

FUTURES

TO

FORGE

preliminary findings from
Forge Futures, May 2024

Where do we see the beginnings of the future of learning today? What can we do to help make that future real for all learners?

In May 2024, over 200 of the world's most forward-thinking public school leaders, learning scientists, tech developers, community organizers, and policymakers gathered in Pittsburgh to ponder these questions at the Forge Futures summit. Over the course of two days, they explored the boundaries of the current education system and began drawing up plans for the future of learning.

The summit began with bus tours of Pittsburgh's **learning ecosystem**. Participants toured schools, community centers, cultural landmarks, innovation hubs, research centers, and after-school programs across the Pittsburgh region where the future of learning is emerging.

The following day, the group convened to roll up their sleeves and co-create prototypes. Oriented toward a shared vision of **education for human flourishing**, each person started with an idea. Through human-centered design facilitation, the group came together in different arrangements to build upon the ideas with the most energy and potential. In small groups, attendees co-created a set of **big ideas** which they recorded on concept posters. The entire group convened to assess which ideas had the most potential impact.

This report gathers and analyzes the 11 big ideas that summit attendees selected. They are offered here as inspiration for the National Moonshot Grant from Remake Learning, a funding opportunity to catalyze prototypes of the future of learning.

EDUCATION FOR HUMAN FLOURISHING

education that provides opportunity and fulfillment for everyone, respecting and nurturing a broader range of strengths, expressions, and dispositions

BIG IDEA

A prototype for the future of learning that can be built and implemented in the next 3-5 years

LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

the complex web of people, places, and forces that shape our learning experiences

FUTURE FEATURES

Across the 11 big ideas, these features emerged indicating the group's collective interests and priorities for features they hope future learning systems will include:

LEARNER AGENCY Empowering learners through opportunities tailored to their passions and interests, and providing voice and choice to utilize project-based methods and competency-focused pathways for personalized and lifelong learning.

SCHOOL UNWALLED Leveraging diverse resources beyond boundaries of the school building and the school day to provide learners with enriched opportunities, engaging the community and utilizing local assets.

BROADER DEFINITION OF EDUCATOR Integrating informal educators, mentors, coaches, and other caring adults into students' learning journeys to diversify expertise and tap into community support.

CREDIT FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING Recognizing and accrediting learning that occurs outside of traditional classrooms and school hours, ensuring all educational experiences are valued and contribute to holistic development.

PRESENT PROBLEMS

Each big idea was designed to solve a problem present in current education systems. Most concepts respond to one or more of these limitations:

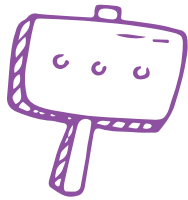
COMMUNITY DISCONNECTIONS Schools don't often take full advantage of assets, resources, and opportunities in the community.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT Students feel a disconnect between what they are asked to learn in school and what they want to learn in life.

EDUCATION WITHOUT LEARNING The definition of success is confined to a limited set of subjects and limited methods of assessment.

LEARNING OVERLOOKED Learning that happens outside of core academic subjects and/or outside of school settings is not valued.

This report clusters the 11 big ideas developed at the Forge Futures summit within four approaches to transformation:



CHANGE HEARTS & MINDS

Public campaigns focused on raising awareness and shifting attitudes and mindsets

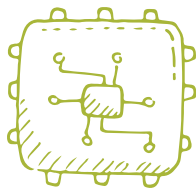
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EXPAND THE TEAM

Personnel within schools and the surrounding ecosystem to enhance the learning experience

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BUILD NEW PLATFORMS

Developing technologies to support the evolution of current educational systems into community-wide learning ecosystems

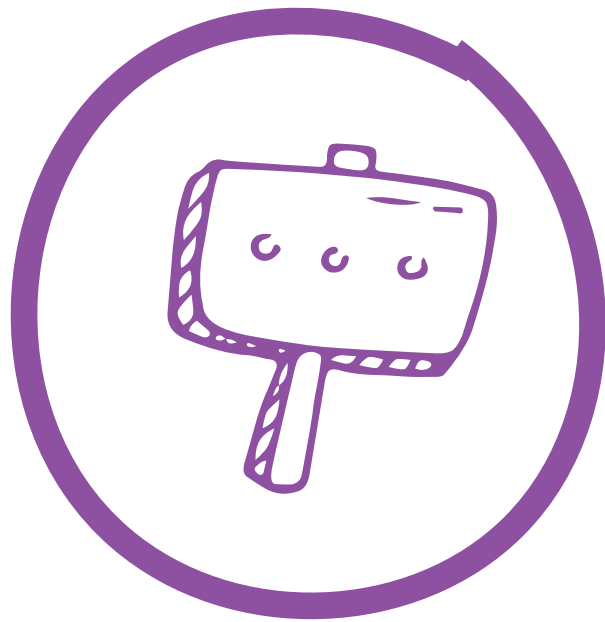
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RENOVATE TO INNOVATE

Comprehensive changes to school systems, curriculum, and assessment to fundamentally transform educational systems

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CHANGE HEARTS & MINDS

Transformational change arises from demand. Forge Futures attendees recognized that greater public awareness was needed to build a broad base of support for the future of learning.

Successful public campaigns can challenge *status quo* mindsets, introduce people to new ways of thinking, inspire by example, and build demand for change. Campaigns are also relatively feasible to pull off and are therefore a great early step on a longer journey of change. If designed to invite two-way communication, campaigns can also be used to test public receptiveness and to invite community input.

IN PRACTICE

TEACH.org's **Leaders Shaping Lives project** is a public service announcement campaign that celebrates teachers and invites people to explore a career as an educator.

THE BIG IDEAS

WE ARE MORE

Let's show the world what real learning looks like so that the public can demand the learning journeys our students need.

THE GOAL Change hearts and minds about what education is and foster a holistic approach to learning that emphasizes the collective experiences and contributions of all participants in the learning ecosystem.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES Current mindsets about education reduce students to academic performance metrics and confine teachers to single-subject expertise. Misconceptions like these need to be fixed in order to realize the future of learning.

HOW IT WORKS Document and publicize student journeys through interest-driven, community-supported learning pathways. Spotlight the real, complex ways in which people learn in and with their communities.

EDY EDUCATION

Every single person should know that learning is a lifelong journey, and that we all have something to teach each other.

THE GOAL Redefine education as a continuous, dynamic, and inclusive journey where everyone is both a student and a teacher, constantly learning together.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES Current mindsets about education overlook the valuable insights and skills found within our communities. Broad adoption of the learning ecosystems framework depends on public acceptance that learning can happen any place, any time.

HOW IT WORKS Capture stories of unconventional educators, from retirees and local business owners to artists and street vendors, sharing their knowledge and skill. Show how everyday interactions can be rich, educational experiences: learning to cook at a local restaurant, picking up a skill from a local artisan, learning to budget from a small business owner.



EXPAND THE TEAM

Systems are made and run by people. Forge Futures attendees understood that even the best designed system won't run by itself. Community-wide learning ecosystems will require new roles.

Creating new roles can help fill in gaps that previously went unnoticed or unstaffed. Expanded partnership and collaboration among education stakeholder organizations will require attentive coordination. Plus, young people will need help navigating the new learning opportunities and pathways afforded by the learning ecosystems approach.

IN PRACTICE

Technology and Innovation Director positions have been created in many school districts in the past 15 years in response to the changing needs of districts.

THE BIG IDEAS

CXO: CHIEF EXPERIENCE OFFICER

Innovative companies have CXOs responsible for ensuring that every customer has a great experience. Schools can, too.

THE GOAL Enhance students' learning experiences by building relationships with community partners and connecting educators with community resources that help students meet their goals.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES Schools are expected to "go at it alone" and be the sole source of learning and opportunity. At the same time, students struggle to see the relevance of what they learn in schools to their vision for their future.

HOW IT WORKS Talk with teachers, students, parents, and community members to identify needs and opportunities. Build and nurture strong, symbiotic relationships between schools and local businesses, libraries, museums, and other institutions, so that students have a wide array of opportunities to experience real-world learning.

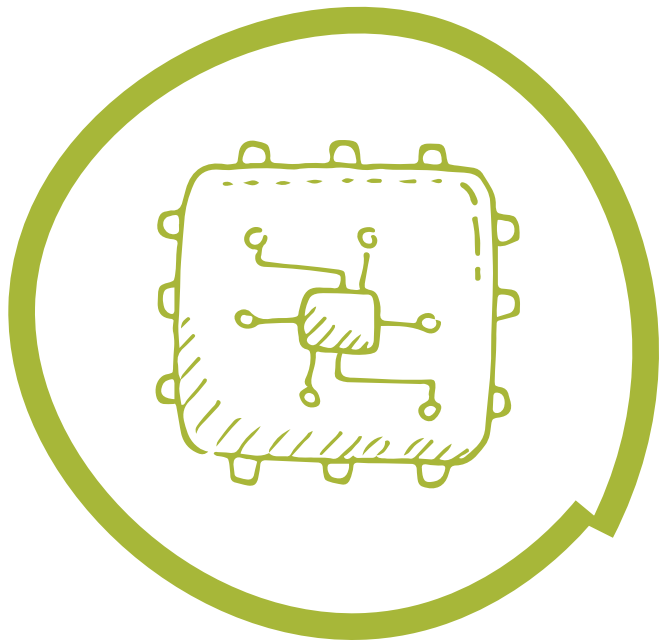
CERTIFIERS OF LEARNING

Every community has people with the knowledge and skills to validate student learning. It's time to tap into this local resource.

THE GOAL Make summative assessment more meaningful and relevant by recruiting community members with deep content expertise to certify students' mastery of skills.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES Current forms of summative assessment are limited and fail to recognize diverse and personalized learning experiences. By distributing responsibility to community experts, more learning can be recognized and validated while teachers concentrate on instruction and formative assessment.

HOW IT WORKS Identify and recruit community members with deep content expertise and supplement their knowledge of child learning and development. Develop learning experiences students can complete for consideration by the community certifier.



BUILD NEW PLATFORMS

Digital technology brings the world within reach. Forge Futures attendees saw opportunities to use the power of emerging technologies to connect students to learning opportunities near and far.

Technology tools can empower users with access to new resources, new abilities, and new people who can help them. Mobile apps and web services are also comparatively inexpensive to other forms of learning infrastructure and can be tested and iterated more quickly. Finally, technology can help overcome geographic limitations like a lack of local resources or experts, providing students with access to the whole world of possibilities.

IN PRACTICE

CommunityShare matches community members with educators to help them co-create and organize real-world learning experiences for students.

THE BIG IDEAS

AVATAR: THE WAY OF LEARNING

We can make traditional report cards obsolete. How? By creating an alternative that's so good, people forget that A+ and D- ever existed.

THE GOAL Reimagine learning as a joyful, engaging adventure that connects learners with relevant people, activities, and resources based on their interests.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES Current education systems are limited in their ability to provide and assess diverse, meaningful learning experiences that are responsive to student interests. Teachers have only so much time and expertise to share with students.

HOW IT WORKS Two people share a learning moment, assign it to their virtual avatars, and leave a digital artifact in the physical world, capturing and celebrating the joy of learning. Learners encounter spontaneous opportunities and experiences, enhancing their educational journey. Additionally, they can build upon the experiences of others by interacting with digital artifacts left in physical spaces, creating a collaborative and cumulative learning environment.

FREE RANGE LEARNING

Young people know so much more than we realize. Let's give them the tools they need to share that knowledge with us and each other.

THE GOAL Make peer-to-peer learning an integral part of every learner's journey by creating a platform that provides opportunities for young people to share their skills and knowledge from an early age and continue to benefit from peer-led education as they grow.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES Students feel a disconnect between classroom content and real world learning. A better system would bridge the inevitable gaps between what students have to learn in school and what they want to learn in life.

HOW IT WORKS Students use the platform to connect with peers who share their interest and to participate in tutorials and projects led by other students. Students can then teach their peers what they've learned, creating a vibrant, collaborative learning community.

EDUCATORS EVERYWHERE

Angie's List connects homeowners to skilled experts who are ready to help. Why not build a platform that does the same for learning?

THE GOAL Create opportunities for community experts to offer their expertise, skills, and resources on their own terms, breaking down the barriers between formal and informal learning.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES Traditional school structures often limit the information and expertise accessible to students to that which is in the physical confines of a school. By mapping student interests to resources available in the broader ecosystem, learners can expand their network of support.

HOW IT WORKS Students search the platform for experts who have signed up to offer their knowledge and skills, then complete virtual or in-person learning experiences. Students earn credentials and experts earn payment.



RENOVATE TO INNOVATE

As with any public structure, our education system needs maintenance. In the places where that maintenance has been deferred, a total renovation is in order. The systems leaders at Forge Futures resolutely identified that systems-level renovations are needed to overcome many of our present limitations and launch us into the future.

Systems-level renovations require a collaboration among leaders and doers across the learning ecosystem, working in concert to change the who, what, where, when, and why of school simultaneously. Essential to this transformation is a steady dedication to the democratic values of public education and a recognition of the reality that millions of students rely on this system every day.

IN PRACTICE

The **Mastery Transcript Consortium** is a network of educators dedicated to transforming high school by rethinking the high school transcript.

THE BIG IDEAS

EDUVENTURE

No two communities are alike. The schools inside of them should be just as unique.

THE GOAL School systems are built by and with the communities they serve. Community assets become inseparable from the school experience, allowing students to earn credit for real-world learning.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES Schools tend to operate separately from the assets all around them: the people, businesses, non-profits, and even other public infrastructure. The silos between schools and communities create tensions where there should be symbiotic relationships that help everyone flourish.

HOW IT WORKS Asset mapping of all of the resources in a community identifies opportunities for symbiosis. Deep public engagement through a community-authored "portrait of a graduate" creates a shared vision. These two pieces become the blueprint for learning in every classroom.

BEST DAY EVERY DAY

What if a school was so deeply embedded in its community that you couldn't tell the two apart?

THE GOAL Let go of letter grades, move from classrooms to learning labs, and put students in charge.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES Despite our best efforts, the structures of school can limit our definitions of learning and stifle the natural joy of discovery and growth. The world around us offers limitless possibilities for learning, but only if we can remember that learning happens everywhere, and all the time.

HOW IT WORKS Transform key community sites, like parks and business districts, into learning hubs. Fill them with openly available learning opportunities that are aligned to educational standards. Let students choose where and what they learn based on their interests.

WALK MY WAY

Life is a series of projects. Some of those projects become our big adventures. School can be that way, too.

THE GOAL A system-wide commitment to project-based learning, every day in every classroom.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES Offering learning that is simultaneously engaging, relevant, and academically rigorous to each and every student is hard work. Truly personalized learning is a worthy goal, but the path to getting there is unclear.

HOW IT WORKS Every teacher gets the time and resources they need to understand the passions and strengths of each of their students. Mentors help students turn their passions into projects aligned to academic standards. Projects that impact learners' own neighborhoods become the norm.

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

Grades hold students back. It's time to lift up learners instead.

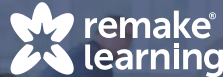
THE GOAL Leave conventional grades and grade levels behind and embrace assessments and progressions that affirm and encourage learning.

THE PROBLEM IT SOLVES Traditional assessment is stressful, disconnected from the goals of learning, and often fails to accurately reflect what a student knows. Meanwhile, age-based grade progression results in a one-size-fits-almost-none reality.

HOW IT WORKS Each school year, students and teachers co-create individual learning goals that are aligned with larger standards. Students work together with their teachers to monitor their progress, moving at their own pace. Concluding assessments come when the time is right, and they're summative demonstrations of the learner's journey.

FORGE FUTURES

FOR YOUTH, EDUCATORS, & FAMILIES
A National Summit on Community-Wide Learning & Learning Ecosystems



Learn more at remakelearning.org/forge

Forge Futures was a national summit on community-wide learning and learning ecosystems that took place May 8-9, 2024. Presented by Remake Learning and AASA, the School Superintendents Association, the summit gathered hundreds of the world's most forward-thinking educators, nonprofit leaders, scientists, and innovators to forge the future of learning together.

This report from Remake Learning gathers and analyzes the big ideas that emerged during the summit to serve as inspiration for the National Moonshot Grant from Remake Learning, a funding opportunity to catalyze prototypes of the future of learning.

