

Background – The Milwaukie Assurance Projects

The Assurance Projects was inspired and commissioned by NCS D – consistent with the District’s legacy of unbounded commitment to the health, well-being and success of the families and communities it serves. The mission was to make more significant progress in three areas of strategic focus:

- Increasing the likelihood of life-long adult success after graduation
- Addressing the breadth of preparation necessary to assure post-secondary success, exploring and applying whole-child [person] strategies
- Promoting equity in everything we do

After a year of research and public outreach, a conceptual operational model was established and a pilot project framed. A leadership group from NCS D endorsed moving forward, and The Pandemic and year of 2020 intervened shortly afterward.

2020 unfolded as an affirmation for NCS D’s Assurance Project initiative, and enabled some progress to be ready to move forward. Now, an opportunity window is open to build the system we know we need to do the whole job of preparing ALL people for ALL the jobs they will have throughout their lives.

The model, in general terms, was to open up the full framework for education and whole -person development – we needed a delivery system that was learner-centered, and more sufficiently powered by the complementary influences of family, school, and community [Epstein].

The research and community feedback has affirmed that this is the proper foundation. It also revealed that the greatest potential for improvement will need to come from families and the community. At the same time, it is clear that these two legs of the learning delivery system are outdated, under-resourced, often rudderless and compromised.

There is little doubt that this type of initiative is urgently needed in the NCS D area. It is needed in all Districts across the country. The opportunity window is greatest for those communities who organize and mobilize early – especially now when significant resources are available to address Pandemic-related community impacts and new waves of resources will flow for infrastructure and economic strengthening.

NCS D can benefit by being in the front tier of adopters – likely securing independent financial investment needed to build the proto-type and make it available for community-scale testing. This also differentiates NCS D in working to secure and assure sufficiency of regular budget streams – being an answer to the hard questions about progress around equity, vocational preparation alignment, and how we define ‘success’.

[Draft] PCLA Enrichment Program Action Recommendations

As the de facto acting director of the Assurance Projects, I am encouraging the PCLA to make the following recommendations to the Superintendent – and mobilize, as inspired and able, to encourage select communities within our region to be among those in the first generation Assurance Projects:

1. That NCS D endorse the value of a Unity Certification program – applying to individuals, organizations and discreet communities. The Unity Certificate represents, initially, the humility of acknowledging that we have learning still to do to be better – and that those involved in the Certification process have committed to taking all the available objective action steps necessary to make steady progress.
2. NCS D endorse the PCLA to work in alliance with other advocates for sustainability, justice, and prosperity to design the framework for the Unity Certificate as a standard that is globally-responsible and aligned with and promotes the shared values and distinctive character of our communities.
3. NCS D endorse PCLA’s involvement in recruiting the resources necessary to build a proto-type community learning system necessary to support the Unity Certificate campaign and facilitate testing in those communities considering a commitment to pursue the Certification designation.
4. NCS D consider the endorsement of a baccalaureate Unity Certificate program for students and families to pursue. That this baccalaureate version meets or exceeds the community Unity Certificate standards and the District’s recognition of the Certificate provides encouragement and support for those who are tending to an intentional, structured personal development program that will lead to a more rewarding scholastic career and, ultimately, a higher likelihood of success through adulthood.
5. NCS D consider using the Unity Certificate – when established - as a contextual framework for community partnerships, programs and organizational and professional development – and thereby using resources in ways that are aligned and mutually supportive of the highest standard of individual, organizational and community excellence.
6. NCS D consider hosting pilot Assurance Project activity within select communities who are pursuing the Unity Certificate, most prominently – a companion learning program concurrent to the school year and in an intensive summer session as a meaningful initiative to support equitable student success through whole-child, experiential learning.

A Glimpse into the Future of Learning

In the future...

These changes point the way toward a diverse learning ecosystem in which learning adapts to each child instead of each child trying to adapt to school.

Learning will no longer be defined by time and place — unless a learner wants to learn at a particular time and in a particular place.

Learners and their families will create individualized learning playlists reflecting their particular interests, goals, and values.

Those learning playlists might include public schools but could also include a wide variety of digitally-mediated or place-based learning experiences.

Whatever the path, radical personalization will become the norm, with learning approaches and supports tailored to each learner.

Educators' jobs will diversify as many new learning agent roles emerge to support learning.

A wide variety of digital networks, platforms, and content resources will help learners and learning agents connect and learn.

Some of those tools will use rich data to provide insight into learning and suggest strategies for success.

At the same time, geographic and virtual communities will take ownership of learning in new ways, blending it with other kinds of activity.

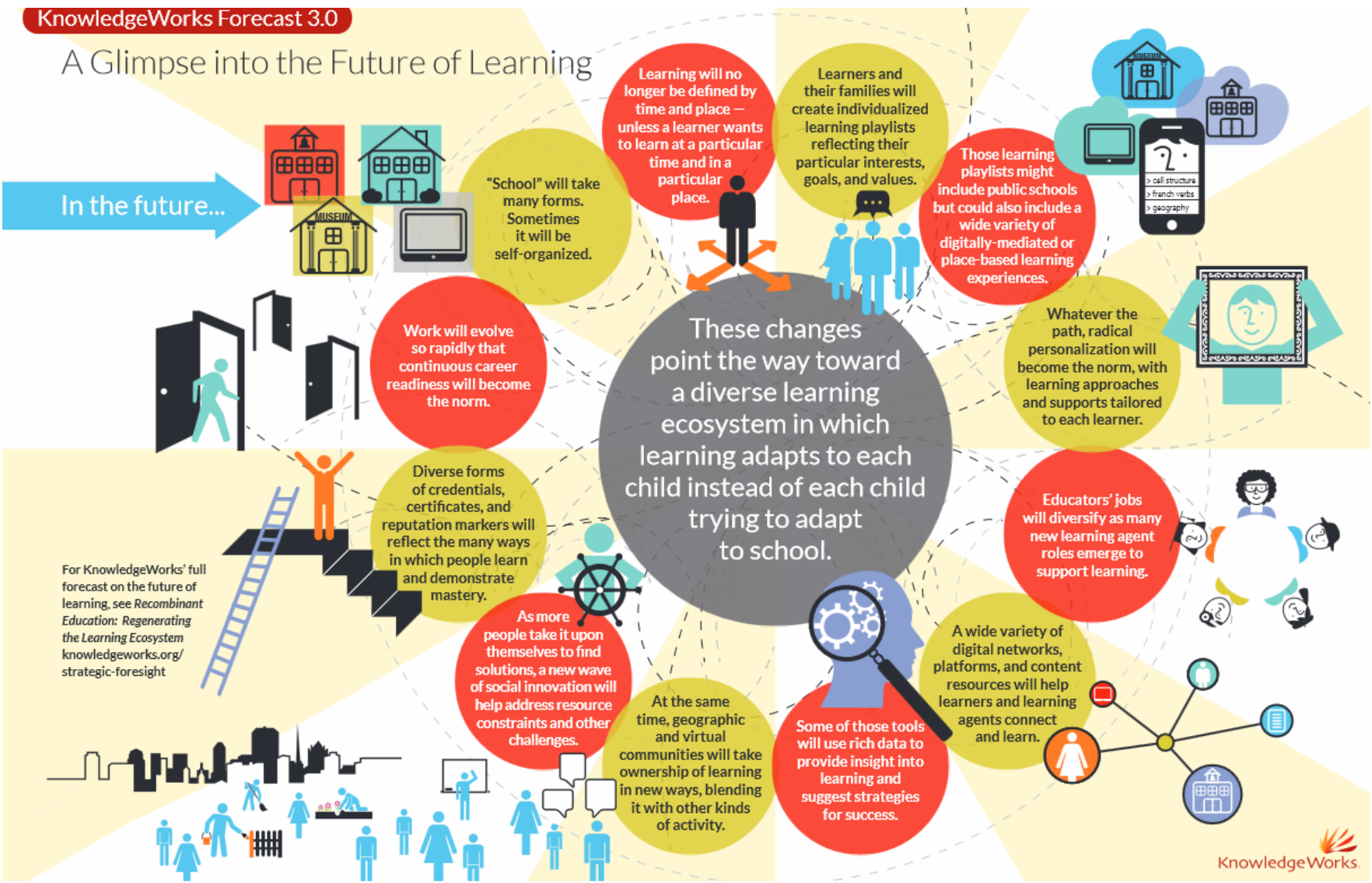
As more people take it upon themselves to find solutions, a new wave of social innovation will help address resource constraints and other challenges.

Work will evolve so rapidly that continuous career readiness will become the norm.

Diverse forms of credentials, certificates, and reputation markers will reflect the many ways in which people learn and demonstrate mastery.

"School" will take many forms. Sometimes it will be self-organized.

For KnowledgeWorks' full forecast on the future of learning, see *Recombinant Education: Regenerating the Learning Ecosystem* knowledgeworks.org/strategic-foresight



Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework

Download the full report at csr.uchicago.edu and wallacefoundation.org

This framework synthesizes decades of research evidence, practice wisdom, and theory to capture a holistic view of children's developmental needs from early childhood to young adulthood. Whether at home or school, in an afterschool program, or out in their community, young people are always developing. Broader societal contexts, systems, and institutions shape youth development—often creating big disparities in opportunities and outcomes. Adults also play a pivotal role, and can give young people a better chance at successful lives by understanding and intentionally nurturing their development.

Developmental Experiences Can Happen in All Settings

Children are shaped by their interactions with the world, the adults around them, and how they make meaning of their experiences no matter where they are.



Developmental Experiences Require Action and Reflection

Children learn through developmental experiences that combine **Action** and **Reflection**, ideally within the context of trusting relationships with adults.



Developmental Experiences Build Components and Key Factors of Success

Over time, through developmental experiences, children build four foundational components, which underlie three "key factors" to success.

Foundational Components

Self-Regulation includes awareness of oneself and one's surroundings, and managing one's attention, emotions, and behaviors in goal-directed ways.

Knowledge is sets of facts, information, or understanding about self, others, and the world. **Skills** are the learned ability to carry out a task with intended results or goals, and can be either general or domain-specific.

Mindsets are beliefs and attitudes about oneself, the world, and the interaction between the two. They are the lenses we use to process everyday experience.

Values are enduring, often culturally-defined, beliefs about what is good or bad and what is important in life. Values serve as broad guidelines for living and provide an orientation for one's desired future.

Key Factors

Being successful means having the **Agency** to make active choices about one's life path, possessing the **Competencies** to adapt to the demands of different contexts, and incorporating different aspects of oneself into an **Integrated Identity**.



Continued on reverse.