



TOMORROW TODAY

LETTERS FROM A FUTURE IN THE MAKING

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 **THE
GRABLE
FOUNDATION**
dedicated to improving the lives of children

“Often when
you think you’re
at the end of
something,
you’re at the
beginning of
something else.”

Fred Rogers

Our world is a very different place now than it was yesterday. It's easy to remember a time before we all carried computers in our pockets, when Tesla referred to a person instead of a car company, when meetings started with a handshake instead of a mic check. It's less easy—but more important—to imagine the ways our world will be different tomorrow.

What will the future bring?

It depends.

Tomorrow could bring discovery.

Will we embrace what's new?

Will we honor what's timeless?

Tomorrow could bring justice.

Will we reckon with our past?

Will we repair harms and correct inequity?

Tomorrow could bring resilience.

Will we approach uncertainty as learners, neighbors, and civic-minded communities?

One thing is certain: tomorrow will bring opportunities, and with them will come challenges. A bright and flourishing future won't happen by accident. It requires a vision for what that future could be, a plan for getting there, and the courage to take bold steps together.

Through a series of letters from such a future, this booklet envisions a tomorrow where learning is a lifelong pursuit, caring is a shared value, equity is how we measure success, innovation is driving us forward, and our connections to each other are keeping us whole. Alongside the letters, you'll meet people in the Pittsburgh region who are making this tomorrow possible through the work they're doing today. As you prepare for tomorrow, take inspiration from these letters and examples.

A traditional Chinese proverb says, **"The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now."** Today's the day. A better tomorrow is possible if we act now. Let's forge a future where each day holds promise for every learner—where youth, families, and educators connect timeless ideas with new ways of learning to prepare for what comes next, no matter what tomorrow might bring.

SCENES FROM TODAY



In order to realize a bright future for learning, we must take a new approach to supporting teachers. **transformED** is radically rethinking traditional ways to help teachers hone their practice. transformED offers innovative, accessible workshops that are embedded in educators' work and relevant to their context.



Literacy is fundamental to learning. As the domains of learning multiply, so do the definitions of literacy. The **Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP)** is powering a renewal of literacy in all its forms to ensure that children start school ready to learn, teens have space and time to develop their creative and digital skills, and adults stay engaged with learning throughout their lives.

LETTER FROM TOMORROW

August 10, 2035

Dear Mr. Ellsworth,

I hope you remember me, I certainly remember you! I was in your 9th grade biology class back in 2022. I'm about to start my third year teaching middle school computer science. I keep thinking back to your class and how much it shaped me.

I've been meaning to write to you for a while now, because I wonder what you think of what learning looks like today. There are obvious differences, like the virtual projects my students work on with their peers around the world. Or the adaptive questions that get more complex as students catch on.

But there are subtle differences, too. One thing I've noticed is that we don't use the word "education" much these days. Instead we talk about learning. You always told us "learning is everywhere" and you were right! We're learning more than ever, but learning isn't something that we do only in school, or only when we're young: it's all the time and for everyone.

Every day, my students stream into school eager to build on what they just learned at home, in their neighborhood, and online. When I was a kid, people

The Consortium for Public Education is connecting teachers with regional employers to help educators use project-based learning so that students develop the skills they will need to build careers.



talked about creating “learning pathways,” and for my students, that’s the reality. I’m never at a loss for ways to enrich their learning at museums, libraries, and community centers all over town, both during and after the school day (and in the summer, too!).

The thing that excites me most is that the work my students do outside of my classroom counts toward their progress in school. One test no longer decides everything. Don’t get me wrong, there are still plenty of kinks to work out. But we have a more complete picture of learning now, thanks to the things teachers like you tried out years ago. I remember how your crazy lab challenges really made me think and use what I learned to solve real-world problems. I use a similar approach with my students, but they’re not fazed in the least! They’re used to facing novel challenges in almost every class.

Another thing that has come a long way is professional learning. My older colleagues have shared stories of searching far and wide to find useful and engaging workshops. I’m glad to have access to so many! Being able to learn directly from veteran teachers, to get the latest research, and to do it all in a collaborative setting has helped me grow so much as a teacher. Maybe you’d be willing to take a break from retirement to drop into a session sometime? I’d love to catch up and I’m sure my colleagues and I would have a lot to learn!

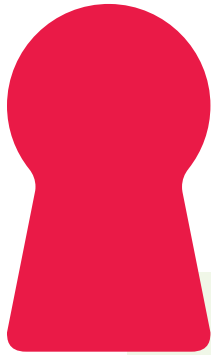
Best,

Ada Williams

The Arts Education Collaborative is working with school districts to develop a program that brings teaching artists into schools as qualified substitute teachers who can integrate the arts into lessons.



SCENES FROM TODAY



Trying Together is mobilizing a league of families and early-childhood professionals to advocate for high-quality early care and education. Through a mix of policy advocacy, community resources, and support for early-childhood professionals, Trying Together champions the needs and rights of children, their families, and the adults who care for them.

The Center for Urban Education (CUE) is tapping into the wisdom of retired Black educators to support Black students. As part of its mission to transform educational opportunities and experiences through culturally responsive teaching, CUE is enlisting experienced high-impact educators—retired Black teachers—to form a tutor workforce that will support the learning of Black students and their teachers in Pittsburgh Public Schools.

LETTER FROM TOMORROW

August 24, 2035

Hi Alex,

I know it's old fashioned to write a letter like this when we're just a video call away, but the birth of your first child and my first grandchild has put me in a sentimental mood. So, if you'll indulge me, I thought I'd take this opportunity to offer some advice.

As a new parent, I'm sure you're full of questions, hopes, and concerns. I know that's how it was for me. I felt like I had no idea what was coming next. The thing to remember is that you are not alone.

I just heard from a former student who has become a teacher. I'm feeling very encouraged that your generation knows that as adults, our most vital responsibility is caring for children.

Your life is about to fill up with people who have dedicated themselves to helping you and your daughter—teachers, doctors, coaches, other parents and families, mentors. Each one will play a role in helping her (and you) turn hope into reality.





I'm relieved and grateful to know that your daughter will grow up in a world where she and all of her peers have high-quality child care. When you were little, everybody knew how important the early years were. But there was no guarantee that every child would get the kind of care they needed. It took years of dedicated advocacy to do what was best for children.

As she grows older, I hope you'll help her find other caring adults, too. The shift in attitude since the days when you were a child is breathtaking—kids today are surrounded by caring adults who are ready, willing, and able to help them thrive. Mentors can make a huge difference in a child's life and now it's easier to find one than ever before. There is no substitute for real relationships.

You know I'm biased, but to me, teachers are superheroes. I thought we worked miracles back when I was teaching, but I'm blown away by what I see when I visit schools today. Together with a few of my fellow retired teachers, I tutor students at the neighborhood high school. From what I can see, today's teachers are doing more than imparting knowledge. They're caring for the whole child—attending to the social, emotional, and cultural dimensions of learning, not just academics.

No matter what comes next for you and your child, just know that you'll find helpers all along the way.

Love,
Dad



Countless young people grow and thrive because of relationships with caring adults in their lives. **The Mentoring Partnership** is creating on-demand mentoring connections to support youth throughout their development. They're creating new opportunities through a web platform that connects students with responsive mentoring when they need extra support.



SCENES FROM TODAY



Our youngest and most vulnerable neighbors need advocates that lift up their voices. **Allies for Children** is building alliances to lead campaigns for food access, nutrition, healthcare, school funding, and other issues that impact kids. In collaboration with artist activist collective **1Hood Media**, they're amplifying the experiences of young people to build a vision for the future of learning.

LETTER FROM TOMORROW

September 14, 2035

Hey Elsie,

It's been too long. How are you? Hope all is right in your part of the world. Last we talked, you were on the cusp of some big life moves. Well guess what? It's my turn this time: I just had a baby! Everyone is happy and healthy and so glad to be home.

These days, life is what's right in front of me: feeding, changing, cleaning, napping, feeding, changing, cleaning, napping. It's hard to find a moment to think big, but when I have the chance, I like to think about all that my little one will need to learn about the world she's a part of. Believe it or not, I'm filled with hope.

When you and I were growing up, things were so stark and tense. Remember how hard we worked to have our voices heard so we could demand the change that was necessary? Without that struggle, my child and her peers would be facing drastically different experiences—and a lot of that would have been due to the color of their skin.

The University of Pittsburgh School of Education is working to ensure that the educators they train have a teaching practice that is grounded in equity and justice. They're creating professional development and mentorship models that help new and practicing teachers understand equity issues and apply humanizing pedagogies.





I'm not saying racism is a thing of the past, but our race is no longer a predictor of the resources we have access to or the outcomes we'll realize. I feel fortunate to know that my child will be seen and valued for who she is and who she will choose to become. That she'll have opportunities to shape the world and speak in her own voice. And that she'll see herself—her history and her future—in what she learns, who she learns from, and who she learns with.

It feels like the paradigm has shifted since our childhood. Now, society drives resources to where they are most needed. It's amazing that my neighborhood school has a Director of Relationships that helps make sure the community's assets are being put to the best possible use for students. The quality of my child's learning experiences won't be determined by her school or her neighborhood or whether she looks like her peers across town.

There's still so much work to do to ensure that each and every child has what they need and is celebrated for what they already have, but I'm excited that my daughter and her peers are growing up in a world that is pursuing justice.

I can't wait for you to meet my little one. You're one of the people I hope she gets to know as she grows up.

See you soon,

Alex



Realizing equity in our schools depends on leadership from diverse, informed, and effective school boards. But there are very few resources available to support our community members serving on school boards. **The Forum for Western Pennsylvania School Superintendents** is exploring new ways to help school board members across the Pittsburgh region build expertise in policy, curriculum, instruction, equity, and innovation.

SCENES FROM TODAY



LETTER FROM TOMORROW

September 29, 2035

Happy Birthday, Jamie!

I can't believe you're already ten years old. Weren't you just born yesterday? Next time we're together, I'll have to cut you in half and count the rings, like we did with that tree stump, just to double-check.

Okay, serious time. I'm writing to share a grown-up secret with you for your tenth birthday (because you're practically all grown up now). Here's the secret: the only thing that stays the same is change.

So much has changed since you were born. Back then, we used oil from the ground to power our lights. We carried around paper money to buy stuff. And everybody had to drive their cars using their arms and legs to control where they were going. The wildest part, time traveler, is that so much more will change as you continue to grow up!

Remember when we talked about innovation? Innovation means solving old problems in new ways. When your dad and I were growing up, people thought they had the world figured out. They thought that all we had to do was memorize

Museums are society's institutional bridge between innovations past, present, and future. The Carnegie Science Center is ensuring that all students have access to museum experiences by building a virtual field trip platform that connects schools to live explorations of science centers, art and history museums, zoos, and aquariums.



The learning and relationships that students experience after school and in the summer are essential to their development. Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time is training out-of-school educators in the practice of social-emotional learning to help ensure that each and every child in the Pittsburgh region has the skills and dispositions to thrive.



Carnegie Mellon University is putting innovation to work for equity by connecting teachers, learning researchers, and technologists. A collaborative cross-campus effort is imagining a more just future for education technology by exploring how it can be used to improve outcomes for learners of color and learners in poverty. They're working with racially diverse, high-need school districts in the Pittsburgh region to develop augmented-reality technology that is informed by the science of learning.

the answers. But guess what happened? The world kept changing. And we had to figure out new answers, because the old ones stopped working.

When you were small, we all finally realized that change wasn't going to stop. That's why everyone in your school learns to innovate. Innovation is learning how to use a tool one way to do one thing, and then figuring out how to use it a different way to do a different thing. Innovation is your teachers finding out how people's brains work and then using that knowledge to help you make your brain huge and smart. Innovation is working with your friends on projects to make things better, and to make better things.

What makes innovation possible? You! Yes, you and people like you and me and everyone else. Every human being is full of imagination and creativity. Imagining and creating are how we build the world around us. That means the world around you was built by people. And soon enough, you'll be building the world, too.

As you build the world, I want you to remember what makes you human: your sense of yourself and your connection to your neighbors. Everyone in your generation is a creative problem solver. The question you have to answer is: what problems do you want to solve? I can't wait to find out what you choose.

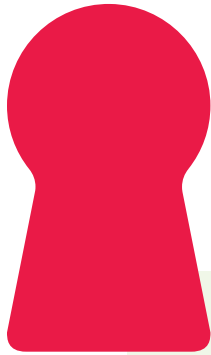
Your favorite aunt,
Elsie

P.S. When was the last time you wrote Grandpa one of your famous letters? I'm sure he'd love to hear about how you're going to change the world.

The Heinz History Center is creating a regional "empathy path" that connects historic sites, libraries, and museums across western Pennsylvania, weaving together stories of the region to help visitors understand that our similarities often run deeper than our differences.



SCENES FROM TODAY



The Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh is redefining the role of the museum in learners’ lives. Through youth-led, social-justice-oriented maker programs, museum educators are supporting young people as they envision and create resources to improve their communities. Five local education organizations, including Manchester Academic Charter School, are co-located inside the museum’s newest space, MuseumLab.

LETTER FROM TOMORROW

October 5, 2035

Dear Grandpa,

Aunt Elsie told me to write you a letter. She said to tell you about what kind of problems I want to solve in our world. I think we have a pretty good world but it is always changing. So there will always be problems to solve. It takes people like me to solve them.

One problem in the world is that there are some people who aren’t happy. Not everyone gets to go to school inside of a museum like me, and some people are allergic to dogs. That makes me sad. I want everyone to be happy.

Here are the steps I would take to make people happy:

- 1. First I would need to figure out what is making them unhappy. Maybe they are allergic to dogs or their toaster is broken or someone was mean to them (these are just examples).**
- 2. Then I would help them. We could work together to fix their problems. If someone was mean to them, we could find them and ask them to be nicer. If the mean person was mean because they don’t have friends, we could be nice**

Allegheny County Department of Human Services is reimagining how to support families and communities so that all children can thrive. Through a network of 27 Family Centers in the county’s highest-need neighborhoods, they’re exploring how maker learning can strengthen the fabric of a community while supporting childrens’ development.





to them and be their friend. Everyone is mean sometimes but playing together makes a big difference. So if they wanted to play during recess we could do that.

3. Then I think we could go and get ice cream: me, the unhappy person, and the mean (but nice now) person. Or if their toaster was broken we could fix it together.

After that, I think those other two would be able to help even more people and spread the happy. We could play with all types of people all over the place. It would help us talk about our feelings which is important.

I think I can make this plan happen because I am a maker. I want to spend my life making new things. I'm proud of some of the things I made. Have you seen my maker portfolio online? I will show you next time I see you. But I want to make more things that will make people happy, which will help me be happy.

Gotta go now, see you at the library later.

Love,
Jamie



Play makes life better for people of all ages. The **Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative's** Recess Advocacy Team is dedicated to elevating the importance of play and physical activity during the school day. In partnership with Pittsburgh Public Schools, they're working toward recess practices and policies that ensure every student has access to playful experiences at school each day.



The letters you've just read depict one possible tomorrow. The world these letters come from is more equitable, innovative, and humane than our own. But the seeds that flower in the gardens of this future are being planted today. It's up to us to see that they grow.

The future of learning holds tremendous promise for our young people and for us. Imagine the heights of achievement your child, your neighbor's child, your niece, nephew, or grandchild will reach. Imagine what an entire generation of creative, innovative, compassionate, and skilled young people could do. Imagine a world enriched by the brilliance of our young people when that brilliance is found, nurtured, and let loose.

This can be the future we meet tomorrow
—if we all commit to doing what it takes.

If we find the courage to question our assumptions and accept the possibility of transformation.

If we make the future everyone's business and reset the table so that everyone's voice can be heard.

If we prioritize justice and remake social systems to be equitable and just by design.

If we tell a new story of learning and broaden the meaning of success.

If we disrupt prevailing dynamics and make room for broader and more inclusive participation.

The future isn't guaranteed—it's made. As we navigate the traumas and uncertainties of the present, we must not lose sight of a future worth forging.

Tomorrow starts now. You can start building it today by sharing your hopes for young people. Use [#RemakeTomorrow](#) and tag [@RemakeLearning](#) on social media to share your vision for tomorrow with the world.

“ One of the greatest dignities of humankind is that each successive generation is invested in the welfare of each new generation.”

Fred Rogers

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What will tomorrow bring? It depends.

Tomorrow Today imagines the future through a series of letters imagined to be written years from now by people reflecting on learning, caring, equity, innovation, and humanity. Accompanying these make-believe letters are examples of real efforts taken by the people of today to shape what comes next. The future imagined in these pages is within reach, if we have the courage to act today for a better tomorrow.

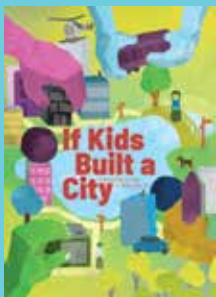


Tomorrow, powered by Remake Learning, is a call to forge a future where each day holds promise for every learner—where youth, families, and educators connect timeless ideas and new ways of learning to prepare for what comes next, no matter what tomorrow might bring.

Other publications exploring what's next for learning

If Kids Built a City

Imagining possibilities for play in Pittsburgh



Learners First

Exploring the ways educators hone their craft



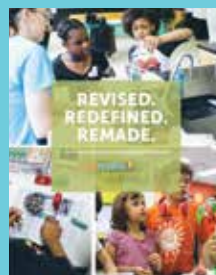
Reframed

Tools for completing the picture of learning together



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Envisioning the future of learning in greater Pittsburgh and beyond



Space to Learn

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