

REIMAGINE EDUCATION

Small-Group Discussions & Feedback

At the Reimagine Education event, small groups came together to talk about the key levers featured in the [Expanding the Vision of Reimagine Minnesota report](#): adult behaviors, cultural competence, student voice, personalized education, community bridges, recruitment & retention, school finance, and social & emotional learning (SEL). People were encouraged to write down their group's comments and share them digitally.

We've put together a high-level summary of your thoughts—what resonated with you, what isn't working, and what we can do individually and collectively to transform K-12 education. Thank you for participating and thinking critically about how we can best move forward.

We were thrilled with all the thoughts and ideas we received! If you want to dig in and read all the feedback we gathered, go to [Padlet](#).

[SEE ALL FEEDBACK](#)

WHAT POINTS MADE IN THE REPORT/RECOMMENDATIONS RESONATE WITH YOU AND YOUR EXPERIENCES?

Adult Behaviors

- We cannot move into other steps without changing adult behaviors—not just teachers but school leadership, too.
- Teachers need to understand psychology and brain function.

Cultural Competence

- There needs to be an explicit focus on how adults understand students' lives.
- Cultural knowledge/competence needs to be infused into curriculum.
- Staff need more training in culturally responsive teaching.

Student Voice

- Youth voice needs to bring this to the front.
- We need an asset-based approach to what students bring to the classroom.
- This needs to be balanced so work is carried out by those getting paid to do the work, but also guided or directed by youth voice.

Personalized Education

- School culture and an asset-based approach are important.
- High-quality technology tools and platforms can help meet student learning needs.

Community Bridges

- This can't just be about curriculum, but must

be embedded, including intentionally forming relationships, being aware, and making intentional connections to community partners.

- Community collaboration means it's not just about the school.

Recruitment & Retention

- Microaggressions must be addressed along with technical problems like barriers to obtaining licenses.

School Finance

- Some districts need more. Level state funding might not make sense.
- How can the state adjust its operating/formula and equity goals in a way that buildings buy in?

Social & Emotional Learning

- SEL shouldn't be a box that is checked but embedded everywhere.
- There has been a gap of understanding in educating the whole child.
- We need to create a safe environment where everyone can be involved.
- Let's understand how to build SEL in anti-racist mechanisms.

Implementation

- Schools that have an implementation process function better.



WHAT POINTS DID NOT CONNECT?

Adult Behaviors

- How does one teach what one does not know?
- Teachers are not held accountable for bias in the classroom.
- Tenure allows teachers to resist change.
- We need a much stronger recruiting reason (winter is not an excuse).
- We need to do more about retention.

Cultural Competence

- There is a culture and systemic problem in Minnesota. We can overuse the word equity.
- Those who are doing equity work may not be best at it.
- What is cultural competence? How is it defined?
- How do we protect students and teachers of color from having to do even more work? Having to fit in the same white narrative/framework?

Community Bridges

- How do we get vocal white parents to embrace success for all students?

Recruitment & Retention

- There is a lot on teachers, and this feels top down.

School Finance

- Open enrollment might undermine the goals of this program, draining funding for tackling these large shifts and initiatives.
- We have funding shortages.
- Where do policy and budgets align to implement this?
- Salaries are low for some staff and debt levels are high.
- We do so many things well and they get defunded.

Social & Emotional Learning

- Schools don't have a growth mindset.

Implementation

- There is an implementation gap.



WHAT ARE THE KEY LEVERS FOR ACTION?

Adult Behaviors

- We need resources for adult learning—not just workshops.
- Let's figure out ways we can help each other interrupt negative adult behaviors.
- Orientation and induction of new teachers should include bridging newly trained teachers and ones with habits.
- Self-awareness is crucial (MPS Toolkit is a place to start).
- Require all teachers to have bias training in order to get licensed.

Cultural Competence

- Professional development that is action-based, building-based (what does this community need), embedded into culture (not a topic to be discussed), and includes student voice (look to ACES) is needed.

Student Voice

- We need systemic ways of hearing and responding to students, as well as creating policy.

Personalized Education

- Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model should be built with various tiers including what interventions and needs might look like at every level.
- Personalized learning plans should be created to asset map students.

Community Bridges

- Rethink the ways we engage community and parents. Don't expect parents to come find us.

- Community partnerships should be prioritized.

School Finance

- If we streamline the funding structure from the state and provide boards with political cover, fixing these issues will be more possible.

Social & Emotional Learning

- Let's acknowledge that SEL is a key component of learning.
- Make SEL efforts responsive to the diversity of our students, families, and staff.

Additional Levers

- Grade-level materials should be standard for all students, including those performing below grade level.
- Assessments need to be changed.
- MCA is not a test of student strengths. We need new measures.
- More time is needed for teachers to do preparation.
- Learn about Innocent Classroom training.
- Enhance basic literacy and reading instruction for all students. Minnesota needs to learn the science of reading.
- This work should connect to Minnesota State University's "Reimagine Minnesota" plan.
- We need a space to highlight what is happening.
- Let's find different ways to access and celebrate success.
- We need to build affordable housing in segregated neighborhoods.



WHO CAN I BRING TOGETHER AROUND THESE IDEAS LOCALLY?

- Superintendents/school boards
- Teacher unions/Education Minnesota
- MTSS teams
- Teachers
 - Include teachers of color cohorts
- Curriculum and technology directors
- Alternative learning center principals
- Leaders in school and community
- Teach and build skills to help youth be at the table. Honor their time with action.
- Out-of-school-time (OST) partners (e.g. YMCA)

WHAT CAN WE DO COLLECTIVELY?

- Bring teachers into conversation more for buy-in and to support their mental health.
- Support [teacher] recruitment and retention.
- Support SEL and trauma-informed initiatives.
- We need to think about and prepare students for adulthood. How do we understand the future of work and future debt?
- Focus on racial equity coaching, teaching and mentoring
- Recognize the specificity of student experience.
- Engage in collective advocacy.
- Acknowledge that SEL is a key component of education.
- Engage in the collective impact initiative of TeachMN2020 at MnEEP to create and retain a racially diverse teaching workforce.
- Help each other to interrupt adult behaviors.
- Analyze how to secure funding while considering how to best distribute funding across schools/districts.
- Develop a framework for developing student voice.



WHAT ELSE MIGHT I/WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND OR APPLY THESE IDEAS?

- We know what to do, but there's an implementation gap.
- How are we using the data? What could we do differently? Stop using it as a measure of teachers' performance.
- We need a better understanding of our future workforce opportunities so we can better align our education systems.
- Do we need to finally get serious about school calendars?
- Communication loops revolving around students (Students: What do I need? Teachers: What do I need to know about my students?)
- Understand that Minnesota Nice has put us behind...is that nice to our kiddos?
- Understand that either you are actively dismantling systemic racism, or you are adding to the practice.
- How to engage in student-centered behaviors
- How to eliminate barriers to improve practices and procedures
- Mentoring groups like in Osseo
- Local affinity groups
- Schools that have independent processes function better.
- Wages between OST and school staff are staggeringly different. If we are going to learn from each other, we need to acknowledge and correct for this difference.
- How else do we build in anti-racist mechanisms?
- How do we protect students and teachers of color from having to do even more work by having to fit into the same white normative framework?
- How can we measure behavior change?
- How do we bring SEL in parity with other measured life skills?
- Pay attention to feedback.
- Racial equity teaching, coaching, mentoring
- Recognizing the specificity of student experiences
- Support students in explaining what helps them learn best.
- Work with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).
- Consider the Culturally Responsive Minds curriculum (founded by teachers).
- Develop marginalized leaders for boards.
- We all need to work together, listen, support, and integrate.