

education   
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THE APPROACH

Reimagining Support for  
Learning Differences Through  
Learner-Centered Education

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We joke about **reinventing ourselves** every 3 to 6 months because our learners change.

Learner-centered site leader

## Introduction

In truly responsive environments, education is a living practice that evolves alongside learners. Rather than expecting young people to fit a predetermined system, these settings are built for learner variability. Utilizing this responsive design approach is most effective when it is continuously shaped by the lived experiences of youth. Centering their needs ensures that environments remain responsive to the needs of all learners. In particular, when education systems are designed for the “edges”—such as for youth with learning differences—they can become more effective for everyone.

Far from a hypothetical ideal, we observed this design in action occurring at multiple levels across three learner-centered environments. At these sites, over 45% of learners have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 plans. To serve their diverse populations, the environments utilize **learner-centered education**, which is defined by five key elements: 1) Learner Agency; 2) Socially-Embedded; 3) Personalized, Relevant, and Contextualized; 4) Open-Walled; and 5) Competency-Based.

To explore how these elements are lived out, we conducted a multi-case study with a team of practitioner-researchers within the three distinct learning contexts. **This brief focuses on the approaches implemented in these three learner-centered environments—specifically, the mindsets they hold, the organizational architecture they’ve built, and the practices they enact to support young people with learning differences.**

As you read this brief, we invite you to reflect on how responsive design manifests in your own work. Our hope is that the sites featured in the brief serve as an inspiration, offering a vision for more affirming approaches where every young person feels seen, valued, and empowered to succeed.

### ABOUT THIS BRIEF

This publication is part of a series by Education Reimagined, with funding provided in part by Oak Foundation. To explore the complete series and related resources, visit our [Learning Differences Research Series](#) page.

The table below provides an overview of our research study. For more details on the methodology and descriptions of the sites, please see our [Research Study Overview](#).

## Case Study Overview

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**Study Design:** Collaborative multi-case study

**Duration:** 8 months (2024–25 school year)

**Research Team:** 16 education leaders, practitioners, advocates, and researchers

**Data Collection:** Site visits, interviews, focus groups, observations, surveys, and documents

**Data Analysis:** Thematic analysis

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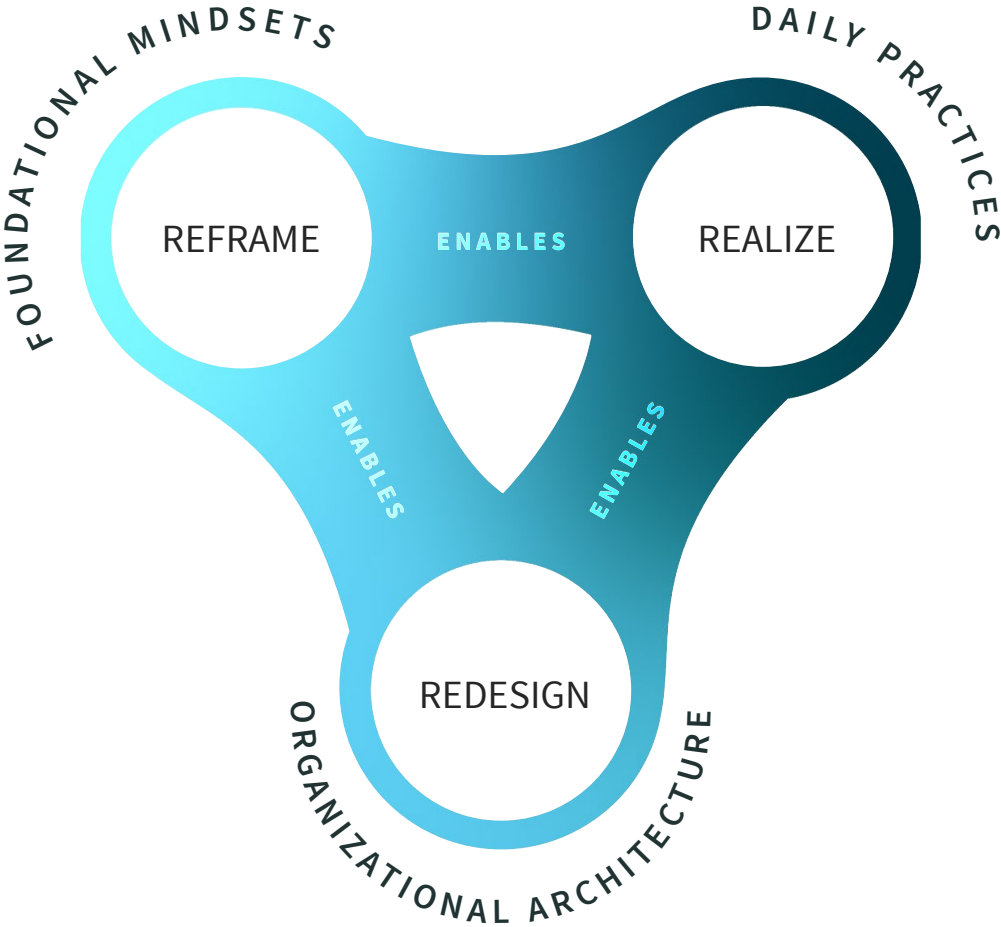
## Overview of Participating Sites: 2024–2025 Academic Year

Learning Environment	Location	Grades	Enrollment	Learning Supports
<b><u>Avalon School</u></b> Public charter school	St. Paul, MN (Urban)	6–12	275 learners	50% IEPs, 10% 504s
<b><u>LaFayette Big Picture School</u></b> Public school within district high school and part of the Big Picture Learning network	LaFayette, NY (Suburban/Rural)	9–12	50 learners	29% IEPs, 18% 504s
<b><u>Norris School District</u></b> Public school district	Mukwonago, WI (Rural)	K–12	63 learners	76% IEPs, 1% 504s

# Three-Level Approach Framework

We classified our core findings into a three-level framework to better understand how these sites serve youth with learning differences. Driven by a commitment to *reimagine* education, this framework outlines the primary ways these environments cultivate inclusive, learner-centered systems.

The three levels—Reframe, Redesign, and Realize—function as a self-strengthening cycle. **Foundational mindsets** enable new **organizational architecture**, which in turn allows for innovative **daily practices**. As these practices are enacted and experienced by all stakeholders, they further solidify the mindsets, creating a virtuous cycle of institutional growth and adaptation.



## Reimagining Approaches to Support Learning Differences

Level of Shift	Description	Core Approaches
REFRAME	The <b>foundational mindsets</b> that shift how we understand learning differences and the potential of every learner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Human-Centered Mindset</li><li>• Strengths-Based Mindset</li><li>• Collaborative Mindset</li></ul>
REDESIGN	The <b>organizational architecture</b> that changes how we structure environments and organize support systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distributed Responsibility Structures</li><li>• Sustained Relationship Structures</li><li>• Embedded Support Systems</li><li>• Experiential Learning Pathways</li></ul>
REALIZE	The <b>daily practices</b> , strategies, and lived pedagogy we enact to transform learners' everyday educational experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Behavior as Communication</li><li>• Exposure to Possibility</li><li>• Self-Knowledge and Advocacy</li></ul>

### Reflecting on Your Approaches

To explore how these shifts might take root in your own community, we invite you to use the following questions as a starting point for reflection and dialogue:

- 1 | What organizational mindsets and practices help or hinder your responsiveness to learners' needs, especially those with learning differences?
- 2 | How is your organization currently supporting learners' life and advocacy skills, and where is there room to grow?
- 3 | What is one shift that would make your approach more responsive to the unique strengths and needs of the young people you serve?

## REFRAME: Foundational Mindsets

In this section, we explore three powerful mindsets that reframe the participating environments' model design and practices: 1) a human-centered mindset, 2) a strengths-based mindset, and 3) a collaborative mindset.



### Human-Centered Mindset

### We're All Human and All Learn Differently

*“The very first question they asked was ‘Tell me about yourself.’ Not his IEP, just who he is.”*  
— Parent of an Avalon learner with autism, ADHD, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia

The sites in our study embrace the fundamental belief that human diversity is natural and valuable. When it comes to learning differences, educators lead with active interest, seeking to understand the “why” behind a learner’s actions. This curiosity fosters healing-centered environments that prioritize belonging and safety, which is especially beneficial for learners who have experienced trauma or had negative school experiences. As one leader shared, their team holds the lens that “each learner is bringing their best self that day.” This perspective is evident when educators speak with deep understanding about learners’ specific functioning (e.g., processing speed, sensory thresholds) as well as their passions (e.g., welding, radio broadcasting). By embracing a human-centered mindset, environments respond to the complex layers of humanity reflected in the learners they serve.

### The Human-Centered Mindset in Practice

#### Avalon School

**Advisory** starts every morning at Avalon, providing a dedicated space for learners and advisors to connect, build joy, and navigate challenges together. Complemented by soft music, dimmed lights, and personalized decor, these sensory-friendly advisory spaces provide learners with a sense of safety and comfort.

#### Norris School District

**Comprehensive onboarding** for new Norris learners assesses their academic, employability, citizenship, and wellness needs. From day one, the in-depth process ensures staff operate under the assumption that “every learner needs something.” This is an approach that validates the diverse needs of every young person across all aspects of their lives.

### Research Connections

Research demonstrates that viewing learning differences as natural human variation supports positive identity development and achievement (Armstrong, 2012). When combined with trauma-informed approaches that create psychologically safe environments, this mindset leads to improved engagement, trust, and academic outcomes (Craig, 2016; Souers & Hall, 2016).



## Strengths-Based Mindset

## “How Are You Smart?” not “How Smart Are You?”

*“Everything was focused on what the learner can do or here’s what we’re helping them to get to. It was never what they couldn’t do or what they failed to do.” — Visiting practitioner-researcher*

Educators lead with learners’ strengths as a springboard for growth by regularly asking, “What strengths does this young person have?” This asset-based perspective helps learners reframe their identity, moving from a focus on their struggles toward a recognition of their capabilities. To make these strengths visible, sites provide varied pathways—such as internships and learner-run enterprises—that invite different forms of intelligence to emerge. For instance, a learner’s exceptional problem-solving might surface while restoring a motorcycle in ways that may not be captured through conventional schoolwork. Such demonstrations of capability reinforce this foundational mindset that every learner possesses strengths worth leveraging.

### The Strengths-Based Mindset in Practice

#### LaFayette Big Picture High School


**Developing life competencies** like citizenship, organization, understanding various perspectives, and physical fitness is a focus at LaFayette. Academic competencies are valued, but they are not treated as the only currency of success. As an educator shared, “Some of our students don’t come in thinking they’re smart, but they’re incredible at managing people, navigating real situations, or sticking with something when it’s hard. We treat that as intelligence because it is.”

#### Norris School District

**Celebrating “small wins”** helps Norris learners recognize their social and emotional growth. It also brings visibility to emerging strengths that might otherwise go unnoticed. For example, a staff member celebrated a learner’s growth by saying, “Remember last year when you couldn’t even talk to this other student? Look at you now—you’re having a whole conversation with them!” This acknowledgment may seem small, but it makes visible a transformation the learner might not have noticed on their own.

#### Research Connections

Research indicates that strengths-based approaches that build on learners’ existing capabilities and center instruction on learner variability lead to improved cognitive outcomes, enhanced motivation, and achievement gains (Armstrong, 2012; King-Sears et al., 2023).



## Collaborative Mindset

## We Can Figure It Out Together

*“If the policy doesn’t fit the kid, we revisit the policy. If a practice isn’t working, we tweak it.”*  
— Norris district leader

Innovation across these sites stems from the belief that if a learner doesn’t fit the system, the system—not the learner—must change. This reframes the culture as one of shared inquiry. As one site leader explained, “the expectation is that you bring the question to the group.” Extending this mindset beyond the staff, sites also engage with learners and their families as essential co-designers. As one parent reflected: “Whether it’s transportation or mental health, educators never say, ‘That’s not our lane.’ It’s always, ‘How do we figure this out together?’” By reframing expertise this way, sites enable the adaptive, collaborative approaches necessary to meet every learner’s needs.

### The Collaborative Mindset in Practice

#### Avalon School

**Leaders model learning** through iteration by testing ideas and seeking feedback at Avalon. Doing so reinforces that growth applies to adults as much as to learners. As a site leader shared, “Our team tries things knowing we’ll probably have to adjust when we get feedback or notice what doesn’t land.” This stance normalizes thoughtful risk-taking in service of learners, signaling that growth is both expected and supported for all within the environment.

#### LaFayette Big Picture High School

**Partner-led sessions** bring together LaFayette families, staff, and community members to share their unique expertise. A notable example involved a parent of a child with dyspraxia who led staff training and community education sessions. Rather than educators training the family, in this case the family trained the educators. Collaborations like this reflect the site’s commitment to treating families as essential partners in learning and developing solutions together.

#### Research Connections

Research shows that collective efficacy among educators significantly improves student achievement and strengthens educator commitment and instructional practice (Donohoo et al., 2018). When this collaborative approach extends to positioning families and learners as essential co-designers, it creates more equitable and responsive learning environments (Ishimaru et al., 2018).



## How These Mindsets Work Together

Together, these three mindsets provide the philosophical groundwork to reframe organizational structures in service of young people with learning differences.

A **human-centered mindset** serves as the bedrock by normalizing differences and creating healing environments. A **strengths-based mindset** builds positive identity by focusing on learners' capabilities and empowering agency. Finally, a **collaborative mindset** enables creative action through partnership and innovation. Adopting these foundational mindsets ensures that every organizational decision is firmly rooted in the unique strengths and goals of their learners.

## REDESIGN: Organizational Architecture

To operationalize these mindsets, we observed four predominant organizational approaches across the sites: 1) distributed responsibility structures, 2) sustained relationship structures, 3) embedded support systems, and 4) experiential learning pathways.



### Distributed Responsibility Structures

### All Learners Are My Learners

*“I expected someone to tell me, ‘That’s not how we do things here.’ Instead, people kept asking, ‘What are you noticing? What do you think we should try?’” — New educator at LaFayette*

In the studied environments, leadership is not a position but a shared practice. Distributed decision-making at the organizational level enables new and senior staff across roles and functions to be responsive and assume collective responsibility for every learner, not just those on their caseload. Across the sites, various hiring processes prioritize these shared values, with leadership teams conveying the message that evolving practice is both expected and safe. As a site leader explained, “If staff are worried they’re going to get in trouble for trying something new, they won’t try. So, we make it clear that we’ll walk through it together.” The result is environments where every staff member is empowered by the organization to respond effectively to the needs of each learner.

### Distributed Responsibility Structures in Practice

#### Avalon School

A **teacher-majority board** and **teacher-powered governance model** empower Avalon educators to collectively redesign schedules, roles, and professional learning. Staff also regularly invite learners into operational decisions, asking questions like: “Here’s what the staff is talking about. We want to make this role. What do you think about it?” This allows both educators and learners to share responsibility for how the site operates.

#### Norris School District

**Daily staff meetings** at Norris foster a collaborative culture where team members celebrate successes and problem-solve in real time. Weekly micro-team meetings further distribute this responsibility, ensuring every learner is seen by the team and none “fall through the cracks.” A proactive “tap-out” system further operationalizes this collective support, allowing educators to step in for one another during overwhelming moments so no one carries a crisis alone.

### Research Connections

Research demonstrates how organizational structures that distribute leadership authority and decision-making power across educator teams create sustainable support systems for diverse learners (Harris, 2008; Hulpia et al., 2011). By engendering collective efficacy, this shared leadership approach has also been shown to strengthen educator retention (Kemper, 2020).



## Sustained Relationship Structures

## Connection Before Correction

*“You stick with the same teacher, the same advisor, and the same kids for 4 years. So, it definitely feels like a second family.” — Avalon learner*

A consistent pattern emerged across sites: multi-year relationships function as core infrastructure. These sustained connections help educators recognize subtle shifts in learners’ needs, anticipate challenges, and respond proactively. As one advisor explained, working with learners across multiple years allows educators to observe learning patterns “across different developmental stages and academic challenges.” In turn, this enables responsive support that evolves with each young person. Sustained relationships also create a bridge to the wider community, allowing educators to connect learners with peers, families, and community partners to form robust networks of support. Together, these connections provide steady grounding for learners while widening access to resources and opportunities tailored to their individual needs.

### Sustained Relationship Structures in Practice

#### Avalon School


**Multi-year learner groups** stay together for 3 to 4 years in advisories at Avalon to ensure all are deeply known. Meeting daily with the same advisor and peers, these groups build family-like connections. One parent described this level of sustained support: “Families hold each other accountable. If someone’s off, we notice. If someone’s missing, we check in. Advisory works the same way.” This long-term continuity ensures that all learners are a part of a community that is fully invested in every step of their learning journey.

#### LaFayette Big Picture School

**Internships with mentors** begin with in-depth conversations between learners, advisors, and mentors to explore a learner’s interests, strengths, and goals. Collaborating in this way positions mentors not just supervisors, but integral members of learners’ support networks. Parents explained how mentors are meaningful adults in their child’s life, who attend their exhibitions and celebrations of learning. As one LaFayette mentor summed it up: “We’re part of the kid’s team.”

#### Research Connections

Research suggests that strong, supportive relationships help learners feel safer and more competent while fostering positive peer connections and contributing to greater academic achievement (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hamre & Pianta, 2006).



## Embedded Support Systems

## It's What We Do for Every Learner

*“We’ll see the list of requested accommodations, and they’re just all things that we do anyway.”*  
— LaFayette site leader

In the studied settings, responsiveness, choice, and individualized support are foundational features for all learners. This normalizes the idea that every learner needs something different. Support is so seamlessly integrated that, as one site leader explained, “If you asked an advisor with 22 kids, ‘Who here has an IEP?’ The students would be totally unaware. They’re just all in a group together.” By weaving these supports into the fabric of daily learning, the sites eliminate the stigma of asking for help, as well as the bureaucratic hurdles that often block access to resources. Reframing structures in this way shifts support from something learners must qualify for into something the system provides by design.

### Embedded Support Systems in Practice

#### LaFayette Big Picture School

**Cross-functional, integrated teams** embed specialists, general educators, and support staff into all areas of LaFayette’s design and operation. A special education teacher shared, “We’re always talking about what’s working, what we’re noticing. There’s no handoff because the advisor, social worker, and I are supporting the same learner together.” A site leader also shared, “I bet you can’t tell who is a special education teacher from who isn’t. Everyone works with everyone.”

#### Norris School District

**Regulation-supportive design** provides spaces and routines at Norris that are available to everyone. These include sensory-friendly rooms, flexible ways to move and work, and daily practices for communicating needs. Because these tools are built into the environment, learners do not need formal qualifications or special paperwork to use them. As one educator shared, “You’ll see kids working at desks, on the floor, pacing, standing—whatever helps their brain work best is best.”

### Research Connections

Research indicates that embedding supports for all learners removes barriers to access, allows learners to engage through their strengths, and leads to improved achievement across diverse learner populations (King-Sears et al., 2023; Waitoller & King Thorius, 2016).

## Experiential Learning Pathways

## We Don't Do a Project for It to Sit on the Shelf

*"I was so behind, but they gave me the ability to do something I enjoyed to gain credit instead of sitting down and just trying to pound out the rest of this work." — Norris learner*

In these environments, experiential learning pathways ensure that evidence of understanding is demonstrated through authentic applications of knowledge and skills. We observed learners in action, engaging in work with real-world relevance, from creating meaningful products to offering community service. Whether a learner organizes a local gathering, creates custom acrylic nail designs, or performs stand-up comedy, the work counts and academic rigor remains high. By centering on experiential learning, the sites ensure that learners' work has immediate utility, moving their education off the shelf and into contexts where their capabilities contribute in meaningful ways.

### Experiential Learning Pathways in Practice

#### Avalon School

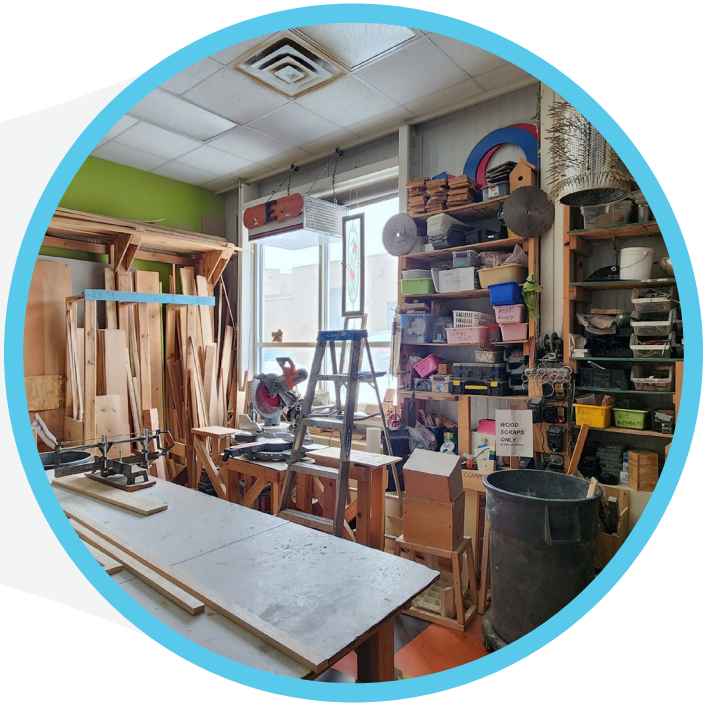
**Authentic assessments** at Avalon turn experiential projects into opportunities for learners to reflect. Through public exhibitions and feedback from field experts, young people demonstrate their mastery of real-world skills. As one learner shared, "People ask questions, and I realize I know more than I thought or where there's a hole in my thinking." This process ensures that the hands-on work results in a clear understanding of individual growth.

#### LaFayette Big Picture School

**Academic credit for real-world work** is offered at LaFayette. For example, a learner with autism earned [International Big Picture Learning Credentials](#) for a project that leveraged their passion for public transit. From studying city bus systems and interviewing transit organizers, they designed and distributed a functional commuter map to their local community. Through this process, they completed research, writing, and data analysis to earn formal academic credit.

### Research Connections

Research shows that authentic, real-world learning experiences help young people connect educational experiences to their sense of purpose while also developing both cognitive and social-emotional competencies (Chan et al., 2021; U-senyang, 2024).



## How These Organizational Architecture Approaches Work Together

In the sites, these four organizational approaches serve youth with learning differences in an interdependent manner. **Distributed responsibility** provides the agility for coordinated responses, which are given depth by the intimate knowledge held within **sustained relationships**. This foundation of connection allows **embedded support** systems to normalize help-seeking. In turn, the way is cleared for **experiential learning** pathways where growth is validated through authentic, real-world work and assessment.



## REALIZE: Daily Practices

This section examines three dimensions of daily practices that surfaced in our findings: 1) perceiving behavior as communication, 2) providing exposure to possibility, and 3) promoting self-knowledge and advocacy.



### Behavior as Communication

### There's Always a Why

*“When students first get here, they’re watching how you react. When they realize you’re not going to push them out, that’s when you can actually start working on what’s underneath.”*

— LaFayette educator

Across the sites, challenging behaviors are interpreted as communication about unmet needs. Educators move beyond behavioral suppression strategies to investigate what a learner is communicating, addressing root causes rather than surface manifestations. For instance, when a 9th-grade learner struggled in grade-level classes while reading at a 3rd-grade level, her behavior escalated. A site leader noted: “She’s drowning. . . and that’s got to be frustrating and embarrassing.” Once staff provided instruction at her actual level, the behavioral issues evaporated, and they found a learner who was truly “trying” and “engaged.” This approach breaks the cycle of penalizing learners for needs they cannot yet articulate. Instead, treating behavior as communication reveals how educators can adjust the environment to better support each learner’s needs.

### Behavior as Communication in Practice

#### Avalon School

**Relational repair** at Avalon focuses on rebuilding trust and emotional safety after disruptions. This shows learners that bonds with educators are unconditional. As one team member explained: “We’re very explicit with kids: ‘You can be mad. You can mess up. But you’re not pushing us away. We will come back.’” Staff model this through reflective questions like “What was happening for you in that moment?” and safety-building phrases like “I’m here for you.” These practices prove to learners that their place in the community is never at risk.

#### Norris School District

**Naming feelings** equips Norris learners with language to navigate their emotional landscape. As one educator shared, “They’ll say, ‘I’m feeling anxious’ or ‘I’m getting mad’—that language changes everything because it gives them choices.” Building this vocabulary deepens self-awareness and allows educators to ask: “What helps when you feel overwhelmed? What should we do in those moments?” Then, these answers inform the staff’s approach, ensuring that plans for support are co-designed with and for learners.

#### Research Connections

Research suggests that behaviors often labeled as “disruptive” signal unmet learning needs, and that social-emotional learning programs building emotion regulation and problem-solving skills can lead to significant improvements in behavioral outcomes and social competence (Durlak et al., 2011; Modecki et al., 2017).



## Exposure to Possibility

## Opening Doors Never Imagined

*“We ask, ‘What could this become? Who could you talk to? What’s one next step?’” — Avalon educator*

The sites systematically expose youth to a world of opportunities designed to help them discover new interests and abilities. Educators treat these possibilities as something to be actively cultivated, leveraging attentive observation with strategic questioning to foster emerging interests. For instance, when a learner who avoided academics gravitated to the piano during breaks, staff noticed. They supported him to start performing at a local café and created pathways for him to earn credits for music composition. Immersing youth in these experiences expands their sense of what they can pursue and who they can become. Through exposure to new possibilities, staff expertise and networks serve as a bridge that replaces barriers with access to new social and professional worlds.

### Exposure to Possibility in Practice

#### LaFayette Big Picture School

**On-site projects and internships** are offered to LaFayette learners who are still developing skills necessary for off-site placements. This ensures that every young person has access to real-world and rigorous learning. Instead of waiting for a learner to be ready to go off-site, mentors are invited on campus to work with learners. For example, computer engineers from a nonprofit mentored learners with interests in technology both virtually and on-site, which enabled them to study physics and build water-powered computers.

#### Norris School District

**Interest-mapping** aligns staff expertise with learner curiosity to create relevant projects and career pathways. To fuel these connections, Norris hires staff with diverse backgrounds and hobbies, then observes to whom and what learners naturally gravitate. When a young person’s curiosity falls outside internal expertise, it is never an inhibitor; instead, staff find outside partners to “run with it.” This approach allows learners to discover new interests by connecting with adults who share and model mutual interests and passions.

#### Research Connections

Research demonstrates that connecting learning to authentic interests and real-world contexts increases intrinsic motivation and engagement, while experiential learning approaches help youth develop practical skills and discover career pathways through direct experience (Celio et al., 2011; Kong, 2021).



## Self-Knowledge and Advocacy

## I Can Navigate My Path

*“What is best for you? How do you like things? What works for you and who are you? What do you need? What are your needs?” — Norris staff questions to learners*

Learners at these sites develop the self-knowledge to shift from passive recipients to active directors of their education. This directional clarity is cultivated for youth in various ways, including “Who Am I” projects, learner-led IEP meetings, and regular reflection on learning preferences. An educational assistant at one site describes a breakthrough moment with an 11-year-old. After initially resisting support, the learner approached him one day and said, “Hey, I’m feeling overwhelmed right now. Can we go take a break together?” This growth in self-advocacy often translates into advocacy for others, as young people discover that their needs are legitimate and that they can—and should—speak up for themselves and their peers.

### Self-Knowledge and Advocacy in Practice

#### Avalon School

**Self-advocacy** is explicitly taught at Avalon through modeling and practice. For instance, a learner with autism and ADHD who once struggled with emotional outbursts was guided to use sentence starters to navigate their frustration. They eventually replaced impulsive reactions with direct requests for support, such as: “Can you write that out for me?” or “Can we try this another way?” Equipping learners with these tools teaches them how to move from being overwhelmed to actively advocating for their needs.

#### LaFayette Big Picture School

**Perspective-taking protocols** build advocacy for others at LaFayette by framing empathy as a shared responsibility. When interpersonal concerns arise, advisors prompt reflection with questions like, “What did your peer need at that moment?” or “How could you support them?” Staff reinforce this by modeling how to navigate their own challenges and advocate for their teammates. This approach signals that advocacy isn’t just a behavior expected of learners; it is the common language of the entire site.

### Research Connections

Research on self-determination indicates that teaching self-advocacy skills leads to improved academic achievement, increased independence, and enhanced self-determination across grade levels and disability types (Burke et al., 2020; Wan Yunus et al., 2021; Wehmeyer et al., 2012).



## How These Daily Practices Work Together

These daily practice dimensions bring learner-centered education to life. When educators perceive **behavior as communication**, they build the emotional safety required for young people to engage in their learning journeys with a sense of openness. Then, **exposure to possibility** through new contexts can serve as proving grounds where youth discover their strengths. From there, learners develop the **self-knowledge and advocacy** necessary to navigate their worldsapes. While the broader mindsets and organizational architecture set the stage, these moment-to-moment interactions are where the learner-centered approach becomes most visible.



## CONCLUSION

# An Integrated Approach for Reimagining Support

Our study reveals that serving youth with learning differences in a learner-centered way is a journey of intentional integration. Across these sites, aligning mindsets, organizational architecture, and daily practices creates systems fundamentally designed for learner variability.

This transformation requires attention to all three levels of our framework: **REFRAME**, **REDESIGN**, and **REALIZE**. Shifting beliefs without redesigning structures leaves new visions unsupported, while changing practices without addressing mindsets leads only to temporary accommodations. It is the synchronized work across all the levels that enables these environments to honor the unique identities and capabilities of every learner.

Ultimately, these sites demonstrate that when we stop viewing learning differences as outliers to be managed, they can become essential starting points for design. This reimagining of support allows education systems to become inherently more flexible, responsive, and attuned to the needs of every young person by fully embracing the totality of who they are.

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To discover how these approaches impact learners, peers, and families, see our companion publication: [The Impact: The Ripple Effect of Reimagining Support for Learning Differences](#). You can also access the full suite of resources and findings at our [Learning Differences Research Series](#) page.

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