

Summary of Key Ideas from the Homework Articles

Article 1: 2024 Trends in K–12 Education

Main Concepts:

- **TREND 1: Districts turn to marketing and advocacy in a competitive enrollment environment.** The enrollment cliff, the loss of ESSER funds, and increased competition are pushing K–12 leaders to develop creative ways to market and advocate for their district to stabilize financial turmoil.
- **TREND 2: The Expiration of ESSER funding spurs a move toward consistent program measurement.** Academic recovery progress has been inconsistent across the U.S. K–12 leaders need to pinpoint which program investments in their district accelerate student achievement and make difficult budget reductions without jeopardizing support for their most vulnerable students.
- **TREND 3: Community engagement improves school climate and drives inclusive decision-making.** Many districts are learning that strengthening community engagement not only improves their understanding of the communities they serve, but also positively impacts school climates by fostering decisions that meet the needs of more students, staff, and families.
- **TREND 4: Leaders leverage change management to build capacity and consensus in an era of uncertainty.** As K–12 leaders face increasing budget, staffing, and political pressures, they are building key skills for resiliency and turning to capacity building and change management to propel their districts and schools forward.
- **TREND 5: Teachers receive more support to develop agency, efficacy, and professional growth.** Teachers need additional support

and professional learning resources not only to accelerate student achievement, but also to feel more valued and effective in their professional roles.

- **TREND 6: Districts seek frameworks to Incorporate artificial intelligence into schools.** Rapid advancements — and potential threats — in artificial intelligence (AI) are redefining the role of technology in the K–12 learning environment, prompting the need for guidance.

Article 2: Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, & Fair School Climate

Main Concepts:

The five guiding principles are:

1. **Foster a sense of belonging through a positive, safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environment.** A positive school climate includes policies and practices that foster school safety for all; promote a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment; and encourage and maintain respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community.
2. **Support the social, emotional, physical, and mental health needs of all students through evidence-based strategies.** Safe, inclusive, supportive, and fair learning environments are highly predictive of students' well-being and academic success. Students thrive when school systems work proactively to improve the school environment; evidence shows these actions can reduce health and safety threats and increase academic success.

3. **Adequately support high-quality teaching and learning by increasing educator capacity.** Students benefit from identifying an adult who they can trust and go to for support in school. Providing educators with training, coaching, and support can help them effectively manage class behavior, ensure students are engaged, and help them to build trusting relationships with students and their families.
4. **Recruit and retain a diverse educator workforce.** All students can benefit from a diverse teacher workforce. Additional research suggests that teachers from diverse backgrounds are more likely to hold beliefs and use classroom practices associated with improved outcomes for all students, including students of color.
5. **Ensure the fair administration of student discipline policies in ways that treat students with dignity and respect.** By expanding policies to include positive actions and high expectations, along with requiring the use of a continuum of supports to increase student success, states and districts can shift the focus of their disciplinary practices to promote a positive and supportive school environment focused on supporting students and keeping them in the classroom learning as much as possible.

Article 3: Forging the Future of Learning

Main Concepts:

Many of the youth who shared their perspectives understandably grounded their ideas about, and hopes for, the future of learning in their experiences of learning and going to school during the COVID-19 pandemic. One commonly held aspiration was to go back into school buildings and see

people with whom they have relationships. Beyond that immediate desire, the youth spoke to **five key elements they want for the future of learning.**

- **Relationships:** relationships with and among peers, educators and mentors involved in learning. Youth want adults to foster relationships with learners such that learners are seen for who they are without judgment. They also want students to have empathy for teachers. In addition, they want the day-to-day experience of being in school to be organized in a way that enables learners to cultivate relationships with one another.
- **Personalization of Learning:** Learning that is oriented around each learner's needs, interests, and goals. Youth also want learning to be personalized, meaning that it would be structured around each learner's needs, interests and goals and feel relevant to them. There would be multiple ways for learners to show what they know, with much less emphasis on summative testing than is common today. The pacing of instruction would be personalized for each student.
- **Learner Supports:** Assistance and interventions that address learners' needs. In articulating the need for more supports, they focused on three main areas: mental health, academics and engagement. They want school to be organized so that there is time and space for staff to check in intentionally with learners. These check-ins would be designed not just to support academics and engagement, but also to address mental health and other barriers to learning that they might be experiencing. As school becomes increasingly digitally mediated, youth want dedicated technology assistance. They also want places of learning to help foster webs of support that include the wide variety of individuals to whom they turned to during the pandemic.

- **Learning Locations:** The places and spaces where learning happens and their key features and functions. Youth want the locations of future learning environments to be flexible and configurable. These locations might be indoors or outdoors, or they might be digital – and they might not be the same all the time. Wherever they are learning, youth want learning spaces to be designed intentionally for interaction. They see potential for these spaces to foster relationships among learners and adults and to add a sense of comfort that can help students relax and destress. Youth also want to have smaller class sizes and high-quality school food.
- **Learning Cultures:** the guiding beliefs and values that shape how a learning location operates and what it feels like to be there. Youth also envisioned learning cultures that would be welcoming and safe for all learners. Many described their current school cultures as having high expectations academically but lacking in supports for whole-person health. Youth want learning cultures to be non-judgmental, allowing them to bring their full selves to school. They also want learning environments to have climates and cultures that help create the conditions for deep relationships between teachers and students. Lastly, they want school cultures to be inclusive and sensitive to the events and changes happening in the world outside of school.