

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: GUIDING POLICY PRINCIPLES FOR LEARNER-CENTERED ECOSYSTEMS

This FAQ is a companion to the [Guiding Policy Principles for Learner-Centered Ecosystems](#). It explains what they are, how they were developed, and how to use them.

What is a learner-centered ecosystem?

A learner-centered ecosystem is a fundamentally different way to organize and structure public education around young people and their unique yet interconnected learning journeys. It brings together schools, families, community organizations, businesses, higher education institutions, and other partners into a more connected network of learning opportunities, with shared responsibility for supporting every learner to discover who they are, develop their gifts, and contribute them to their community and the world.

What are the Guiding Policy Principles, and do they recommend specific policies or approaches?

They outline the conditions policy must create for communities to build and sustain learner-centered ecosystems. They are meant to be a shared compass, not a map. They offer direction for policy development without prescribing a single route.

Why do learner-centered ecosystems require policy change, not just new practices?

Enabling learner-centered ecosystems requires more than changing what happens in individual schools or programs. It means reimagining how education systems organize, support, and credential learning. Today's policy environment was designed for a more conventional system, with rigid, standardized, compliance-focused structures that often constrain this kind of transformation. Resources and responsibility are also divided across sectors, creating duplication, gaps, and barriers to coordination and learning. Policy change is essential to moving from isolated innovation to systemic transformation.

Who developed the principles?

Development began in 2024, when Education Reimagined convened a collaborative of twenty-five leaders from education policy, systems, and practice. The principles were then shaped by Education Reimagined's work with communities through the Learner-Centered Ecosystem Lab and refined in 2026 by eleven ecosystem leaders from the Lab.

Who are they for?

These principles are offered to anyone seeking to transform education systems and enable communities to create new ways of organizing learning. We hope they will support policy influencers, advocates, and decision-makers working to shape the conditions for this transformation, as well as the leaders and communities building learner-centered ecosystems.

How might I use these principles?

The principles offer a common starting place for communicating and advocating for policies that create enabling conditions for learner-centered ecosystems. They can serve as:

- Shared language for describing what those conditions are and why they matter.
- A practical lens for analyzing proposed legislation and policy. Reviewing a bill against the principles can surface where it aligns with the conditions ecosystems need, and where it could be strengthened.
- A resource for informing broader strategy, from community-level efforts to state-specific policy agendas, alongside other tools adapted to local contexts.

What role can states play?

While states play a pivotal role as stewards of public systems and essential protections for learners, they can also serve as enablers of innovation. They can connect learning across communities and build the broader conditions and infrastructure for systemwide research and development.

How do these principles connect to State Education R&D?

The [State Education R&D Playbook](#), developed with Transcend and the Alliance for Learning Innovation, states need to create systems that support both evidence-based decision-making and innovation. These principles build on that foundation by naming the specific policy conditions learner-centered ecosystems need to take root and grow. Together, they help states both invest in R&D capacity and direct it toward learner-centered transformation.

Why do the principles say they will evolve?

Ecosystem work is still maturing. As it develops, communities and states will surface new needs and insights, and the principles will be updated periodically to reflect them.

How do the principles relate to each other?

They are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, like the ecosystems they support. For example, flexibility to reorganize learning (Principle 1) is greatly strengthened when credentials can move across settings (Principle 3) and when communities have a meaningful role in shaping how learning is organized (Principle 2).

Where can I learn more about learner-centered ecosystem?

Education Reimagined offers research and resources about learner-centered ecosystems, how they are emerging across the country, and what it takes to build them. Explore our [resources](#) page to learn more.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions about the principles?

If you have additional questions about the principles or would like to explore opportunities to collaborate, reach out to Education Reimagined's Senior Partner of Policy, Sarah Bishop-Root at sarah@educationreimagined.org.