



education
evolving

ANNUAL REPORT
2023-2024



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

educationevolving.org

We thank the generous supporters
who make our work possible.

Bush Foundation
Chris Ghere and Alex Vitrella
CityBridge Education
Civic Affairs Trust
David Dugger and Annemarie Toebosch
Dick and Joyce H. McFarland Family Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation
Great Minnesota Schools
Hannah and Lars Esdal
Joe Graba
John and Denise Graves Foundation
John Portz
Labrador Foundation
Leon Lowenstein Foundation
Mac and Mary Ryerse
Marcus and Whitney Penny
Masai and Niara Leonard
Mike Sullivan
Minneapolis Foundation
Minnesota Learner Centered Network
Mortenson Family Foundation
Natalee and Keith Johnson
Nora Whalen and Ben Goldfarb
Ted Kolderie, through an advised fund at the Saint Paul Foundation
ThriveEd
Tim Penny
WEM Foundation

Why We Exist

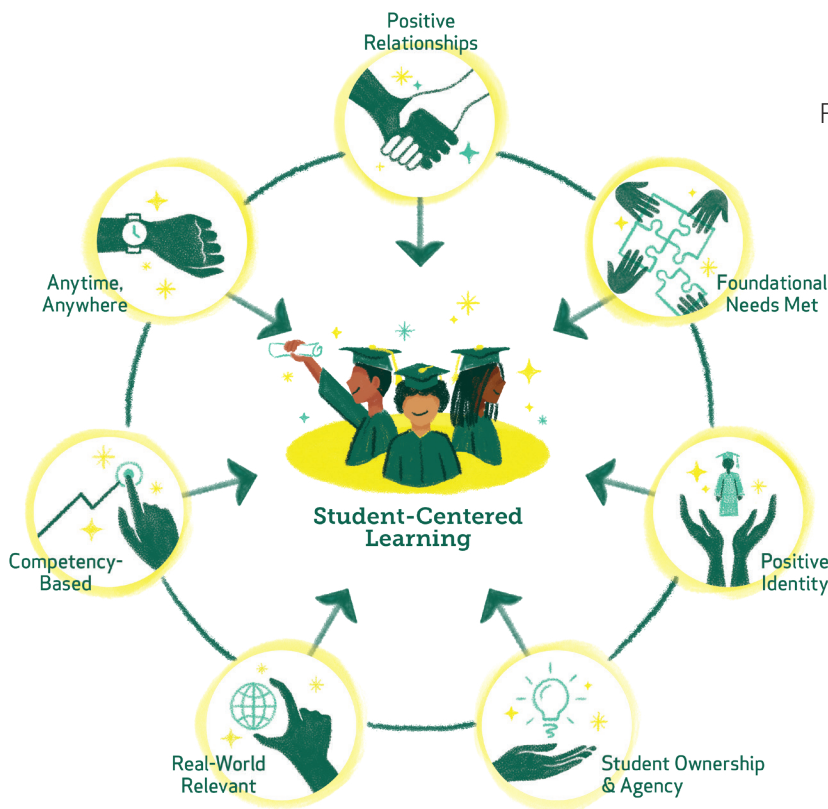
The one-size-fits-all model of school common today was never designed to serve all students, nor to prepare them for a changing 21st century world. It must be **more student-centered**.

Fortunately, the creativity, brilliance, and entrepreneurial spirit needed to boldly redesign learning **already exist in school communities**—among students, families, and educators.

Our job is to support these leaders at the systems and policy level as they build schools that center relationships, prioritize both academic rigor and social-emotional development, and nurture the many diverse cultures and identities of our youth.



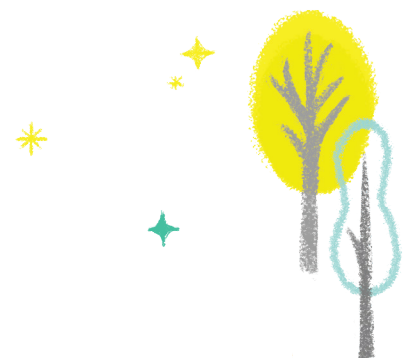
✦ Our Vision: Equitable, Student-Centered Learning for All



Guided by our community— and modern learning science

For us “student-centered learning” is more than a buzz word. Seven concrete principles are our North Star.

We co-created these principles with students and educators, and in deep consultation with academic research.





Our Theory of Change: Community-Led Redesign

Actions We Take



Policy Advocacy

We push policies that create opportunities, clear barriers, and scale what works.



Thought Leadership

We share community stories, research, and analysis to inform and inspire change.



Educator Support

We connect and support a core group of innovators who are proving what's possible.

Policy environments that catalyze and support community-led change

Policies are informed by those doing the work and those whose voices have traditionally been underrepresented.

Schools where educators have agency and communities share power

Educator teams work in partnership with students and families to boldly innovate. Together they build student-centered schools.



Changes We Seek

Ultimately, student-centered experiences and outcomes for each student

Our youth develop a sense of purpose and belonging, and are prepared to lead us into the more just and thriving future we so need.



✦ Our Current Focus Issues



Student-centered learning designs

Changing students' experiences in school

We support and clear policy barriers for educators who shift learning from one-size-fits-all to personalized, learner-driven, and culturally affirming.



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.



Educator talent pathways

Changing how we prepare and keep great people

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



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.

We advance our issues using the three strategic levers—**thought leadership, policy advocacy, and educator support**—highlighted on the previous page and across the following pages.





Policy advocacy highlights | 2023-2024

Shifting rules and structure to catalyze change

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

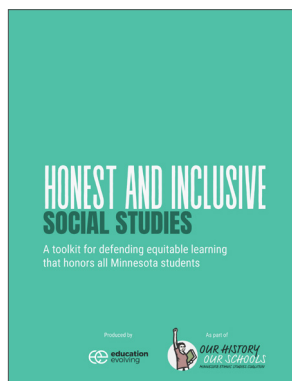
Delivered more honest, inclusive social studies standards

MN students will learn more equitable academic standards in social studies, including Ethnic Studies, after our years of advocacy helped push them past the finish line in 2024.

Earlier in 2023, we helped to pass a bill to ensure all MN students have access to rich Ethnic Studies courses. The legislation promises schools support from the MN Department of Education (MDE)—and a stronger set of tools for teaching Ethnic Studies with fidelity.

Mobilized a broad coalition of educators, students, & community members for the standards

We organized overwhelming community support for academic standards that are more reflective of today's students. We share this success with our partners in the MN Ethnic Studies Coalition, a group of education equity advocates from local community-based organizations.



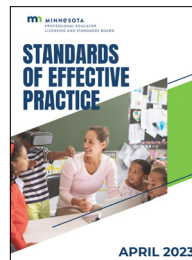
200+
supporters
testified or
submitted
comments

✦ We wrote a toolkit to help community members craft strong statements of support

Saw through 21st century standards for new teachers

Minnesota's standards for the knowledge and skills new teachers learn in preparation programs have been revised for the first time since 1999.

Now adopted, the new teacher standards—shaped by our sustained advocacy—will prepare teachers to lead with more student-centered pedagogy and better serve MN's increasingly diverse student population.



The teacher collaborates with students to design and implement culturally relevant learning experiences, identify their strengths, and access family and community resources to develop their area of interest.”

—From the new teacher standards

Kept crucial allies for personalized, competency-based learning

Gov. Walz urged lawmakers to pass language EE has advocated for since 2019—boosting crucial competency-based education efforts in MN.

While the proposals haven't yet made it to the finish line, the strong support from the governor and MDE—including a budget allocation of a whopping \$35M, up from \$7M last year—marks progress.



Gov. Walz in 2022 speaking at Student-Centered Learning for Equity

Cleared a new, innovative licensure pathway for heritage language teachers

In 2023, we successfully championed a bill to clear a barrier for teachers that schools want and need, but who lack a viable licensure option to stay in the classroom.

We lobbied the state licensing board to back policy recommendations drawn from our initial paper on this topic in 2020. The bill received strong bipartisan support from House and Senate education committees.



EE's Alex Vitrella testifying before the MN Senate in support of the innovative licensure pathway

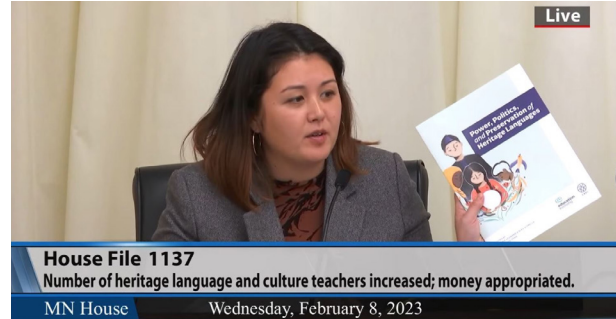
Launched new program for these vital teachers

We worked side by side with the licensing board on the pathway created by the bill, and in 2024 welcomed the first cohort of teachers to use it. We also founded and facilitated the MN Heritage Fellows, a core group of heritage language speakers and educators who formally advise the licensing board as it refines this budding pathway program.



50
teacher
candidates
already using
the pathway

The initial cohort of heritage language licensure candidates at a kickoff event in early 2024



MN Rep. Samantha Sencer-Mura citing and recommending our paper on heritage language teachers in a legislative hearing

Available at: educationevolving.org/heritage-languages

Protected timely reporting of assessment results in MN

We successfully pushed for MDE to walk back legislative language that would have delayed the release of important student assessment results. Students, families, and educators need this information sooner, not later, to understand how schools are doing.





Thought leadership highlights | 2023-2024

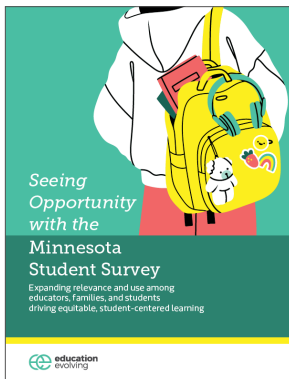
Shifting hearts and minds to spark change

We contributed ideas, stories, research, and analysis to inspire and equip change-making educators and policymakers, through publications, events, and media outreach.

Won support for more well-rounded data on how students are doing

In 2023 we released our recommendations to make the Minnesota Student Survey a more valuable and relevant measure of key things like school culture, student engagement, mental health, and social-emotional growth.

Since publishing the report, we've been supporting champions inside the Minnesota Department of Education as they've taken action steps on the recommendations.



50+
students, educators,
and other experts
informed our
recommendations

Paper available at:
educationevolving.org/mss

Completed a new report with recommendations to rethink the MCAs in MN

Our latest policy paper calls for state assessments to be more timely, relevant, and equitable for educators and families looking to improve schools. The paper presents clear, specific, and actionable recommendations for policymakers—and lays the groundwork for our advocacy efforts in future years.

The paper will release later in 2024.

Served as a trusted source on student-centered policy and practice

We moved public conversation on our issues, speaking to major news outlets in digital, print, radio, and TV—across the state and nationally. The Bush Foundation published a feature on Education Evolving's work and impact in their magazine.

We also penned blog posts, newsletters, and memos read widely by educators, policymakers, and others in Minnesota and beyond.

16
media mentions
for our issues,
work & team

37
newsletters
& blog posts

5k+
readers
engaged

50k+
visitors
to our websites

Moved critical national conversations on the future of teaching

We shared ideas of collaborative leadership and teacher role design—core to our Teacher-Powered Schools work, described more later—on panels and in breakout sessions at leading conferences concerned with the teaching profession.

- We were a designer partner and spoke at the symposium of the National Center for Teacher Residencies in Chicago, IL;
- Presented at the Strategic School Staffing Summit for Next Education Workforce at ASU, and;
- Were invited guests at a convening for the Coalition to Reimagine the Teaching Role in Austin, TX.





Educator support highlights | 2023-2024

Shifting practice to prove change is possible

We connected and supported a core group of schools and educators practicing student-centered learning and shared power through convenings, resources, and direct support.

Invigorated the student-centered community at dynamic, powerful events

We hosted *Student-Centered Learning for Equity*, the largest educator convening of its kind in our region.

Students and adults co-led every breakout workshop. Breakouts focused on proven practices and critical skills for sustainable student-centered learning.

The hybrid events boasted lively panels with students and educators, student musical performances, and special guests like radio host Angela Davis—who facilitated a rich discussion (below) that was broadcast on air and released as a podcast.



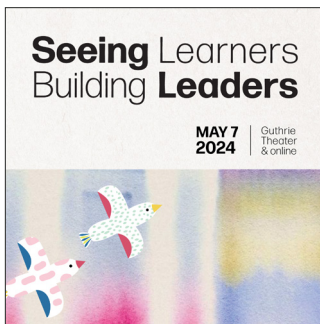
SCL4E attendees engaging in a lively breakout session facilitated by students and adults

Partnered to build a student-centered, outdoor learning program

We supported the Gatewood Elementary school team in rolling out an inquiry-based, outdoor environmental science program. Together, we engaged families more deeply and invested in student mental health. During our multi-year partnership, Gatewood rose to become the most requested transfer school within the district.



Students work on a project with the school's naturalist at Gatewood Elementary in Minnetonka, MN



600+
community members
at SCL4E 2024

13
workshops
in-person
& online

The theme for SCL4E 2024 was **Seeing Learners, Building Leaders**

Angela Davis moderating a panel of youth and adults from regional student-centered schools at SCL4E 2024





Teacher-Powered Schools highlights | 2023-2024

Shifting where and how decisions are made

A program of Education Evolving, Teacher-Powered Schools (TPS) is distinct but complementary to our Minnesota policy and systems change work. It has taken on a national scope—having grown and gained widespread attention in recent years.

Teacher-Powered 101

A teacher-powered school is a school designed and run by a team of educators, working in close partnership with students, families, and community.

Teachers use collaborative leadership practices and their collective autonomy to make changes that improve student learning—and transform the teaching profession.

Read more at teacherpowered.org



Delivered direct support to burgeoning teacher-powered teams

We worked closely with hundreds of educators in schools across seven states and the District of Columbia in 2023 and the first half of 2024, coaching teams and providing tailored support based on what they need.

Informed by this work and with all our coaches at the table, we creatively refined our coaching model to better meet teams at different stages of their teacher-powered team development.

We held our first formal coaches retreat in early 2024, where we established a framework to ensure each team we coach receives the best resources and knowledge we have to offer.

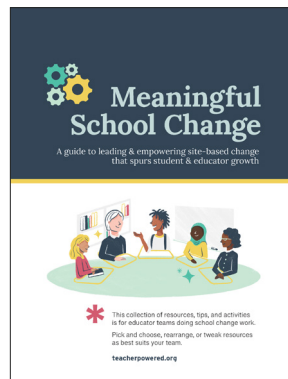


TPS staff & coaches pausing for a photo during a productive team retreat

400
educators
supported by
teacher-powered
coaching



40
school teams
supported in coaching
& workshop sessions

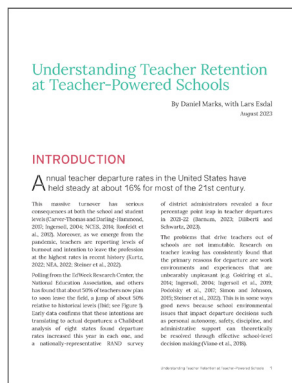


We created coaching resources to support teams, like this change management guide from summer 2023

Published findings that teacher-powered schools boost team retention

We released a study on teacher satisfaction and retention that showed leaving rates at teacher-powered schools were half that of schools nationally. Teachers cited power and autonomy for teams—and their student-centered missions—as reasons to stay despite facing the same factors driving attrition at traditional schools.

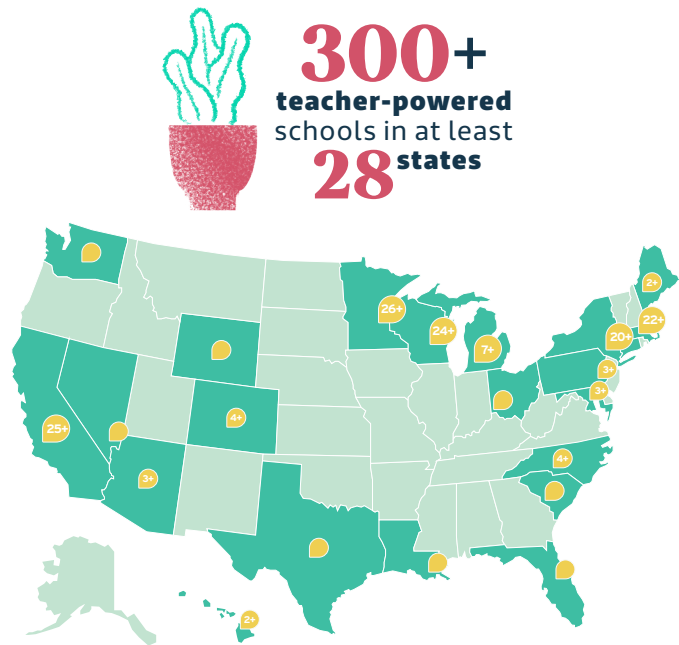
Our findings spurred media interest, and we saw coverage on the study from national and local news organizations.



Developed deep partnerships to multiply our impact with schools

Schools are stronger when partnering with students, families, and community organizations. So are we. Several excellent education organizations and networks have partnered alongside us, formally and informally, to support local educator teams and improve hyper-local education systems.

We hold key partnerships with Empower Schools, the Institute for Educational Leadership, the Center for Powerful Public Schools, the National Center for Teacher-Residencies, the Center for Community Schooling, and the Coalition to Reimagine the Teaching Role.



Spread the word for collaborative leadership practices

We informed people about the best practices and big ideas core to teacher-powered schools in numerous news articles, blogs, newsletters, and podcasts—as well as at dozens of educator conferences.

Articles about TPS ran in Education Week, the Hechinger Report, MindShift, and local MN outlet MinnPost—all respected for their education reporting.

30+
conferences
presented at

5
podcasts
on the topic
of TPS



“**T**his is not about releasing power, but sharing it and building relationships.

—A teacher-powered principal speaking about the TPS movement

Together with our community, we're
building an education system that...

honors our youth as people

challenges them as scholars

interrogates our inequities

innovates our workplaces

sustains our communities

to build a more just and
thriving world



education
evolving