

pioneering

ISSUE 22 • OCTOBER 6, 2016 • EDUCATION REIMAGINED

A NOTE FROM EDUCATION REIMAGINED

Kelly Young, Executive Director

ALAMO HEIGHTS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Profile of their Learning Environment
Conversation with Superintendent Kevin Brown

ONE YEAR IN REVIEW: REFLECTIONS ON THE GROWTH OF A MOVEMENT

LEARNER VOICES

TOOLS & RESOURCES

UPCOMING EVENTS

OPPORTUNITY BOARD

ON OUR BOOKSHELF

WORTH YOUR TIME



• connect. share. discover. lead. •

pioneering

Dear Pioneers,

The end of September marked a major milestone for Education Reimagined—our one-year anniversary of the launch of Education Reimagined and the public release of the vision.

It is almost impossible to believe that it was only one year ago that the signers of the document and our team were huddled around computers across the country waiting to send the email that would release the vision publicly. We didn't know how it would be received. Since that moment, we have been amazed by the enthusiasm it has generated and the growth and momentum of the community committed to making it a reality.

Last week we were grateful to be able to celebrate this anniversary, coincidentally, with 48 learner-centered educators, learners, and school and district leaders who came together in San Diego, CA for the first meeting of Pioneer Lab*. It couldn't have been more fitting. For us, the movement is bottom-up and top-down-enabled. It has always been about empowering, supporting, and amplifying the work of the diverse stakeholders making it happen with learners in their communities.

In this issue, we reflect back on this past year with musings from our community about the last twelve months, what it means to be a part of this movement, and what learner-centered education makes possible. We also take a closer look at a Texas district transforming their community to ensure all learners feel known and included, and we've highlighted a series of books that dive into what it means to create community and set innovation loose.

We have been so honored and humbled to play a part in this growing movement. And, none of it would have been possible without all of you—the brilliant, courageous, and dedicated pioneers from all across the country who we see as our friends and allies. Thank you!!!

Warm wishes,
Kelly Young

*Pioneer Lab is a national community of practice committed to accelerating the growth and impact of the learner-centered movement. If you are interested in learning more about it, email us at educationreimagined@convergencepolicy.org.



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Connect. Share. Discover. Lead.
We seek to accelerate the growth of the movement dedicated to transforming education in America. We invite those excited and interested by the possibility of learner-centered education to discover more, join a growing movement, and begin a journey to make this a reality in diverse communities across the country.





ALAMO HEIGHTS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Alamo Heights, Texas

“When work for students is designed well, they get excited about their learning, and I have the luxury of facilitating the learning versus providing the learning.” – DR. SUSAN FREY, TEACHER

UNDER A MICROSCOPE, ALAMO HEIGHTS, TX appears to represent small town America to the letter—a small, independent city stretching less than ten square miles and home to less than 16,000 people. But, when you zoom out, you’ll find America’s seventh largest city, San Antonio, engulfing Alamo Heights from every direction—creating an unexpected mix of early 20th century farmville and 21st century cityscape.

At the center of this unique cultural landscape is Alamo Heights Independent School District (AHISD). With humble beginnings as a two-room schoolhouse, AHISD realized—in 2008—after a century of traditional practices, it was time for a change. After gathering community input—including from learners themselves—a brand new vision emerged that enlivened all involved. Now, learners at AHISD are delving into opportunities that were once unimaginable.

Take the story of 11 year-old AHISD learner, Paul Eguia. This determined young man set out on a journey to discover a way to get himself and his peers to make healthier food choices. His project, dubbed “The Green Lights Food Challenge,” brought the entire AHISD community together. With support all around, Paul invited his peers to try 37 different fruits and vegetables and commit to a physical fitness regimen to bring his health initiative full circle. Through his efforts, his community became conscious of their daily health habits.

Expanding beyond the work of a single learner, picture walking into a space where hyper-focused teens have lost all concept of time as they diligently design and build sophisticated rockets that travel three-times faster than the speed of sound. Or, perhaps you happen upon a group of young learners lighting up the stage through the **socially embedded** design of Destination Imagination’s Improv Program. Better still, you discover a group of learners organizing a community-wide project to “foster a school environment where all students feel welcome and safe to be themselves.”

Just as you think, “these are all nice side projects,” you realize this is the central learning philosophy—ensure all learners are developing a healthy sense of self, seeking knowledge and understanding in all things, thinking critically and creatively, engaging socially and globally through communication and collaboration, and empowered with life-skills that can be carried far into the future. This **personalized, relevant, and contextualized** theory of learning comes to life in pleasantly unexpected ways every day at AHISD.

This is just the beginning. The evolution of AHISD is far from over and the leaders and learners refuse to rest on the laurels of what AHISD has accomplished so far. Until every child is able to maximize their full potential and feels at home in their learning environment, boundaries will continue to be pushed and innovation will continue to be sought.

LEARN MORE

[Profile of a Learner](#)

[Spotlight On Engagement](#)

[Igniting Tomorrow’s Innovators and Most Valued Engineers](#)

FACTS & FIGURES

Public School District

4,850 learners

6 schools

25% free and reduced lunch

97% graduation rate

94% college bound

\$11.2 million scholarship money awarded to 2016 graduating class

CONNECT

Website

[AHISD](#)

Social Media

[Twitter](#)

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Alamo Heights Independent School District: A Conversation with Superintendent Kevin Brown

Education Reimagined had the privilege to speak with Alamo Heights ISD Superintendent Kevin Brown. Listen in on our conversation and discover how an entire district decided to break free from their school-centric model.

Q. As you approach ten years as superintendent at Alamo Heights, what have you seen along the way?

A. AHISD and Alamo Heights are great places to be. Back in 2008, when I became superintendent, there was great pride within the district. We were pretty traditional, touting the traditional markers of teaching to students and developing student passivity; focusing some on test scores and how many kids made it to Ivy League universities. We aren't completely out of that mentality yet, but we've made substantial changes.

Before we invited the entire community to help us create our new strategic plan, there wasn't any perception—internally—that there were problems out there. But, as we went through the process of community engagement and strategy development, we began to see more and more what needed to be addressed. We got a lot of investment and ownership from the staff and community. Because of this, we have made great strides toward transforming our environment, keeping the focus on student engagement and voice.

We've recently turned another leaf over and implemented a pilot program called Engaged Classrooms ([link](#)). There are 17 educators who applied to be part of a very intensive partnership with an Instructional Coach, and together they work to design engaging units for students. There is a lot of professional development relating to design and the use of technology. Additionally, we have completely redesigned their classrooms with new flexible furniture, new flooring and paint, and one-to-one technology. There is a lot of excitement in our district about these learning spaces, as well as the "responsible roll-out" of one-to-one technology in them. It is a complete redesign of the learning environment and the work we are doing in instructional design. We are hoping to be able to keep up this transformation of space throughout the coming months with the support of a bond referendum.

Q. What were the steps involved in getting the 2008 plan together? At what stage was the community brought into the conversation?

A. A few key things come to mind. First, the AHISD board had to be involved. As superintendent, my first meeting with the board was around the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) visioning document ([link](#)). It had come out a few months before, and I thought it linked pretty closely with how my board was thinking. I spent a lot of time with them—studying the articles and having conversations. I felt they were on board and were anxious to move forward as a district.



Kevin Brown

We were in a good place. People were looking for innovation. In search of next steps, I spoke with other districts about what they had gone through. Additionally, we hired on a consultant from the Cambrian Group and worked with the Schlechty Center. Both parties really helped to engage our district in trying to think about what our kids need to be prepared for the 21st century and helping us to create a learning organization.

As we developed our strategic plan with the consultant, we also brought in a team of 35 stakeholders to get things off the ground. With these 35 as a stronghold, we engaged with 250 members of the community—splitting them into six groups, we spent 40 hours with each developing a piece of the puzzle. After their hard work was completed, we unveiled our new plan and vision ([link](#)). Because they have been involved from the start, buy-in from the community has not waned. Through this collaborative effort, we now have a district team who receive assistance from The Schlechty Center to help us think in terms of being designers—designing experiences for our kids. All of our staff has gone through some level of professional development in the design process.

We're thrilled with the strides we have made. It may have felt slow at times, but each step has been essential to get us where we are today.

Q. One of our favorite things to highlight is what makes each environment unique—something we may not find anywhere else. What would fit that description at AHISD?

A. We have six strategies that make up our mission ([link](#)). They truly capture who we are. My personal favorite took an entire day to develop: “Each student will cultivate an awe, wonder, and thirst for learning, discovery, and the beauty of the world.” This kind of commitment, although it might not be entirely unique, is something I treasure.

On a more somber note, the year we developed our six strategies, four learners in our community passed away—two from AHISD and two from private schools. All four deaths were drug or alcohol related. Upon hearing this news, we committed ourselves to funding a wellness program with the help of our AH School Foundation to assist our learners in addressing their health-related needs—we raised \$1.4 million. We now have a program that is a national model for prevention, intervention, and most important, recovery. We have developed a strong community of sobriety and support for our students. It may sound odd, but when I hear one of our learners has made the decision to enroll in rehab, I make it a point to celebrate their decision—celebrate their courageous decision to better themselves. I believe that this commitment to ensuring that all kids get what they need to be healthy and happy—whatever that is—makes us unique as a district.

Q. That is an impressive commitment to learners as individuals. As superintendent, how do you remain engaged with your learners?

A. On the whole, our strategic plan has elevated student voice tremendously. I make it my personal mission to sit down with every senior throughout the year and listen to their insights over lunch. I bring what they've shared back to my board and staff to keep everyone in the loop and up to date on how our learners are feeling about their environment.

We've also hosted student panels in front of our whole district staff, led focus groups, and run anonymous surveys. Many campuses have replicated this as well. Our learners are really good at articulating how they learn and what they would like to learn. And, that has made a huge difference. For example, I had a teacher of 36 years come into my office

“It is remarkable what happens when we make room for the possibility that our learners have something incredibly valuable to contribute.”

Kevin Brown

and tell me she had never heard anyone tell her she was boring before. She said it was a huge wake-up call. She wasn't angry at all; she saw it as an opportunity to do a better job attending to her kids.

Sometimes our engagement and elevation of learner voice has come as a shock for those involved. We recently developed a Learner Profile to capture who a successful AHISD learner would be. To create these, we launched a committee comprised of a whole range of stakeholders, including students and parents. During one of our meetings, a learner spoke up against the assertions of the adults in the room: "No, no, no—you're wrong," she said, politely. After that conversation, one of the parents approached me to express his surprise at this student's "audacity." All I could say in response, "That is exactly what we want to hear from our kids! We want them to put it all out on the table." And, by the end of the day, that same parent was advocating for more learners to join the committee. It is remarkable what happens when we make room for the possibility that our learners have something incredibly valuable to contribute.

Q. The hard work that has gone into creating this environment of inclusivity and opportunity for all is inspiring. Can you share a story about what it has meant for your learners?

A. A few years ago, we had a learner named Eric. He hated school—particularly didn't like science. He came from a low-income family where no one had ever gone to college. Later on, he enrolled in our rocketry program because he thought it would be a blowoff class. To provide some background, a group of learners in the program designs, builds, and launches a rocket each year at the US Army White Sands Missile Range, where their rocket travels three times the speed of sound—the program is certainly no "blow-off." It inspired Eric to work hard in the program.

During Eric's second year in the program as a senior, he was working on the rockets, and through our local congressman, his class had the opportunity to speak live to American astronauts on the International Space Station. To Eric's surprise, the astronauts weren't able to answer all of his complex questions. Afterwards, this young man came up to me, "Dr. Brown, I'm going to be the first in my family to go to college, and I'm going to go to NASA and work on the mission to Mars." Long story short, his family got him into the University of Texas San Antonio and, during his sophomore year, he got to work with NASA in a paid intern program that will cover his college tuition and guarantee him a job after graduation. And, guess what? He'll be working on the Mars mission.

Dr. Kevin Brown came to Alamo Heights ISD in July 2000 and has served as Superintendent of Schools since July 2008. On the state and national level, Dr. Brown serves as President of TASA and the Texas School Coalition and as an advocate to transform public schools to better meet the needs of all 21st Century learners. In 2004, he earned a Doctorate in Education Administration from Texas A&M University, which catalyzed his passion for public education and his belief that quality teachers and a supportive community are critical components to the success of children and to the continued success of our democratic way of life. He is particularly passionate about the Alamo Heights community, schools, staff and students.

One Year in Review: Reflections on the Growth of a Movement

from the Education Reimagined Community

It's hard for us to believe, but it has officially been one year since the Education Reimagined vision went public. To celebrate this momentous occasion, we invited our team, Advisory Board, and pioneers to share their reflections on where we've been, where we're going, and what learner-centered education makes possible. Education Reimagined Executive Director, Kelly Young, starts us off...

Looking back four and a half years ago, when I started as Director of this Convergence-led education project, I was pessimistic about what a national conversation on education could do to improve things for children. Every topic we could think of—how to attract and retain high-quality teachers, the role of technology, how to create collaborative schools, the role of testing—was uninspiring and insufficient to tackle by itself. All questions seemed to lead to much bigger questions about the purpose of education and what we want for kids. But, as I was searching for this bigger conversation, people would say, “You can't boil the ocean. You have to have a dialogue on a part of education, so that it can lead to action.”

It took eight months and what felt like a million conversations, but then I met Gisèle Huff, Executive Director of the Jaquelin Hume Foundation. She spoke about the “Industrial-era system” and “factory model school.” She said, “Your topics are all wrong. You are trying to tweak the Model T engine to get us to the moon. Instead, we need to start building the rocketship!” At that moment, I saw the possibility of reimagining education from a blank slate. I started testing the idea with possible participants, and we had a winner. People from all different backgrounds and views were excited about leaving the old debates behind and having a new conversation.

What's so remarkable is how many interviews I had before anyone mentioned “transforming” the system, rather than reforming it. It was not a hot topic. Four years later and one year after the launch of Education Reimagined, we are in a totally different place. There are hundreds of learner-centered pioneers visible to each other and known for their efforts to transform—rather than reform—the system. ESSA has been passed and states now have the latitude—if they take it—to allow those pioneers to set aside the constraints of the current system and begin to invent a new system aligned to the aspirations and needs of our times. In fact, many states have already established innovation zones or competency-based pilots that give pioneers the freedom to discover how to create learner-centered environments.

This all means that, though it is called by many names, the learner-centered paradigm for education is coming to life all across the country. We are in a moment of incredible possibility. Just to be part of this burgeoning movement—to watch it blossom, grow, and spread—has been an honor and a privilege. And, I am so eager and excited to see what comes next.

“Each of us, to a person, shares a fundamental commitment for all children to learn and thrive regardless of their circumstances.”

**A Transformational Vision for
Education in the US**

Reflections

Bobbi Macdonald, City Neighbors Foundation, Advisory Board Member

Education Reimagined invited me and 27 diverse education stakeholders into a room and asked us to let go of everything that divides us, so we could find the beliefs, vision, and ideals of education that unite us. The work was sometimes confronting and sometimes frustrating, but I found myself gathering my courage and speaking my mind. As a charter starter sitting at the table with AFT and NEA representatives, I realized other people in the room were doing the same thing—letting go of the sides they are used to taking and, instead, focusing on everyone’s shared ideals for children, teachers, and families. And, together, we created a vision for education we believe has the essential components for children to become empowered, engaged, and joyful participants.

There are times in my work in Baltimore when I have felt despair over the systems and political environment that sometimes hold us back from true innovation and progress for the children of Baltimore. But, what I realized while working with Education Reimagined is that our system is made up of people—and I am one of those people.

Education Reimagined brings together pioneers across the USA who are doing innovative work with students and teachers. This grassroots movement is marching forward, and we are not alone. A movement that believes children are capable, loving, creative, and worthy of the deepest respect is a movement that carries us forward in this work of reimagining education. For that, I am grateful.

Joe Erpelding, Design39Campus, Pioneer Lab Participant

The time is now to make learner-centered education available to all students to ensure they are life-ready to elevate humanity.

Demi Edwards, Chief of Staff, Education Reimagined

For over three years, I have been reimagining education with a team of creative, passionate, and unbelievably driven partners and a growing community of relentless, heroic, and determined pioneers. When I started back in May 2013, I could not have imagined how life changing this experience was going to be.

That is what Education Reimagined and learner-centered education means to me. It is the possibility to change the lives of learners; educators; school and district leaders; policymakers; and parents. To change the lives of all of those striving in their communities to ensure that all learners are ready to face and take on the world before them.

I recognize that changing lives—transforming them, in fact—is no small feat. Yet, over the past three years, I have seen it happen again and again. In gatherings of education veterans, renewed passion and commitment has taken hold. Among educators and administrators already dedicated to putting the learner at the center, I’ve witnessed renewed hope and courage bolster those feeling worn

EDUCATION REIMAGINED

Milestones



APRIL 2013

First Meeting of the “Re-imagining Education Project”

Convening ideologically diverse stakeholders to discover what they might do together



OCTOBER 2014

Final Meeting of the “Re-imagining Education Project”

28 diverse stakeholders emerge committed to the vision and to launching a partnership of leaders

out. With learners now experiencing learner-centered environments, I've been amazed by the confidence and poise of who they are. And, on my own team, I've seen leadership emerge in those who only knew themselves as followers.

All of this comes back to learner-centered education and the transformational possibility it holds for all involved to be seen, known, and loved as both who they are now and who they are capable of being. This is a movement that is changing the world, one individual at a time. And, there is no place I'd rather be.

**Becky Pringle, National Education Association (NEA),
Advisory Board Member**

I continue to be inspired by the vision and the growing influence of Education Reimagined. From the outset, this endeavor has been about trust. I can't say enough about the process Convergence uses to bring a diverse collection of participants together for a common purpose. For me, it has highlighted a "success loop" that starts with the quality of the relationship. As we focus on building the quality of the relationships, we significantly increase the quality of our conversations. And, as we find ourselves in deeper, higher quality conversations, we reach higher quality decisions and achieve higher quality results.

The results themselves are also deeply rooted in trust—trust and respect for students, no matter their background. Our vision is founded on the belief that each and every student can reach their full potential when the system adapts to their unique needs, strengths, interests, and aspirations, rather than expecting the students to meet the needs of the system. We at NEA are now striving to find and encourage learner-centered pioneers among our members who are already at work in communities, schools, policy arenas, and across the education profession. We share the aim of Education Reimagined to grow the number of active champions of learner-centered education, to support similar pioneering efforts, and to further share the possibility of this movement with a broad spectrum of education stakeholders.

**Nate McClennen, Teton Science Schools,
Pioneer Lab Participant**

Learner-centered education realizes the dream of customizing learning for the profile of each child. No child is truly left behind in a system that ultimately builds an ecosystem of resources that allows each learner to develop the skills, dispositions, and knowledge needed to contribute to the world in a meaningful way.

**Monica Snellings, Communications & Design Lead,
Education Reimagined**

Being a designer and not an educator, some days I ask myself how did I get here? What rabbit hole did I drop through?

I have always been a voracious reader and curious learner. Lucky for me, my work as a designer and communicator over the years



JANUARY 2015

Vision Finalized

"A Transformational Vision for Education in the US" is signed by all 28 ideologically diverse stakeholders



MARCH 18-19, 2015

Pioneer Basecamp

113 learner-centered students, educators, and administrators come together from across the country—the pioneer community begins to develop

has enabled me to be a life-long learner. And, for me at Education Reimagined, it has been especially wonderful to engage my mind and bring all of my skills to an effort that resonates deeply with my own lived experience. You see, I was one of those kids that did not fit the standardized one-size-fits-all model. Bored stiff, I bailed out of high school my junior year and headed off to a small liberal arts college. That year, I came alive in so many dimensions that I was forever altered and my life course was set. My work has now aligned with a mission—learner-centered education for ALL kids.

My favorite part of being on this team is every day I get to have fun thinking about how Education Reimagined can shine a light on the amazing work being done by pioneering educators. It's a very good day when we discover a new pioneer. It's an even better day when we get to hear about what they are up to. So, I have a "job" that feels like an adventure where I get to be a creative learner every single day. What could be better than that?

**Marla Ucelli-Kashyap, American Federation of Teachers (AFT),
Advisory Board Member**

I know that many bright and committed teachers and public education advocates are reimagining education every day—where they are and with what they have. For me, representing AFT first in the vision process and now on the Advisory Board has been a way to honor those small steps. And, at the same time, a way to think about creating the conditions for learner-centered systems on a larger scale, where all students and the adults who support their development have the tools they need to succeed.

Since the vision "went public," it's also been exciting to see more and more examples of innovation and the efforts to connect the thinkers and doers behind them. Equally important, there are now more tables that bring together forward-thinking practitioners, policymakers, and advocates. Anyone who thinks there isn't a lot of innovation and creative thinking in American public schools and communities would change their mind if they had an opportunity to sit at one of these tables. In light of the challenges facing our public schools every day—especially those where most of our economically disadvantaged children and students of color attend—the work with Education Reimagined has been a heartening and hopeful experience.

**Ryan Krohn, Institute for Personalized Learning,
Pioneer Lab Participant**

I believe when learner-centered education is available to ALL, each learner will express themselves as who they are, rather than who they are not, and will be well-positioned to draw on their talents as they approach future opportunities and challenges.



SEPTEMBER 29, 2015

Public Launch

The vision is made public; Education Reimagined is launched as an initiative committed to making learner-centered education available for all children in the US

“We see a paradigm shift—from the Industrial Age’s school-centric paradigm to a new learner-centered, network-era paradigm.”



NOVEMBER 4, 2015

Pioneering Goes Live

First issue of *Pioneering* ([link](#))

**Susan Stancampiano, Operations Associate,
Education Reimagined**

During my time with Education Reimagined, I have been lucky enough to be surrounded by incredibly inspiring, innovative, and dedicated individuals in the office, on the phone, and at a variety of conferences. Everyone is full of ideas, positivity, and a passion for continuing the momentum of the learner-centered movement. I have worked in the education field in a few different capacities, and, to me, everything boils down to how can we best serve learners. From Kindergarten through my high school graduation, I attended 13 different schools, but until I started working for Education Reimagined, I had never seen individuals so dedicated to recognizing each learner as an individual and helping them thrive.

For our one-year anniversary, the Education Reimagined team was out in San Diego for the first Pioneer Lab, which included a site visit to one of the environments in our community. As we toured Design39Campus, it illuminated what learner-centered education can look like in practice, and it allowed me to dream. What if my education had looked like this? When I had the opportunity to teach, I discovered I loved science—it had just never made sense to me before. Would I have pursued a different career path if I could have learned science in a way that worked for me?

What if all learners were seen as people already part of society with valuable contributions to be made? What is going to happen when this movement reaches all kids? Only one year in and we're already working toward so many things as a community. This movement has the power to change everything—and the team working toward it is ready for those dreams (and so many more) to become reality.

**Stephan Turnipseed, Destination Imagination,
Advisory Board Member**

When I consider the journey from reformation to transformation, I am compelled to reflect not only on the journey but on the destination. The destination we imagined is not a place filled with rigid paradigms of conformity. Rather, it is a place filled with the heady voices of newfound freedom of all children ready to construct knowledge. It is a place where children revel in their responsibility, owning their learning. It is a place where children and society embrace one another equally. It is breathtaking.

To be part of such a remarkable and achievable future over the last year has been both a journey of passion and a labor of love. We have had wins and losses; however, the scorecard is tipping in favor of our children. I have seen the power of this firsthand through many gatherings and nods of approval as, one by one, parents and schools come to see the truth of our cause. I have been moved to tears and steeled for battle as the situation demands. In the end, the most exciting and inspirational image I carry is a simple truth—our shared societal future rests in the hands of children. We can ill afford to fail them now when much of what we know has yet to be dreamt.



NOVEMBER 11, 2015

Keynote at iNACOL's Symposium

NEA Vice President Becky Pringle and Jaquelin Hume Foundation Executive Director Gisèle Huff join Kelly Young to give the event's closing keynote address

“Nothing starts without individuals: nothing lasts without institutions. We need both the organic growth and the systems of support.” — **Becky Pringle**

NOVEMBER 18-19, 2015

Foundation Leaders Gathering

6 education foundation leaders join learner-centered practitioners and members of our Advisory Board to explore the possibility of learner-centered education and what it could mean for their funding strategies

**Sonya Wrisley, Innovation Consultant,
Pioneer Lab Participant**

Learner-centered education is truly the future of the entire educational world. It is the only way we can ensure each and every learner is fully engaged and being supported to reach his or her potential through his or her interests, passions, and learning style.

Allan Cohen, Strategic Consultant, Program Leader

This has been a year of standing for the possibility of learner-centered education and of finding the thousands of pioneers who are also taking that stand. Each time I meet a young learner from a pioneering learning environment, my faith in learner-centered education and in the future of our society is affirmed. Organizing education around each unique learner is clearly an idea whose time has come.

At the day-to-day level, playing one's small part in the unfolding of such events is surprisingly routine. But, I am astonished every time I step back and look at what we are all a part of. There is now the very real possibility that every single child will experience being known for the unique person they are and that they will be supported in their natural desire to learn and grow in the unique ways that work for them.

When we gather together, this possibility is electrifying. The energy is palpable. It is an incredible privilege to contribute to this movement.

Marc Porter Magee, 50CAN, Advisory Board Member

For me, Education Reimagined is about relationships—forming connections with pioneers who are imagining a better way to provide every kid in America with the education they deserve. It's helped me think bigger about where we should set our sights in our efforts to improve American education, and it has exposed me to a wider world of innovators who are doing this work every day. Education Reimagined has accomplished so much in its first year. I can't wait to see what this community of pioneers is going to accomplish in the years to come.

**Kim Carter, MC² and Q.E.D. Foundation,
Pioneer Lab Participant**

At its heart, learner-centered education is about recognizing and honoring the capacity of every person, regardless of their age, to effectively shape both the decisions that impact their lives and contribute to the communities in which they live. Everybody wins when we empower and support each other.

David Fairman, Consensus Building Institute, Program Leader

In nearly 30 years of work as a facilitator of public policy collaboration, I've dealt with some challenging issues from peacebuilding in Mindanao to public housing in the US. Supporting the work of Education Reimagined to create a shared vision for the future of education, and then helping that vision catalyze wider dialogue and



MARCH 8, 2016

SXSWedu 2016

Host a series of learner-centered events at SXSWedu

MARCH 16-17, 2016

Visionary Leaders Meeting

Education practitioners and thought leaders gather with our Advisory Board to explore the potential of learner-centered education to meet the needs of traditionally disadvantaged learners

alignment building with education stakeholders around the country, has been one of the most satisfying experiences of my career.

Three things about the process stand out. First, the leaders involved were able to let go of many strongly held views about schooling today to imagine education as it could be tomorrow. Kelly Young, a true visionary, and my remarkable co-facilitator, Allan Cohen, were critically important in standing for that shift and making it possible.

Second, the participating leaders opened their hearts and minds to each other. That opening allowed many powerful moments of personal connection, mutual respect, admiration, and affection to emerge during the crafting of the vision. The commitment to putting it all on the line has carried over beautifully into the ongoing dialogues with other education stakeholders who are attracted to the vision and need a safe, open space for talking through its implications for their work and partnerships.

Finally, the ability of the vision to attract, excite, motivate, and mobilize has proven to be quite extraordinary. Today, I am more hopeful for the future of education than I have been in a long time. The momentum of the learner-centered education movement is building fast. It's a privilege to be engaged in this transformational moment.

**Gisèle Huff, Jaquelin Hume Foundation,
Advisory Board Member**

My work with Education Reimagined has had a profound effect on me both personally and professionally. I joined the effort years ago skeptical of what could be accomplished given the wide range of views held by those involved and generally suspicious of groupthink. It turned out that I was just blown away. It was the highlight of my professional life. With this vision, we are in a different place for what we can do for the kids in this country.

Simply put, learner-centered education is the only approach that overcomes the law of averages that our institutions have been following since the Industrial Revolution. The learner-centered experience enables us to provide *whatever it takes* to every single child in America. Over the last year, I have been witness to the growing community of pioneers making this experience real for hundreds of kids. And now, more than ever, I am ready to see their work take hold in every community across the country.

Scott Van Beck, Houston A+ Challenge, Pioneer Lab Participant

Who couldn't be passionate about a movement with the phrase "learner-centered" at its heart? This is what education should be about, plain and simple.



DENVER

MAY 13-14, 2016

Pioneer Lab Training, Denver

30 pioneers come together for the first iteration of our Pioneer Lab Training

“The future is already here, it's just not evenly distributed.”

— **William Gibson**

**Paul Haluszczak, Communications Associate,
Education Reimagined**

As the fifth addition to the Education Reimagined team, I've entered at a booming moment within the learner-centered movement. And, although I was only introduced to the vision some five months ago (and quickly sent in my job application), I'm still just as wide-eyed about the very real actions happening across the country to realize an education system that will adapt to the uniqueness of every child.

I'm overwhelmingly grateful to work in a community that selflessly devotes its time to a future that lives up to our fullest expectations of an environment where all children can realize their dreams. As a high-schooler, it was painfully visible how much my teachers were constrained by the restrictions imposed by federal legislation. I didn't need to know the complexities of the system to understand it was not working. For me, school was simply a game to be won as quickly as possible, so I could move on to bigger and better things. Ironically enough, those "bigger and better things" happen to be working in education transformation.

In my short professional career, I was 0 for 2 in finding work that made me feel I was making an impact for the whole of society. Now, I'm confident this is exactly the kind of work I have jumped into here. With the opportunity to share so many unique and inspiring transformational stories from across the nation, I'm proud to take ownership in amplifying learner-centered efforts and environments from Florida to Alaska and everywhere in between. Writing their stories leaves me with endless joy and optimism about the future that lies ahead.

Stacey Lamb, Design39Campus, Pioneer Lab Participant

Over 2,000 years ago Plato said, "Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each."

To find "the genius of each," all learners need an educational system that allows for their own strengths and interests, accounts for their prior experiences and learning styles, and encourages wonder, creativity, connections, and engagement. All learners should not just know the WHAT behind their learning; they should also know the HOW and the WHY in order to truly make a difference in our world and their future!

**Jim Rickabaugh, Institute for Personalized Learning,
Pioneer Lab Participant**

We face the challenge of preparing today's students for a future that will feature constant change and multiple careers. We must nurture in learners the skills to learn, adjust, unlearn, and relearn as their world evolves. This is the focus and promise of learner-centered learning.



MAY 25-26, 2016

Policy Leaders Meeting

25 policymakers, advocates, and practitioners gather to explore the policy space for learner-centered innovation under ESSA



DC

JUNE 23-24, 2016

Pioneer Lab Training, DC

61 pioneers from diverse models come together for the second iteration of our Pioneer Lab Training

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."

— **Albert Einstein**

Kelly Young, Executive Director, Education Reimagined

What does this work mean for me? It means the possibility of cultivating wonder, play, and joy in my kids' lives and the lives of every child. It means they have the ability to pursue their curiosities, interests, and crazy "why" and "what if" questions wherever they lead. It means that all children are truly prepared for whatever life throws at them. I want that freedom for every child and young adult.

The other night, my son imagined falling through a hole in the earth—from DC to China. As we played with the idea, he got stumped wondering how a boy standing in China and a boy standing in DC could both jump "down" the hole but travel in opposite directions. We joked that maybe he would jump down, travel halfway through, and then come back up the way he went down. As we played around with the possibilities, he was suddenly struck when I said that we are sometimes the ones "upside down" on the planet. "Why don't we fall off the earth when we're on the 'bottom?'" he wondered. That led to an even more baffling conversation about how, even when we are sitting still, we are actually spinning at 1,000 mph, traveling around the earth at 66,000 mph, and traveling around the Milky Way at something like 44,000 mph. "Wow," he said, "How come we don't hurdle off into space?" My response: "That's a very good question. You should find some kids at school to investigate that with. Tell your teachers you want to discover why we are not thrown off the earth like a sling shot." We both laughed at the strangeness of it all, and he said, "No, that's not what we do in school." All I could think was—Why not?

I love the human spirit when we are unconstrained, curious, determined, joyful, and alternately frustrated and elated in pursuit of discovering something for ourselves. I see a future where the joy of learning, exploration, and creativity drives how we approach the world and the challenges we face. Making learner-centered education available to all students would breath life and humanity back into learning—both for the learners and the adults who work with them in and outside of official education. It would allow people the opportunity to make powerful contributions to their families, communities, and world right now and in the future.

I get to stand for that future every day at Education Reimagined. And, more than that, I get to meet the most incredibly courageous, generous, humble pioneers who are making this vision a reality in diverse communities all over the country (and world), despite the odds. It is both humbling and enlivening.



SEPTEMBER 29-30, 2016

Pioneer Lab, San Diego

48 pioneers gather for the first ever-expanding national learner-centered community of practice

“Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.”

— Ryunosuke Satoro

A Year In Numbers

EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Convenings Hosted

5

in 3 cities with
3 more planned for 2016

Pioneers Gathered

150

representing a variety of
roles and perspectives

Events & Conferences Attended

19

with **5 more** planned for
the remainder of 2016

TEAM GROWTH

Full-Time Team Expansion

3 to 5

166% increase

COMMUNICATIONS

Pioneering Issues Published

22

increasing readership by **over 250%**

Number of Tweets Shared

5000+

and **250% growth** in Twitter following

FUN FACTS

Number of Conference Calls

700+

a bajillion hours, give or take

Appetizers Served

2000

with many more glasses of wine consumed

Possibilities and Dreams Shared

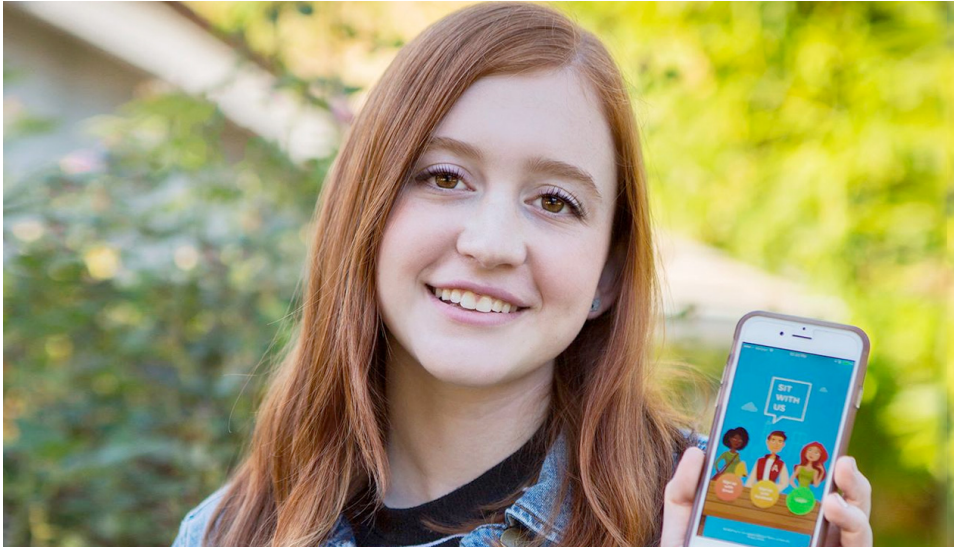
Limitless

thanks to our wonderful community
of pioneers



LEARNER VOICES

Check out the articles, podcasts, and videos below. They might just challenge your assumptions of what kids are capable of creating and doing if we let go of the current Industrial-era paradigm and move towards learner-centered education.



FROM NPR

Teen Creates ‘Sit With Us’ App For Bullied Kids

For many, showing up late to a lunchroom created an immediate state of panic—unsure where they would be able to sit. Discover how one teen’s experience on the extreme ends of loneliness used her past to develop a more promising future for other kids in her shoes. [Listen here](#)

FROM TECH50+

Meet the 12 Year Old Developer of Alzheimer’s App ‘Timeless’

When a 12-year-old in New York City grew frustrated by the debilitating effects Alzheimer’s was having on her grandmother living in China, she took the disease into her own hands. Dive into her ingenious solution to enhance her grandmother’s social experience from half a world away. [Read here](#)

FROM ABC

Canberra boy who learnt sign language to help his deaf friend wins humanity award

A child’s innate ability to form community is inspiring. Head down under and unearth how a friendship between two young learners has changed the way an entire environment thinks about communication. [Watch here](#)

FROM MEDIUM

Not Short and Sweet: A Conversation With Refugee and Immigrant High School Students

Making the invisible, visible. And, allowing complexity its place when grappling with society’s intricate truths. If you stand for these two statements, what can you make possible? [Read here](#)

“I felt like, with my story, it was my job to stand up and do something.”

Natalie Hampton
NPR



Digital Promise

Technology is everywhere, but access is still limited for many learners across the country. **Digital Promise** ([link](#))—an initiative authorized by Congress in 2008—seeks to close this digital divide by working “at the intersection of education leaders, researchers, entrepreneurs, and developers to improve learning with the power of technology.” Through the use of networks, stories, research, and engagement, Digital Promise strives to bring to life a new age of learning that allows “all people at every stage of their lives to have access to learning experiences that help them acquire the knowledge and skills they need to thrive and continuously learn in an ever-changing world.” Their vision leads to ideas, which lead to action. With initiatives like the League of Innovative Schools, Educator Micro-Credentials, and Education Innovation Clusters, Digital Promise focuses on including all education stakeholders in transforming the education landscape—bringing all learners, young and old, to the cutting edge of the future of learning. Explore their work and imagine where technology will take your learning environment five years from now.

Digital Promise Approach ([link](#))

League of Innovative Schools ([link](#))

Navigating the Digital Transformation Journey ([link](#))

Edcamp Foundation

Collaboration is one of the central pieces in transforming education, particularly when it takes place from the ground up. Starting at the local level and expanding outward is the entire premise of the **Edcamp Foundation** ([link](#)). With their modest beginnings in 2010, their current vision of “creating an international network of educators dedicated to participant-driven professional learning for themselves and others that accelerates student growth” was little more than a pipe dream. Less than six years later, Edcamps have taken the world by storm with over 700 conferences held in over 25 different countries. As described by the foundation, “each Edcamp is independently organized and hosted and is free to participants.” By allowing communities to create accessible opportunities for all education leaders—including online participation via Facebook—Edcamp lowers the barrier for innovators to share their ideas and strategies across a wide-spectrum of practitioners. Discover if an Edcamp is right for you and whether you might even organize one yourself!

Find an Edcamp Near You ([link](#))

Organize Your Edcamp, Today! ([link](#))

Edcamp Blog ([link](#))

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars! We will be speaking at some and hosting workshops at others. In all cases, pioneers will be front and center! Join us.

iNACOL Blended and Online Learning Symposium

San Antonio, TX

October 25-28

[Conference Website](#)

Teach for All Global Conference

Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

October 25-27

[Conference Website](#)

City Neighbors' 6th Annual Progressive Education Summit

Baltimore, MD

November 12

[Conference Website](#)

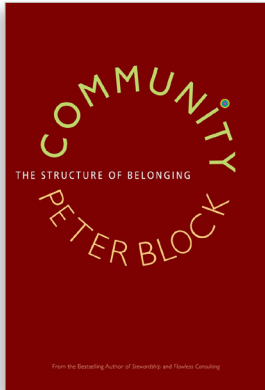
OPPORTUNITY BOARD

Education Reimagined

is seeking two new learner-centered staff members to join our team: an Associate Director of Partnerships and Convenings ([link](#)) and an Associate Director of Practitioner Engagement and Learning ([link](#)).



ON OUR BOOKSHELF



Community: The Structure of Belonging

by Peter Block

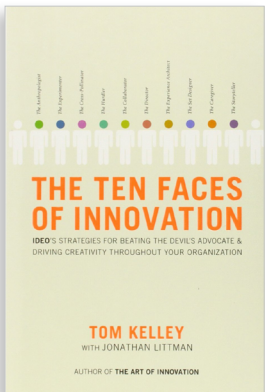
Education is meant to operate as a complex, invigorating network of learning opportunities for all. However, complex industries—like education—often unintentionally invite oversimplified solutions, building restrictive silos that suffocate collaboration and innovation across specialties. Peter Block, the author of *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, welcomes readers to explore ways to break down these fragmented segments of society and build spaces that capture the possibility of true community.



Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces that Stand in the Way of True Inspiration

by Ed Catmull and Amy Wallace

As pioneers from coast-to-coast know, education transformation requires us to wipe the slate clean and invite unrestricted creativity into our design thinking process within our respective learning communities. And, what better place to see that come to life than the brilliant minds of Pixar Animation Studios? Journey through the history of Pixar’s extraordinary work and discover some of the parallel experiences you share with these innovation savants as you wade through the largely undiscovered waters of learner-centered transformation.



The Ten Faces of Innovation: IDEO's Strategies for Defeating the Devil's Advocate and Driving Creativity Throughout Your Organization

by Tom Kelley and Jonathan Littman

The world of innovation demands safe spaces to create without inhibitors. However, we are all too often our worst barriers to outside-the-box generation. In Kelley and Littman’s *The Ten Faces of Innovation*, they provide suggestions on how to keep naysayers—including yourself—in the conversation, while continuing to move innovation forward. Allowing everyone to play devil’s advocate and improve upon the idea presented, rather than simply saying “it won’t work,” your team may discover new strategies of implementation that never had the opportunity to expose themselves before.

WORTH YOUR TIME

The Families that Launch Their Own Autism Studies

There is a wave of medical research gaining momentum via “N-of-1” trials. Through the singular accounts of everyday people, solutions to massive problems in the medical field are being uncovered. Through the lens of autism research, discover the parallels “N-of-1” evidence might have for your unique learners. [Read here](#)

Just Try Topping This “When I Was Your Age” Tale

Examples of self-organizing communities come in many forms, and in nearly every instance, the generosity and creativity they embody inspires us to seek out similar organization for our own lives. Turn your calendar back to 2011 and discover how a small, mountainous town adapted to the after effects of Hurricane Irene to keep their community fully operational. [Read here](#)

Disrupting the Classroom: How the sharing economy is creating a marketplace for cheating

Education pioneers are well aware of the positive benefits found when their learners develop agency in their learning. As further motivation, it is important to realize the flipside of learning when kids are driven in the opposite direction—forced to take on tasks and assignments they never chose to pursue. [Read here](#)

“This is an idea whose time
has come.”

— A TRANSFORMATIONAL VISION FOR EDUCATION IN THE US

Read past issues of
PIONEERING : A LEARNER-CENTERED PUBLICATION
www.education-reimagined.org



AN INITIATIVE OF CONVERGENCE

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