

pioneering

ISSUE 4 • DECEMBER 22, 2015 • EDUCATION REIMAGINED

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education 
reimagined

• connect. share. discover. lead. • pioneering

Dear Pioneers,

It is hard to believe that 2015 is almost over. This year-end has us reflecting on where we've been and what we've done over the past twelve months. The Education Reimagined team has certainly been busy. Looking back on 2015, we see some major highlights:

- Released our Transformational Vision for the Future of Education in the US;
- Hosted Pioneer Basecamp, a gathering of over 100 fabulous pioneers;
- Unveiled version 1.0 of our website;
- Keynoted at iNACOL's Blended and Online Learning Symposium;
- Launched a successful social media strategy and our bi-weekly e-magazine publication, *Pioneering*;
- Made it in the *New York Times* and 12 other education publications; and
- Expanded our Education Reimagined team.

This has been a great year for Education Reimagined and Convergence.

But, this review also had us realize that the moments that meant the most were not necessarily the ones of major achievement. Instead, they were the moments that we spent engaging with and learning from all of you—the passionate, courageous, hopeful, curious, innovative, and industrious individuals working every day in all sorts of different ways to bring learner-centered education to life for kids across the country.

You are the pioneers behind a growing movement that is bigger than any single person, school, or district. We are inspired, encouraged, and invigorated to see the power of this burgeoning movement and by the dedication of all of its players. It is an honor to be part of it. Thank you.

Now, with this exciting year coming to a close, we turn our sights to the year to come.

And, amidst the growing lists of meetings to host, conferences to attend, and articles to write, we saw what 2016 means for us: Endless possibility. Aspiration. Transformation. Hope.

What do you see?

Warmest wishes, and happy holidays!

Kelly



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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.





FROM THE VISION

Components of the Education System: Learner-Centered Implementation

In order to fully realize a reimagined learning environment, the future education system will need several core components. Local communities and other constituencies will need to experiment with those components to discover how they can be implemented together to best support each and every learner. Thus, the expression of the five elements (competency-based; personalized, relevant, and contextualized; learner agency; socially embedded; open-walled) of great learning will vary across the nation according to the needs and resources of the learners and their communities.

The chart below juxtaposes some of the model components of the current paradigm with those of the learner-centered one.

| MODEL COMPONENT | CURRENT PARADIGM | LEARNER-CENTERED PARADIGM |
|--|--|--|
| Organization of learners | Organized in age cohorts | Learners learn individually and in diverse and shifting groups consistent with their developmental, social, and competency needs |
| Curricula | Standardized linear curricula divided into subjects | Relevant, contextualized curricula organized by competency |
| Learner goals / Progress indicators | Required credit hours and seat time | Development of competency in agreed domains of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in timeframes appropriate to each learner |
| Role of learners | Passive vessel to be filled | Active co-creators of their learning and development |
| Role of adults | Individual teachers expected to serve as content deliverers, curriculum developers, data assessors | Network of qualified adults facilitating learning and development |
| Technology | One-to-many communication tools (e.g. books, white boards, projectors) | One-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many communication, networking, diagnostic, and content delivery tools |
| Assessment | Primarily “of” learning | Intentional assessment “for, as, and of” learning |
| Resource Allocation | Place- and formula-based funding uncorrelated with individual children’s needs | Financial resources applied and integrated to support the whole child |
| Location | Localized in a school building | Learning occurs at many times, in many places, and through many formats; a physical space is established for learners and adults to gather, socialize, and learn |
| Meeting learner’s needs | Differentiation of the standard model to meet learners’ needs | Personalization for each and every learner |

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.

Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) Midwinter Conference

Panel Discussion:

Kelly Young will lead a conversation with Stephan Turnipseed, former President, LEGO Education North America; Michael Hinojosa, Superintendent, Dallas ISD; Greg Smith, Superintendent, Clear Creek ISD; Kevin Brown, Superintendent, Alamo Heights ISD

Austin, TX, Jan. 24-27, 2016

[Conference Website](#)

AASA National Conference on Education

Thought Leader Presentation:

The Future of Learning is Now

Phoenix, AZ

Feb. 11-13, 2016

[Conference Website](#)

SXSWedu

Summit:

Transforming Education with Learners at the Center

Panel Discussion:

Abandoning Age-Based Learning

Austin, March 7-10, 2016

[Conference website](#)



EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

Earlier this month, with strong bipartisan support, Congress passed the **EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT** ([link](#)), opening up a new era that moves away from the high-stakes accountability of No Child Left Behind and dramatically alters the federal role in education policy. Among its many provisions, ESSA increases the authority that states and localities will have for decision-making, including offering states flexibility to redesign assessments.

WHAT DOES THIS NEW LAW MEAN FOR PIONEERS working to bring learner-centered education to life in diverse communities across the United States?

One of the conditions that supports the creation of learner-centered learning environments is the existence of enabling policies that offer flexibility and support for experimentation and innovation. By providing states with conditions like these, ESSA is helping set the stage for more and more learner-centered innovations.

What we have learned in seeing the stories of transformation across the country is that learner-centered education will spread through a “pull-from-the bottom,” rather than a “push-from-the top,” approach. There will not be a standardized one-size-fits-all answer to what learner-centered education looks like. And, transformation can only be done by and with communities—not to or for them. Learning communities must be the ones, trusted by and empowered from the top, to design and create environments iteratively to meet the needs and circumstances of their particular learners and have them reach their full potential. And, given the challenge of transforming a complex system, it will require the collaboration, commitment, and ownership of diverse grass-roots learner-centered actors—practitioners, parents, learners, funders, administrators, business and union leaders, policy makers, and community members.

These stakeholders will not create in isolation but rather will build upon networks of other pioneers that share the processes, tools, and resources that they have created along their journey towards transformation. For example, the CCSSO’s Innovation Lab Network works with state networks to build systems that provide flexibility to localities to put learners at the center. Their Next State of Learning project has developed videos that highlight transformative processes and efforts at the community, district, and state level in [Colorado](#), [Maine](#), [New Hampshire](#), and [Wisconsin](#). As communities see the results achieved by leading states and districts, they will gain strength, guidance, and courage for their own efforts.

Education stakeholders moving forward in the new environment created by ESSA will have more questions than answers. And, as the new law begins to take effect, we look forward to exploring these questions alongside pioneers across the country.

WHAT’S BEING SAID ABOUT THE ESSA

KnowledgeWorks

[ESEA Reauthorization Marks Pivotal Moment for Early College High Schools](#)

Nellie Mae Education Foundation

[Nellie Mae Education Foundation Statement on ESSA](#)

Next Generation Learning Challenges
[From “Shock and Awe” to Systemic Enabling](#)

iNACOL

[Rethinking Accountability for Continuous Improvement of Next Generation Learning Models](#)

America Forward

[The Every Student Succeeds Act: How ESSA Advances on Learner-Centered Education](#)

CCSSO

[State Chiefs’ Statements on Signing of ESSA](#)

National Association of Elementary School Principals

[ESSA Signed Into Law—What Now?](#)



LINDSAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Lindsay, California

We are not just reforming education. We are completely dismantling the traditional time-based structures and building a learner-centered system of empowerment.

—Tom Rooney, Superintendent

WHAT IF LEARNING COULD HAPPEN ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, AND BE ABOUT ANYTHING?

What if learning were recognized as a lifelong endeavor? What if learning could be engaging, inspiring, relevant, and—even—fun?

In 2007, these “what ifs” inspired and guided California’s Lindsay Unified School District as they tackled a complete transformation of their education system. From the start, they engaged diverse voices—educators, principals, district leaders, parents, union leaders, city officials, and community members—in creating a new vision for learning. Through extensive work with leadership and the community, they emerged with a new mission, vision, and strategic design that set them on the course toward **personalized learning** for all Lindsay learners.

Under LUSD’s Strategic Design, the education system has been turned on its head. Learners no longer advance through the system because of age or grade-level, rather, they are met at their developmental level and progress through required learning based on performance. This **competency-based** system focuses on learner outcomes that prepare each child academically, socially, and emotionally. Lindsay values the development of **skills** and **dispositions** like creativity, problem solving, and critical thinking just as much as the acquisition of knowledge.

Lindsay’s Learning Facilitators are empowered to be “future-focused trend trackers”—they create learning opportunities that are **relevant** and **contextualized** to their learners’ current lives that prepare them for what the future holds. Learning Facilitators work to personalize learning opportunities to the learners’ interests, needs, and learning styles and challenge them with real-world learning experiences. Technology is also brought into play in a big way. With all content soon to be available online, learning will be 24/7 for Lindsay learners. But the Learning Facilitators’ greatest joy is seeing that all Lindsay learners are beginning to take **ownership** of their learning. Such deep levels of learning advance graduates prepared and equipped as lifelong learners—ready to “choose the future they desire.”

Lindsay’s learner-centered mindset and methods, as well as their results, have made them the talk of—well—the nation, and they’ve opened their doors to visitors from across the country for several years. They’ve also been incredibly open about both their successes and mistakes in transforming education. Superintendent Tom Rooney sees Lindsay’s transformation as a model for others to learn from as they transform their own organizations. His biggest piece of advice: Involve, engage, and listen to the voice of the learner at every step along the way.

LEARN MORE

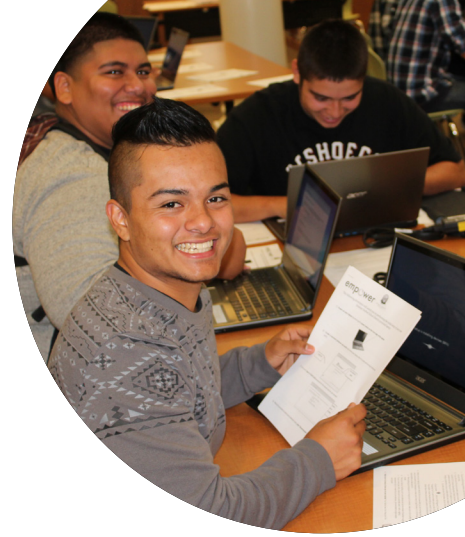
[How Lindsay Unified Redesigned Itself From the Ground Up](#)

[How Lindsay Activated Change by Activating Their Community](#)

[One Valley School District’s Unorthodox Educational Approach: No More Grades](#)

[Six Trends at Lindsay Unified School District](#)

VIDEOS [A Day in the Life of an Empowered Lindsay Learner](#) [Transforming Education](#) [City WiFi Project](#)



FACTS & FIGURES

Public, K-12

4,100 learners

8 schools

ELL or Primary language other than English: 54%

Learners with disabilities: 4.24%

Free or reduced lunch: 100%

Graduation rates: 91%

College enrollment: 58%

CONNECT

District Website

[Lindsay Unified School District](#)

Twitter

[@Lindsay_USD](#)

For more information contact:

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A VOICE FROM THE FIELD

Bea McGarvey is co-author of *Inevitable: Mass Customized Learning*. She consults with schools and districts across the United States to realize and accelerate a new vision for education. Her knowledge and experience are the result of a thirty-year career in education—as a classroom teacher, as a middle school counselor and administrator, and as a district and state leader. She has served as Executive Director of Education for Portland Public Schools in Portland, Maine; as President of Maine ASCD, and as a faculty trainer for International ASCD. Bea was also a Senior Associate at Marzano Research Lab and played a guiding role in Lindsay Unified School District’s visioning process.

Three “Re-Thinking Breakthroughs”

by Bea McGarvey

THERE’S AGREEMENT AMONG EVEN DIVERSE POPULATIONS THAT EDUCATION MUST CHANGE—SIGNIFICANTLY. Educators, policy makers, parents, and learners are signing on to a new vision for education. No more tinkering! It’s all about transformation.

Creating a new vision, however, is a foreign concept for us educators. We are much more comfortable with *implementing a new program. Just tell us the components of the new program, and we will comply.* Creating a new vision??? Where and how do we begin this transformation?

Best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell tell us, “Transformation isn’t about improving... It’s about RE-THINKING.”

While working in the field to make this vision a reality, my colleagues and I have discovered a few “Re-thinking Breakthroughs.”

BREAKTHROUGH # 1: START WITH THE IDEAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Creating a vision? Let’s begin by studying and modeling the thinking and creative processes of visionaries. Today’s visionaries don’t think about buffing and polishing existing organizations, they begin by...*re-imagining the ideal.*

Steve Jobs didn’t think about buffing and polishing Tower Records. He began by re-imagining what the “ideal listening experience” might be.

Jeff Bezos didn’t think about buffing and polishing Barnes and Noble. He began by re-imagining what the “ideal reading experience” might be.



Bea McGarvey

Teachers, Jerry Baldwin and Zev Siegl, and writer Gordon Bowker didn't think about how to make a better cup of coffee. Instead, they began by re-imagining what the "ideal coffee experience" might be.

So let us start by re-imagining (and defining) the Ideal Learning Experience (ILX). My friend and colleague, Chuck Schwahn, and I base our definition of the ILX on the conditions for intrinsic motivation.

Every hour of every day, every learner (simultaneously):

- is met at his/her level of learning;
- is using one of his/her best styles of learning;
- is learning concepts and skills with content of high interest to him/her;
- understands the relevancy of what he/she is learning; and
- is challenged, successful, and looks forward to returning to his/her learning community tomorrow.

Once Jobs, Bezos, and the three coffee-guys imagined their ideal experience, they then asked the **Design Question:** *What will we have to do—have to create—to make the ideal listening, reading, or coffee experience happen?* With this question in mind, they followed the golden rule of effective organizational structures: Form follows Function. And, their answers to the Design Question required new structures, which gave birth to iTunes, Amazon, and Starbucks.

We educators, on the other hand, reverse the golden rule of organizational structure: We put the Form *before* the Function. We almost universally try to stuff that beautiful, ideal learning experience into the current, bureaucratic, time-based, Industrial Age, assembly-line structure of our public schools. Instead, the Design Question for us educators must be: *What will we have to do—have to create—to make the Ideal Learning Experience happen? To make Form follow Function?*

AND, that question is closely followed by another: who will create them?

BREAKTHROUGH # 2: EMPOWER (UNLEASH) TEACHERS

Most educators are energized and pulled by this vision—to REALLY meet the individual learning needs of all learners simultaneously. Savvy leaders, at all levels of the educational community, are recognizing the power of a previously untapped resource: the expertise and entrepreneurial thinking of teachers. These leaders are *systematically enabling* educators—especially teachers—to create the structures that will allow the Ideal Learning Experience to exist. The culture in their organizations has shifted.

New Hampshire Commissioner of Education, Virginia Barry has shifted the culture from the very top of New Hampshire's educational community. Likewise, under the leadership of Superintendent Tom Rooney, the Lindsay Unified School District in California is a model of top-down/bottom-up transformation. Both leaders are strategically empowering—or *systematically enabling*—their staff.

These leaders recognize that the bureaucratic, controlling, accountability strategies of Industrial Age public schools have served only to manipulate people and have resulted in a culture of veiled compliance and, ultimately, of alienation. Applying the research of motivational theorists (Dweck, Pink, Deci, and others), these leaders are using empowering strategies to support people as they create the vision, resulting, instead, in a culture of autonomy and investment.

“We almost universally try to stuff that beautiful, ideal learning experience into the current, bureaucratic, time-based, Industrial Age, assembly-line structure of our public schools.”

BEA MCGARVEY

Empowerment is about acknowledging and releasing the power people and teams already have. A question remains: *Are all people/teams ready for empowerment?* As we observe these empowered teams in the field, we are seeing the following characteristics—which might become requisites to empowerment:

1. They GET the vision. It runs through their veins. They aren't faking it. It's impossible for them to think otherwise.
2. They are out-of-the-box thinkers. They are not paralyzed by the 1892 structures in which they find themselves.
3. They are problem-solvers. They identify barriers and constraints and brainstorm ways to get over, under, or around them. They make no excuses.
4. They use inventive thinking. They are entrepreneurial.
5. They have a Growth Mindset for themselves. They are not deterred by setbacks. They have a strong sense of efficacy. They believe they can transform education.
6. They share the load. They work together in teams—continually adjusting to meet the needs of learners.
7. They embrace technology. They use technology as teacher and enabler to be able to customize learning for all learners.

BREAKTHROUGH # 3: CHANGE YOUR LANGUAGE

The last of the Re-thinking Breakthroughs is rather simple—yet symbolic and powerful. If I say, “students, teachers, classroom, schools,” you get a picture in your head. However, if I say, “learners, learning facilitators, learning opportunities, learning communities,” you get a different picture.

The words we use drive our **THINKING**. It's what we **SEE**, and thus, what we **CREATE**. —Chuck Schwahn

Replace the old, Industrial Age words with those that signal a transformation and see the possibilities that emerge.

| INDUSTRIAL AGE WORDS | TRANSFORMATIONAL VISION WORDS |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Students | Learners |
| Teachers | Learning Facilitators |
| Principals | Leaders |
| Curriculum | Learning Outcomes |
| Courses | Learning Opportunities |
| Instruction | Facilitating Learning |
| Grades | Feedback |
| Report Cards | Learner Portfolios |
| Schools | Learning Centers |
| Districts | Learning Communities |
| Graduates | Lifelong Learners |



LEARNER VOICES

Check out the articles and videos below. In this issue we focus on kids who have followed their passions and interests to solve problems, help others, start businesses, and pursue careers.



FROM NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS (NFIB)

Why are Candle Scents Always so Girly?

Although it was initially a joke, 13-year-old Richard “Hart” Main of New Philadelphia, OH, created a business by taking a common household item and tailoring it to men: candles. And five years later, Richard’s business is thriving, and he’s even found a way to use his success with [ManCans](#) to give back. [Read here](#)

FROM WCPO CINCINNATI

Boy Invents Electronic Device for His Friend Who Got Struck by Lightning

When Ethan Kadish was struck by lightning, he lost the ability to communicate. His friend, 8th grader Jacob Smilg, has worked tirelessly to program a video board allowing Ethan to communicate for the first time in more than two years. Jacob’s not done though—he’s hoping for a 3-D printer for Hanukkah so he can refine his next iteration of the video board. We could all use a friend like Jacob! [Watch here](#)

FROM UPWORTHY

A Group of 10-Year-Olds Take on Global Warming

[Read here](#)

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

The Chef at 15

[Read here](#)

“It was something I could do and should do. So, why not?”

JACOB SMILG



PassageWorks

At **PassageWorks Institute**, [\(link\)](#) there is a clear and constant focus on the holistic development of all learners—educators and students alike. PassageWorks seeks ways to “collaborate with teachers and school leaders to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that create safe, meaningful, and engaged learning communities that respect and honor the diverse views and experiences of students, families, and educators.”

All of their activities are guided by their “Engaged Teaching Approach”—a relationship-based approach that “integrates social, emotional, and academic learning; promotes mindfulness; and assists educators to develop and sustain their own authentic and reflective teaching practices.” They offer courses, workshops, school-based professional learning, curricular resources, and publications; and support field-based initiatives across the country. In addition, over the years, they have both published books, articles, and videos on their approach and collected a vast library of mindfulness resources—which you can also explore on their [Pinterest!](#)

Innovation Lab Network

The **Innovation Lab Network (ILN)** [\(link\)](#) is a group of states dedicated to “spurring system-level change by scaling locally-led innovation to widespread implementation, both within and across states, with a constant focus on student outcomes.” The ILN currently includes twelve states: California, Colorado, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. The Council of State School Officers (CCSSO) serves as a centralizing entity for this state cohort, providing facilitation and communication for their efforts.

As members of the ILN, these twelve states are each actively supporting implementation of student-centered approaches to learning. They have identified six shared principles—or critical attributes—to guide this work: 1) Fostering world-class knowledge, skills; 2) Student agency; 3) Personalized learning; 4) Performance-based learning; 5) Anytime/anywhere opportunities; and 6) Providing comprehensive systems of learner support. While these principles ground the work, the ILN states do not mandate exactly how implementation plays out; instead, their state departments of education create opportunities for schools and districts to “act as pressure-testers” of new, student-centered approaches, providing them with the necessary backing and freedoms along the way. In support of this locally-driven innovation, the ILN has focused on creating shared frameworks among the states and mutual learning networks within and across states. The CCSSO and ILN also host an extensive trove of resources that include reports on a wide range of topics. Some great examples are:

Innovation in Action: State Pathways for Advancing Student-Centered Learning [\(link\)](#)

Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions: The Innovation Lab Network State Framework for College, Career, and Citizenship Readiness, and Implications for State Policy [\(link\)](#)

LOOKING BACK

Over the past few weeks, we’ve been seeing more and more “best of” lists and 2015 reflections come across our Twitter feed. And, since you might have some extra time on your hands during the holidays, we thought we would share a few with you:

Getting Smart
[#YearInReview](#)

50CAN
[11 Advocacy Films to Watch Over the Holidays](#)

Edutopia
[2015: The Good, The Bad... and the Potential](#)

And, if you’d rather take a step back from your education-filled lives here are a couple more.

The New York Times
[Farewell, 2015 Year-End News Quiz](#)

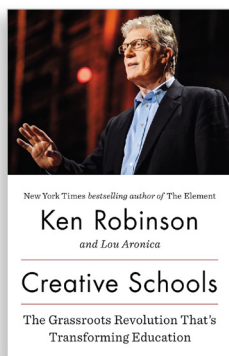
National Geographic
[Most Popular 2015 Photos of the Day](#)

Happy holidays!



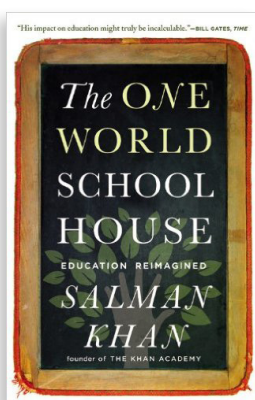
ON OUR BOOKSHELF

The theme of this issue is transformation!



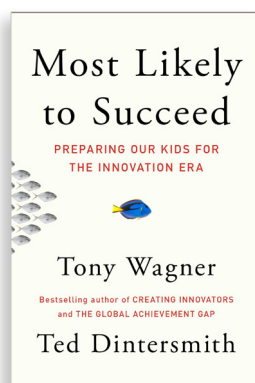
Creative Schools: The Grassroots Revolution That's Transforming Education by Sir Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica

All children are born with immense and different talents. It's the job of the education system to personalize learning in order to encourage and stimulate these talents in every child. That's the call to arms in Sir Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica's recent book, *Creative Schools: The Grassroots Revolution That's Transforming Education*, in which the authors argue that personalized, organic learning is the best way to foster the diverse and wonderful creative energies of all children. Filled with illuminating case studies, observations, and the latest in academic research, *Creative Schools* asks for—and makes a persuasive case for—nothing short of a radical rethinking of education.



The One World School House: Education Reimagined by Salman Khan

Authored by Sal Khan, founder of the Khan Academy, *The One World Schoolhouse: Education Reimagined* lays out a bold and infectiously optimistic vision for the future of education. It centers around liberating learners and educators from the traditional model to one that encourages meaningful human interaction, creativity, and mastery-based assessments that engage, challenge, and inspire every learner. Not a "solution" but a call to action, *The One World Schoolhouse*, invites us to envision a world where every child has the tools and opportunities needed to discover and develop their passions and dreams.



Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for the Innovation Era by Tony Wagner and Ted Dintersmith

How is it possible that a learner can pass through the American education system only to realize that they're unprepared to handle the stresses of college, a job, or daily life? In this thought-provoking book, Tony Wagner and Ted Dintersmith argue that we need to rethink the basic function of American education. The message for educators is inspiring and clear: create environments focused on creative problem-solving, collaboration, and the entrepreneurial mindset, and we will create a culture of high-imagination learners who will all be "Most Likely to Succeed."

WORTH YOUR TIME

Students at the Center: TEDxBeacon Street

In this recently released TEDx Talk, Nellie Mae Education Foundation President and CEO and Education Reimagined Advisory Board member, Nick Donohue, asks the question: Why is our education system still designed as if it's 1915? He digs into what a new future—a student-centered one—could mean for education and challenges all of us to come together to make this future a reality. [Watch here](#)

Call for Applications: The 2015 LRNG Innovators Challenge

In between your holiday festivities, check out this great opportunity! LRNG is hosting a competition for innovative educators who are "committed to exploring how learning experiences can move fluidly and coherently across the spheres of formal and informal learning." Applications are due January 13th, and winners will be announced in early March 2016.

[Apply here](#)

“The more we help children to have their wonderful ideas, and feel good about themselves for having them, the more likely it is that they will some day happen upon wonderful ideas that no one else has happened upon before.”

—**ELEANOR DUCKWORTH**

Read past issues of
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