacement or proxy for reimagining system design. As Black and Brown students began to comprise a majority of students enrolled in urban public schools during this period, the voices of parents, students and advocates in urban school communities have been minimized gradually by governance shifts that have weakened local control while enhancing the power of mayors and governors to replace elected boards with appointed ones, and to hire and fire system leaders (i.e., CEO's and superintendents). These shifts have been driven by a corporate approach to public schooling that treats students and parents as clients rather than partners, and schools as stand-alone organizations whose teachers and principals should be given the autonomy to act as long as they meet national/state standards measured by standardized tests.

This approach to school system governance has privileged the values and beliefs of the business, research/consulting, and philanthropic sectors and has allowed these sectors to impose their educational values, goals and solutions on communities while stripping parents, educators, advocates and students of the power and resources needed to inform and effect change. Urban system reform efforts in New Orleans, Detroit and until recently, Newark, typified this approach of concentrating power among elites in the name of taking "politics" out of reform. Essentially, this model substituted "messy" local politics, with national and state politics dominated by the perspectives of mostly White elites from the corporate, government and philanthropic sectors. In doing so, the de facto purposes of urban schools became largely defined as producing graduates who can pass standardized achievement tests, complete high school, enroll in college and serve the economy. While these are important aims, they underplay public education's role in strengthening democracy, advancing social and cultural development, and promoting a just society (Tyack, 1993).

## Reimagining Governance

As we reimagine the design of public school systems, we must ensure that new systems are designed and guided by governance structures that treat students and parents, along with school and community-based educators, as partners in design and decision making processes. But meaningful representative governance must be accompanied by ongoing, evidence-based dialogue with the community in ways that were modeled by the PS 2013 Campaign in New York City. As described by Guevara (2014), PS2013 was a student-centered, equity driven visioning process led by 3 organizing groups (the Coalition for Educational Justice, the Urban Youth Collaborative, and the Alliance for Quality Education). The process engaged parents,

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students, advocates, and other stakeholders in a series of evidence-based dialogues that generated a shared view of the problems, solutions, goals and values prioritized by the community. As priorities emerged, participants in the process were expanded to include local colleges and universities, political and business leaders, and union representatives. The process led to an education vision and reform agenda that was adopted by the De Blasio administration and the New York City Department of Education, and one that continues to be monitored and modified by community input in the face of challenges posed by state and national education leaders with conflicting priorities. In sum, reimagining urban school systems requires governance structures that are: 1) representative to ensure that a full range of values and aspirations inform system renovation and school innovation; and, 2) reflective to ensure that decision making is informed by evidence along with strongly held community values and aspirations. Finally, community-centered and equity-driven governance systems must foster transparency and public accountability for achieving a broad range of results measured by leading and lagging indicators that are in keeping with the full range of a community's values and aspirations for public education. These guardrails should help governance bodies move beyond chasing the latest reform model backed by federal and/or philanthropic dollars to consider designing systems that support and sustain community-centered and equity-driven reform agenda.

**Theory of Change**

Community-centered and evidence-based governance strategies also require a shift in the theory of change guiding school and system reform. Representative governance bodies supported by ongoing, community-centered and evidence-based engagement processes are critical to support two of the four dimensions of scale outlined by Coburn's (2003) seminal analysis. Coburn argued that taking reform to scale goes beyond expanding the implementation of a reform so that it affects an increasing number of students, practitioners, and schools (breadth). She argued that achieving scale also involves increasing the depth or quality of an effort, while also expanding its sustainability and ownership. Enhancing sustainability and ownership requires a system that monitors, supports, and refines a reform over time, ensuring that its implementation supports the twin goals of equity and excellence. In addition, ownership requires that students, parents, practitioners and major education stakeholders "see themselves" in the reform--that is, it reflects a shared vision and values and is consistent with community priorities and goals. Reforms imposed by external experts (superintendents or CEO's working with a small coterie of researchers and consultants) empowered by federal or state mandates rarely last beyond changes in political leadership or the three to five year attention span of most philanthropic initiatives. Theories of change that prioritize top-down implementation that bypasses community engagement have led to

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massive disruptions (school closures, staffing changes, charter school expansions, leadership turnover) while failing to produce results or community buy-in over time.

Despite the failure of top-down reform to generate sustainable change and community ownership, this approach continues to be touted in the face of sustained improvement obtained by urban school systems in Union City, New Jersey; Long Beach, California; and Aldine, Texas; that design, implement, and monitor their reforms with the support of broad-based community coalitions that include, parents, practitioners, business leaders, students, the higher education community, arts and cultural groups, and other important stakeholders. In fact, these community-centered, evidence-based reform efforts convert stakeholders into reform partners who provide the political will and system resources (Kirp, 2013) to address each of Coburn's four dimensions of scale. Theories of change that sacrifice ownership and sustainability, in the hopes that depth and breadth will win hearts and minds down the road, rarely survive changes in governance and leadership, and the disappointing results cause foundations to shift priorities every three to five years. However, the real harm here is the trail of failed promises made to students, parents, practitioners and community leaders who are left to pick up the pieces after the latest wave of education reform heroes depart to write books and take new positions.

**The Triple Crisis**

Our nation's enduring failure to engage communities in renovating their systems to sustain reforms has been laid bare painfully by COVID-19 and the ensuing health, economic, and racial crisis (Triple Crisis) the pandemic helped spawn. Moreover, as a recent analysis of the impact of COVID-19 in Los Angeles shows (Cabildo, Muholland Graves, Kim and Russo, 2020), longstanding structural barriers in education, health care, the economy, and housing have combined to "racialize" the impact of the crisis by leaving systems ill-equipped to marshal the resources and partnerships (e.g., community organizations, advocacy groups,, health agencies, and businesses) needed to support student learning and development for our most vulnerable children and families. While economically privileged families have the means to ameliorate the worst of the hardships posed by the Triple Crisis (educational, health, economic, social) in the short run, poor and privileged families alike will suffer the negative social, political, and economic consequences produced by public systems failing under the weight of the pandemic. Without a significant infusion of resources, public education systems weakened by the Triple Crisis will leave poor families with a scattered array of ineffective choices while privileged families create isolated islands of excellence that will not survive the tsunami of systemic failure. The Triple Crisis require schools supported by public education systems that can act in concert with other

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essential systems (health, economic, public safety, transportation, housing), to ensure that every school, student, and family receives a web of needed supports and timely interventions similar to the ones called for by the Annenberg Institute's National Task Force on the Future of Urban Districts in 2002.

Almost twenty years have passed since the Task Force inspired a flurry of efforts to redesign urban school districts–those deemed most troubled at the time. In a policy brief commissioned by the Shared Systems Work Group, Peurach and Yurkofsky (2018) identified four major approaches to district redesign that emerged during this period: managerial, market-driven, federated, and networked. Market-Driven or Portfolio Approaches to reform attracted the most attention during this period given the radical nature of this design and its imposition on urban communities through state takeovers riven with political and racial conflict (New Orleans, Newark, and Detroit are all such examples). As described by Peurach and Yurkofsky, the remaining three approaches largely involve shifting the responsibility for supporting teaching and learning to central office administrators (Managerial), collaboratives of school and central office leaders (Federated), or to school networks supported by school leaders, reform support organizations, and other partners (Networked). Given the rapid shifts of direction and leadership that have occurred in urban districts, many systems have remnants of two or more of these approaches vying for scarce resources. The resulting lack of strategic focus breeds tensions within systems and confusion among students, parents, and advocates given the chameleonic nature of the system.

Despite their contrasts, the four approaches share a common flaw–they each treat teaching and learning as a technical endeavor detached from social and cultural forces that influence the ways children, youth, and adults make sense of and use information, skills, and knowledge (Resnick and Nelson-Legall, 1997; Serpell and Haynes, 2004; Rose and Issa, 2018). This stance allows districts facing financial hardships to cut art and music programs, along with guidance counselors and recreation programs that often help students make connections between their academic coursework and meaningful activities in their families and communities (New Day for Learning, 2015).

These errors are compounded by districts that use their meager and declining resources to hire more police officers in misguided attempts to build barriers between the schools and the communities they serve. The burgeoning racial justice movement and the surge of right-wing militia are powerful evidence of how differences in social and cultural lenses can result in dueling realities where power distinguishes the views that are validated from the ones that get marginalized.

This exercise of power to sustain dominant narratives is evident in the federal

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government's recent threat to withdraw funding from schools that incorporate the 1619 Project in their curricula, even as the same government champions school choice and local control. The growing Black and Brown majorities in our nation's public schools, however, are demanding an education that embraces rather than demeans their historical and contemporary cultural experiences. They are demanding an education that positions parents and community as assets for teaching and learning and as partners in education rather than clients. For instance, educators and advocates in Boston are calling for a district-wide approach for developing culturally sustaining practices (Rose and Issa, 2018). Similarly, educators in Oakland have called for decolonizing the system's approach to teaching and learning by using targeted universalism to address the unique needs of African Americans males and other student groups that have been underserved traditionally by the system (Chatmon and Watson, 2018).

Instead of constructing barriers between schools and communities, the growing Community Schools Movement offers increasing evidence that schools can enhance academic and broader outcomes when they work in tandem with community-based organizations, advocacy groups, municipal agencies, and faith-based institutions. Recently, the Partnership's Community Schools Playbook (2018) identified four pillars that support the success of these kinds of schools: 1) Integrated Student Supports, 2) Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities, 3) Active Family and Community Engagement, and 4) Collaborative Leadership and Practices. The Playbook provides clear and compelling examples of what these pillars look like in practice as well as companion changes in policies that are needed to strengthen this work.

Extending the reach of these pillars across all schools in a community, however, requires an education system designed to work in concert with other public systems and the broader community. The Annenberg Institute's Task Force on the Future of Urban Districts (School Communities That Work, 2002) recognized this need by calling for *Smart Districts* that operated within a larger *Smart Education System* akin to the collaboratives envisioned by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's seminal New Futures Initiative launched in 1988 (see Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2000). These concepts of education systems embedded within larger local ecosystem have seeded similar efforts over the past decade such as the Ford Foundation's More and Better Learning Time Initiative (see Del Razo and Renee, 2015), the Promise Neighborhood Initiative (201-), the StriveTogether Initiative, and the Community Schools Movement mentioned earlier.

### System Renovation/Redesign

The powerful vision and promising outcomes produced by these efforts to propel

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teaching and learning beyond classroom walls depends on reimagining and renovating education systems -- not just schools. Systems are required to ensure that structural barriers to equity and excellence that operate within and across schools and communities are identified and removed. Systems are required to ensure that access to essential and high-quality resources (technologies, curricular materials, health supports, learning networks, community partners, additional funding) is distributed equitably and in a timely manner. Systems are also needed to address fundamental differences in power related to race, class, ethnicity, gender and other factors that have privileged the salient problems and solutions valued by dominant groups while muting the voices of the new majority served by public education (Simmons, 2010). Finally, renovating and redesigning systems will require the construction of scaffolds to support the transition from the old to the new in ways that minimize disruption for educators, students, and families that can occur when weak supports are abandoned before new ones take hold.

**Shared Systems Work Group**

The Shared Systems Work Group was established to clarify The Partnership's stance toward system renovation/redesign by using our vision and values, existing research, and the work of network members, to identify an emerging set of design principles and illuminate the range of pathways communities and their partners are taking to create public education systems rooted in equity and excellence. From the outset, we recognized that there is no "One Best System;" rather, communities that share the Partnership's vision and values must be supported to develop design principles they can use to guide the development of a new system and marshal the technical, political, social, and cultural capital needed to sustain the work.

To scaffold these efforts, Shared Systems has undertaken three interdependent strands of work: 1) syntheses of existing research, 2) case studies of system renovation/redesign strategies and outcomes, and 3) analyses of emerging system design principles in the field. This work has been carried out under the leadership of colleagues at the National Education Policy Center at the University of Colorado Boulder working in collaboration with the Partnership's team of staff and consultants at the National Public Education Support Fund. In keeping with the Partnership's principles, our priorities and strategies were developed in consultation with the Shared Systems Work Group, and a smaller group of Research Advisors (see attached list of members of both groups).

In the first phase of this work, we developed a Shared Systems White Paper (Ucelli et al, 2017) and commissioned an analysis of major system reform strategies undertaken since 1990. As described earlier, the latter analysis by Peurach and

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Yurkofsky (2018) provided the Work Group with a broad landscape of system reform efforts and the underlying values and forces shaping these directions. The White Paper and landscape analysis were viewed as starting points for conversations with the Shared Systems Work Group rather than as definitive statements. Both products were used to generate discussions about how well the issues identified in the White Paper and the system reform approaches aligned with The Partnership's vision and values.

To address the second strand of effort, we collaborated with Kara Finnegan and the University of Rochester to conduct an overview of 14 reform networks focused on renovating existing systems/districts and/or building new systems starting with a network of schools. Finnegan collaborated with a team of researchers that included Michele Renée Valladares, Matthew Garcia, and Brian Lightfoot at the University of Colorado Boulder, along with her colleague Christina Curti Leal at the University of Rochester. This project helped test and sharpen our definitions of systemic reform and equity, while surfacing similarities and differences between the levers networks used to catalyze renovation/redesign and the range of partners engaged in these efforts.

As the Triple Crisis underscored the need and urgency for deep and sustained systems reform, we organized follow-up interviews with leaders of 11 of the 14 networks to assess how the crises had affected their approach to systems change and equity, and their thoughts about next steps for Shared Systems. We also conducted an analysis of the design principles we could glean from reviewing the frameworks of 45 networks and organizations devoted to system reform. We were interested in identifying areas of broad agreement/consistency among the design principles, areas of conflict, and places where gaps existed given the vision and values of the Partnership. We also located the positions groups occupied in the ecosystem of reform (e.g., higher education, think tanks, community-based organizations, reform support organizations) to discern implications for potential gaps or biases in the perspectives that influenced the salience of some design principles and the absence of others.

Finally, we presented the results (preliminary) of these analyses (District Reform Approaches, Reform Networks, Design Principles Review) to the Shared System Work Group to help refine our research, surface major questions and concerns, and define Work Group priorities and processes for the next 10 months. The following sections provide an overview of the Design Principles and Network Analyses and the issues and priorities generated by the Work Group's deliberations.

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# Shared Systems 2021:
# Design Principles Analysis

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## Introduction

The collective work of the Partnership for the Future of Learning ('Partnership') reflects a vision for education designed to foster deeper learning; student-centered practices; equity; democracy; and trust, judgment, and responsibility. As the work evolved, the network's members raised the importance of centering racial justice as a core value, and elevating the science of learning's emphasis on the importance of children's holistic development. Each element of the Partnership's vision and values rests on the premise that public education is an essential public good that needs sufficient, equitably provided, and publicly governed resources to build and support systems that enable all students to thrive.

This report was developed to take a critical look at the reform frameworks organizations closely aligned with the Partnership use to guide their work with schools, school networks, districts, and community partners. We paid particular attention to gleaning the design principles these organizations used to inform their efforts and how well they aligned across the group and with the Partnership's vision and values.

## What are Design Principles?

Design principles are descriptions of core elements and desired features of a program, product, or project that are used to guide its development. The hope is that design principles articulate and communicate the user's needs, aspirations and values to those tasked with development and implementation. In education, design principles describe the fundamental elements that developers should use as they construct schools, and other parts of the education system so that they work in unison to meet the needs and fulfill the aspirations of students, families and communities, and the larger society.

Over the last two decades, education reformers have grappled with sifting through and weighing the design principles that should inform national, state, and local efforts to rectify persistent differences in educational outcomes between student groups. During that time, design principles for reforming education systems have been articulated by government agencies and various types of organizations that reflect broad differences in perspectives and values about the purposes of schooling and the nature of learning. These organizations range from research and policy think tanks to organizations that provide technical support to schools, school networks and districts to local and state government agencies to community-centered advocacy organizations.

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The perspectives and values of the different types of organizations and their constituents and stakeholders are reflected in the design elements they promote. For instance, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform released the following design principles in their *Smart Districts* (2002) report;

- High Standards and Expectations
- A Pool of Well-Qualified Teachers and Administrators
- Incentives and Access to High Quality Professional Development
- Materials and Curriculum Support to Assist Schools in Developing Courses of Study aligned with Established Standards
- Respectful and Trusting Relationships among School, Staff, Students and Parents
- A Mechanism for Comparing School Progress that weighs Equity and Excellence
- Access to Economies of Scale
- Substantive Parent and Community Involvement

In 2011, the Center for Reinventing Public Education published *Seven Components of a Portfolio Strategy* (2011) and outlined these design principles;

- Choice
- School Autonomy
- Pupil-Based Funding
- Talent Development
- Performance-Based Accountability
- Sources of Support
- Extensive Public Engagement

While the two reports share some similarities (e.g. a focus on professional development and additional support for schools), there were substantial differences in the key elements each reform identified as essential for renovating education systems. The *Smart Districts* framework emphasized the system's role in supporting curriculum, instruction, professional development and meaningful community and family engagement. This framework also seeks to balance 'excellence' and 'equity' in evaluating school progress. Conversely, the *Portfolio Framework* keyed in on school choice and autonomy, pupil-based funding, and holding schools accountable to their test-based performance as the major drivers of school improvement with the system's role limited primarily to identifying talent, setting goals, and monitoring progress.

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As such, these two frameworks have contrasting views of the way education systems should operate and their primary functions. Smart Districts focuses on the system's role in building 'collective capacity' by supporting curriculum and professional development across schools by tapping into the expertise of stakeholders (e.g. teachers, community advocates, students) and by providing economies of scale. In the Smart Districts' model, school performance also considers equity in the form of mechanisms that provide differentiated resources based on need, in addition to holding schools to high standards. Whereas, Seven Components of a Portfolio System moves the responsibility for curriculum and instruction to individual schools and/or networks of schools as a basis for autonomy and choice at the school level. In the portfolio model, performance based accountability focuses on the success and failure of individual schools to develop capacity and the districts' responsibility is reduced to primarily allocating school funding. As such, the Smart Districts and Seven Components of a Portfolio System frameworks envision starkly different reforms rooted in contrasting values and orientations to the challenges in public education.

**The Partnership's Vision and Values: Implications for Design Principles**

The reforms that underlie any system renovation rest on a foundation of values, a vision and a set of aspirations that are operationalized in a set of design principles. This report attempts to examine how the Partnership's vision and values are reflected and/or are challenged by frameworks produced by organizations that are loosely aligned with the Partnership's orientation. In doing so, this report analyzes the design principles outlined by 45 frameworks that were produced over the last two decades, including Smart Districts and Seven Components of a Portfolio Model Strategy.

In the current environment where school systems (not just individual schools) must respond to the impacts of the triple crisis which has had a disproportionately negative impact on communities of color, the need to articulate and advocate for policies rooted not only in equity, but explicitly *racial equity* has only increased. On one hand, the need for additional resources and supports directed towards education, health and social services to address these challenges are clear. However, on the other hand, our social and health institutions are facing drastic budget cuts due to the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, to ensure policies aimed at remedying the impacts of the triple crisis are racially equitable public institutions must recognize and address the disparate effects on less affluent students but also specifically on students of color, and in doing so they must address the political challenges that could undermine their effectiveness during implementation (Welner, 2001; Renee, Welner & Oakes, 2010).

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Indeed, one often under-addressed challenge is the attention paid to the technical aspects of reform policies and practices at the expense of considering cultural and political factors in design and implementation. In order to address the root causes of educational inequity the communities intended to benefit from reforms must be included in the surfacing and framing of challenges and in developing and implementing solutions that address technical issues as well as those related to social and cultural influences on teaching and learning.

A publicly constructed and shared set of design principles for system redesign and renovation would allow system and community leaders to marshall the political, social, and technical capital needed to initiate a sustained change effort, monitor progress, make necessary modifications, and build the scaffolds required to support students and practitioners in service of renovating education systems to respond to the challenges that were highlighted and exasperated by the triple crisis.

**Description of Report**

This report is designed to be a resource communities might use to translate their vision for system renovation/redesign into a set of principles for guiding the work and assessing progress over time. This report also provides a foundation the Shared Systems Work Group can use to develop its next steps in identifying areas of strength, points of disagreement, and gaps that must be filled to transform local aspirations for an effective and equitable public education system into reality. A draft of this report was shared with the Working Group to initiate dialogue to move towards consensus on the most prevalent issues and themes, as well as ones that were missing and require elevation.

Finally, this report presents an analysis of design principles produced by organizations supporting networks of schools and/or school districts drawn from actors across the field. In all, we reviewed 45 frameworks that were produced between 2002-2020 (Appendix A). The frameworks were surfaced through recommendations from the Shared System Research Advisory Board and Working Group (Appendix B). Additional frameworks were added by the Shared Systems team and largely reflect the work of organizations of close association to the Partnership.

This analysis identifies design principles that were prevalent across the frameworks, as well as areas of difference and places where gaps might exist given the Partnerships Vision and Values. The Partnership's *A Policy Framework for Tomorrow's Learning* (2017) five values, then, provided the overarching lens that guided our analyses;

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- Deeper learning: Students learn to master and apply critical content knowledge by using higher-order skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration. They become resourceful, resilient, and able to guide their own learning.

- Student-centered teaching: Teaching and learning opportunities are anchored in the science of learning and research on youth development; educators value and respond to the needs of diverse students, and they have tools to ensure that all students learn well.

- Equity: Resources and supports that enable deeper learning outcomes are provided to all students, with particular attention given to the needs of those who must overcome historical disadvantage.

- Democracy: Schools prepare young people to be active and engaged citizens in an increasingly diverse and complex democracy. They function as democratic institutions that engage parents and communities as central participants in decisions.

- Trust, judgment, and responsibility: Knowledgeable professionals work together with engaged parents, community members, and policymakers in a process of continuous improvement characterized by trust, respect, shared responsibility, and mutual

Moreover, given shifts that occurred before and during the Covid-19 pandemic, we paid special attention to the ways design principles align with the definitions of 'equity' and 'systems change' we developed with support of the Shared Systems' Research Advisory Board and Working Group in late 2019 and early 2020;

- Equity...is ensuring justice and opportunity for all people, with a focus on striving to identify and eliminate systemic barriers (like racism, sexism, classism, ableism, etc.) that prevent that justice and opportunity from being obtained by specific groups of people. Improving equity involves a process of redesigning systems toward the aim of increasing justice and opportunity by changing rules, laws, culture, and procedures as well as redistributing resources.

- Systems Change... is the idea that large-scale education improvement is best achieved when reforms address multiple levels of and mutually influential elements of the broader organizational system.

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The frameworks were produced by a range of groups including reform support organizations, research and policy organizations, and community and advocacy organizations. Each of the frameworks reflect the perspectives of these organizations and their constituencies. As such, it's important to provide a deeper description the types of organizations in our sample:

- Reform Support Organizations primarily provide technical support to schools and school networks. Examples included are Big Picture Learning and New Vision for Public Schools.

- Research and Policy Organizations primarily focus on research and/or policy analysis with less focus on technical support. These organizations can be university based or independently operated. Examples included are the National Education Policy Center and Learning Policy Institute.

- Community and Advocacy Organizations primarily support campaigns and/or lobbying while some conduct research and provide technical support they have to blend evidence with community perspectives. Examples include Alliance to Reclaim our Schools and Coalition for Community Schools.

- Local and State Educational Agencies (LEA/SEA) are state agencies that primarily communicate policy mandates. Examples included are the California Department of Education and Oakland Unified School District.

As we reviewed our sample, we found an overrepresentation of frameworks that were produced by research and policy organizations. Sixty-six percent of the frameworks were produced by these types of organizations. Moving forward we will refine our criteria to reflect the work and voices of actors from different positions in the education ecosystem–particularly those from community based organizations.

Our analysis was driven by the following guiding questions;

- *What are the key design principles that appear across all of the different publications?*

- *Where do stark differences and gaps in design principles exist and what issues or values underlie these differences/gaps?*

- *Given the challenges systems face in light of the pandemic and heightened calls for racial and social justice, which design principles should the Partnership amplify to guide community engagement and advocacy about system/school design and resourcing in the years ahead?*

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These questions were used to distill points of convergence and difference, and to understand how specific design principles aligned with the values of the Partnership. The inquiry was undertaken by developing codes (Appendix ??) derived from key terms used in *A Policy Framework for Tomorrow's Learning*; i.e., 'Deeper Learning', 'Student Centered Teaching', 'Equity', 'Democracy' and 'Trust, Judgement and Responsibility' were developed. Further, an explicit focus on descriptions of 'racial equity' in addition to 'equity' was also included to reflect the ways the Partnership's values have evolved since the publication of the framework in 2017. The codes were then applied to terms and concepts that appeared across the 45 frameworks to determine the frequency they appeared. This report concludes with building blocks to develop design principles based on the most common features outlined by the frameworks that were also in alignment with the Partnerships' evolving values.

## Framework Analysis

### Guiding Question 1: Which design principles are emphasized across the frameworks?

As noted previously, the scope of the frameworks varied, however the most common themes and terms focused broadly on (1) teaching and learning, (2) community relationships, and (3) school and district governance.

#### Teaching and Learning:

All the frameworks discussed teaching and learning explicitly. However, they differed with respect to the emphasis placed on various modalities of teaching and learning (e.g. project-based learning) and their desired learning outcomes (e.g. college readiness). We proceeded to determine the frequency with which various modalities were promoted and the student outcomes they attempted to address.

Table 1. Common Aspects of Teaching and Learning

| | |
|---|---|
| Project Based Learning | 38% |
| Real World Experience | 35% |
| School Culture | 35% |
| College Prep | 33% |
| Teacher Capacity | 28% |

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In sum, the frameworks shared an emphasis on learning that prepares students to navigate a complex world, that emphasizes critical thinking and real-world experiences (35%), and that utilizes project-based learning (38%). Additionally, many of the frameworks emphasized a student centered school culture including an environment that fostered collaboration (26%) and personalization (23%).

Community Relationships:

Community engagement was also a prevalent topic. A majority of the frameworks discussed the importance of supportive communities and the need to have input from community stakeholders. The nature of community engagement, however, took different forms and had different goals.

Table 2. Common Aspects of Community Relationships

| | |
|---|---|
| Integrated Supports | 45% |
| Collaboration Between Community and Schools | 40% |
| Community Partnerships | 33% |
| Community Engagement | 33% |
| Community Playing a Decision Making Role | 20% |

Sixty-one percent of frameworks that discussed community relationships in some form. However, the focus and process of community engagement varied among frameworks. The most common form of community relationship was discussed as a means to provide integrated services and wrap around supports that are responsive to the needs of students and their families (45%).

School and District/ System Supports:

Table 3. Common Aspects of Governance

| | |
|---|---|
| Focused on Changing Practices | 64% |
| Focused on Changing Policies | 33% |
| Multiple Measures of Evaluation | 35% |
| Performance Based Assessment | 33% |
| Continuous Improvement | 28% |

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A majority of frameworks (64%) focused on changing practices within schools/ networks of schools and/or districts/ network of districts as opposed to changing education policies (33%). XX% (UPDATE) discussed both changing policies and practices. Several frameworks also focused on assessment and evaluation and promoted a coherent system of evaluation that is aligned to student outcomes and is rooted in performance based assessments (33%) and/or multiple measures (35%) of student outcomes. In addition, several focused on establishing continuous improvement processes that can surface and test context specific problems and solutions (28%).

**Guiding Question 2: Where do stark differences and gaps in design principles exist and what issues or values underlie these differences?**

There was agreement amongst several of the key terms and themes used in the frameworks to describe their design principles however there were also conflicts about the underlying meaning, objectives and processes of those key terms and themes. As such, the below four 'tensions' highlight some of the conflicts that emerged.

***Tension 1:*** *Organizations used different terminology to describe similar learning goals. (e.g. deeper learning, linked learning, positive youth development).*

At times, frameworks would use different language to discuss similar ideas. Conversely, frameworks would also use similar language that obscured underlying tensions about values, objectives and priorities. Elements of learning described by the Partnership and others as 'deeper learning' were described by other organizations' design principles using a variety of terms. The Partnership and other organizations use meaningful learning interchangeably with deeper learning while others did not label the elements deeper and/or meaningful learning but nonetheless describe many of the same key features. For example, deeper learning was described by the *Deeper Learning Dozen* as;

> "Experiences that **develop [students'] mastery**, **identity and creativity"**, "experience **learning that is connected… to their community**"… "**learning by doing and apprenticeship**" (Deeper Learning Dozen).

Whereas *A Guide to Integrated Student Supports for College and Career Pathways: Lessons from Linked Learning High Schools* described many of the same features as 'linked learning;

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> “[T]he Linked Learning approach joins together rigorous college-prep academics, a challenging career, or profession-themed curriculum that meets industry standards, and an **opportunity for students to apply classroom learning through work-based or other real-world experiences in their communities**… It also recognizes that **“educating the whole student requires rethinking teaching and learning so that academic content and students’ social, emotional, and cognitive development are joined not just occasionally, but throughout the day**” (A Guide to Integrated Student Supports for College and Career Pathways: Lessons from Linked Learning High Schools)

Both the *Deeper Learning Dozen* and *A Guide to Integrated Student Supports for College and Career Pathways discussed the importance of learning being connected to real world experiences rooted in students’ communities while also providing the opportunity to learn through apprenticeships and internships. Additionally, both frameworks positioned learning as extending to other competencies such as developing identity, emotional and social abilities and creativity.*

***Tension 2:*** *The extent to which race and ethnicity were discussed explicitly as challenges to equity varied across frameworks.*

An overarching theme that emerged was the lack of principles that explicitly confronted or addressed challenges tied to race and ethnicity. While educational equity was discussed as a goal by a large majority of the frameworks, equity was positioned as an outcome of reforms rather than a factor that should guide an analysis of bias and the development of targeted universalism For example, *Increasing Access and Equity: A Whole School Approach* framed race in idealistic terms and not as a factor that has historically hindered reforms.

> “In urban, suburban and rural settings, SREB’s school improvement frameworks provide a structure that **empowers schools to make the changes needed to expand or improve access to high-quality programs and ensure that all students — regardless of their gender, race, socioeconomic background, ability level or location** — discover a purpose for learning and life.” (Increasing Access and Equity - A Whole School Approach)

Framing reforms as being effective regardless of demographic difference does not fully acknowledge educational reforms' historical inability to reduce educational disparities across these lines, particularly in regards to race and ethnicity. Conversely, a subset of frameworks (14%) called explicitly for racial and/or ethnic

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equity and recognized racial and ethnic differences as a systemic challenge to enacting reforms. As such, Education Justice is Racial Justice demands were explicitly rooted in the historical and contemporary differentiated treatment of students of color;

> "**Stop Treating Black and Brown Children Like Criminals**: We demand schools that are rooted in a culture of mutual respect and a commitment to educate young people, not frighten and control them into submission. We must embrace and invest in positive discipline practices and restorative justice as critical components for building that culture." (Education Justice is Racial Justice)

Further frameworks that explicitly centered racial equity focused on solutions to enduring issues such as converting to restorative justice from punitive discipline practices. These frameworks sought to highlight specific ways students were marginalized in schools due to race and ethnicity and advocated for policies that were conscious of the historical implications of racism.

***Tension 3:*** *Since race and ethnicity were often not explicitly addressed, improved student outcomes were often framed as a primarily technical challenge in comparison to being treated as a technical, political, and cultural endeavor*

Frameworks often elevated the technical aspect of reforms over the need to attend to the cultural and political dimensions of reform in communities. For instance, frameworks that viewed education reform primarily as a technical challenge discussed the need for school leaders to have more technical expertise and implicitly emphasized dominant views of "capacity" and "flexibility". For example Tr*ansforming School Funding Systems: Equity Transparency, Flexibility* highlighted capacity as a central component to improving student outcomes;

> "Enabling Condition for Strategic School Design: **If school leaders have the support and capacity** to strategically organize those resources to best meet the needs of their students…**Then they will better use their resources (time, people, and money)…Which will improve instruction**, and…That will ultimately lead to improving student achievement." (Transforming School Funding Systems: Equity Transparency, Flexibility)

However, the focus on school leaders' technical expertise does not recognize the 'cultural dimensions' of school reform. Without the inclusion of the sociopolitical elements of change, such as interrogating one's own bias or political constituencies aligned with particular programs and policies, reforms (e.g., small schools, charter

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schools, magnet schools/programs) are prone to reproducing rather than resolving inequity. As the *The New Frontier: An Integrated Framework for Equity & Transformative Improvement in Education* points out;

> "The **'Cultural Dimensions'** of educational systems change **attend systematically to 1) organizational culture as well as to 2) cultural responsiveness as they relate to institutional and system functioning**. These areas include: internal reflection, collaboration, personal and group accountability, developing constructive relationships between people (staff, faculty, students, parents/family, boards, unions, and community), political dimensions, affective dimensions, cultural competence, and structural Inequality." (The New Frontier: An Integrated Framework for Equity & Transformative Improvement in Education)

Moreover, the emphasis on pursuing technical changes while not fully considering students' socio-political realities was also present in the ways frameworks approached teaching and learning. For instance, *Organizing Schools for Improvement* stressed the importance of "student-centered learning climates";

> Student-centered learning climate. **All adults in a school community forge a climate that enables students to think of themselves as learners.** At a minimum, improving schools establish a safe and orderly environment — the most basic prerequisite for learning. **They endorse ambitious academic work coupled with support for each student.** The combination allows students to believe in themselves, to persist, and ultimately to achieve.

In their framing of student-centered climates, the goal was to "enable students to think of themselves as learners." However, their description of student-centered environments does not explicitly call for culturally relevant curriculums and without attention paid to culture, learning is situated as a primarily cognitive function not also as a sociocultural process. *Organizing schools for Improvement* also uplifted the "unrecognized challenges" of "social context" -- differences in the social capital of communities and inequity outside of school (p. 28). However, it did not explicitly attend to historical power imbalances and/or political or cultural differences rooted in race and/or ethnicity.

In contrast, *OurSchoolsPVD* -- a community driven effort to reform schools -- explicitly outlined student-centered cultures as being "unapologetically anti-racist" and having "clear mechanism to center the expertise and wisdom of youth" in addition to creating an "inspiring culture of high expectations". The explicit

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emphasis on these cultural dimensions of teaching and learning integrates the sociocultural and cognitive aspects of learning.

The racial reckoning in the US demonstrates clearly the socio-cultural consequences people of color face everyday due to their race and/or ethnicity. However, teaching and learning is often discussed in culturally and politically neutral terms such as being "student-centered", "seeing themselves as learners" or being rooted in "real-world experiences". In fact, for students of color teaching and learning can not be student centered without it considering students socio-political reality. Indeed, students of color will struggle to see themselves as learners unless the school environment is explicit anti-rasict and students of color can not have meaningful "real world experiences" without paying attention to the ways race mediates those experiences.

***Tension 4:*** *Most frameworks discussed the importance of community input, however the role of community was framed from passive engagement to active partnership.*

Valuing the perspectives and resources communities provide was a feature of a majority of frameworks (61%), however the role of community and the process of incorporating community input varied. Several frameworks discussed community input as 'engagement', which was typically done through community outreach to surface perspectives and support. However, communication was largely centered around building support for plans that were already established. For instance, *Seven Components of a Portfolio Strategy* states;

> "Extensive Public Engagement: **Cities need to know what families want and value, and cities need to show what they will deliver.** This strategy brings a lot of changes to schools. It works best if it channels the needs and dreams of communities for their children, and translates those into new opportunities for families, teachers and school leaders". (Seven Components of a Portfolio Strategy)

In this framing, 'the strategy' is already conceived but for it to "work best" it should "channel the needs and dreams of communities". However, incorporating the aspirations of communities into pre-existing plans can undermine the integrity of a community's vision or alter it to favor the vision of the developer. Contrarily, frameworks that focus on 'partnership' emphasize a systemic process for engaging with families and establishing community partnerships. For instance, *Ten Principles of Effective School Design* discussed an "ongoing" process that is "driven by parent demand and cultivated by the community";

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> “**Parents and caregivers engagement is an ongoing process that integrates families into the life of the school in a variety of ways**. The result is a **partnership, driven by parent demand and cultivated by the school community, in which parents and caregivers have voice and power to shape all components of the school.** The school assumes that any person trusted by the student’s family can be a partner for achieving youth success” (Ten Principles of Effective School Design)

These four tensions are not exhaustive of the differences presented among the frameworks, but they do highlight some of the important conflicts beneath the surface of common ideas and the language used to discuss those ideas.

**Guiding Question 3: Given the challenges systems face in light of the triple pandemic, which design principles should the Partnership amplify to guide community engagement and advocacy about system/school design and resourcing in the years ahead?**

**Building Block 1:** Learning is oriented towards teaching students the skills they need to pursue their aspirations in a complex world and transcends the modality of learning (i.e. project based, blended).

The Partnership describes deeper learning as “students learn[ing] to master and apply critical content knowledge by using higher-order skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration. And as a result, [t]hey become resourceful, resilient, and able to guide their own learning” (A Framework for Tomorrow's Learning).

There is broad agreement that the desired process and outcomes of learning should be centered around students’ experiences, critical thinking, identity, navigation capital and connection beyond school;

> “**Experiences that develop [students'] mastery, identity and creativity**”, “experience learning that is **connected... to their community”** “**learning by doing and apprenticeship**” (Deeper Learning Dozen).
>
> “Meaningful learning should support acquisition of the knowledge, language, **lifelong learning skills, and dispositions that students need to succeed in today’s world**: the ability to **apply complex knowledge to solve problems**, collaborate, communicate, inquire,

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> and learn independently, **build relationships**, and be resilient and resourceful" (Blueprint for Great Schools 2.0)

> "Mastery of core academic content, **critical thinking and problem solving**, **effective communication, ability to work collaboratively, learning how to learn, and academic mindsets**" (The Shape of Deeper Learning).

These definitions emphasize cognitive aspects of teaching and learning, but fail to elevate the social, cultural and emotional components of learning. UC/Accord framework, Critical Conditions for Equity and Diversity in College Access, discusses the need for 'identity and connection with their home communities" and that race and culture" to be recognized as important drivers for student success.

> "What is it? Students see college going as integral to their identities; **they have the confidence and skills to negotiate college without sacrificing their own identity and connections with their home communities**. They recognize that college is a pathway to careers that are valued in their families, peer groups, and local communities. Why Does it Matter? **Race and culture play an important role in shaping students' college- going identities**, and this role is related to the historical underrepresentation of many minorities in colleges" (Critical Conditions for Equity and Diversity in College Access).

As the Deeper Learning Dozen points out, "Deeper learning is not synonymous with project based learning, student centered learning, competency-based learning or blended learning… which are modalities which can be shallow or deep in practice" (Deeper learning Dozen). Deeper learning experiences can be provided through culturally relevant, project-based, internships or other curriculums and programs. Regardless of modality, deeper learning develops the knowledge, intellectual and social skills, emotional capabilities and mindset young people need to pursue their aspirations and contribute to society.

The Partnership elevated four methods of teaching oriented towards deeper/ meaningful learning experiences: (1) culturally relevant (2) student-centered, (3) inquiry/ project -based, and (4) linked to the real world. There was commonality around the types of educational activities that provide deeper learning experiences.

> "Big picture learning deeper learning is facilitated through their ten distinguishers which include **internships, family engagement, authentic assessments and professional development/ post secondary planning**" (Bigger Picture Learning).

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> "The network schools engaged in several different instructional strategies to develop deeper learning cognitive skills, including **integrating project-based learning and real-world connections into instruction, providing internship opportunities outside of school,** and differentiating and personalizing instruction to ensure that all students developed these skills" (The Shape of Deeper Learning).

There is considerable agreement among equity minded educational organizations about the important outcomes of quality learning experiences and, similarly, the educational activities that produce these outcomes. However, the language used in design principles to describe school curricula and desired educational outcomes is wide-ranging and may be inaccessible for people not immersed in education. Additionally, different terms are used to describe a similar set of attributes, a tendency that could create confusion for stakeholders inside and outside of education.

**Building Block 2:** Student assessments should be performance based and include multiple measures of student success.

This principle reflects the weight given to standards and assessments in federal and state policies that were intensified under No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top. As such, many frameworks' design principles paid particular attention to the alignment of student assessments to be aligned to the desired learning outcomes, include performance based measures (33%) and utilize multiple measures (35%) of student achievement.

> "Schools and student learning are complex. Using standardized student test scores as the sole measure of the impact of policies and practices is not enough to capture that complexity: **understanding school and student achievement requires multiple measures that take into account many dimensions of students' learning and preparedness to learn**" (Leveraging Time for School Equity).

> "Staff at the network schools described a range of assessment strategies that were used to monitor and ensure that students gained deeper learning cognitive skills to prepare them well for college and career. These included **longer term assessments, such as exhibitions or portfolios**, which allowed students to demonstrate their cumulative knowledge and skills and their readiness to move on to new stages of education or work (e.g., to move from one grade to

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> the next, or to graduate). Teachers also described **more frequent assessments to gauge students' understanding of concepts, as well as more traditional summative assessments**, such as tests" (The Shape of Deeper Learning).
>
> "The learning tasks posed for students are key… as are the assessments that manifest what students actually need to know and provide feedback to inform subsequent instruction" (Organizing Schools for Improvement).

Further, there was divergence between the student indicators included in "multiple measures". For instance, *Leveraging Time for School Equity: Indicators to Measure More and Better Learning Time*, not only considered multiple measures of student learning, but also multiple measures of system success.

> "The [MBLT] indicator framework **measures a range of critical inputs and outcomes at the student, school, and system levels.** Both inputs and outputs are needed to bring this initiative to scale. The **outputs involve traditional indicators that measure evidence of student learning**, **as well as non-traditional indicators that highlight the range of skills and abilities students need for success in the twenty-first century**. The inputs include external stakeholders' actions that help shape the MBLT initiative and the student outcomes. The fluid relationship among these inputs and outputs allows us to document the interactions that lead to the creation and sustaining of ecosystems of equity" (Leveraging Time for School Equity).

**Build Block 3:** Student-centered teaching is fostered through a positive school culture that is culturally responsive and provides access to college and career pathways.

There is significant agreement within the field about the relationship between "quality" teaching and employing student-centered teaching methods. Organizations also largely agreed on methods that align with student centered practices such as fostering a positive school culture and increasing teachers' capacity. Additionally, there was particular attention paid to the processes that facilitated student-centered learning.

> The Education Center believes that the **coherence of a school's culture, structures, and instruction enables teachers to effectively challenge and support students.** We partner with school

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> systems to create the conditions for school-level coherence by **growing the capacity of teacher leaders to facilitate professional learning communities with a focus on the instructional core**: the relationship between the student, teacher, and the content with which they are engaged (Bank Street Education Center)

> “Instructional Core: The central idea (articulated by Ball and Cohen, 1999) **that improvement in learning in a classroom is a function of instructional capacity, which is through the interaction of three capacities**: “teachers’ intellectual and personal resources;” **“students’ experiences, understandings, interests, commitments, and engagement;”** and content, or what students are engaged in. “**In focusing on this relationship as the basis for increased student achievement, school districts target their improvement efforts on providing capacity and support to the activities in the instructional core**” (Childress, 2004) (Leading for Capacity and Coherence: The LEAD Connecticut District Leadership Capacity and Coherence Framework)

The Partnership's vision of student centered teaching encompasses teaching that is *culturally responsive*. The connection between student-centered teaching and culturally responsive teaching was highlighted by several frameworks. For instance, The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools’ framework, *Education Justice is Racial Justice*, tied teaching quality, culturally relevant curriculums and social services together and recommended policies that could facilitate their alignment. The connection between culturally responsive teaching and student centered teaching was particularly evident in frameworks focused on community schools.

> “**Qualified Teachers, Relevant Curriculum, Social & Health Services**: We know what our children need - experienced teachers with appropriate educational resources; rich, challenging, **culturally-relevant curricula**; a welcoming school environment that doesn’t operate as if students are criminals; and schools that provide social and health services that help to overcome the challenges kids bring with them to the schoolhouse door. **We need to invest in 10,000 sustainable community schools.** The federal education law — the Every Student Succeeds Act — should be utilized to fund and support sustainable community schools” (Education Justice is Racial Justice).

> “Curricula that are engaging, **culturally relevant**, and challenging. Schools offer a robust selection of classes and after-school programs

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> in the arts, languages, and **ethnic studies**, as well as Advanced Placement (AP) and honors courses. Also offered are services for English Language Learners and special education students, GED preparation programs, and job training. Pedagogy is student-centered" (Community Schools: Transforming Struggling Schools into Thriving Schools)

Frameworks that addressed the need for student centered teaching to be 'culturally relevant' or 'culturally responsive' often did not use the term 'deeper learning'. Additionally, curricular rigor and cultural responsiveness were mentioned together often but were treated separately rather than as interdependent factors. There was, at times, a tension between frameworks that positioned student-centered learning as a process that uncovers and responds to students needs and is culturally relevant and those that position student-centered teaching in more technical terms such as teaching credentials and teacher capacity.

Defining student centered teaching as inclusive of socio-cultural elements, such as cultural relevance, teacher diversity and interrogating biases integrate cultural reforms with technical ones. Sociopolitical factors could be closer tied to teacher capacity and quality which are often treated as technical improvements.

**Building Block 4:** Racial and ethnic equity should be discussed explicitly and should focus on providing additional resources such as integrated supports, wraparound services, and removing structural barriers outside of school.

Racial equity should be discussed explicitly and capacity building for practitioners should include examining personal as well as social biases;

> "If teachers are to deepen learning outcomes for students... Continually deepen their knowledge of child development, content, and **culturally sustaining pedagogy** with colleagues and more expert others; Continually **build their understanding of their own and their students' racial, cultural, and identity development**" (Bank Street Education Center).

> "Cultural approaches to Teaching and Assessment: Devoting attention to **deep learning about marginalized students' experiences, perspectives, hopes, fears, families, and communities** (with an asset- vs. deficit-based approach); engaging a wide range of students as co-creators of rigorous curricula and effective instructional strategies; using **culturally responsive and multilingual curricula, instruction, and assessment practices**

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> across subject areas and grade levels (e.g., mathematics, reading, science, history, etc.)" (The New Frontier: An Integrated Framework for Transformative Improvement in Education).

Additionally, equity of resources should be provided in the form of 'integrated student support'. *An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement* describes;

> "**[I]ntegrated student support as a means to "address out-of-school barriers to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies and providers**, usually coordinated by a dedicated professional staff member. Some employ social-emotional learning, conflict resolution training, and restorative justice practices to support mental health and lessen conflict, bullying, and punitive disciplinary actions, such as suspensions" (p.7).

**Building Block 5:** Schools should strive to be in partnership with the communities they serve as opposed to merely engaging with communities.

The role of community is positioned differently across the frameworks with varying emphasis placed on the ways their role is institutionalized. "Systemic engagement is defined as the establishment of systems and structures that promote and embed engagement principles into a district's core priorities, policies, and practices" (Brooks, Rollins, Collins & Mayanja, 2019, p. 8). Frameworks talked about community in different ways. There were distinctions between the emphasis on process, how the community role was institutionalized and the attention paid to power dynamics. The role of community was described on a spectrum from reactive engagement to active partnership. Many frameworks used the terms engagement and partnership interchangeably, however, the processes they described to facilitate connections between schools and communities positioned the communities in passive roles. Frameworks that sought to position families as partners discussed the process of community engagement as proactive and continuous.

> "Parents and caregivers **engagement is an ongoing process that integrates families into the life of the school in a variety of ways**. The result is **a partnership, driven by parent demand and cultivated by the school community, in which parents and caregivers have voice and power to shape all components of the school.** The school assumes that any person trusted by the student's family can be a partner for achieving youth success." (Ten Principles of Effective School Design)

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**Building Block 6:** Systems work must confront and embrace the political and cultural challenges required to sustain change.

Reforms must go beyond technical change to engage shifts in mindsets, cultures and values. Processes that incorporate input from the teachers, students and communities should be implemented. Some frameworks paid particular attention to the socio-cultural dimensions of systems reform;

> "The '**Cultural Dimensions' of educational systems change attend systematically to: 1) organizational culture as well as to 2) cultural responsiveness as they relate to institutional and system functioning.** These areas include: internal reflection, collaboration, personal and group accountability, developing constructive relationships between people (staff, faculty, students, parents/family, boards, unions, and community), political dimensions, affective dimensions, cultural competence, and structural inequality." (The New Frontier: An Integrated Framework for Equity & Transformative Improvement in Education)
>
> Equally, the **deployment of design and improvement methods often reifies the concerns and perspectives of those who run the process;** before they utilize any more bottom-up approach, therefore, **practitioners need the opportunity to deeply interrogate and understand the structural dimensions of contemporary inequity, and to address their own experience with inequity, implicit bias, and discrimination**" (Deeper Learning Dozen).

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