



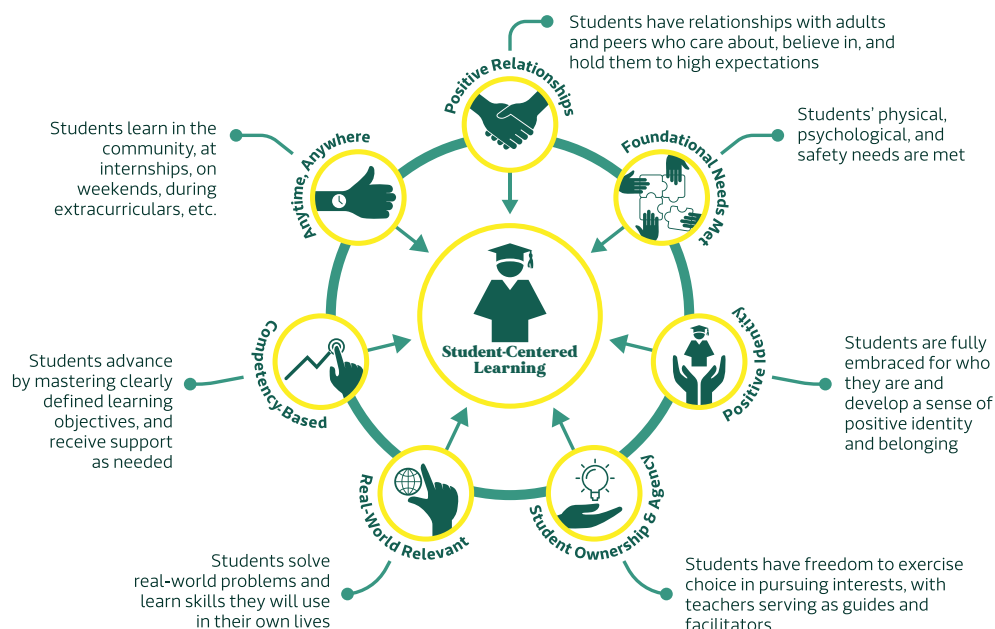
# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## 2020

---

## Our mission

We advance **student-centered learning** for all students, by **supporting teachers** designing and leading schools, and by **advocating for policy** that catalyzes community-led innovation.



## How we create equitable, systemic change



### Thought leadership

Shift hearts and minds to spark change

We contribute ideas, stories, research, and analysis to inspire and equip changemakers, through publications, events, and media outreach.



### Policy advocacy

Shift the 'rules of the game' to drive change

We advocate state and district policies that shift power to communities, enable and encourage innovators, and create the conditions to scale equitable, student-centered learning.



### Educator networks

Shift practice to prove change is possible

We connect and support a core group of 'proof point' schools practicing student-centered learning and shared power through convenings, networks, and resources.

## Where we're targeting our impact right now



### Student-centered learning designs

Changing what students' experience in school

We enable, encourage, and equip educators to shift learning from one-size-fits-all, to personalized, learner-driven, culturally affirming, and liberatory.



### Outcomes that matter

Changing how success is defined and measured

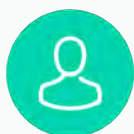
We push schools, districts, and states to define, measure, and be accountable for broader forms of student academic, social, emotional, and civic success.



### Autonomy and shared power

Changing where and how decisions are made

We advocate for decisions to be made closer to students, and support educators sharing power among their teams, students, families, and communities.



### Educator talent pathways

Changing who serves students and communities

We advance policies, programs, and pathways that recruit, prepare, and retain innovative and talented educators who reflect the communities they serve..

## Together, a theory of change

Shifts in hearts, minds, policies, and practices lead to changes in talent, power, outcomes, and ultimately learning.



These changes start with a core group of those who are ready. Together they create 'proof points' of equitable, student-centered learning.



We tell the story of those successes, to inspire further changes in hearts, minds, policy, and practice, in a continuing cycle. Over time, innovation spreads and improves.

## Thought leadership highlights

### Published papers making the case for culturally-affirming instruction and innovative school designs

In June, we published *Power, Politics, and Preservation of Heritage Languages*, in partnership with the Coalition of Asian American Leaders. The paper asserts the vital role heritage language instruction plays in honoring all students, highlights learning programs leading this work, and presents actionable recommendations to clear policy barriers they face.



**“Learning your heritage language shows that your education supports you as a person.”**

—Diamond, one of several students whose perspectives shaped the paper

In September, we published *Evidence for Teacher-Powered Schools: A Practical Route to Better and More Equitable Student Outcomes*. The paper makes an evidence-based case for collaborative leadership and its impact on student achievement. It concludes with simple steps teacher-powered leaders can take to show the power of the movement.



**Distributed papers to 4,500+ educators & stakeholders**

### Assembled a cohort of expert educators to explore how student-centered learning contributes to equity



Over the summer, 11 educators collaborated with EE staff to audit the seven principles of student-centered learning with an explicit equity lens. The project gained new urgency amidst historic protests against systemic racism, as educators well understand that the same legacy of injustice reaches into our schools.

The wisdom acquired from this Equity Fellowship informs our upcoming Student-Centered Learning Equity Guide, to be released in 2021.

### Shared reflections from pandemic-era learning

Throughout the year, we published blog posts on how collaborative leadership helped schools adapt to the upheaval of Covid-19, the importance of relationship building when learning across distance, and other ways schools are living out student-centered principles during the pandemic.

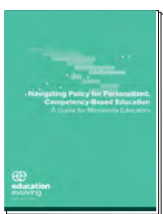
## Policy advocacy highlights

### Navigated policy to help educators employ competency-based education



In March, we testified before the Senate in favor of a competency-based education (CBE) bill, which was voted out of committee to the Senate floor before progress stalled out as Covid response took precedence. We then pivoted to join a working group of CBE champions within the Minnesota Department of Education to provide guidance for doing CBE under existing law.

In December, we completed writing *Navigating Policy for Personalized, Competency-Based Education*, a guide for educators describing relevant policy that enables schools to do CBE today (final paper released early 2021). The guide has been used by educators around the state, as they innovate with their learning programs under Covid-19 and beyond.



### Strived to make Minnesota's teacher standards more student-centered

In January, we submitted formal recommendations on the first draft of new standards for Minnesota teachers. Throughout the rulemaking process, the vast majority of our recommendations were applauded and ultimately incorporated into future rule drafts by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board.

### Advocated more honest and equitable social studies standards

In September, we began serving on the review committee for Minnesota's K-12 Academic Standards for Social Studies. We worked to ensure new social studies standards are inclusive of more lenses, narratives, and histories—and critically honest about both the achievements and atrocities that mark our nation's story.



**Three dozen community members helped steer our input**

Through the end of the year, we engaged parents, educators, and other stakeholders to inform our feedback on the first draft of new standards, which took a bold shift in the direction of equity. The committee voted to add Ethnic Studies as a new strand within the standards as well as embed Ethnic Studies within other sets of standards.

### Worked with heritage language teachers to find a clear a path for licensure in MN

In the fall, we worked closely with a group of heritage language teachers—in particular, teachers of Hmong and Somali—whose positions while critical have no clear teacher licensure pathway in Minnesota. In consultation with professional experts and stakeholders, and the state teacher licensing board, we set about creating clear licensure guidance for heritage language teachers. Our efforts continue in 2021.



## Educator networks highlights

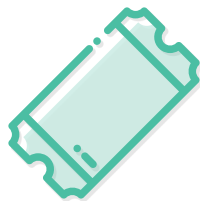
### Convened hundreds to build movements around rethinking education

In May, we kicked off Student-Centered Learning for Equity, a six-week virtual convening which drew more than 600 participants. The event, designed to build a regional movement around student-centered learning, had to quickly pivot online with the onset of the pandemic. Then, during weekly breakout sessions that ran until July, Minneapolis became the epicenter of a global reckoning on systemic racism. The event became a critically important venue for connection, reflection, and learning during an intense summer.

38 sessions on topics like family involvement and engagement, dismantling unhealthy power dynamics, and reframing systems toward a liberatory pedagogy captivated participants longing for connection in a newly-socially distant world.

In October, we hosted 2020 Teacher-Powered Odyssey: Rethinking Power in Education, our fourth national conference on collaborative leadership. We worked with our Teacher-Powered Educator Ambassadors to create the type of virtual experience educators needed during a unique year—replete with a flexible breakout schedule, on-demand virtual tours to schools from across the country, engaging general sessions, and even a digital happy hour.

More than 600 attendees registered for the conference, with 105 teams joining from 28 states. In the few weeks during and after the event we had more than 1400 on-demand views of recorded sessions.



**1,200+  
attendees  
across all  
our events**

### Facilitated rejuvenating learning collaboratives for teacher-powered educators



Starting in April, we launched cohorts of 6-8 educators in monthly Learning Collaboratives, where they met to focus learning on teacher-powered practices and build connections to national peers in a tumultuous time. Word spread and the Learning Collaboratives were quickly waitlisted, with new cohorts eagerly launched in the fall.

**“[This] group has caused me to continually examine and rethink my practice, my school, my philosophies.”**

—Mike Dunn, educator and Learning Collaborative participant

### Provided support to educator teams and school communities

Consistent with our goal to provide both direct and indirect support schools we worked closely with multiple teams across the country in virtual trainings, facilitated workshops, and regional coaching.

Over the summer, we co-hosted a three-part ChangED webinar series for classroom educators focused on success stories and finding hope during a time of unrest and change.

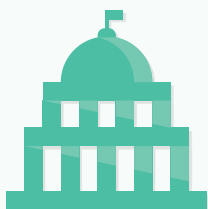
## What's next?

We've got a full plate dished up for 2020. A few of our priorities include:



### In thought leadership

- » Publishing *Ready for the Challenge*, a year-long blog series examining ideas and evidence from student-centered learning in a pandemic.
- » Publishing a Student-Centered Learning for Equity Guide informed by the work and wisdom of our Equity Fellows.
- » Continuing to share research, analysis, policy reporting, and stories of student-centered innovation via our blog and other communications channels.



### In policy advocacy

- » Seeing that MN's new social studies standards reflect the individuals—students—tasked with mastering them.
- » Releasing and promoting the guide *Navigating Policy for Personalized, Competency-Based Education* to help educators traverse the murky waters of MN state policy around CBE.
- » Continuing work on heritage language teacher licensure and developing roadmaps for prospective heritage language teachers.



### In educator networks

- » Hosting the annual Student-Centered Learning for Equity event, themed “Learning from Disruption, Healing Forward.”.
- » Keeping connected with the national Teacher-Powered network through continued Learning Collaboratives and regional “Teacher-Powered Days” set for the fall.
- » Supporting school teams across the country in virtual trainings, facilitated workshops, and regional coaching.

## **Thank you to those who supported our 2020 program**

Bush Foundation  
Douglass Brandenburg Family Foundation  
Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota  
Labrador Foundation  
McKnight Foundation  
Dick and Joyce H. McFarland Family Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation  
Minnesota Learner-Centered Network  
Ted Kolderie, through an advised fund at the Saint Paul Foundation  
Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools

### **Our team**

Alex Vitrella, Program Director  
Amy Junge, Director of Teacher-Powered Schools  
Danyika Leonard, Policy Director  
Lars Esdal, Executive Director  
Marcus Penny, Communications Manager

### **Our Board**

Curt Johnson  
Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed  
Mary Ryerse  
Tony Simmons  
Nora Whalen  
Krissy Wright







**educationevolving.org**

*Report design by Marcus Penny*

Copyright © 2021