



NVUSD'S VISION 2040

# REIMAGINING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER





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Dear NVUSD Community,

Together, we have reimagined education for the Napa Valley Unified School District. As your Superintendent and Board of Trustees, we are honored to share Vision 2040. This vision was crafted through a highly collaborative process that brought together 1,000+ individuals from our community and collected over 70,000 pieces of input and feedback. Through a year-long community engagement process, we have honed a robust and enriching vision for our future.

This vision is our guide; our students, staff, families, and community partners will work together to make our vision—a vision of their creation—a reality. As we look towards our next fifteen years as an organization and watch our students progress through their time within NVUSD, we are energized to support and committed to achieving this vision.

We set out to “reimagine the future, together” and have done just that! Thank you for your participation, your collaboration, and your support. We look forward to living this vision today and every day to come. We remain proud to be NVUSD!

In collaboration,

Rosanna Mucetti, Ed.D., Superintendent  
and the Board of Trustees

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Ed.D.

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In the summer of 2023, the Board of Education and the Superintendent of the Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD) launched a community-wide collaborative process to develop a long-term vision to guide the way our school system will serve children from TK to 12th grade and beyond. The result is Vision 2040.

Vision 2040 was developed through the collaborative design work of the Guiding Coalition—a group of over 100 individuals, including students, families, community members, and district staff, selected for the diverse communities and perspectives they represent. Their work was enhanced from the input and feedback collected from the greater Napa Valley community through over 50 meetings and three surveys (see section “How was this Vision Developed?” for more information). This engagement and design work included explorations of future trends that are likely to impact education; physical and virtual learning journeys to schools and other organizations already engaged in reinventing education; and equity-centered design exercises that considered the needs of students, staff, families, and community members.

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# WHAT IS A VISION?

A Vision is an organization's guiding idea. It describes a bold and aspirational leap into the future and paints a vivid picture of the change an organization wants to bring about in the world. NVUSD's Vision will serve as a destination—our north star—that works as a horizon point for us to move toward, guiding collective action and shaping the strategies that will make the vision a reality.

A vision is intended to be long-range. Longer time frames allow us to step outside of the constraints of the present and reimagine the possibilities of the future. They also encourage us to be proactive and to anticipate and plan for changes. Thinking about the outcomes we want can bring new energy and result in new solutions to persistent problems. Moreover, planning with the end result in mind frees our imaginations to think differently about our path forward.

Vision 2040 tells us where we want to go. The companion Strategic Plan, *Transforming Our Future Together: Strategic Plan 2024–2029*—the first in a series that will get us to 2040—tells us how we will get there. It will be our map, articulating the phases, scope, sequence, and syncopation of the work we will do to make Vision 2040 a reality.

Vision 2040 focuses on what we want to be true for our graduates. Implementing the vision will require creativity, learning, continuous improvement, and collaboration. Having a shared destination will speed results by aligning actions and resources, and by inspiring relevant collaborations. Having a plan will keep us on track.

# WHY THIS VISION? WHY NOW?

The conclusion of the 2023–2024 school year marked an exhilarating milestone for NVUSD, with the completion of our 2019–2024 five-year strategic plan. Focused and intentional work

through this plan led to many improvements in educational programming, experience, and infrastructure, and created a more stable financial landscape.

NVUSD is now poised for a brighter, more aspirational future and can dream bigger for students. To ensure these dreams become reality in an ever-changing world, a collaborative, community-focused group crafted a thoughtful, comprehensive vision and plan. Community engagement was central and crucial.

Our Vision intentionally prepares our students to develop the agency to create their futures, to be ready for a variety of careers which may include, but not be limited to, college, and to become adults who can confidently take care of themselves, their loved ones, and their communities. The NVUSD community is energized to share this collaborative vision that acts as our guiding force. We are committed to realizing this vision. Now is the time.

# HOW WAS THIS VISION DEVELOPED?

This vision was developed in partnership with our community of students, staff, family members, and community partners, who gave input and feedback.

The process included: one Student Summit, three Guiding Coalition meetings, around 50 Community meetings, including a Community Installation, and three surveys, all of which generated around 70,000+ data points.

## 70 INTERVIEWS

### NEEDS-FINDING INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS: AUG. – SEPT. 2023

During the initial phase of the visioning process, over 70 staff and community members were interviewed in either individual sessions or focus groups. They shared their perspectives on the past and current school system and their aspirations for the future of NVUSD.

### BOARD MINI SESSION: SEPT. 12, 2023

The Board of Education, senior leadership, and Core Team (a small, cross-departmental group who led the work internally) were given an opportunity to understand the vision design process through an experiential overview prior to launching community engagement activities.

## 280 STUDENTS

### STUDENT SUMMIT: SEPT. 13, 2023

Each high school and middle school sent a diverse group of students to take part in the Student Summit hosted at Napa Valley College. 280 students shared their perspectives on life after graduation, what they need in order to thrive in their lives and careers, and what adults have done to support their success.

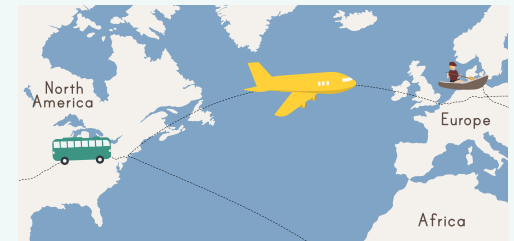


## 80+ PARTICIPANTS

### GUIDING COALITION ACTIVITIES

#### DESIGN SESSION 1: OCT. 6–7, 2023

The design sessions began with a journey into the future to imagine the world our students and staff will encounter over the next 15 years. We heard from a panel of futurists, and we explored scenarios of the future of Napa Valley, as well as the needs of future students, staff, family, and community members.



#### LEARNING JOURNEYS: NOV. – DEC. 2023

Guiding Coalition members were invited to step outside their context and learn from others by joining at least one of the following: an in-person visit to the University of California at Davis Viticulture and Enology Program; virtual visits with Portland Public Schools, The Center for Advanced Research and Technology, Fifth Day Experience, and Patiño School of Entrepreneurship.



### DESIGN SESSION 2: DEC. 8–9, 2023

Using data from Community Engagement Series 1, inspiration from the Learning Journeys and other examples of portraits, and trends in the world of work, the Guiding Coalition created their first prototypes of the Graduate, Adult, and System portraits.

### DESIGN SESSION 3: FEB. 9–10, 2024

At this meeting, data from the community engagement series was shared with the Guiding Coalition members. They worked in small groups to incorporate that data into the next version of the portraits. Guiding Coalition members also created an initial list of refreshed core values, based on the work to date, as recommendations to the Board of Education.

## 50 COMMUNITY MEETINGS

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SERIES

OCT. 11–NOV. 10, 2023

This community engagement series mirrored the questions from the Student Summit, asking participants what students will need to thrive in life and career, what staff will need to know and be able to do to support them, and how the school system could support students and staff.

JAN. 8–21, 2024

The ideas in the draft portraits created by the Guiding Coalition were shared with students, staff, families, and the community in this second round of engagement. Participants were asked for feedback on the emerging ideas, and to share any additional input that they felt was missing.



### BOARD TOUCHPOINT: FEB. 2024

Board of Education members reviewed the synthesized work from the Guiding Coalition, shared their questions, and made suggestions for clarification.

## 100+ GUESTS

### COMMUNITY INSTALLATION: MAR. 16, 2024

The “near-final” versions of the Portraits and Core Values were shared at one community-wide in-person event, as well as on the district’s website, for final feedback from the community.





## VISION STATEMENT

Our graduates are confident, compassionate, and adaptable adults who are well-prepared for life and become inspiring advocates for themselves and their community.

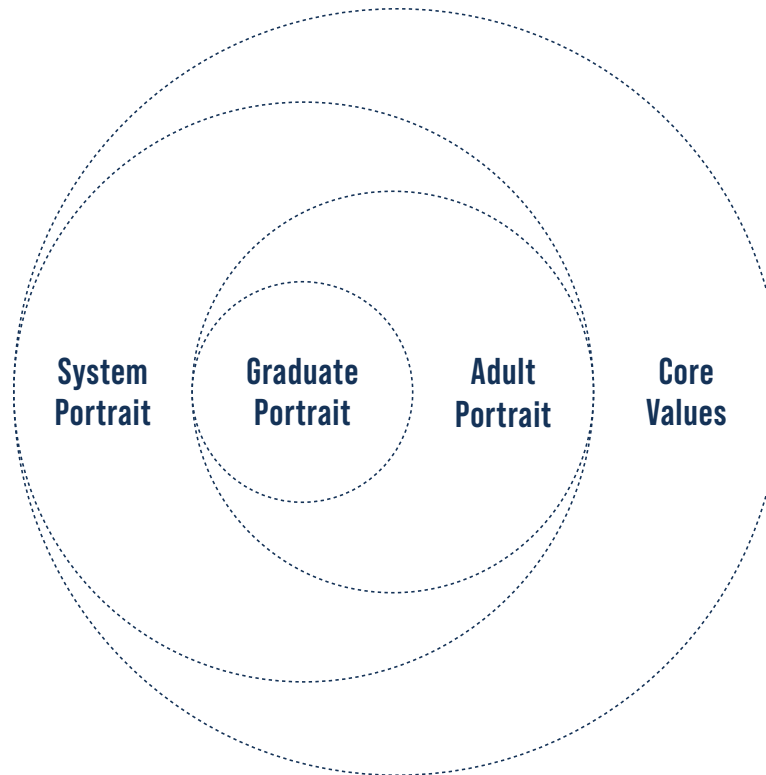
# VISION 2040 HAS FOUR COMPONENTS

A Graduate Portrait—which envisions the outcomes for students and expresses the community's aspirations for what graduates will know, be, and be able to do in order to thrive in their lives and careers;

An Adult Portrait—which articulates the qualities that will help adults working in the school district support each student's journey toward realizing the Graduate Portrait;

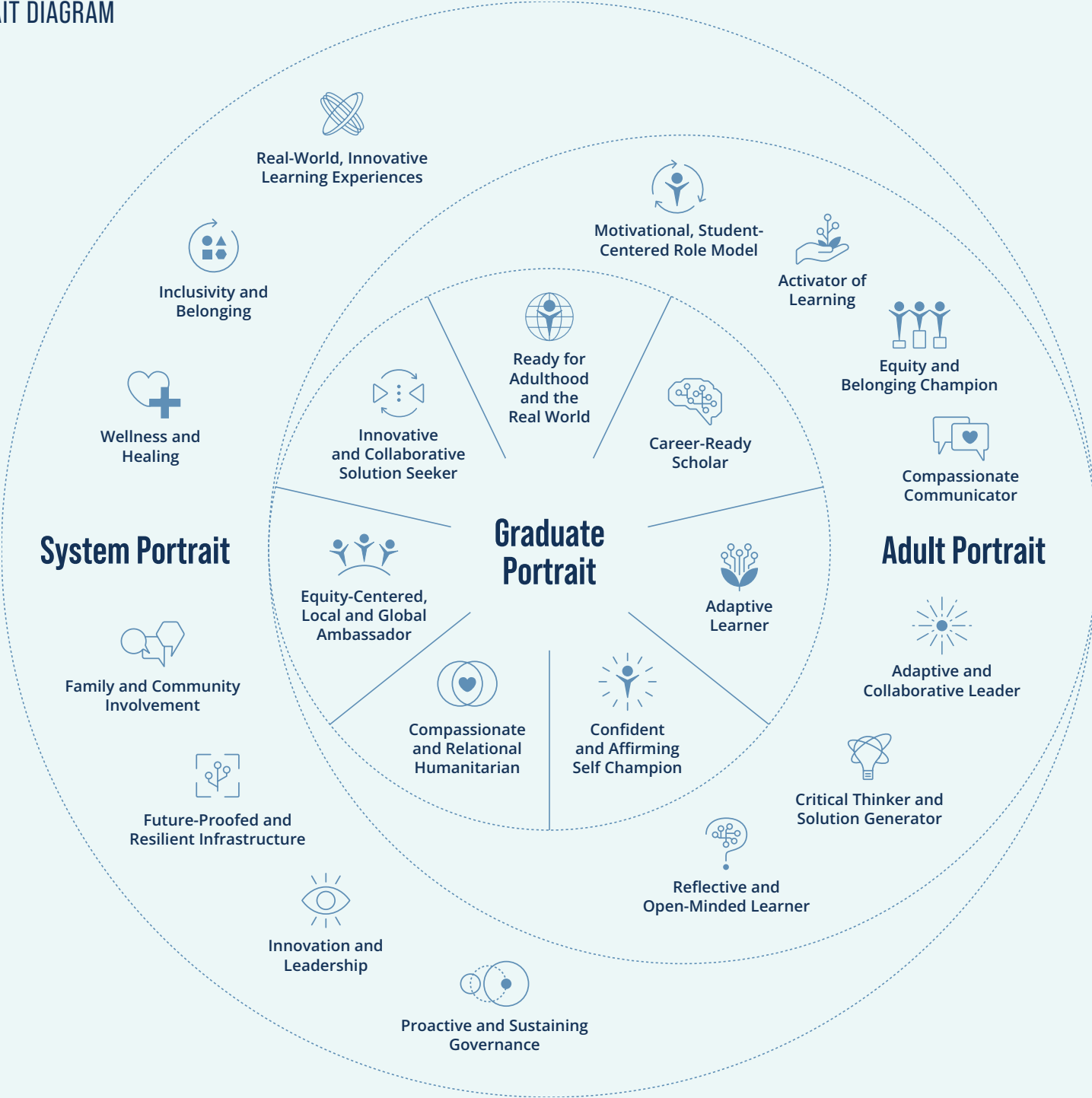
A System Portrait—which describes the changes needed in the school district in order to create the conditions that will enable adults to attain the Adult Portrait and support students in realizing the Graduate Portrait;

A statement of Core Values.





VISION PORTRAIT DIAGRAM



# CORE VALUES

Core Values are the enduring beliefs that guide an organization's actions over time. They articulate the district's ethics and are foundational to creating system change in that they inform all elements of the vision, as well as the mindsets and ways of working toward its achievement.

The following statements were developed through the vision work.

## CENTERING STUDENT AGENCY AND SUCCESS

We believe in preparing students to succeed in their careers and thrive in a rapidly changing, globally-connected world by supporting each student to explore their interests and strengths, fostering their sense of agency and positive self-identity, and maximizing their potential and opportunities for future success.

## CULTURE OF KINDNESS, JOY, AND CELEBRATION

We believe a positive environment that centers kindness, joy, and celebration enhances our community's commitment to working together toward long-term success.

## EQUITY AND ACCESS FOR OUR STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FAMILIES

We believe in an equitable, adaptive learning system that is accessible to all of our students and families, and believe that the adults in our system play a critical role in acknowledging and eliminating the inequities that our students and families face.

## FUTURE-READY CULTURE OF INNOVATION

We believe that our ever-changing world requires us to build a culture that encourages innovation, creativity, and adaptability; maximizes our collective knowledge; and builds upon the strengths of all to develop solutions that center our people, particularly our students.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

We believe that harnessing the collective power of our community through collaboration and purpose-driven partnerships, and including the diverse perspectives of all our stakeholders, especially our students, is essential to building a thriving, responsive educational system.

## RELATIONSHIPS BUILT THROUGH TRUST AND BELONGING

We believe that having our community's trust is essential to our success and our collective ability to engage in purpose-driven work. That trust depends on honest, transparent, frequent, and accessible communication with all of our stakeholders, and the creation of an inclusive, nurturing and caring environment in which our students, families, and staff feel a sense of belonging and safety.

## UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

We believe in the pursuit of excellence and the necessity of fostering a growth mindset<sup>1</sup> and continuous improvement culture, in which feedback is courageously sought and integrated, and failure is seen as an opportunity for learning and growth.

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1. A growth mindset, as conceived by Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck and colleagues, is the belief that a person's capacities and talents can be improved over time.





# THE GRADUATE PORTRAIT

The Graduate Portrait envisions the outcomes for students—the community's aspirations for what graduates will know, be, and be able to do in order to thrive in their lives and careers. The following Graduate Portrait, created from the work of the Guiding Coalition and the broader community, will prepare each student for life beyond high school, helping them to thrive in an ever-changing world.









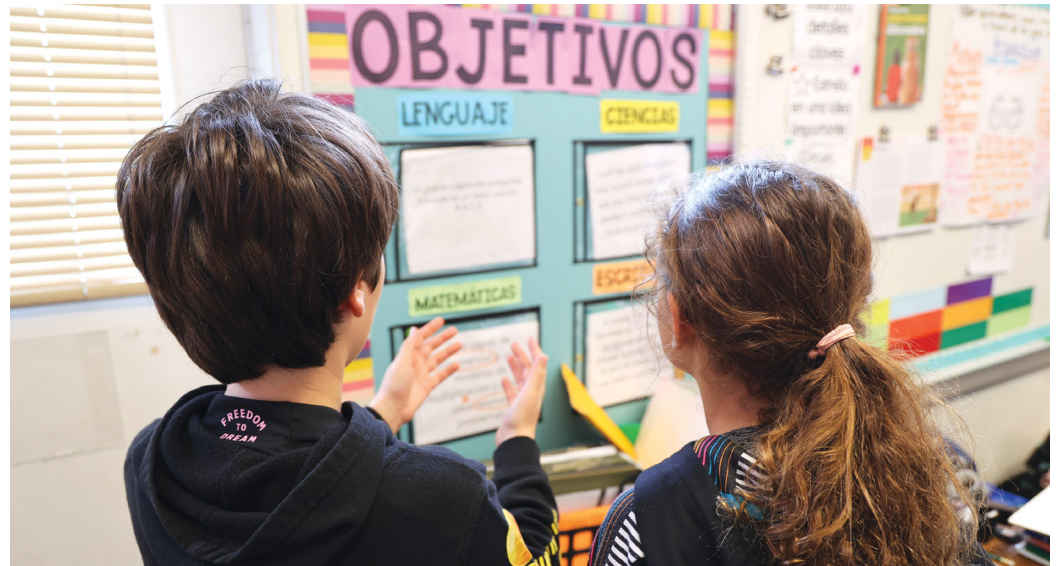


**Ready for Adulthood and the Real World:** Students are prepared to thrive with a spectrum of essential life and workplace knowledge and skills that support a healthy lifestyle and allow them to seek help and support when needed.

Students possess a spectrum of life skills that enable them to thrive at home, at work, and in the community. They are financially literate and have the knowledge and skills to successfully manage banking, budgeting, savings, investments, credit, debt, insurance, and taxes, as well as the ability to assess the risk of fraud. They can manage daily life, including taking care of a home, a vehicle, and home-based technology, and have the skills to maintain material goods.

They have learned an effective and personalized system of organization and time management, including the ability to prioritize. They can create short-term and long-term goals and identify and implement action steps to attain their goals efficiently and effectively. They know how to construct a resume and have experience with interview techniques and strategies.

Students understand the value of a healthy body, mind, and spirit. They know how to make choices that lead to physical, mental, and/or spiritual wellness. They understand the benefits of good nutrition and exercise



and know basic medical care, including first aid and CPR. They know strategies for self-care and stress management and how to support their own mental health. They understand how conditions in the environment affect health and quality of life.

Students know how to act compassionately according to their values. They persevere and demonstrate grit, determination, resilience, and adaptability in the face of adversity. They understand the value of having hope for their future and have strategies to help them access positivity and optimism.

Students have developed emotional intelligence<sup>2</sup> and regulation. They know how to understand, process, and manage their own emotions, and they understand the emotions of others and the impact of emotions on themselves.

Students understand the value of social capital and have cultivated a network of supportive adults and allies. They interact meaningfully with people who may have different norms based on different lived experiences. They can apply conflict resolution strategies to address issues with others.

Students know how to advocate for themselves and confidently acquire support. For example, they know how to identify, obtain, and manage resources to support their needs, including resources from community, philanthropic, or government entities. They can confidently seek help (for example, academic support, health and mental health resources). They know how to use and access community resources to meet their needs and participate in recreational opportunities.

2. Emotional intelligence is the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically (Oxford English Dictionary).



**Career-Ready Scholar:** Students know how to integrate their foundational academic knowledge across various disciplines and apply it through relevant real-world technical competencies<sup>3</sup> enabling them to step into a career or career pathway of their choice.

Students have strong foundational academic and technical knowledge and skills and make interdisciplinary<sup>4</sup> connections among different subject areas.

- They have strong literacy skills, including reading, writing, and speaking. They know how to listen deeply and ask questions.
- Students have strong knowledge and skills in math, social studies, history<sup>5</sup>, physical and life sciences, geography, environmental science, and statistics (probability, reliability).
- Students know civics. They understand the Constitution, basic rights, and the history of democracy. They have an understanding of laws, how laws are made, and how systems of government work. They understand how citizens can participate in their government, including the rights and responsibilities of citizens, such as voting.
- They have regular exposure to the visual and performing arts (VAPA) and design, with opportunities to deepen their artistic ability and appreciation.

Students know how to communicate. They can clearly and creatively express information purposefully and appropriately to diverse audiences using different modalities and forms of expression, including spoken, written, and visual forms. They are experienced at public speaking, and able to present to small and large audiences both virtually and in person, using effective visuals. Students can express ideas using the arts and have an appreciation for creativity.

Students have multicultural knowledge that reflects the lived experiences of students and families in

our diverse community and understand culturally responsive communication. They are able to adapt their communication to different audiences.

Students know how to engage in meaningful conversation using effective verbal and nonverbal language and listening skills. They are multilingual and able to communicate effectively in more than one language.

Students are digitally and technologically literate and can effectively adapt to an increasingly technologically diverse world. They know how to use technological and multimedia platforms and tools, such as 3D modeling, visualization tools, augmented reality<sup>6</sup> (AR), virtual reality<sup>7</sup> (VR), and assistive technology, where appropriate. They have basic computer and programming skills. They understand how to use artificial Intelligence<sup>8</sup> (AI) as a resource to accomplish tasks in improved and novel ways.

Students are poised to begin their journey toward their vocation or career of choice. They have technical competencies that have been effectively applied and practiced in a real-world context. They have knowledge and awareness of career pathways gained through the exploration of learning experiences that connect their interests and future options with purpose. They have identified future options for their career(s) after high school and have a post-high school plan with clear next steps (e.g. college, certifications, trades, etc.) and can make short-term and long-term goals related to their future and career interests. They understand the college application process, including the processes related to financing college (FAFSA, loans, scholarships, etc.), and have the support they need to start early enough so as to identify and take advantage of all available opportunities.

3. The term “technical competencies” is defined broadly to mean any skill that is used to perform tasks effectively. The ability to use and/or create specialized mechanical or digital tools, tools to analyze data, or tools for effective communication, are all examples of technical competencies.

4. Interdisciplinary means relating to more than one branch of knowledge and the making of connections between them.

5. Including history from multiple perspectives, for example, as in Ethnic Studies: the study of histories from many perspectives, experiences, and cultures.

6. Augmented reality (AR) is a technology that superimposes a computer-generated image on a user's view of the real world, thus providing a composite view.

7. Virtual reality (VR) is the computer-generated simulation of a three-dimensional image or environment that can be interacted with in a seemingly real or physical way by a person using special electronic equipment, such as a helmet with a screen inside or gloves fitted with sensors.

8. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a branch of science that uses smart machines that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence.



**Adaptive Learner:** Students see learning as a lifelong endeavor and an effective strategy for adapting and growing in an ever-changing world. They are knowledgeable about their learning preferences and seek opportunities that allow effort to be rewarded with growth.

Students embrace learning as a lifelong endeavor. They possess a growth mindset<sup>9</sup>. They know how to manage the discomfort that is inherent to the learning process and value it as a necessary part of learning and growth. They appreciate that learning takes time and are patient, understanding that it is fine if they do not know something immediately.

Students are curious and inquisitive. They actively explore areas of passion and interest and are open to new ideas and perspectives. Students are reflective and resilient, willing to take risks and learn from mistakes. They persevere through failures, understanding these are temporary and necessary for growth, and they appreciate and seek constructive feedback.

They are aware of and advocate for their personal preferences and styles of learning. At the same time, they adapt and navigate their learning in response to the changing world around them.

Students understand that learning is both an individual and collaborative process. They engage in productive struggle with others and can utilize technology as a tool to expand their learning.

9. A growth mindset, as conceived by Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck and colleagues, is the belief that a person's capacities and talents can be improved over time.





### Confident and Affirming Self-Champion:

Students are their own champions and have a positive self-identity that affirms their personal assets, enables growth through self-awareness, and honors and provides resilience in the face of pressure to act against their sense of self.

Students demonstrate agency and believe in their ability to control and influence their own lives, thoughts, and behavior. They have developed a positive self-identity and recognize their strengths. They can exercise freedom of thought while staying open to different perspectives and respectfully express their viewpoints and beliefs. Students withstand peer pressure and can express when they are uncomfortable. They can support themselves with positive self-talk and by practicing self-compassion. They handle various situations with confidence.

Students value and recognize their cultural assets and wealth, such as language, the social capital of family and friends, and the ability to navigate social institutions. They have a historically-connected sense of self. They are aware of their roots—their cultural histories, ethnic origins, and heritages (ancestries). They know how to extend and strengthen a constructive network of peers, mentors, colleagues, and friends, who further affirm personal strengths and assets.

Students are aware of their personal values and beliefs as well as their personal biases. They understand what brings them joy and can access optimism fueled by hopes and dreams.

Students actively develop a positive personal reputation in the world (both in person and digitally) that defines who they are and exemplifies their strengths and assets.







## Compassionate and Relational Humanitarian<sup>10</sup>:

Students are dependable, trustworthy, and empathetic and practice compassionate and respectful behavior toward others, both in person and digitally, and towards the environment that nurtures them.

Students know now how to build connections with, and between, people. They are socially intelligent and use effective social and interpersonal skills, both in person and online. They embrace and celebrate differences (including but not limited to race, culture, gender, language, sexual orientation, physical ability, neurodiversity<sup>11</sup>, and religion), as well as recognize our common humanity. They cultivate healthy and trusting relationships by being dependable, reliable, and trustworthy.

Students are empathetic and manage interpersonal relationships by understanding and responding to the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of other people. They care about and know how to actively support the welfare and mental health of peers, including through peer counseling and mentoring.

They model anti-bullying behavior and navigate conflict, advocate for others, and work toward peaceful resolutions.

Students practice good digital citizenship<sup>12</sup> through appropriate and ethical use of social media and other technologies. They have basic cybersecurity<sup>13</sup> knowledge and awareness of the impact of their digital footprint, and know how to protect their identity.

Students are eco-conscious and respectful of nature and the environment. They understand the interdependence between humanity and the natural systems that support us, and are aware of the human impact on the earth. They can take action to repair ecosystems, such as water and energy conservation, management and generation of energy, and land protection. They are compassionate toward the world and show love, kindness, and respect for all living things.



10. A humanitarian is a person who seeks to promote human welfare.

11. Neurodiversity can be described as having a brain that works differently from the “neurotypical” person. Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one “right” way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits.

12. Digital citizenship refers to the ability to use technology responsibly, safely, and respectfully. It refers to the ability to protect private information online, mitigate risks associated with cyberthreats or online threats, and utilizing information and media in a respectful, knowledgeable, and legal way.

13. Cybersecurity is the practice of protecting digital systems, networks, and programs from criminal or unauthorized use of electronic data.



## Equity-Centered, Local and Global Ambassador:

Students demonstrate competencies needed to productively contribute to, participate in, and act on issues relevant to their local and global communities. They are equity-centered and inclusive, advocating for themselves and others to ensure all voices are included and respected.

Students understand equity, have an equity and social justice mindset, and advocate for equitable outcomes. They are aware of inequities and implicit bias, and understand the impacts of systemic racism at local, national, and global levels. They are compassionate about people and inclusive of marginalized communities or groups. Students possess the skills and tools to address situations of inequity.

Students are community-minded. They care about community wealth<sup>14</sup> and well-being. They understand societal structures and systems such as local government, housing, and health services, and promote actions that benefit the common good. They have integrity and a sense of accountability, and value the importance of service and giving time, energy, and support without the expectation of something in return.

Students value diversity and inclusion, and understand and appreciate the different cultural assets that everyone brings. They see strength in interdependence and value teamwork and collaboration. They can

work with others, know how to challenge respectfully, and find common ground to build social cohesion.

Students are informed and aware of both local and global current events, and can analyze current events from multiple perspectives. They are civically engaged and know how to advocate for themselves and others. They have experience working to address public concerns and to make positive contributions to their community. They know their voice matters.

Students have a global mindset. They see that we are all interconnected in a global society, understand how we fit into global and local communities, and can navigate a diverse world.

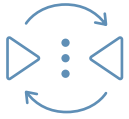
Students experience both traditional and nontraditional forms of leadership<sup>15</sup>, which broadens their definition of “leadership” and helps them cultivate their own leadership style and skills. They practice influential leadership and contributor skills to impact the world positively.



14. Community wealth refers to the collective assets—social, intellectual, cultural, and financial—that a community can draw on to care for community members and the natural environment.

15. Here, the term “traditional leadership” refers to leadership with formal authority and power, while “non traditional leadership” refers to leadership based on personal attributes such as influence, advocacy, knowledge, etc.





## Innovative and Collaborative Solution Seeker:

Students apply critical and flexible thinking skills, collaborative problem-solving approaches, and systems thinking to seek creative and meaningful solutions to complex problems that are ethical, equitable, and address the needs of people while minimizing unintended consequences.

Students are knowledgeable about different problem-solving approaches. They are proactive in addressing problems and know how to approach problems from multiple angles, think through multiple challenges and consequences, and ask the right questions.

Students have critical thinking skills. They can think logically and analytically, asking questions, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, and making judgments about what they read, hear, say, or write. They follow evidence-based assessment to compare their personal experiences and ideas with those of others to build and refine their comprehension of the world. They are data literate. They know how to access, synthesize, and convert data into information and actionable insights. They can curate information from diverse sources and critically analyze and assess the quality of information, understanding how bias, including the bias built into tools such as AI, can affect analysis. They can discern reputable sources.

Students are systems thinkers, able to see from the parts to the bigger picture, and



vice versa. They are aware of who or what is in a system and who or what is not. They understand how systems can be reinforced or changed.

Students can bring their creativity to bear on problem-solving. They know how to use their imaginations and understand how to use design thinking<sup>16</sup> and other human-centered design strategies to think creatively, meet the needs of people, and address complexity.

Students are inquisitive and curious. They have developed cognitive flexibility and are open to new ideas and perspectives, allowing their curiosity to lead to more learning and discovery. They are willing to try new things.

Students know how to collaborate and solve complex problems with people who have perspectives that are different from their own. They know how to work effectively with different sizes and structures of groups—virtual, in-person, in real-time, or asynchronously—and with humans, robots, and/or machines. They apply ethical principles and equity-mindedness to problem-solving.

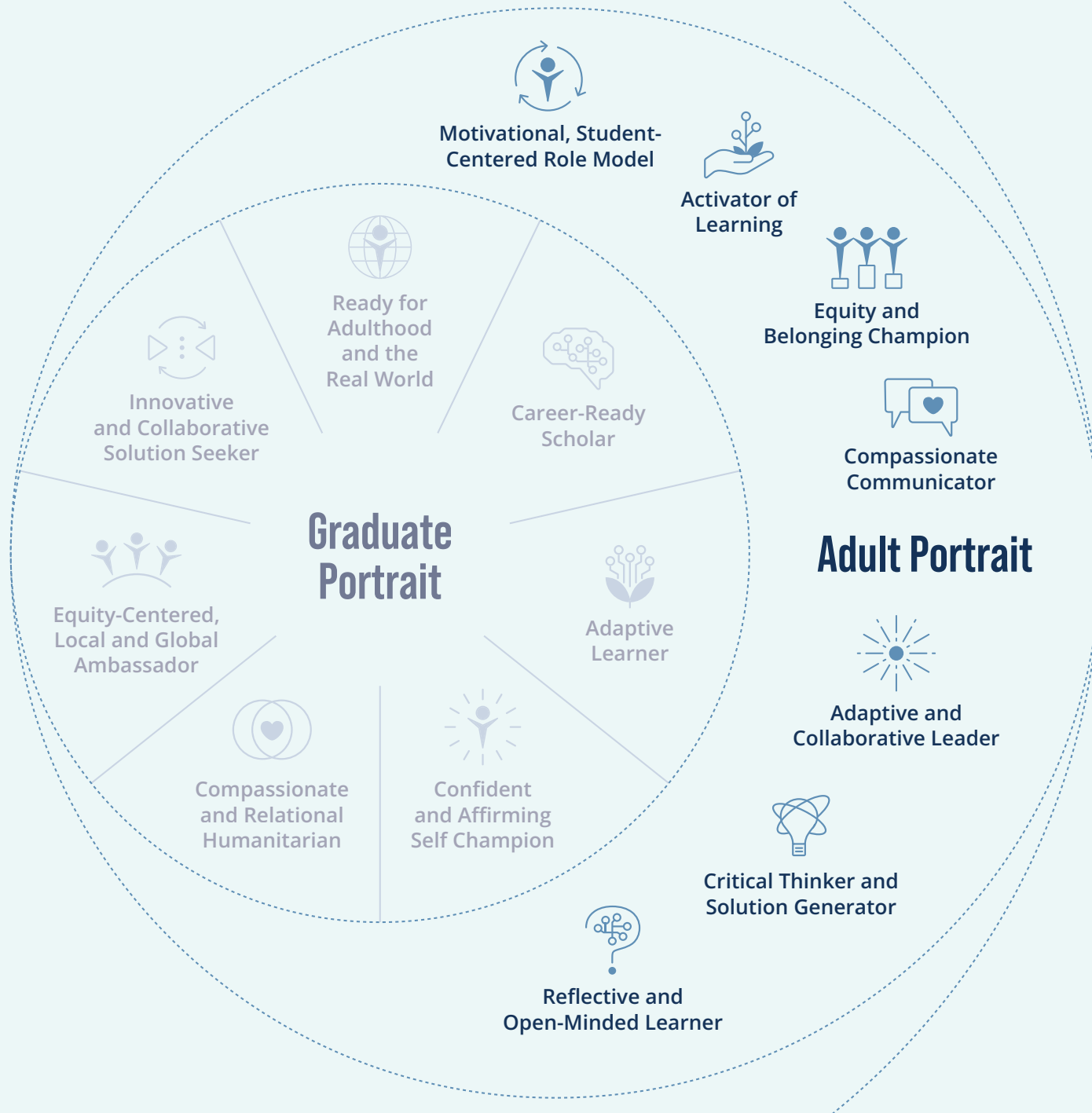
Students know how to augment their knowledge and skills through the appropriate use of current and emerging technologies to learn and access a wide range of information and resources.

16. Design thinking is defined (by the Interaction Design Foundation) as a non-linear, iterative process that teams use to understand users, challenge assumptions, redefine problems, and create innovative solutions to prototype and test.

The background is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this are several thin, white, curved lines that form parts of large circles. These lines intersect to create a series of overlapping, lens-shaped regions, reminiscent of a Venn diagram or a stylized molecular structure. The lines are thin and white, contrasting with the blue background.

# THE ADULT PORTRAIT

Widespread successful achievement of the Graduate Portrait is only possible if a supportive and intentional community of adults work together. The Adult Portrait, created from the work of the Guiding Coalition and the broader community, applies to all adults working in the school district. It articulates the qualities that will help adults support each student's journey toward realizing the Graduate Portrait.











## Motivational, Student-Centered Role Model:

Adults are champions for students in every arena, motivating them to develop and realize their vision for the future.

Staff understand that students are motivated to learn through the relationships they have with adults, and they build deep connections with students.

Staff are role models for healthy adulthood. They work hard, and appreciate, respect, and motivate others. They are resilient and model learning from mistakes. They are confident, believe in themselves, effectively manage their time, prioritize self-care, and build a physically and emotionally healthy and balanced life so they can be effective at nurturing others.

They foster passion, enthusiasm, and joy by modeling a positive attitude, optimism, and passion for their profession. They believe in students' potential and help them visualize and plan for both short-term and long-term goals. They help students and their peers identify and build upon their skills, and help guide them to paths that suit their strengths and interests.

Adults put students' long-term needs first when making classroom, school, and district decisions.





**Activator of Learning:** Adults kindle learners' passion by designing rigorous and engaging learning experiences, adapting to all learners' needs and interests, and connecting learning to real-world applications.

Adults demonstrate instructional strength. They use expertise in pedagogy and their understanding of how people learn to design strong learning objectives and rigorous and engaging lessons that include a deep basis in foundational skills (science of reading, writing, math, etc.).

They focus on how to think critically, rather than on what to think. They focus on practice, collaboration, and student ownership of learning, and know how to ask questions that invite deep thinking. They treat students with mutual respect and as members of a collaborative learning community.

Adults promote experiential learning that builds life skills and integrates real-world application into instruction, based on knowledge of emerging trends in industry and careers. They draw on local industry and community resources to support learning and to provide enriching career experiences to students. They support understanding of learners' individual interests, goals, and educational paths, and can guide students toward college, careers, trades, entrepreneurship, or vocational programs as best fits their goals.

Adults adapt to individual learners' needs and differentiate instruction for a range of abilities, including English Learners, neurodivergent learners, and learners receiving special education services. They use holistic, whole-child data (beyond state assessments) to support instruction. They know how to set goals, use assessments, and create an intervention plan, including early interventions in academics and behavior, and respond with a plan when students are not successful.

Staff embrace technology (current and emerging), and balance these tools with other means to support relevant, real-world instruction.







**Equity and Belonging Champion:** Adults are culturally competent advocates for equity, access, and inclusion at all levels of the district system.

Adults are advocates for equity, access, inclusion, and belonging (including, but not limited to, race, culture, gender, language, sexual orientation, physical ability, neurodiversity<sup>17</sup>, and religion). They are culturally competent, celebrating diversity and cultural assets within the community, and exposing students to learn about and appreciate other cultures. They value and promote multilingualism, and advocate for support for English language learners. They pursue training and utilize options for the inclusion of students with special needs, including training on assistive technology and sensory supports.

Adults are social justice leaders, able to recognize and address biases, positionality, and privilege (their own and others), and continuously work to develop their own potential to make positive change locally and globally. They use anti-racist mindsets and practices, such as re-imagining internal assumptions and beliefs about others that undermine productive relationships and actions. They regularly reflect upon and critically examine curriculum, texts, projects, and other materials for relevance and cultural responsiveness.



17. Neurodiverse can be described as having a brain that works differently from the “neurotypical” person. Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one “right” way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits.



**Compassionate Communicator:** Adults build authentic, trusting relationships with students, staff, and families, communicating with respect and transparency in a way that values diverse perspectives, uplifts community voices, and creates an ecosystem of “cariño”<sup>18</sup> for everyone.

Adults value and build meaningful relationships with students, families, and staff. They are empathetic, listening to truly understand what others are thinking and feeling, build emotional connections, and take action to help.

Adults possess high social-emotional intelligence<sup>19</sup> and build an understanding of social-emotional learning with others. They can regulate their emotions and maintain a calm demeanor when working with others and are seen as trustworthy—a “safe person”—by students and peers.

Adults acknowledge people’s diverse perspectives and backgrounds and get to know others’ stories outside the classroom or office. They are curious, supportive, and consider other people’s points of view. Adults help to create an inclusive space of belonging by encouraging and facilitating open, honest, and respectful communication with students, staff, and families that makes everyone feel heard, respected, and valued.

Adults are proactive and responsive in giving constructive, actionable feedback and

navigating difficult conversations. They support de-escalation, conflict resolution, and use proven strategies to address bullying.

Adults are knowledgeable about mental and emotional health. They understand the stresses that students experience in school, and understand the use of tools, like behavior intervention, restorative justice, and trauma-informed practices<sup>20</sup>. They are aware of and can adapt to the “temperature” in the room and can balance problem-solving and action-orientation with attending to people’s emotional needs in the moment.

Adults possess strong written, verbal, and nonverbal communication skills, and can adapt to different audiences across multiple mediums. They are multilingual or are learning to become multilingual. They follow up, completing the communication loop and checking for understanding.

Adults are good digital citizens and communicate ethically online (e.g., not engaging in cyberbullying, not spreading misinformation).

18. An ecosystem of “cariño” is a system of care that places social-emotional well-being first while maintaining high expectations (Dr. Victor Rios, The Scholar System).

19. Emotional intelligence is the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one’s emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically (Oxford English Dictionary).

20. Restorative practices are characterized by the use of non-violent communication, classroom circles to build relationships, create shared values and guidelines, and restorative conversations to address behavioral disruption and harm. The goal is to build a caring, equitable community with conditions conducive to learning and healing. (From: NVUSD Parent Guide to Student Discipline)









**Adaptive and Collaborative Leader:** Adults embrace innovative ideas and chart a path into the future, collaborating with others to drive growth and learning. They hold high expectations for students and adults and provide the necessary support to reach those expectations.

As leaders in the district, adults aim to be transformational, igniting success and passion across the district community. They are willing to be brave and take risks. They boldly look to the future of education, economics, and the environment, and embrace creative, innovative, and future-oriented ideas to challenge inequitable or ineffective systems.

Leaders respect the autonomy of others and build their capacity. They are “warm demanders”—holding high expectations while also providing high support.

They see value in working with others to solve problems collaboratively and create effective feedback loops to further collaboration

between staff and families. They are skilled at working effectively with diverse teams and with people who have different learning and working styles than they do. They also collaborate with other leaders within and across districts to share practices, problem-solve, innovate, learn, and build community.

They are flexible and adaptable, capable of coping with uncertainty and effectively responding to a crisis. They are authentic, vulnerable, relatable, and willing to adapt and change trajectory in response to data and feedback.



## Critical Thinker and Solution Generator:

Adults are creative, resourceful systems thinkers who critically use data, imagination, and technology to solve problems.

Adults identify problems and use a variety of approaches to seek solutions. They use imaginative, creative, and resourceful thinking, and bring “play” to problem-solving to develop new ideas and solutions. They are systems thinkers who can see connections among things and anticipate the unintended consequences of their actions.

Adults think critically and distinguish facts from disinformation. They know how to engage in cross-disciplinary research, and how to use research and evaluate its credibility. They are able to obtain, analyze, and interpret data; efficiently synthesize large amounts of data; and present data in a way that is easy to understand. They embrace technology for problem-solving and can use tools like AI effectively and mindfully.

Adults know how and when to ask for help to solve problems.



## Reflective and Open-Minded Learner:

Adults are continuous learners who stay curious and seek to grow to navigate a changing world.

Adults are self-reflective, continuous learners who hold a growth mindset. They can identify their own strengths and areas for growth. They welcome change and seek to continuously improve and refine their skills using a broad range of data—including receiving and acting upon constructive feedback—to drive improvements for themselves and others. They know how to admit mistakes and apologize.

Adults stay curious and ask questions. They value learning from previous generations (ancestors) and future generations (students). They are open-minded and proactively learn about the future of education, economics, the environment, and other areas related to their role. They are aware of emerging trends, issues, and needs locally and globally.

They participate in ongoing professional learning in areas of their interest and areas critical to their role and student success. They seek to integrate technology into everyday work when appropriate and become digitally fluent/technologically literate (including basic principles of cybersecurity, programming, navigating social media, and using AI).

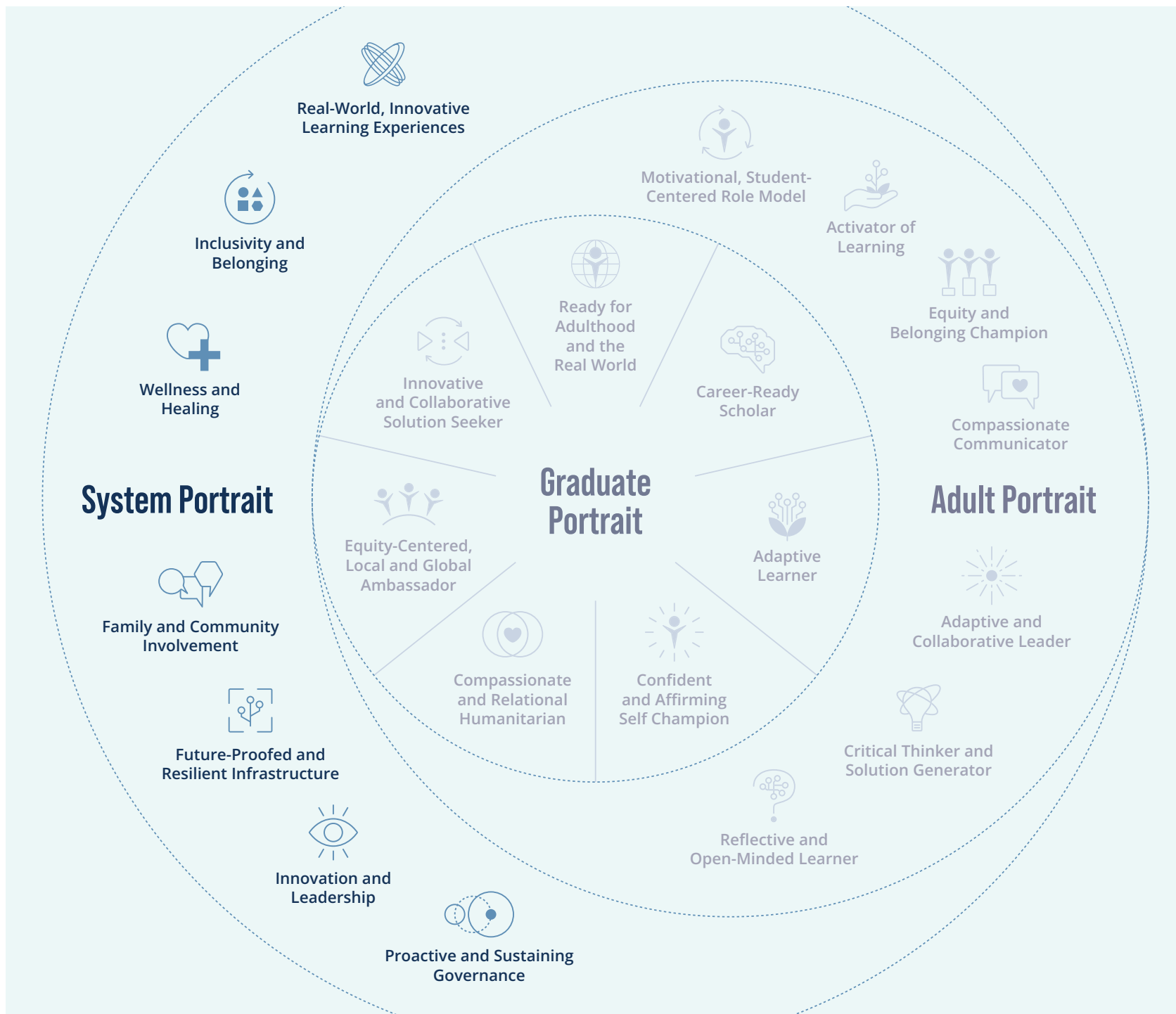


# THE SYSTEM PORTRAIT

The System Portrait describes the changes needed in the school district in order to create the conditions that will enable adults to attain the Adult Portrait and support students in realizing the Graduate Portrait. This will help us to ensure that every student is future-ready, prepared to thrive in life and career when they graduate from NVUSD.

This is a long-term vision and these changes will not all happen at once. This portrait, created from the work of the Guiding Coalition and the broader community, will inform a series of strategic plans which will determine what we do, and in what order, so that we can successfully guide our district and support our students' success.













**Real-World, Innovative, Learning Experiences:** NVUSD provides learning experiences for each student that are forward-looking, richly interdisciplinary, and focused on real-world relevance. We challenge ourselves to innovate beyond the traditional model of school and use a variety of approaches, partnerships, tools, and technologies to support each student's journey of learning.

Learning experiences for every student, including students who receive special education services, students who are multilingual learners, and students who are newcomers, are rigorous, flexible, and personalized. There are multiple entry points to learning, and pacing is guided by

students' comprehension and attainment of skills. All students have access to a range of subject options, including Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA), Culinary Arts, and STEAM experiences; multilingual education; environmental science and awareness; and learning that includes life

beyond the classroom. We use performance and mastery-based assessments which require students to demonstrate or apply their knowledge, skills, and strategies by creating a response, or product, or doing a task. Assessments focus on progress, growth, and improvement.

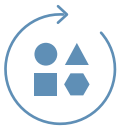
We use in-person, virtual, and hybrid experiences to liberate learning from a fixed model of teacher and students in a classroom. We aim to ensure that learning happens in the best environment for the topic. We use technology to support a variety of learning options, and to allow flexibility outside of a 5-day, in-person learning system, to increase personalization for all students. We have intentionally designed, industry-based career explorations, including 4-year college, community college, employment, entrepreneurship, and trades, for all students from preschool through Adult School. These give all students hands-on experiences and real-world skill building that enables them to integrate what they learn inside and outside the classroom (for example, in internships, or community-based learning).

Our schools and classrooms are inclusive, integrating general and special education services. An understanding and appreciation of the range of needs our students come with is deeply embedded across our district, and as a learning organization, we are continually working to best meet those needs. For example, students have access to culturally relevant and culturally sustaining curricula; we have improved the IEP process for all involved and support students in learning to lead their own IEPs; we encourage student voice and opportunities for student-led instruction.

Our schedules support collaboration between adults, enabling them to design for flexibility, integrate additional services, and learn together.







**Inclusivity and Belonging:** NVUSD works to build a school district community that affirms and creates a sense of belonging for all. We understand the negative impact of “othering” on our students, families, and staff, whether due to long-standing inequities or contemporary shifts. We courageously work together to be an inclusive system.

We have welcoming schools and departments where all students, staff, and families feel safe, respected, valued, supported, and informed. We are a district in which diversity of all kinds is celebrated—including, but not limited to race, culture, language, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, neurodiversity<sup>21</sup>, and religion. We promote and support inclusion and affirmation at all sites and departments and sustain Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices that address the roots of inequity so that everyone in our system can experience a sense of belonging.

We proactively address bullying using a variety of restorative and community-based practices. We create spaces and structures through which we listen to students, families, caregivers, and staff, especially those from communities that have been historically underserved or excluded. We affirm the value of being a multicultural, multilingual community and help our students see the connection between our local and global communities. We address racial issues and inequities based on hearing our communities’ lived experiences.

We ask for regular feedback on our progress in supporting inclusivity and belonging and “close the loop” with students, families, and staff by sharing how their feedback was used.



**Wellness and Healing:** NVUSD understands the importance of well-being to students’ ability to learn, and staff’s ability to do their best work. We are committed to prioritizing and resourcing wellness, including physical and emotional safety and mental health, for our school district community.

We are a system that prioritizes well-being, including physical and emotional safety, and mental health supports. We achieve a balance between work/school and personal life *for all*. We build on our established culture of healing and positive relationships, prioritizing and supporting wellness to meet any immediate needs as well as the ongoing maintenance of well-being.

We build awareness about on-campus, district-wide, and community mental health and wellness supports and resources. We promote ongoing efforts to connect students, families, and staff to services. Students have access to healthy living skills that support wellness, including education about exercise and stress management, and access to free, nutritious food. We resolve conflict proactively, using restorative practices<sup>22</sup>, including restorative justice and community circles.

We are also proactive about organizing funding and resources to support wellness, including mental health support and social-emotional learning *for all*. We creatively find solutions using braided funding<sup>23</sup>, multiple resources, community-based organization support, and matched funding to meet our wellness goals.

21. Neurodiverse can be described as having a brain that works differently from the “neurotypical” person. Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one “right” way of thinking, learning, and behaving; and differences are not viewed as deficits.

22. Restorative practices are characterized by the use of non-violent communication, classroom circles to build relationships, create shared values and guidelines, and restorative conversations to address behavioral disruption and harm. The goal is to build a caring, equitable community with conditions conducive to learning and healing. (From: NVUSD Parent Guide to Student Discipline)

23. Braided funding pools multiple funding streams toward one purpose while separately tracking and reporting on each source of funding. Blended funding combines, or “comingles,” multiple funding streams for one purpose without continuing to differentiate or track individual sources. Source: The Urban Institute. The value of braided funding is to create stronger support in the event that one funding source goes away.









**Family and Community Involvement:** NVUSD knows that our families and our community are essential partners in our students' success. We are in continual dialogue with our partners, creating open, transparent, multi-way, and multilingual channels of communication, learning from one another, and providing excellent service to all.

We cultivate and leverage the resources and expertise of partners and funders to create mutually beneficial community partnerships. These support students, staff, and families in multiple ways, including programs and infrastructure. Schools deliver high-quality learning for every NVUSD student. They provide flexible spaces that facilitate students learning “anywhere at any time”. In collaboration with our city and community, we aim to make schools hubs of collaborative networks and create opportunities such as extended campus hours, community partners serving as facilitators of learning, and students and teachers using the city as a classroom.

We see and appreciate the expertise that students, families, and caregivers bring, and we support and collaborate with families as their students navigate the educational system. We implement specific strategies to involve and support students and families, especially our differently-abled, neurodivergent, and multilingual learners, as well as our newcomers.

We have strong strategic communication between the district, schools, students, families, and caregivers, especially during school-to-school transitions or interventions. Information is disseminated in multiple ways (for example, in-person, virtual), through multiple languages, and is easy for parents, families, and caregivers to access, use, and understand.

Schools provide welcoming environments with great service (responsive, accurate, tangible, empathetic, reliable) and clear communications with families, parents, and caregivers. We have expanded and ongoing training and technical support for online platforms. We have aligned district-wide processes and practices, and systems are streamlined so that families have a “one-stop shop” to complete administrative tasks and get information.





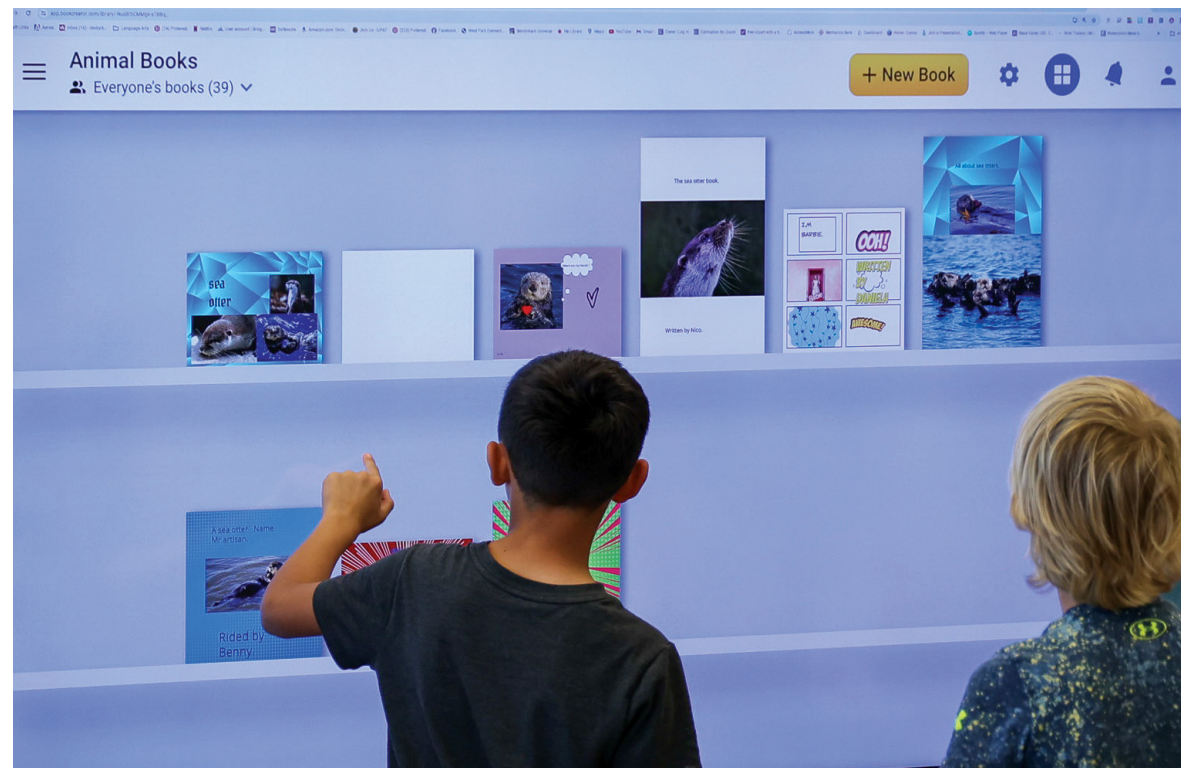
## Future-Proofed and Resilient Infrastructure:

NVUSD understands that our district infrastructure—our facilities, grounds, and technologies—supports our staff and students to do their best work, aspire, and achieve. We are proactive about upgrading infrastructure and building environmental resiliency in our district.

We engage in smart planning, using strategic foresight (tracking trends in education, technology, and facilities management) balanced with fiscal responsibility and environmental awareness. Our facilities are state-of-the-art, built or upgraded by balancing the need for greater flexibility in learning, future readiness with technology, and environmental resilience.

We are working towards resilience as a district. We adopt best practices to reduce our environmental impact and increase the sustainability of our building practices and operations where economically feasible and well-established practices have been proven. We aim to make all our campuses and other facilities environmentally resilient through our choices around heating, cooling, energy use, and materials.

We resource our technology needs, ensuring we are proactively planning and are fully staffed. We thoughtfully embrace the potential of new



technologies, balancing the need to prepare students for the real world with guidance around responsible use.

We have a digital citizenship curriculum that students find relevant and engaging, and that aligns with our responsible-use guidance. We educate students and staff about the benefits of social media, including best practices and the tools to use it safely and smartly (for example, in creating or sharing content, and in developing their personal brand).

We embrace and integrate the robust use of data system-wide so that we are making evidence-based decisions about our instructional and operational practices.

We increase our understanding of the use of assistive and adaptive technologies to support our students, especially students receiving special education services, our multilingual learners, and our newcomers. All staff receive regular training to make the best and most appropriate use of new and emerging technologies. Families and caregivers also have access to resources to help them support their students with technology use.









**Innovation and Leadership:** NVUSD has a system-wide culture of innovation that helps us build the capacity across our district to look ahead; use our creativity to design learning that supports all of our students; generate new solutions for pressing issues affecting students, staff, and families; and redesign our system to support our aspirations.

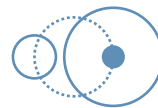
We develop a system-wide innovation practice to creatively and collaboratively problem-solve our greatest issues. Our system is proactive, responsive, and engaged in continuous learning. We have shifted from a fixed mindset about what school must be to a growth mindset about what school could be.

We train and empower staff to creatively address challenges and innovate at all levels and in all divisions, following the guidelines of our system-wide practice. We provide relevant and relatable professional learning for all staff, classified and certificated, based on staff interests and school or department needs. We have implemented a system that supports leadership development, with opportunities for staff who want to pursue an alternate route into teaching, for example, or to take on a different role in the district.

We engage students at every stage in our innovation process. We engage in strategic partnerships and shared decision-making (with staff, students, parents, caregivers) to collaborate on improving our district and share information and feedback. We communicate our lessons learned and rapidly share good ideas across the organization.

We celebrate learning and leadership publicly and transparently to reward staff and student creativity.

We work to influence policy that supports innovation and change.



**Proactive and Sustaining Governance:** NVUSD ensures the long-term health of our district through our commitment to transparent and excellent governance, including strategic thinking, student-centered decision-making, and policy creation.

Our governing body is equity-focused, open-minded, and supportive, and our community values governance and understands how it works. We know that good governance makes our district desirable to current families and staff and to prospective families and staff. We are committed to governance policies that create opportunity for all.

Our policies support a broad understanding of student success that includes career readiness (strong academic foundation, real-work applicable skills, life skills), as well as a plan for their path after graduation (college, employment, trades, entrepreneurship, etc.).

We are proactive and transparent about the issues facing our district. We have shifted from public engagement on single issues to ongoing community dialogue focused on system-wide issues. We include more student, staff, parent, family, and caregiver voices in our planning.

We are dedicated to the continual investment in consistent and ongoing training and education of the Board of Trustees on governance best practices.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to everyone who took part in our year-long process to reimagine education in NVUSD! In addition to those named on the following pages, this Vision is the work of every member of the NVUSD community—students, families, educators, staff and community members—who attended a community meeting, hosted a meeting, or filled out a survey. Our deepest gratitude for your participation!



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