



**JULY 2020 – JUNE 2021**

# A NOTE FROM **OUR PRESIDENT & CEO**



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen K. Garza". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

**KAREN K. GARZA, PH.D.**

*President & CEO | Battelle for Kids*

I am very pleased to share with you our 2021 Annual Report. It is a special year for our organization because it's our 20th anniversary. We are very proud of our impact and innovation over the years, and we are grateful to have had wonderful opportunities to collaborate with innovative school systems and passionate, dedicated education leaders across the country.

After a very challenging 2020-2021 school year, we had hoped that school systems across the country would have a positive, hopeful start to the 2021 school year. However, it seems that school system leaders are navigating even more challenges this year from the continued adaptations needed to respond to the pandemic and communities at odds with each other about a myriad of issues. We commend school leaders across the country for advancing a new vision for education—no small feat during this chaotic time.

This year's report highlights stories of school district partners who are bringing their Portrait of a Graduate to life. We are proud to celebrate these stories of innovation and impact. Every school system is unique, and their journey in this work is unique. But education leaders are united in their dedication and commitment to serving all children equally well for life and contribution. We are humbled and honored by the opportunity to work in partnership with each of them!

BFK is continuing to adapt to the evolving needs of school systems. I am grateful and proud of our entire team for advancing our mission while the landscape is continuing to change dramatically. I marvel at their innovative, high-quality thinking and approaches, and their unwavering dedication to serving our district partners and the students in their care. I also appreciate the continued support and leadership from our Board of Directors. They are all highly successful business leaders who care deeply about our mission.

The pandemic and the other societal issues causing extreme angst in communities are concerning, and I am hopeful that we can find our way forward as a nation. These challenges demonstrate that our young people need to be equipped with the 21st century skills, competencies, and mindsets to navigate and thrive in this complex world. BFK is committed to contributing positively, in partnership with school systems across the country, to realize a new vision for education—one that creates a hopeful future for all young people and for our country.

In this moment in time, we have a leadership opportunity: to lead with an inspiring and aspirational vision for the future!

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## WHO WE ARE



## REALIZING

the power and promise of

*21st century learning*

*for*

# EVERY STUDENT

Battelle for Kids (BFK) is a national, not-for-profit organization with the mission of realizing the power and promise of 21st century learning for every student. We put our core values and dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion at the center of everything we do and every decision we make as we collaborate with school systems, communities, and partners to achieve our mission.



WE ARE PROUD TO  
CELEBRATE OUR  
**20TH ANNIVERSARY.**

Supported by an initial grant from Battelle Memorial Institute, BFK was established in 2001 by the Ohio Business Roundtable to advance student academic achievement and growth in Ohio. In 2005, BFK became an independent, national not-for-profit organization focused on developing innovative services and solutions to empower and support teachers, leaders, and school systems to reach every learner.

**2001**

**Battelle**for**Kids**

**Today**

**Battelle**  
for**Kids**

## THE WORLD CONTINUES **TO CHANGE RAPIDLY**

For 20 years, Battelle for Kids has adapted to the ever-changing needs of those we support. The shifting landscape and the unique needs of today's 21st century learners demand a broader definition of student success—well beyond academic content mastery.

Today, our work centers on helping education leaders engage their communities to re-envision and transform their school systems. We take a systems approach to promote enduring transformation and equitable, deeper learning outcomes for *every* student.

We are honored to serve education systems, state departments of education, and other partners through our extensive history of developing innovative, responsive services, solutions, and products.

# 20 YEARS OF INNOVATION

**2004**

**Value-added  
Training & Toolkits**

**Educators Connect  
for Success**

**2008**

**BFK•Learn**

**Differentiated  
Compensation  
in Education  
Symposium**

**2001**

**Battelle for Kids  
Founded**

**2007**

**BFK•Link**

**2011**

**Balanced  
Assessment Toolkit**

**2002**

**SOAR**

A Network of Battelle for Kids

**2009**

**Great  
Teachers Make  
Great Schools  
Conference**

**BFK•Award**

**2012**

**Celebrate Teaching**

**2006**

**Survive or Thrive:  
Education in a  
Flat Pack**

**2010**

**Formative  
Instructional  
Practices**

**Ohio  
Appalachian  
Collaborative**

**2017**

**EdLeader21**  
A Network of BattelleforKids

**2018**

**Portrait of a Graduate**

**21 Partnership for**  
**21st Century Learning**  
A Network of BattelleforKids

EdLeader21  
**ANNUAL EVENT**

**2014**

**Assessment  
Literacy**

**BFK•Grow**

**Data Coaching  
Framework**

**2015**

**Rounds21**

**Strategic Planning**

**Designing Sound  
Assessment**

**2016**

**Human Capital Ed Leaders  
& Standards Certification**

**2020**

**Assessment21**

**2013**

**The Student Experience21™**

**Human Capital21**

National Forum to  
**Advance Rural Education**

**2021**

**Roadmap21**

**Deeper Learning21**

**Leader21•Principal**

**Portrait of a Leader**

**2019**

**Portrait of an Educator**

**Portrait of a System**

**Battelle  
for Kids**

# OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are honored by the unwavering support and leadership of our Board of Directors. They are the brightest minds in education, government, and business, and we are sincerely grateful that they care deeply about transforming education.



**RUSS AUSTIN**  
*Battelle Memorial Institute,  
Board Chairman*



**TIFFANY CARREKER**  
*White Castle  
Management Co.*



**THE HON. RICHARD CELESTE**  
*Former Ohio Governor,  
RFCNextAct, LLC*



**MELISSA DIXON**  
*Battelle Memorial  
Institute*



**ALTON FRAILEY**  
*Former TX Superintendent,  
Alton L. Frailey & Associates, LLC*



**LARRY HILSHEIMER**  
*Greif, Inc.*



**DR. AIMEE KENNEDY**  
*Battelle Memorial  
Institute*



**DR. DARLINE ROBLES**  
*Former CA Superintendent,  
University of Southern California*



**PATRICK TIBERI**  
*Former Congressman,  
Ohio Business Roundtable*

## OUR TEAM

Our team is committed to collaborating with school systems and communities to realize the power and promise of 21st century learning for every student. We are passionate people, experts in our respective fields of education, technology, finance, project management, partnerships, and marketing and communications.

## OUR CORE VALUES

We are  
**INCLUSIVE**



We are  
**CARING**



### REALIZING

the power and promise of

*21st century learning*

*for*

# EVERY STUDENT



We are  
**COURAGEOUS**



We are  
**COLLABORATIVE**



We are  
**LEARNERS**

**Battelle**  
for Kids  
*believes*

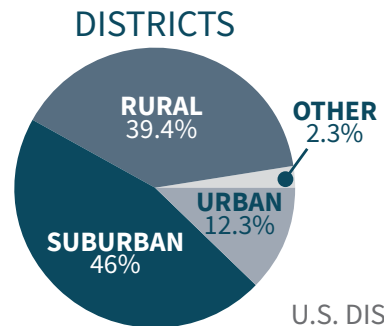
Education is the critical foundation for cultivating, promoting, and accelerating equity and inclusivity for society. We have a responsibility to advance deeper, 21st century learning for every student, everywhere, resulting in high quality, equitable experiences and outcomes. Therefore, Battelle for Kids intentionally prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work with school systems and partners.

# WHO WE SERVE

Reaching nearly 3 million students in 267 school systems in the past year, we are steadfast in our commitment to expand our reach and grow our impact for every student.

**290**  
CLIENTS SERVED

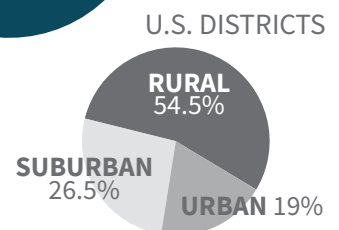
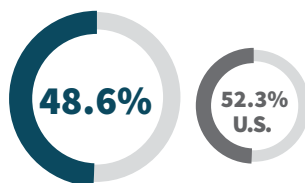
**2.84M**  
STUDENTS



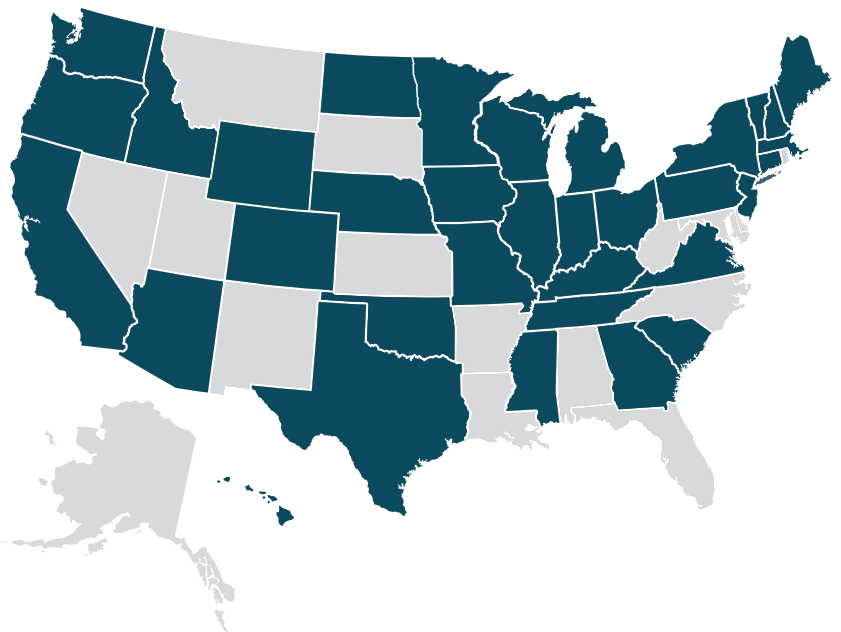
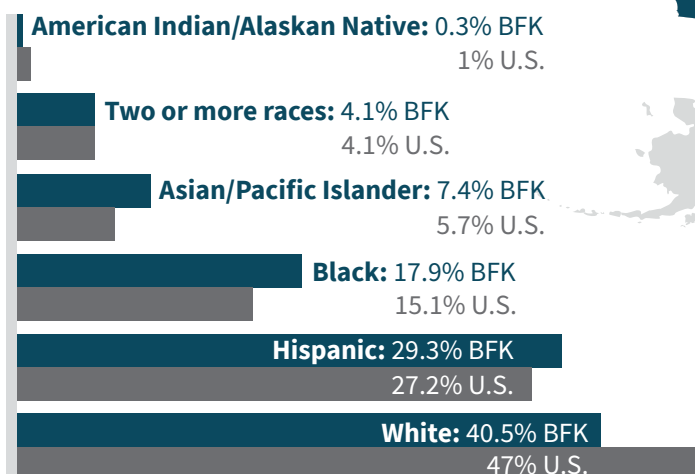
**267**  
SCHOOL  
SYSTEMS

**23**  
OTHER  
Partners/State  
Agencies/Grant  
Funded Clients

ECONOMICALLY  
DISADVANTAGED  
STUDENTS



## STUDENT ETHNICITY



## CLIENT NET PROMOTER

**100**

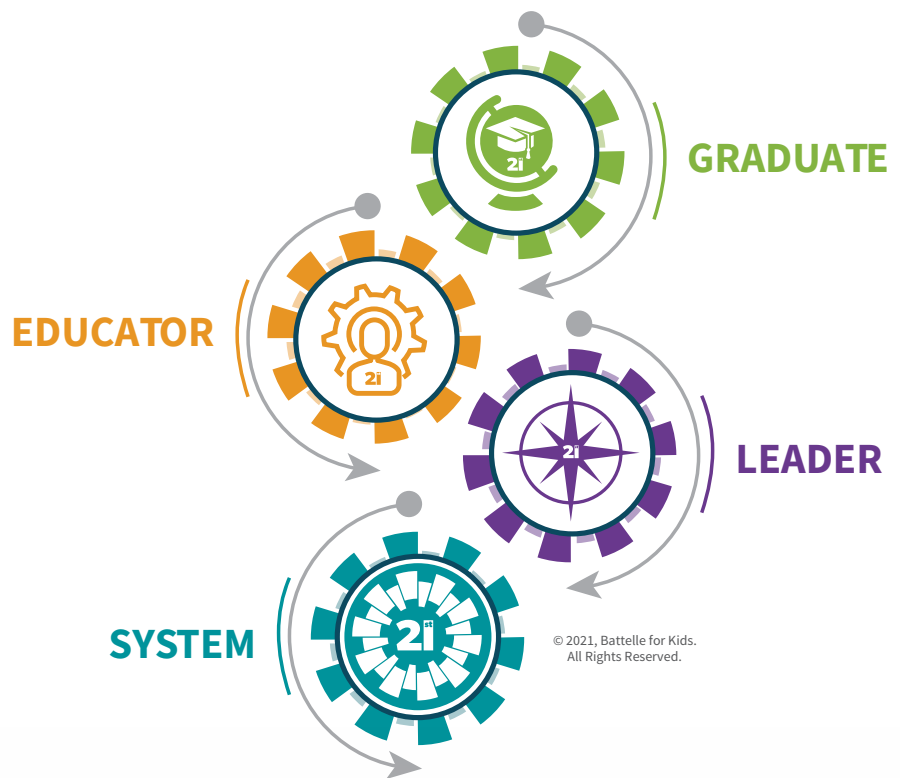
**36% RESPONSE  
RATE OF 25  
PROJECTS** (in progress)

# HOW WE HELP

Battelle for Kids helps education leaders engage their community to re-envision and transform their school systems.

When the whole education system is aligned to the 21st century vision—the Portrait of a Graduate—equitable, deeper learning outcomes for every student can be realized.

Building on the locally developed Portrait of a Graduate, this systems approach—Portrait of a Graduate, Portrait of an Educator, Portrait of a Leader, and Portrait of a System—provides the cohesive alignment, necessary to bring the vision to life. This interconnected systems framework illustrates the dependency of each component part of the system for enduring transformation.



# TRANSFORMING **EDUCATION SYSTEMS**

## Our Theory of Action



*This challenging, courageous, and exciting work to transform education systems is happening across the country. On the following pages, we share stories of school systems—all in unique phases of their transformation journey—during the 2020-21 school year.*



Locally developed and globally positioned, Portrait of a Graduate is the first step in system transformation.



Align all aspects of the system—including the strategic plan—with the vision of 21st century learning.



Bring the vision to life with relevant professional learning and resources.



Connect, learn, and accelerate with other forward-thinking leaders to transform education for every student.

# STORIES OF 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

## STORIES OF **VISION**



Locally developed and globally positioned, a Portrait of a Graduate identifies the 21st century skills, mindsets, and competencies every student needs to be a lifelong learner and contributor.

We help school systems engage their communities to develop a collective vision, which serves as the North Star for system transformation. During the envisioning phase, we support school system leaders, as they engage their community stakeholders to reimagine and redefine their education systems, anchored in these fundamental questions:

- What are the hopes, dreams, and aspirations that our community has for its students?
- What are the skills and mindsets our children need for success in this rapidly changing, complex world?
- What are the implications for the design of the learning experiences—and equitable access to those experiences—we provide in our school systems?

This year we collaborated with 39 school systems across the nation in the local development of their Portrait of a Graduate. We are incredibly proud that many school systems did not allow the extreme change and uncertainty from the pandemic to cancel their vision for the future. Together, with their community, they found a way to navigate the demands of the pandemic while remaining focused on a hopeful, aspirational direction forward.



**Portrait of a Graduate**



# Using Momentum to Spark Change

## Iowa City Community School District, IA

47 schools, serving 14,000 students

“There’s a ‘perfect energy’ coming together in our district. The opportunity for us is then to use that energy and fuel meaningful change.”

**MATT DEGNER** | *Superintendent*

Iowa City Community School District began developing its Portrait of a Graduate in spring 2020. COVID-19 temporarily paused early work, but Superintendent Matt Degner knew there was a need to look critically at how the district was adapting to societal changes.

“COVID highlighted some of the ways we needed to adjust as a system to make sure we were meeting the needs of all our students,” said Mr. Degner. “It was the prime time to be having these conversations.”

Once it became possible to reconvene, over 140 students, staff, parents, and community stakeholders met and discussed some of those societal changes they had seen over the past few months. They talked about the hopes, dreams, and aspirations they have for all students, as well as the skills and mindsets students should cultivate over their time with the district. The final version of their Portrait of a Graduate includes six competencies:

- Adaptability
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Empathy
- Global Citizens
- Learner’s Mindset

Moving forward, Mr. Degner is excited that Iowa City has a vision for all students. The district is creating an internal team to drive the implementation of the Portrait. He and other district leaders have started thinking about ways to redesign learning experiences so students are supported and develop the skills outlined in their Portrait. They intend to provide learning experiences that match what students will encounter in society, whether collaborating in a group or communicating with someone from a different cultural background.

As an early measure of success, the district will evaluate the investment in the vision from students, educators, and parents. Mr. Degner believes those stakeholders will see its value and want to continue rethinking how the education system can work for all students. “There’s a lot of energy and momentum behind making sustainable change in our district right now,” he shared. “Our goal now is to make sure the tenacity and hunger for rethinking our education system don’t fade.”



## • PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE •

 EdLeader21 Network Member

# Honoring the Past, Planning for the Future

## The Winnetka Public Schools District 36, IL

5 schools, serving 1,600 students

The Winnetka Public Schools District 36 has deep roots in progressive education. For over 100 years, the progressive educational philosophy has informed the district's practices of differentiated instruction and project-based learning. With such a strong reputation as a progressive school system, it was important to integrate the district's history when developing a Portrait of a Graduate.

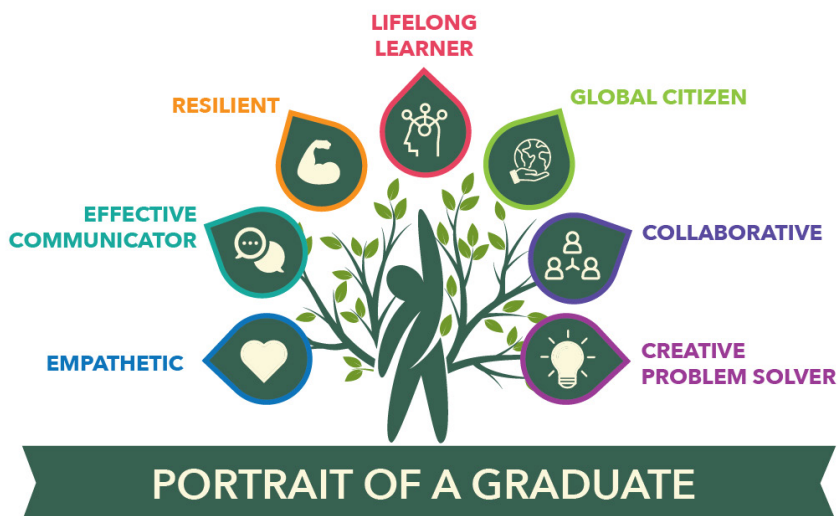
The Portrait design process began in early March 2020. Superintendent Dr. Trisha Kocanda and 60 community stakeholders met to discuss their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for students in Winnetka. The design team started to form some ideas of the skills and mindsets they saw as crucial to include in the Portrait of a Graduate, including:

- Empathetic
- Effective Communicator
- Lifelong Learner
- Global Citizen
- Collaborative
- Creative Problem Solver

The onset of COVID-19 paused Winnetka's work, but the design team reconvened virtually in fall 2020. The first step was to reassess how the pandemic changed opinions of what competencies should be included in the Portrait of a Graduate. Given the circumstances, the team felt compelled to add a competency: resilience. "After going through seven months of the pandemic, we found that a growth mindset was necessary to emphasize," said Jen Fiegen, a district staff member who was on the design team. "The children really showed us how important it was to have this mentality."

Design team members worked to ensure the characteristics included in the Portrait of a Graduate aligned with the values engrained in the progressive education philosophy. "The process allowed us to take a critical look at what we mean when we call Winnetka a progressive school system," said school board member Maxie Clark. "In the end, we were able to identify how these competencies and the progressive education philosophy go hand-in-hand."

Moving forward, Winnetka's Portrait of a Graduate will serve as the anchor for its Strategic Plan. As the district looks toward the future, it will remain rooted in its values and continue to empower students.



# United by a Collective Vision

## Western Maine Education Collaborative, ME

17 districts, serving 14,000 students

The Western Maine Education Collaborative (WMEC) is in the distinctive position of developing a unified, organizational vision that incorporates the experiences of individual member districts. Each member district is creating its own Portrait of a Graduate, which will feed into and align with the collective WMEC vision for educator efforts across the region. “Our 17 districts are diverse,” said executive director Kristie Littlefield. “The beauty of the Portrait for an organization like ours is that it supports our belief that, while each district has its own unique needs, there’s great value in collaborating in identified common areas of need.”

Each member district started developing their Portrait of a Graduate in 2020, but the pandemic interrupted early work. They could have paused their involvement in the design work, but most districts chose to continue. “In a year when we jumped from crisis to crisis, the Portrait of a Graduate work was grounding, energizing, and allowed us to plan and hope for the future,” said Leanne Condon, assistant superintendent at member district RSU 10.

Local stakeholders echoed this sentiment through their commitment and engagement. “The process provided a platform to connect with local communities about what they hope to have developed to support student learning,” Ms. Littlefield said. “They were more engaged than ever before.”

The WMEC continues to work with its communities and identify the shared hopes, dreams, and aspirations for students. As the vision becomes clearer, it will align efforts across the entire region and be positioned to strengthen and enhance teaching and learning through collaborative networks and ongoing professional learning supports. The WMEC Portrait will also serve as an example of the power of collaboration for other regional education coalitions.

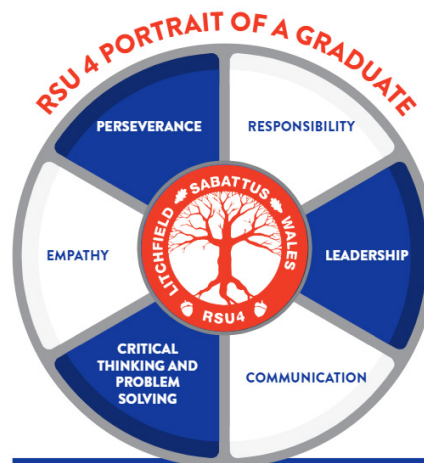
“We all want our students to be as prepared for their future—  
college, career, or life-ready—as possible.”

KRISTIE LITTLEFIELD | *Executive Director*

### • PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE •



*Empowering Learners to Invent Their Future*

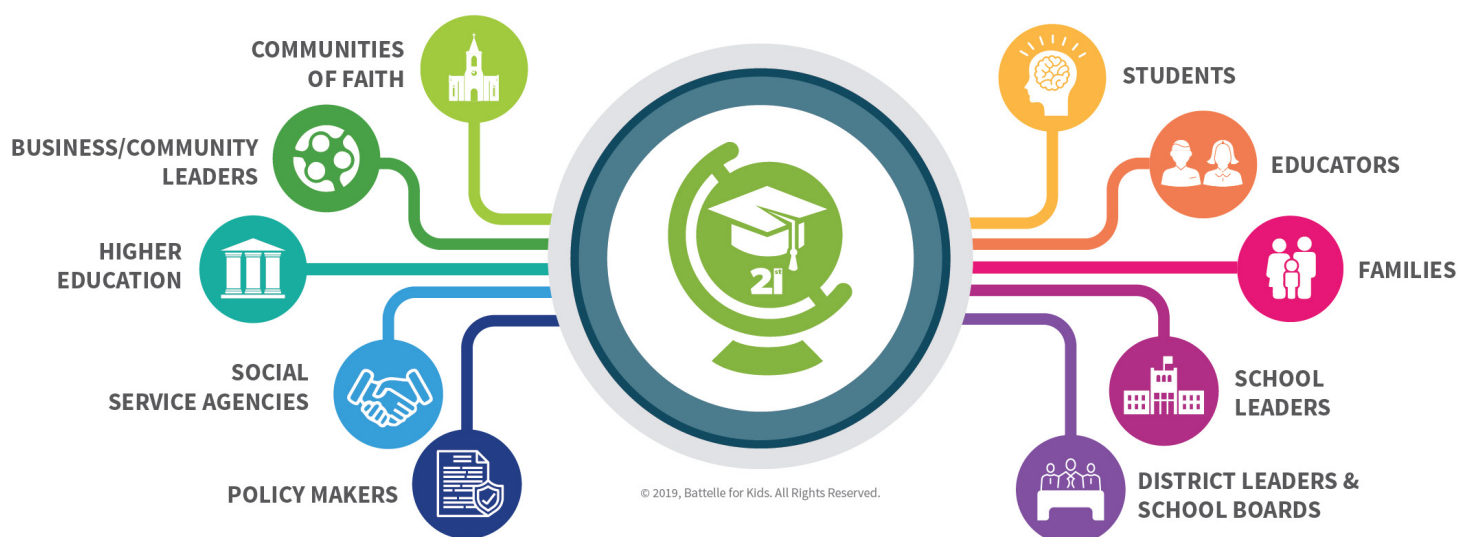


*Inspiring All Learners to Achieve  
Future Success*

# STORIES OF STRATEGY

For enduring transformation, all aspects of the system—including the strategic plan—must be aligned and anchored to the vision for 21st century learning, the Portrait of a Graduate. We provide education leaders strategic offerings to establish conditions that advance 21st century learning throughout the system.

This year we collaborated with 11 school systems across the nation in the local development of their strategic plan. Our process involves the ongoing engagement of a representative Design Team, capturing the diverse voices and perspectives of each system and community, to inspire collective ownership and action.



## Strategic Planning



# A Bold, Courageous Strategic Plan

Albemarle County Public Schools, VA  
24 schools, serving 14,000 students

“The result of this work is a strategic plan that will enhance our ability to have a meaningful impact on the students and communities that we serve in ways that they experience.”

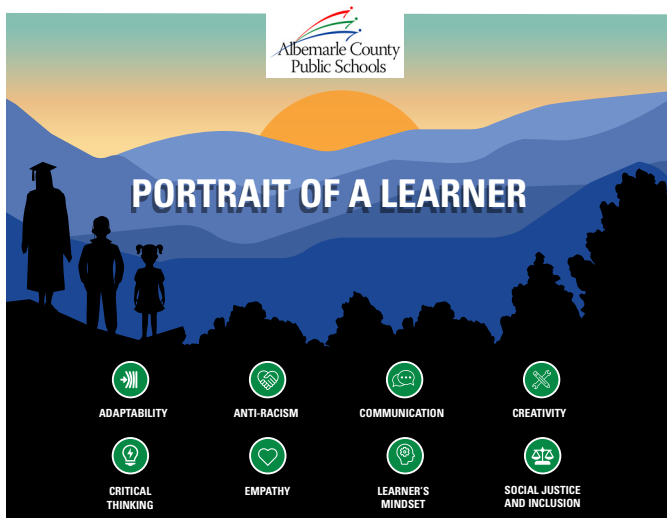
DR. MATTHEW HAAS | *Superintendent*

In July 2021, the Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) school board unanimously adopted the strategic plan after a thorough, rigorous, and rewarding development process that involved more than 100 students, employees, families, and community stakeholders.

Superintendent Dr. Matthew Haas wanted to ensure that the strategic plan, which will anchor the district’s work in years to come, recognized the many ways students can thrive and succeed, well beyond their academic capabilities.

The plan is anchored by the ACPS’s Portrait of a Learner—a collective, local vision that articulates the community’s brightest hopes for all students. “It charts a path that provides our students with an educational experience that prepares them to be lifelong learners and to make positive contributions to society, while they are our students and in their future endeavors,” said Dr. Haas. “It helps prepare the leaders who will make it possible for each of us to benefit from a more equitable, inclusive, and prosperous world.”

District leaders wanted to ensure that the strategic plan aligned with existing priorities, including their Anti-Racism Policy. Four years after the violent Charlottesville riots of 2017 that put a global media spotlight on the community, district leaders demonstrated courageous leadership on social justice. The decision to lead boldly continues to be deliberate and purposeful by the school board and district leadership. Anti-racism is articulated in Albemarle’s Portrait of a Learner and in the district’s strategic plan.



“These are non-negotiables,” a district statement concluded following the board meeting, addressing its Anti-Racism Policy. “We are firmly committed to achieving these outcomes and to supporting the inclusive programs and activities that make this possible. We welcome all points of view in how best to strengthen our continuous growth model, and we reject all efforts that would have us resist positive change in favor of the status quo.”

The creation of ACPS’s Portrait of a Learner and the *Learning for All* strategic plan were both school community-driven and ultimately supported the district’s mission to “establish a community of learners and learning through relationships, relevance, and rigor, one student at a time.”

# There's Never a Better Time Than Now

## Revere Local Schools, OH

4 schools, serving 2,800 students

Every successful strategic plan is anchored by a compelling vision. During the 2020-21 school year, Revere Local Schools convened district and community stakeholders, poised to engage in purposeful conversations as they collectively designed the Vision of a Minuteman—their Portrait of a Graduate, and the first step of Revere’s strategic planning process.

As the previous strategic plan was sunsetting, district leaders wanted to ensure the new strategic plan would center on the 21st century learning experiences to prepare their students to become leaders in a rapidly changing and complex world. The Vision of a Minuteman steered the district’s work moving forward.

Superintendent Dr. Matthew Montgomery understood the importance of engaging with the community during the COVID-19 pandemic and the social justice resurgence. The Vision of a Minuteman design process created a forum that catalyzed these critical and courageous conversations and channeled them into an exploration of the skills and competencies students needed to navigate the realities of today and tomorrow.

Reimagining a new vision and bringing stakeholders together to inform the district’s strategic plan called for close collaboration between the district and the broader community.

The process of collaboratively designing the Vision of a Minuteman preceded the strategic planning process. Together, students, district leaders, and community stakeholders developed a strategic plan that set forth bold strategies and measurable objectives to bring the vision to life. The process was founded on quality stakeholder engagement, unity of voice, and ensuring the broader community was invested and committed to student success.



To convey a cohesive story and maximize a strong brand, the strategic plan was named “Realizing the

Vision” to reflect and closely align with the compelling, inspirational “We R Revere” statement centered in the district’s Vision of a Minuteman.

Dr. Montgomery’s aspiration was, “all stakeholders in the community live the Vision of a Minuteman every day, spurring meaningful change, helping students find their voice, and preparing them to become the leaders of the future.”



 EdLeader21 Network Member

“I cannot imagine a more appropriate time in modern history to reflect & reimagine our vision.”

**DR. MATTHEW MONTGOMERY** | Superintendent

# Embracing the Whole Child

## Lubbock Independent School District, TX

58 schools, serving 27,700 students

“The strategic planning process helped us narrow our focus on a series of deliverable goals that strengthen our core beliefs and ensure our students graduate with the skills they need to succeed, no matter which path they choose to pursue.”

**DR. KATHY ROLLO** | *Superintendent*

Lubbock Independent School District (ISD) prioritized completing its comprehensive strategic plan during the 2020-21 school year. During a time that demanded so much in-the-moment thinking, the strategic plan was an opportunity to step back, think about the big picture, and create a path forward. Anchored in its Portrait of a Graduate, the district's strategic plan placed students at the center of all its work.

“Our strategic plan is the result of two years of important work, presenting the perfect time to refocus on our mission of providing a better future for every child, every day after facing numerous challenges over the last few years,” said Superintendent Dr. Kathy Rollo. “The plan provides an exciting new chapter for Lubbock ISD, serving as a clearly defined roadmap to guide our service to students, staff, families, and the community, with our mission at the heart of the plan.”

In its Portrait of a Graduate, Lubbock ISD identified the skills and mindsets all students will develop. Many of the competencies in the Portrait support the whole-child approach to education, such as adaptability, creativity, and critical thinking. The Lubbock ISD Portrait competencies do not only relate to academics; they underscore the importance of a well-rounded educational experience. The strategic plan emphasizes this approach by focusing on social-emotional learning, mental health, and extracurricular activities.

To build understanding and ownership throughout the broader community, the process for developing Lubbock's strategic plan included input from students, parents, and community stakeholders. Although the format for these conversations was different due to the pandemic, the level of engagement from the community was not affected.

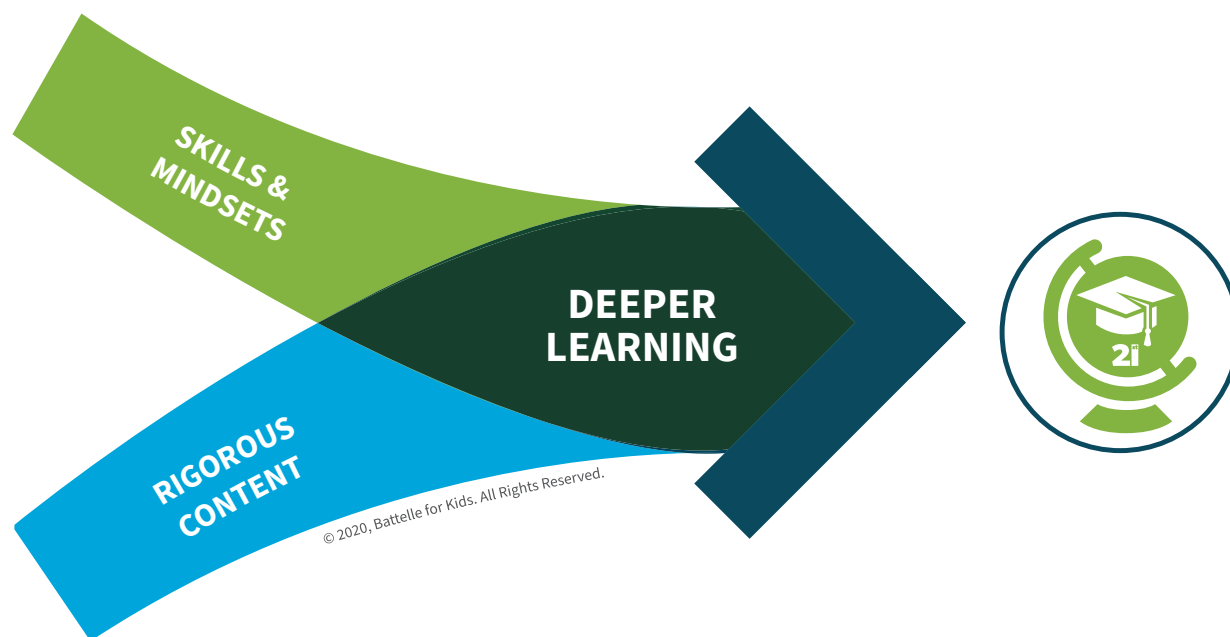
“It was inspiring to see representatives from the Lubbock community coming together to collaborate virtually and in-person,” Assistant Superintendent Doyle Vogler said. “Everyone was so committed to this work and stayed focused on our students because it’s all about the kids.”

As Lubbock ISD's strategic plan took shape, district leaders wanted to align the goals to the school board's goal of ensuring a cohesive vision with actionable steps for developing the whole child. It is a living, breathing document that will adapt to the needs of students—and district leaders are committed to collaborating as a community to meet the shared goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan, for the benefit of every child, every day.



# STORIES OF PRACTICE

To bring the Portrait of a Graduate vision to life, educators must be empowered and supported with relevant professional learning and resources. We offer services to equip educators as they design and implement deeper learning experiences for every student.



Deeper learning occurs through the **purposeful** integration of rigorous academic content with experiences that **intentionally** cultivate skills, mindsets, and literacies essential for students to become *lifelong learners and contributors* in the 21st century.



# Rethinking Student Learning Experiences

## Frederick County Public Schools, VA

21 schools, serving 14,000 students

With its Portrait of a Graduate and Strategic Plan as the foundation, Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) took the 2020-21 school year as an opportunity to grow and advance deeper learning for all students. Despite the obstacles related to COVID-19, the district found it important to continue its work and stay focused on the future of student learning. “The pandemic is a temporary challenge, but transforming learning experiences for students will have a long-term impact,” said Dr. James Angelo, assistant superintendent for instruction.

The district wanted to do that by taking a critical look at its Teaching and Learning Framework, which serves as the connector between its vision, mission, and everyday practices. FCPS worked to address each of three foundational components outlined in the Framework: Design Learning (planning), Facilitate Learning (teaching), and Reflect on Learning (assessing and responding). The district built resources to assist with planning and designing learning experiences that integrate academic content standards with the competencies identified in the Portrait of a Graduate. To help build capacity around designing and facilitating these learning experiences, district leaders provided several professional learning opportunities to educators throughout the year. Dr. Angelo shared that, as a result, “student learning experiences are being designed in a way that connects with student interests and passions.”

When FCPS thought about the third component of its framework, they wanted to emphasize reflection rather than assessment. This led district leaders to investigate student-engaged assessments, which build learner agency and choice as to how they show evidence of growth in both content and competencies. Thanks to a grant from the Chan Zuckerberg Institute, the district has partnered with researchers from George Mason University to help give structure to and evaluate these assessments. Although more observation and evaluation of the effectiveness of these assessments are needed, early results are promising. In addition to helping students develop more self-regulatory behaviors, these assessments allow for more creativity and innovative thinking.

Moving forward, FCPS plans to continue building understanding and capacity around putting the Teaching and Learning Framework into practice. This future work will apply the insights gained from the student-engaged assessment findings. As the district’s work continues, it remains committed to being “an innovative community where caring relationships and authentic learning inspire all students.”



# Developing Innovative Exhibitions of Learning

## Pike County Schools, GA

7 schools, serving 3,500 students

Pike County Schools are passionate about bringing a vision of 21st century learning to life for all students. After designing a Portrait of a Graduate about seven years ago, the district continues to develop ways to implement and assess the deeper learning competencies identified for their students. Even during an extraordinary year, Pike County moved forward with exploring ways to put its Portrait into practice.

Throughout the 2020-21 school year, Pike County designed capstone experiences for students in the 2nd, 5th, 8th, 10th, and 11th grades. These experiences intentionally integrated academic content standards with their Portrait competencies: think critically, solve creatively, collaborate effectively, communicate clearly, and act responsibly. Instead of designing the experiences at the central office level, district leaders worked together with teachers to build capacity and ownership in the capstone design process. During the process, educators wanted to emphasize the capstone experience as an exhibition of learning—not a regurgitation of what students heard in class. Ideally, they will showcase “what they’ll do with what they’ve learned and defend its importance,” Superintendent Dr. Mike Duncan explained.

The capstone experiences will complement the district’s previously developed cornerstone and end-of-year performance tasks. These tasks give students an opportunity to showcase their learning and demonstrate their growth after each school year. Moving forward, Pike County will realign its end-of-year and cornerstone tasks to serve as a foundation to capstone experiences. This coordination will help the district gather and share evidence of their Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

The district is particularly intentional about how the competencies outlined in their Portrait of a Graduate are measured at each grade level band. When designing the capstone experiences, it was essential to define the competencies further and determine which are better to measure and which are better nurtured. These distinctions are formative to the capstone experience and important for the district to keep in mind as they continue to design the learner experiences.



 EdLeader21 Network Member

# STORIES OF ACCELERATION

Our professional learning networks bring educators across the nation together to connect, learn, and accelerate with other forward-thinking leaders to take collective action and transform education for every student.

**EdLeader21 Network** @EdLeader21 · Oct 14, 2020

Thank you to Steve Holmes, @CoolsCitySuper and @SuperScot for joining us this morning for the #EdLeader21 keynote with @PedroANoguera

**Battelle for Kids** @battelleforkids · Oct 14, 2020

Our panel of #Edleader21 network superintendents engage in Q & A with @PedroANoguera

"Focus less on what you don't control, and more on what you do control."



**EdLeader21**  
A Network of Battelle for Kids

**SOAR**  
A Network of Battelle for Kids

**EdLeader21 Network** @EdLeader21

In this week's roundtable, district leaders shared their purposeful approaches and learning leaps!

"All of us experience the pandemic in different ways but none of us have given up. We are all trying new ways of learning!"

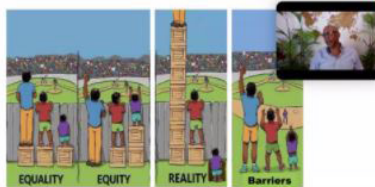
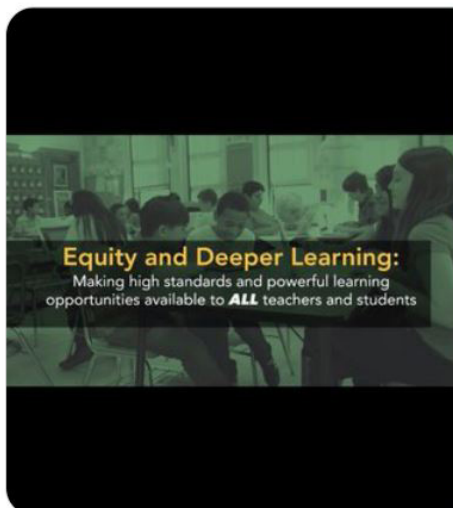
- Dr. Michael Nelson, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools, ID

You Retweeted



**Karin Castillo-Rose** @hhs\_pncpl · Oct 14, 2020

The #EdLeader21 keynote was EVERYTHING today! #removethebarriers #PedroNoguera #LearningLeader @HenricoHighSch



The goal should be to eliminate barriers to learning for ALL students



# Moving Forward Together

## Strongsville City School District, OH

8 schools, serving 5,600 students

During the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, Superintendent Dr. Cameron Ryba and his team faced many competing priorities. Despite these demands, they chose to remain deeply engaged in the SOAR Network, a collection of innovative school districts across Ohio leading the transformation & redesign of 21st century education systems. “So much of our time had been spent on COVID procedures and protocols, but our SOAR work gave us something to look forward to,” Dr. Ryba said. “Our focus could be on learning, not just logistics.”

In their second year with the network, Strongsville began implementing its Portrait of a Graduate, called the Model Mustang, into all aspects of the district. Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Pelko also noticed how Strongsville educators were already rethinking and designing their lessons differently to meet the needs of students during the pandemic. To her, it made sense to capitalize on this progress and continue working to implement the Model Mustang to create deeper learning opportunities.



“The things our teachers were doing to engage kids were amazing,” said Mrs. Pelko. “We just thought it was a great opportunity to show how these lessons aligned with the bigger vision for our district.”

The Strongsville team met several times as part of the SOAR Network experience to refine its plan to develop its system-wide learning design framework. During their designated meeting time, they collaborated with other design teams from districts in Ohio who were all working toward transforming their school systems. Dr. Ryba was also able to connect and collaborate with fellow superintendents and visionary leaders.

“The beauty of SOAR is hearing what other districts are doing well and figuring out how we can try that in our own district,” said Dr. Ryba. “I feel like I steal ideas every time we get together!”

With all the lessons they learned this year, Dr. Ryba and Mrs. Pelko believe the district has made significant progress in re-envisioning student learning and engagement. Moving forward, they want to avoid a return to traditional education methodologies and continue providing learning experiences that meet the needs of each student. They also look forward to collaborating and learning more with fellow SOAR districts as part of this vibrant network.

“Throughout the year, we kept asking ourselves: how can we use this as an opportunity to grow?”

**DR. CAMERON RYBA** | *Superintendent*



EdLeader21 Network Member



SOAR Network Member

# ACCELERATING TRANSFORMATION TOGETHER

We are continuously inspired by the unwavering commitment of our EdLeader21 Network members to serve students, especially as the pandemic and rapidly changing landscape impact every part of our lives.

This is not your ordinary network. Despite the day-to-day demands, our network members remained dedicated to the transformation of education. Unified by a shared vision—that every student is experiencing 21st century, deeper learning—members energize and support one another on the journey.

## In the words of network superintendents:

*“The network provides an opportunity to share our thinking in a space that isn’t politically charged, and we get feedback to help us be our best selves, enabling us to lead work so our students show up as their best selves.”*

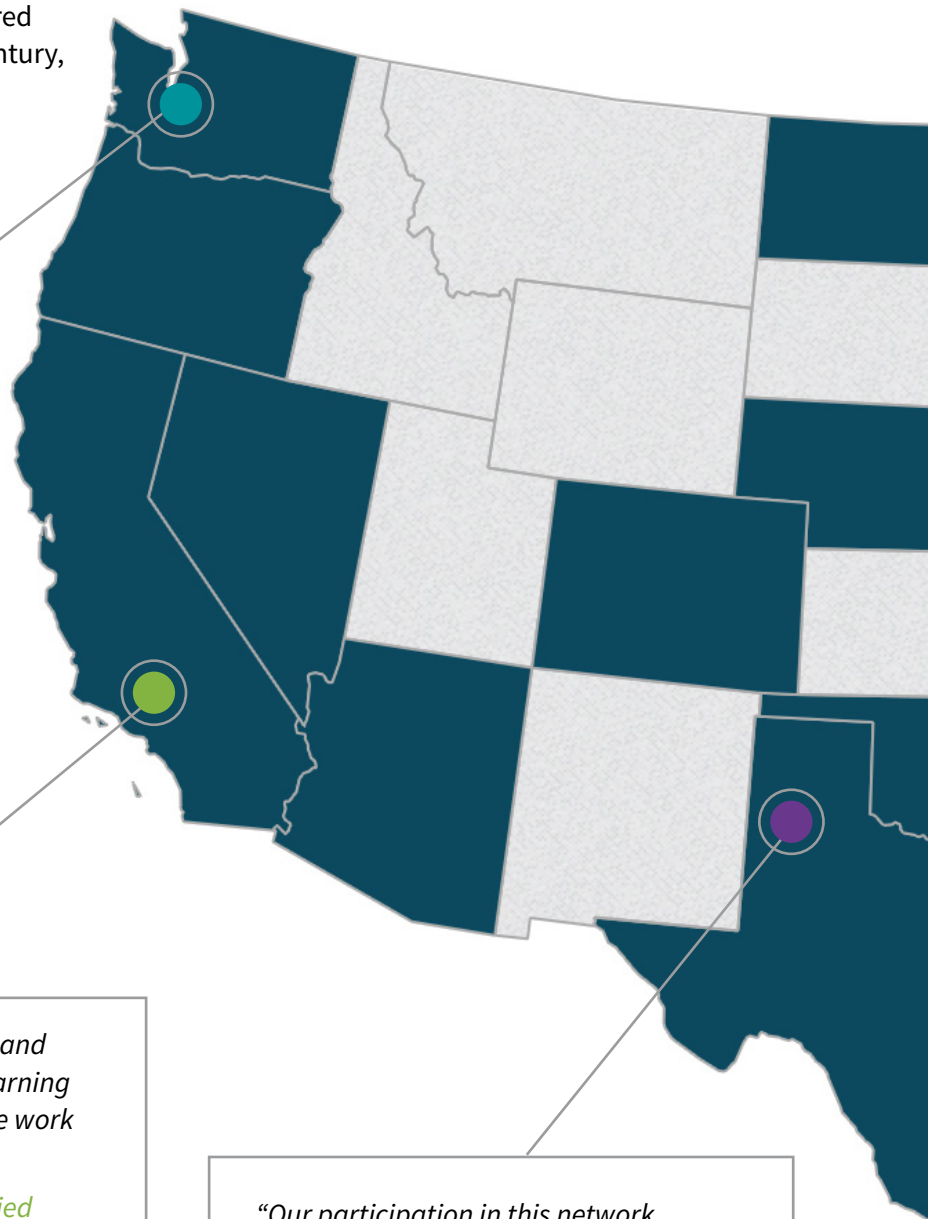
**Dr. Michelle Reid** | Northshore School District

*“When you’re in crisis, you should expand your network, not isolate. We keep learning together as a network and deepen the work happening in our districts.”*

**Michael McCormick** | Val Verde Unified School District

*“Our participation in this network has expanded our thinking about the potential of what could be in our district.”*

**Dr. Kathy Rollo** | Lubbock Independent School District



## Network members in 30+ states & Singapore

*"Through this network we're building capacity to learn and do different things for kids. And we're not married to all the old habits because we have a broader span of ideas."*

**Dr. Melvin Brown** | *Reynoldsburg City Schools*

*"I appreciate the thought partners around 21st century leading and learning. The networking is awesome, and I often call on members for advice."*

**Dr. Michael Barnes** | *Mayfield City Schools*

*"This network is valuable because it centers on the work we're advancing. Every district in this network is developing or implementing a Portrait of a Graduate. We have relevant conversations, deeper connections, and better collaboration."*

**Dr. Brian Troop** | *Ephrata Area Schools*

*"This is a national learning network that has been instrumental to us crafting the work around our collective vision for 21st century learning."*

**Dr. Aaron Spence** | *Virginia Beach City Public Schools*

INNOVATIVE,  
RESPONSIVE, &  
**NOTEWORTHY**

Our ongoing collaboration with school system leaders drives our research, innovation, and design work. Our team is always listening to education leaders to inform the design of meaningful professional learning and relevant resources that are responsive to their needs.

## RESEARCH & DESIGN

We are on a mission to support education systems as they work to deliver equitable, deeper learning outcomes for every student. This year we collaborated with innovative school systems and educators to design new, powerful resources to support systems, leaders, and educators in the necessary shifts to advance 21st century learning.

### Shifting the Education System

#### Roadmap<sup>21</sup>

This experience for system leadership teams provides a deep exploration of the moves necessary to advance the vision of 21st century learning. Participating teams identify potential onramps, detours, and roadblocks along their journey in leading system transformation. Teams develop an action plan—their road map—to bring their system's Portrait of a Graduate to life. This experience is for districts embarking on their journey, needing a jumpstart, or onboarding new leaders.

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### Shifting the Role of the Principal

#### Leader<sup>21</sup>•Principal

This capacity-building experience for school leaders and those responsible for supporting principals, develops and builds a shared understanding of the knowledge and skills necessary to lead the implementation of 21st century, deeper learning in their schools. This experience is organized around the essential question: What should principals know, understand, and be able to do to implement the system's vision for 21st century learning, a Portrait of a Graduate?

## Shifting the Role of the Educator

### DeeperLearning<sup>21</sup>

In this experience, educators actively engage in reimagining learning and teaching in the 21st century. Through practice, reflection, collaboration, and iteration, participants explore the design and facilitation of deeper learning experiences, aligned to the district's Portrait of a Graduate. Throughout the experience, educators implement and iterate learning design strategies through real-time practices with their students.

### TheStudentExperience<sup>21</sup>

Originally designed in 2013, this online suite of tools includes a 24-item student perception survey to help educators elevate and respond to student voice. Our redesign of the tools includes a new survey theme of 21st century learning, to accompany the original themes of hope, engagement, and belonging. In 2021, Battelle for Kids partnered with the Center for Research and Reform in Education (CRRE) from Johns Hopkins University to conduct an evaluation of TheStudentExperience<sup>21</sup> (TSE<sup>21</sup>). Overall survey scores showed very strong reliability, with observed reliability for the the entire survey, including all four subscales, all school levels, content areas, and learning modes (e.g. in-person, hybrid, virtual).



# EVENTS

The effects of the ongoing global pandemic continued to make our events virtual experiences throughout 2020-21. We worked to provide relevant experiences, responsive to the needs of education leaders.

## EdLeader21 ANNUAL EVENT

In October 2020, we hosted our Annual Event for EdLeader21 Network members, bringing together like-minded education leaders from across the country. The event showcased the work of 18 district members in a variety of live and pre-recorded virtual learning sessions. The opening session kicked off with more than 400 attendees splitting into multiple breakout rooms to connect with one another—and showcased three videos produced from the principal, teacher, and superintendent perspective. Dr. Pedro Noguera shared a thought-provoking keynote discussing the importance of making high standards and powerful learning opportunities available to all teachers and students. Jay McTighe, Mickey Porter, and Stephen Chang held popular expert sessions on topics relating to assessment, daring leadership, and equity during challenging times.

**Event engagement: Over 980 people from 108 member organizations**

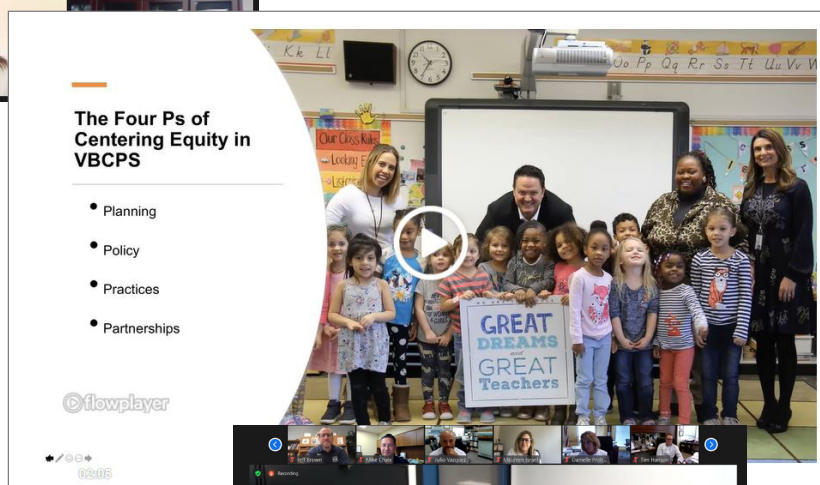
“Thank you so much for these past two days. Deep thinking, a cognitive lift that actually recharges our batteries. We’ve been so marred down by having to think about our present crisis, it’s such a relief to bring a team here to continue thinking ahead about our trajectory.”

**2020 ANNUAL EVENT ATTENDEE**

“Even though this is a difficult time, I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to participate the last two days. This conference helped me be better as a superintendent. I appreciate the opportunity to grow!!”

**2020 ANNUAL EVENT ATTENDEE**





## National Forum to Advance Rural Education

In November 2020, Battelle for Kids and the National Rural Education Association co-hosted a virtual event bringing together a diverse community of K–12 and higher education practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. Six interactive workshop sessions, 20 on-demand research sessions, and 13 learning sessions were available to attendees, and author Daniel Pink provided a relevant keynote: *The Science of Timing: 4 Lessons for Educators*.

**Event engagement: 397 participants for the 112th event**

## *dare to lead*<sup>™</sup>

Based on the research of Dr. Brené Brown, Dare to Lead<sup>™</sup> is a courage-building program for leaders; a necessary tool for those committed to being champions for system transformation and equity in their education systems. This learning experience fully pivoted to a virtual format and received steady engagement from both educators and superintendents during a challenging year.

**Event engagement: 3 cohorts, 97 participants**

# NOTEWORTHY: INFLUENCING THE EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

With the change in leadership at the national level in January 2020, and because of our strong networks, Battelle for Kids brought together system leaders to help influence the landscape of federal policy.

Read our collective letter to Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona representing the experiences, perspectives, and shared vision of EdLeader21 Network school systems.

[READ THE FULL LETTER](#)



How we respond to interruptions in learning due to the effects COVID-19 makes all the difference for today's 21st century learners. At the end of the school year and into summer 2021, BFK supported school systems in responding. A dedicated webpage was created where numerous resources were curated to support school systems.

## Reframing LEARNING LOSS



[VIEW THE REFRAMING LEARNING LOSS WEBPAGE](#)

# PODCASTS

We continued our podcast, EdSpark21, and published 3 new episodes, with education thought leaders and guests including:

- **Dr. Jal Mehta** | professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education
- **Dr. Sarah Fine** | faculty member at High Tech High Graduate School of Education
- **Micky Porter** | coach and leadership facilitator at PlusONE Leadership
- **Dr. Pedro Noguera** | sociologist, author, and Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dean of the USC Rossier School of Education



**EdSpark21**

by BattelleforKids

**PODCAST**

# WEBINARS

**LISTEN TO PODCASTS AND VIEW WEBINARS**

We hosted four new webinars to explore relevant topics to deeper learning and transformation. BFK's webinars were responsive to help education leaders navigate a historic school year, while also helping them maintain a hopeful, aspirational focus on the vision.



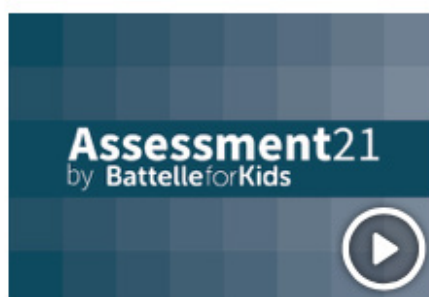
**Are They Okay? Let's Ask Them!**



**Closing Gaps That Matter**



**Accelerating Transformation Together Webinar**



**Rethink & Redesign Measures of Deeper Learning**

## OUR PARTNERS

Battelle for Kids partners with businesses and philanthropic organizations, and we are grateful for their support and collaboration in advancing 21st century learning across the country. BFK also actively pursues grants to support the work that builds momentum and accelerates the transformation of school systems.

### AASA Learning 2025 Commission Report



[READ THE REPORT](#)

AASA, the School Superintendents Association, convened a collective of thought leaders in education, business, community, and philanthropy to create a new vision for education, captured in Learning 2025: National Commission on Student-Centered, Equity-Focused Education. Dr. Karen Garza served on the commission, and Battelle for Kids was identified as the organization to deliver Portrait services and supports.



The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI) supports student-led assessment in partnership with Frederick County Public Schools, VA.



The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation supports BFK's diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities as well as our partnership with the Colorado Rural Education Collaborative on Student-Centered Accountability Program.



The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is supporting efforts to build capacity to contribute to the implementation of continuous improvement processes that maximize the impact of evidence-based interventions in schools, leading to improved outcomes for Black, Latino, and low-income students. Partners in this work include Columbus City Schools, OH, Sunnyside Unified School District, AZ, and George Mason University.



The Wallace Foundation is supporting Columbus City Schools to develop a comprehensive, aligned pipeline that produces equity-centered leaders, that is, principals with the knowledge and skills to make educational equity a reality.



**Participate  
Learning**

CatchOn, an ENA Affiliate and Participate Learning help support our network members with enriching experiences throughout the year.

**Battelle**  
for**Kids**

Learn how we can help.

visit [bfk.org](https://bfk.org)

THANK  
YOU





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