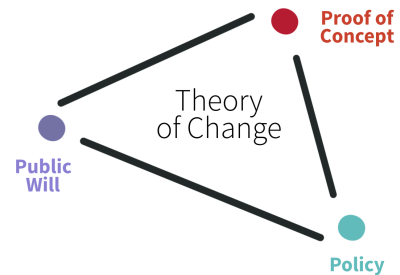


### Theory of Change: Making the Shift to Learner-Centered Education Inevitable and Irreversible

We believe the movement must simultaneously activate three primary levers for change in order to make the shift to learner-centered education inevitable and irreversible, able to radically transform the lives of every single child in this country, regardless of background or circumstance:

- **Increasing Public Will.** This movement must engage members of the public—including parents, business and civic leaders, educators, and advocates—in the conversation about the growing gap between what the world demands of our young people and how schools currently operate. They must be persuaded that we cannot close that gap by tinkering with the current version of school. We need to invent a whole new system that is flexible enough to maximize the potential of each individual learner.



- **Refining Public Policy.** There are countless policy barriers currently impeding the work of learner-centered schools and practitioners. These obstacles range from how we hold schools and educators accountable to high school graduation requirements and college admissions criteria. The intersection of these policies makes it difficult, if not impossible, for learner-centered pioneers to invent the new systems, structures, and processes needed for learner-centered environments and models to flourish. We need to identify and understand the impact of these policies and create room for policy pilots that enable systems to explore alternative approaches.
- **Building Proofs of Concept.** Most critically, the movement need to expand the number, variety, and reach of learner-centered environments so that diverse communities around the country can see, touch, and experience the impact learner-centered education can have for all students, especially those not well-served by the current system. These models and ecosystems of learning are critical to demonstrating that learner-centered approaches can reliably deliver the outcomes society needs and wants for all learners.

### Education Reimagined’s Contribution: Building and Igniting the Learner-Centered Movement

Education Reimagined’s contribution to these three levers is to unite, connect, amplify, and elevate the diverse players activating these levers at local, regional, and national levels. While these pioneers are already at work to bring the vision to life, they are largely working in isolation. Only together can they create and foster the ecosystem in which learner-centered innovation can thrive and spread.

Our strategy hinges on three key areas of focus, mobilizing and partnering with pioneers across the country to:

- Make learner-centered education visible, tangible, and desirable to key constituencies across the US;
- Build sustainable leadership and policy conditions for learner-centered education in specific geographic regions; and
- Evolve shared notions of learner outcomes and model quality.

## **Making Learner-Centered Education Visible, Tangible, and Desirable to Key Constituencies Across the Country: A Year of Learning (September 2019 - August 2020)**

In order to build the demand, systems, and structures needed for the learner-centered movement in America to become inevitable and irreversible, we must shift the broader, national conversation about the purpose and outcomes of education. This will be the focus of our soon-to-be-launched “Year of Learning”—a 12-month, community engagement campaign that will be rolled out across the country. During the “Year of Learning,” we will work with hundreds of local, regional, and national players to make learner-centered education visible and tangible to diverse communities across the US. By 2020, we intend for one thousand communities to be actively exploring learner-centered education as a viable approach for transforming education in this country; and for dozens of diverse communities to have embraced learner-centered education as their preferred approach for transforming education for their learners. We will amplify these communities’ conversations, as well as the voices and stories of pioneers, such that hundreds of thousands of people have been exposed to the promise of learner-centered education through media, movies, articles, and blogs.

The list of potential allies in this movement is expansive and includes groups advocating for ideas as diverse as: the needs of cognitively-diverse learners; social and emotional learning; “deeper-learning”; culturally-responsive learning environments; restorative justice practices; project-based learning; and learner-voice and agency. We envision the “Year of Learning” as an opportunity to create an umbrella initiative that can connect, amplify, and create buzz around the impact each of these diverse groups is having. This is about helping people to see that what may seem like unrelated change initiatives are actually connected under the powerful narrative of the learner-centered movement; and engaging them in the conversation about why learner-centered education and the transformation of the education system should become a national priority for students, parents, teachers, civic leaders, and employers.

## **Regional Deep Dives: Building Sustainable Leadership and Conditions for Learner-Centered Education**

Education Reimagined is committed to discovering what it takes to actually create the necessary conditions in a state for learner-centered models to thrive and spread.

Using the strategies that produced the vision document endorsed by 28 disparate signatories, we propose to connect geographically proximate communities of learner-centered stakeholders who are positioned to accelerate the emergence of supportive conditions inside of a state. These region-specific stakeholders will include: state policymakers, higher education actors, K-12 educators and administrators, learners, district and charter leaders, business and union leaders, parents, community advocates, and “out-of-school-time” learning providers.

We have identified Colorado as a state uniquely positioned for this type of deep-dive work. It will serve as a pilot state for us to determine how to effectively activate and unite the key regional stakeholders needed to push on the three levers of change. The result of any deep-dive endeavor will be a broad-based, multi-sector, ideologically-diverse community of 100+ stakeholders who have the vision, commitment, and resources necessary to collectively build public will, create empowering policy conditions, and develop proof of concept. Within 3-5 years, we hope to see one to three states become exemplars of what a state well-positioned to support learner-centered education from early childhood through higher education can look like.

## **Proof of Concept: Evolving Notions of Learner Outcomes and Model Quality**

In order to enroll the public and persuade stakeholders to design new models and create new policy conditions, the learner-centered movement must develop proofs of concept at both the model and the policy level. For this to succeed, we need two things: 1) a shared view of the kinds of outcomes we want learner-centered models and systems held accountable for—including clarity on how to measure them; and 2) shared tools for the model and system creators to evaluate their models' expressions of the elements from nascent to advanced.

With respect to learner outcomes, we know the movement needs to begin by making the case for the kinds of outcomes society needs now and then demonstrating that learner-centered education produces those results. We will be convening a group of diverse national stakeholders to tackle this challenge—engaging them in a dialogue about the kinds of outcomes education needs to produce in order for learners to be successful and the kinds of evidence that would allow us to know young people were achieving those outcomes. We plan to identify and partner with researchers, existing networks, and practitioners to identify or develop the metrics that will allow learning environments to demonstrate the types of outcomes that current school and accountability systems do not capture—but which sit at the heart of what society is demanding and what learner-centered education aims to produce.

With respect to model quality, we have spent the six months developing and piloting a site-visit toolkit and set of corresponding protocols with a core group of leading practitioners. From early tests, the toolkit and protocols have been well-received by practitioners. These tools will empower sites to self-evaluate their progress toward a full expression of the five elements. They will also allow for cross-model visits during which practitioners can assess and work to challenge each other's thinking around what strong learner-centered practice looks like. We believe these protocols will be key to conversations around the types of policy systems that will enable learner-centered education to thrive.