From Ideas to Impact:
Creating Equitable Learning & Development Ecosystems

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Co-Founder, Former CEO and Senior Fellow

May 20, 2021

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Format for the Hour

Equitable L&D Ecosystems – Why this idea is so important and so hard. How we can break it down to help assess our progress.

Partnerships between the L&D Systems – Why we underestimate how hard partnering is. What we learn when we really try.

Empowering Adults in All Settings – What can happen when we really commit to creating SEL rich learning environments both in and beyond the classroom.

Changing the Odds Remix – What I'll be doing to make these ideas more concrete and actionable.

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Equitable Learning & Development Ecosystems

- Why this idea is so important to me personally.

- Why I decided to "refire" to work on it.

- Why I really believe we have a shot at getting it ingrained.

- Why this panel of PSELI leaders is going to knock your socks off.

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The Journey

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Two Takeaways From Camp

Young people (especially those who have been marginalized) embrace their potential when they feel:

- **Safe**
- **Supported**
- **Respected**
- **Seen and heard**
- **Challenged**
- **Allowed to use all the assets they bring**

Adults (especially those who are not certified teachers) create potential in environments where they feel the same things.

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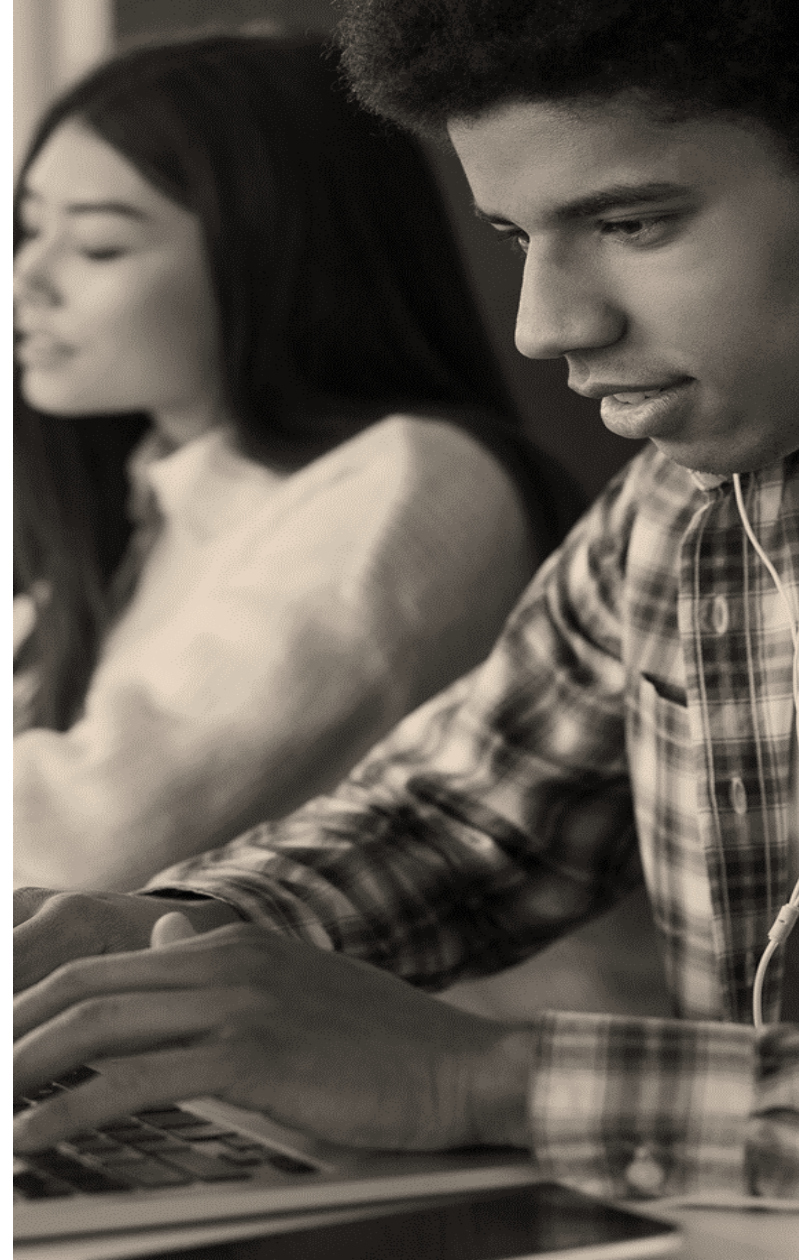
~~CEO~~
Senior Fellow

The Decision

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Positive Experiences + Positive Relationships + Positive Environments [Interagency Work Group on Youth Programs]

PYD is an intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances young people's strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.

https://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development

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Unfinished Business:

Further Reflections
on a Decade of Promoting
Youth Development[1]

Karen Pittman
Merita Irby
Thaddeus Ferber

January 2002

The Forum For Youth Investment
Takoma Park, Maryland

Problem-free isn't fully prepared

Full prepared isn't fully engaged

Academic competence isn't enough

Competence alone isn't enough

PYD has its origins in the field of prevention. In the past, prevention efforts typically focused on single problems before they surfaced in youth, such as teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and juvenile delinquency.

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Whole Child
Expanded Learning
SEL (Social and Emotional Learning)
SEAD (Social, Emotional and Academic Development)
Education Ecosystems

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The Readiness Projects Priorities

Advance "stickier" narratives about how science and research on learning and development can be used to advance equity and thriving.

Amplify the voices of youth and community leaders and ask how a more robust approach to equity and thriving can support and refine their agendas.

Assert the essential role of all adults in all settings – when, where and with whom learning happens—and prioritize efforts to recognize and act upon their perspectives.

Articulate the need to advance the idea of a "thriving youth" field (similar to early childhood) to align work within and across systems and solutions.

THE READINESS PROJECTS | the forum FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT | National Urban League | AIR AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®

Build Schools
Back Better

The Opportunity

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The Power of Settings

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Build Schools Back Better

Use Summers to Innovate Towards Long-term Change

Invest In Adolescents

Strengthen & Leverage Community Partners
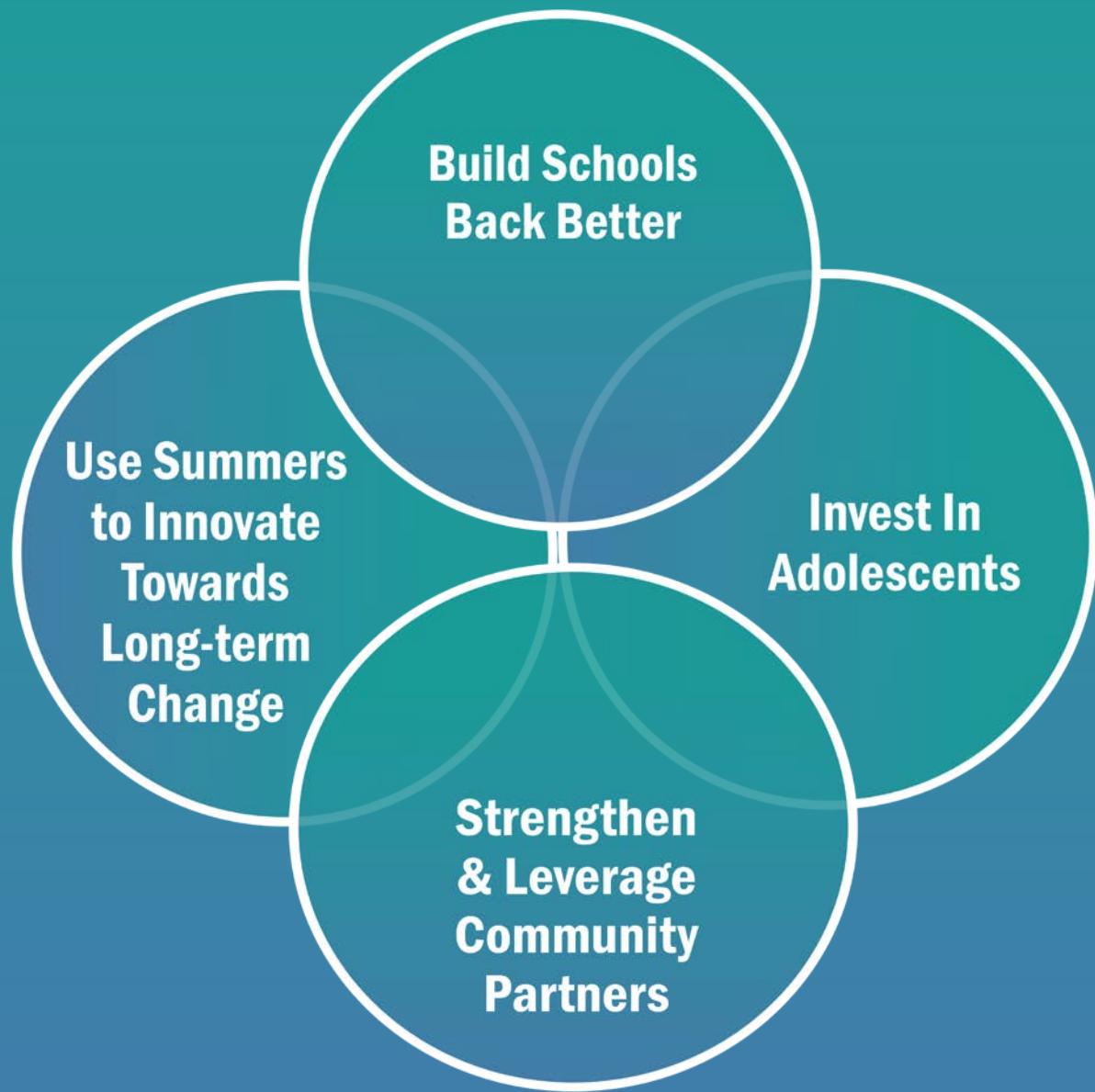
Support for Bold Changes Cuts Across Demographic Lines

	Bold changes	Not the time		Bold changes	Not the time
Race/ethnicity			Region		
White	56%	36%	Northeast	59%	36%
Latino	57	35	Midwest	56	35
Black	68	26	South	57	35
Asian	58	33	West	61	33
Household income			Area		
Under $50K income	54	35	Urban	64	30
$50K-$100K	57	37	Suburban	58	36
$100K+ income	65	31	Small town/rural	48	40

Walton Family Foundation | Beacon Research

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Most Parents See Nearly All These Steps Having an Impact

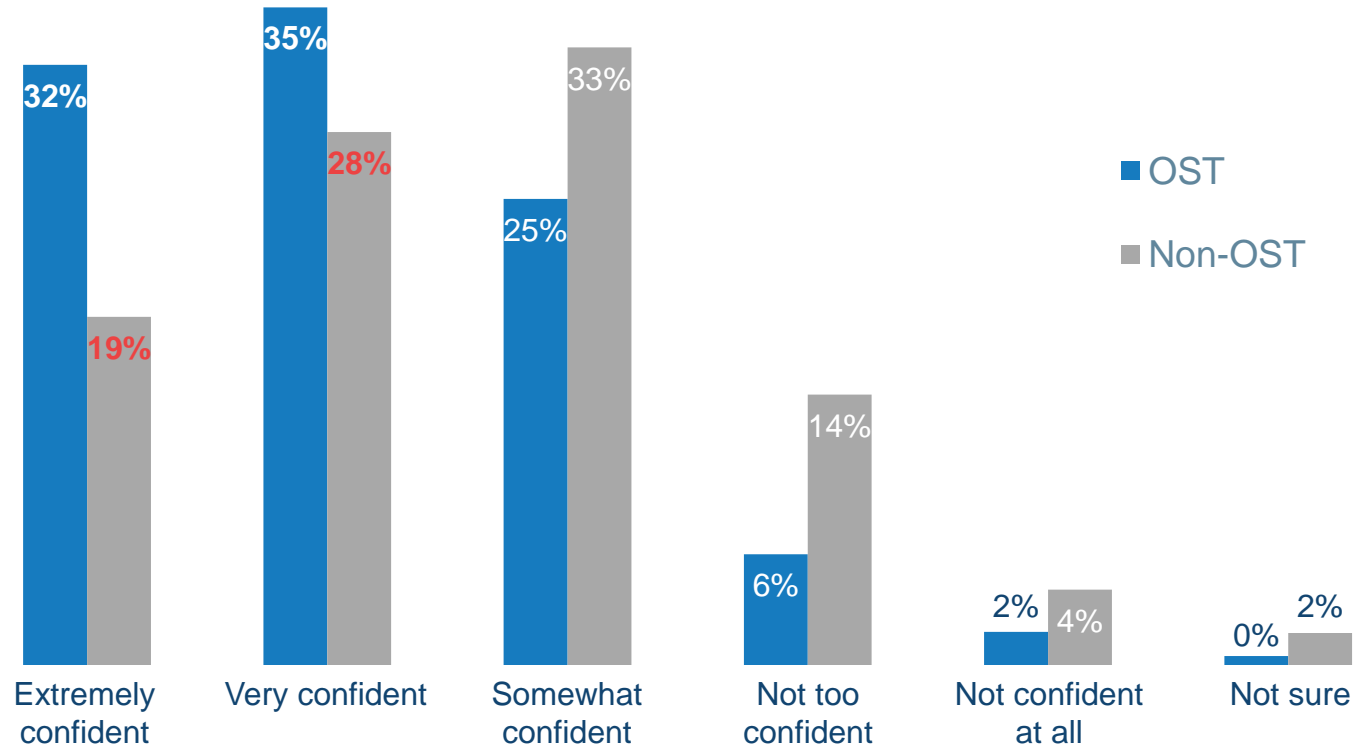| How effective would each of the following be in terms of helping students in your state – extremely effective, very effective, somewhat effective, or not that effective:	% saying extremely or very effective
Offering more college credit/work-based learning/apprenticeships	76%
Providing teachers w/ better instructional materials/digital resources	74
Providing special funding for students w/ greater learning needs	74
Expanding broadband access to underserved areas/upgrading tech	73
Providing tools/support to meet students' emotional/mental health needs	73
Developing tools to help teachers w/ student academic/mental health	71
Improving online learning by providing teachers w/ more training	70
Expanding high-quality tutoring programs	69
Expanding free pre-K and childcare options for all children	68
Offering summer school instruction to any child who wants it	66
Creating more pathways into teaching to draw more diverse workforce	66
Creating more school options, like charter schools, learning pods	65
Providing direct grants to parents of $500 per child	62
Expanding learning time through longer school day/school year	45

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OST Parents More Confident about Fall than Non-OST Parents

Confident about children being prepared for Fall 2021:

*67% Parents in OST, **47%** Parents Not in OST*

Bar chart legend: ■ OST ■ Non-OST

	Extremely confident	Very confident	Somewhat confident	Not too confident	Not confident at all	Not sure
OST	32%	35%	25%	6%	2%	0%
Non-OST	19%	28%	33%	14%	4%	2%

Subgroup Distinctions

☆ **High-quality OST correlates with confidence** among Parents, Teachers & OST Providers alike. Those who rate their program as "excellent" are more likely to be extremely confident (Parents **52%**, Teachers **47%**, OST Providers **43%**)

☆ **Dosage also impacts confidence** – those whose children attend programs 5 or more days a week are most confident (**46%**)

"I've noticed that kids with out-of-school activities are the ones who get their work done, because they've figured out a strategy to keep it in check. If they have something they are successful at, their level of confidence as a person impacts how they approach learning in a classroom." (Teacher)

Please select the descriptor that you think BEST describes these programs.

Aftercare

Afterschool

Enrichment

Extended Day

Extracurricular

Out-of-school Time

Recreation

Summer Learning

Youth Development

How do you think parents said they refer to these types of programs?

Aftercare
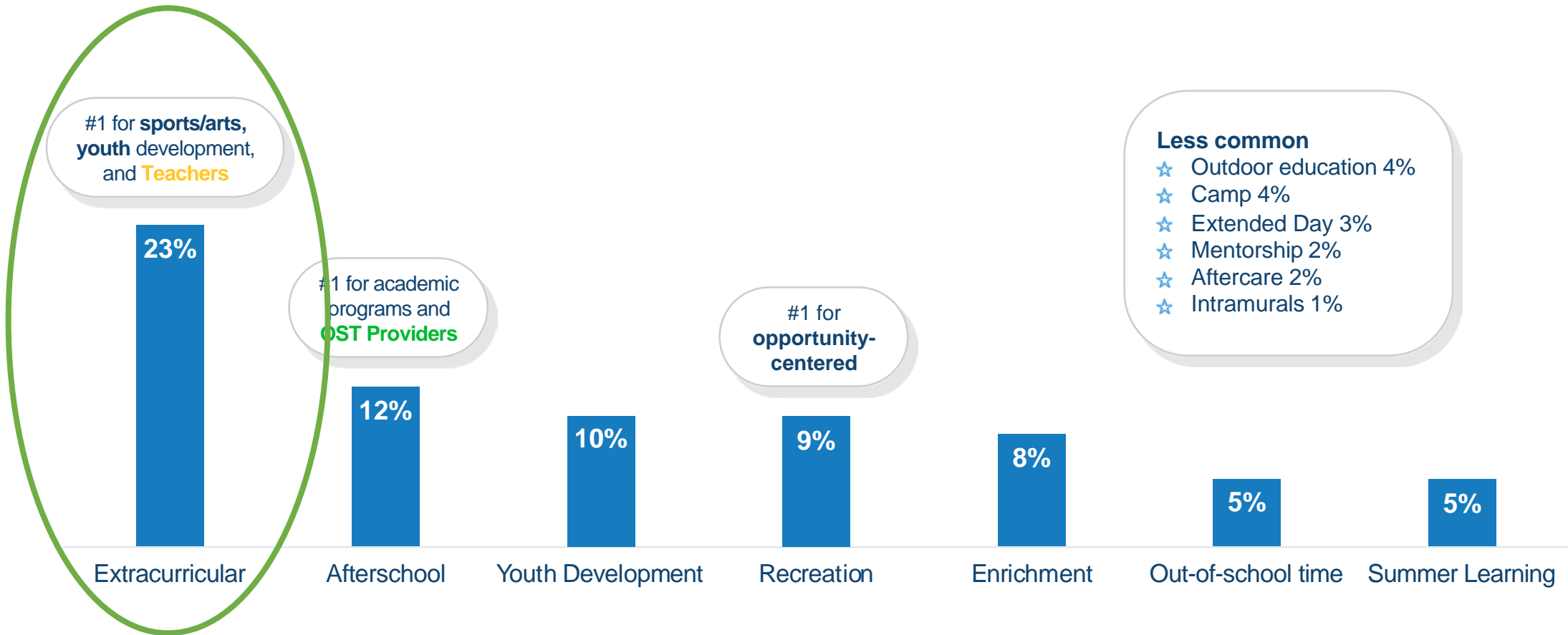
Afterschool

Enrichment

Extended Day

Extracurricular

Out-of-school Time

Recreation

Summer Learning

Youth Development

Language Matters

#1 for **sports/arts, youth** development, and **Teachers**

23%
Extracurricular

#1 for academic programs and **OST Providers**

12%
Afterschool

10%
Youth Development

#1 for **opportunity-centered**

9%
Recreation

8%
Enrichment

5%
Out-of-school time

5%
Summer Learning

Less common
- ☆ Outdoor education 4%
- ☆ Camp 4%
- ☆ Extended Day 3%
- ☆ Mentorship 2%
- ☆ Aftercare 2%
- ☆ Intramurals 1%

22% of non-OST parents are not sure compared to 4% OST

LEARNING HEROES: FINDING PASSION, PURPOSE & VOICE

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Complementary Delivery Systems
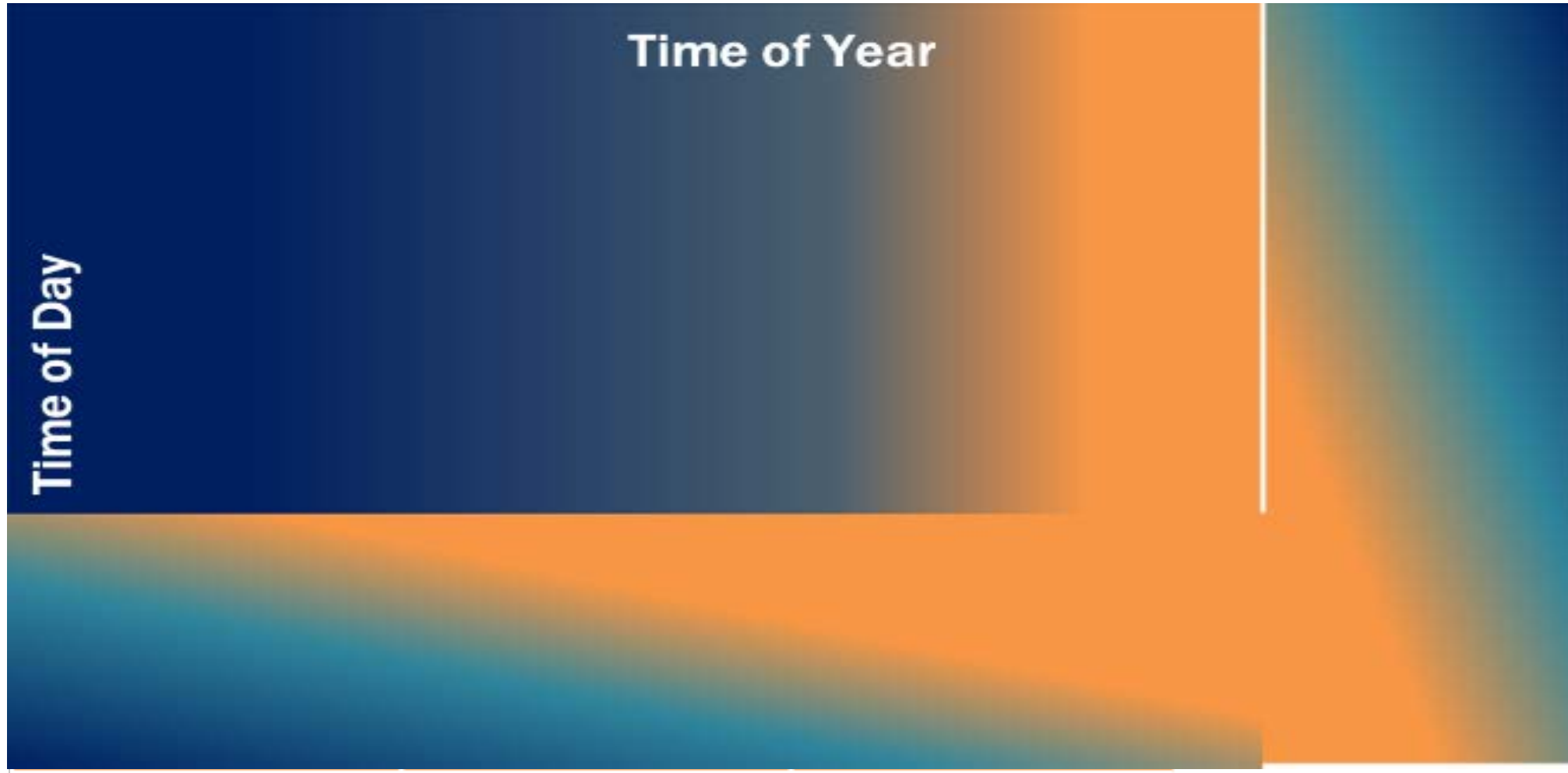
Distinct Yet Reinforcing Roles

Venn diagram based on
Parent survey responses

Home
Respect,
Kindness, Patience,
Learning from mistakes,
Self-control, Empathy,
Compassion

Home + School
Communication,
Listening,
Being
organized

OST + Home
Self-esteem,
Independence

All 3
Responsible
decision-making,
Self-motivation

School
Basic reading,
writing, math, etc.,
Problem-solving,
Critical thinking,
Focus

School + OST
Social skills,
Creativity

OST
Teamwork,
Confidence,
Leadership,
Perseverance

Subgroup Distinctions

Important for OST to Develop:

☆ Leadership more important to 6-8 vs. K-5 Parents
☆ Communication skills also in the top-tier for Black and Hispanic Parents

LEARNING HEROES: FINDING PASSION, PURPOSE & VOICE

Absenteeism is a Sign that Positive Conditions for Learning are Missing in Any Mode of Instruction

Voluntary attendance is a sign that positive conditions are present...

Physical and Emotional Health and Safety

Adult and ~~Student~~ **Learner** Emotional Competence

Belonging, Connection, and Support

~~Academic~~ **Learning** Challenge and Engagement

Relationships are Essential to Positive Conditions for Learning

Attendance Works ©

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Build Forward Together – Toward Equitable Learning and Development Ecosystems

STRATEGIES

- Build Back Smarter.
- Build Back Broader.
- Build Back Bolder.
- Build Understanding of Inequity.
- Build On Adolescents' Determination.

GOALS

Build Schools Back Better

Use Summers to Innovate Towards Long-term Change

BUILD FORWARD TOGETHER

Invest In Adolescents

Strengthen & Leverage Community Partners

THE READINESS PROJECTS

https://forumfyi.org/the-readiness-projects/build-forward-together/

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How is your community planning to Build Forward Together? (Click directly on the graphic)

Build Forward Together – Toward Equitable Learning and Development Ecosystems
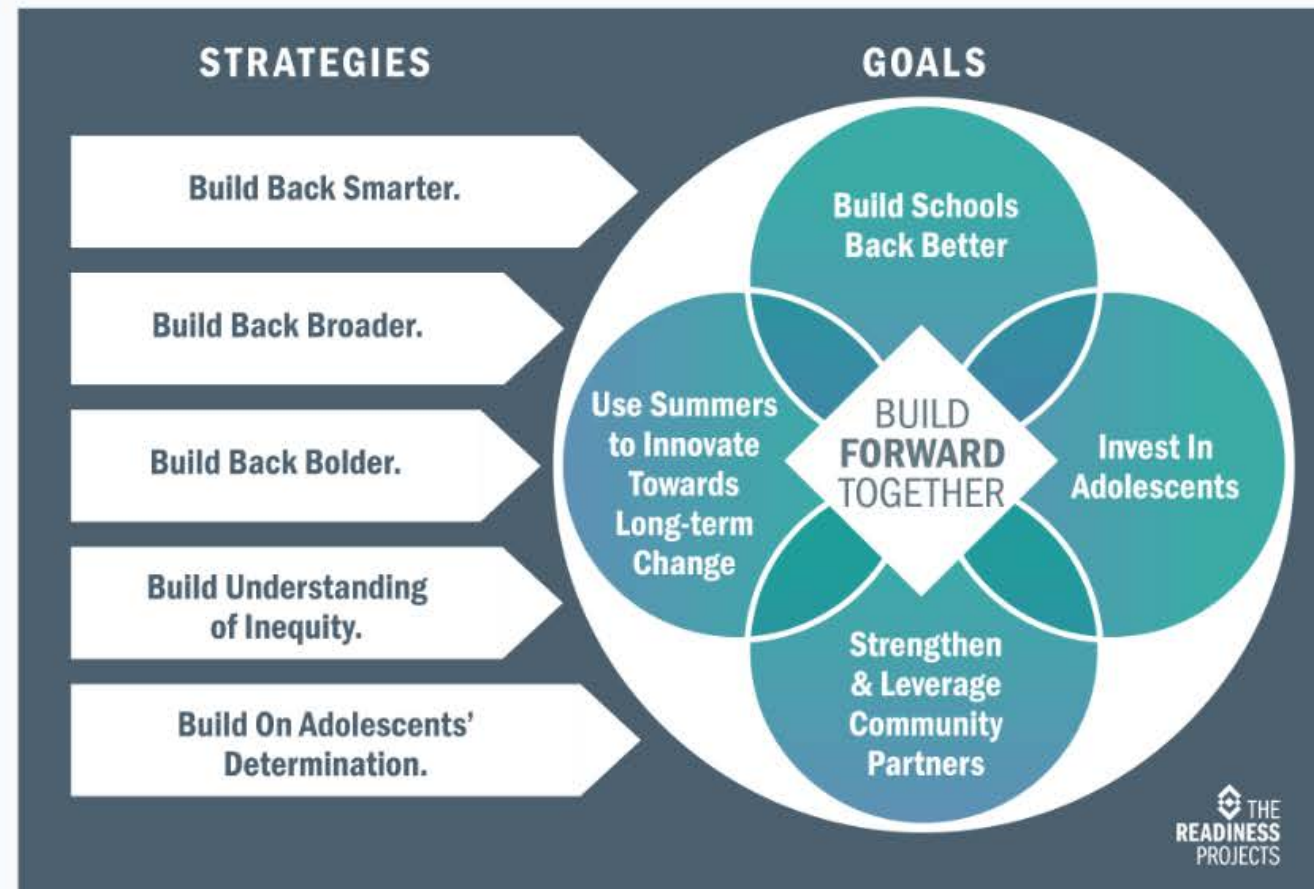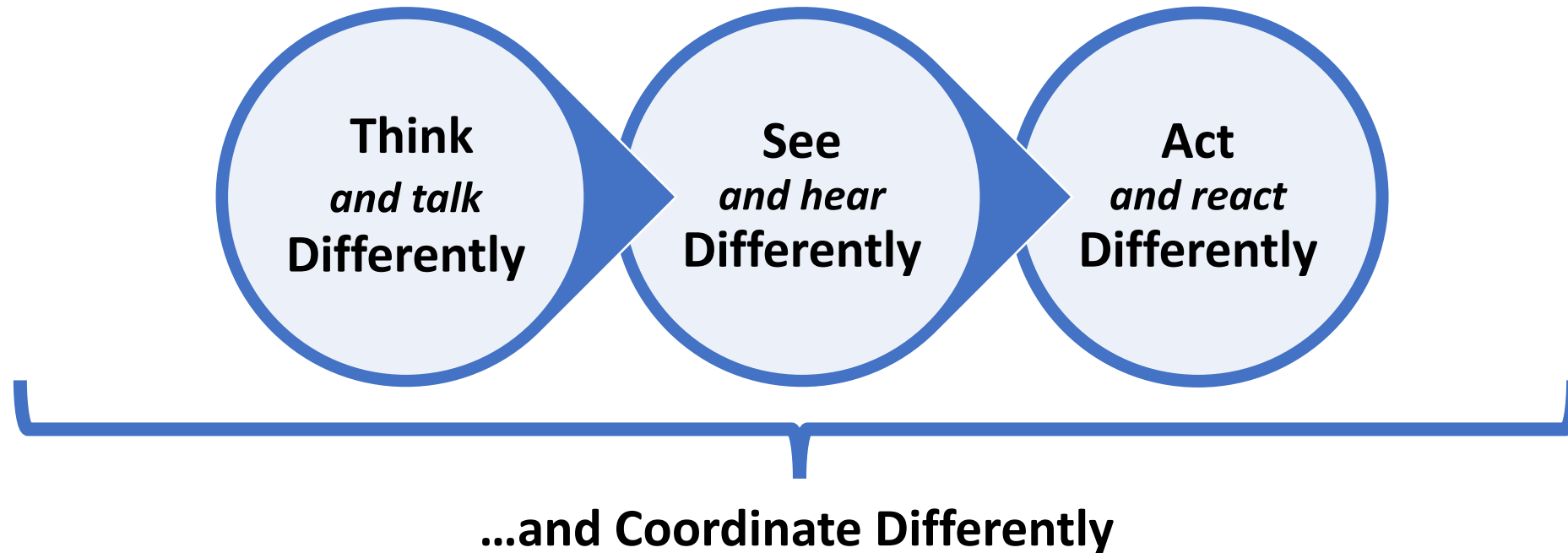
The Partnerships for Social Emotional Learning Initiative (PSELI) is a multiyear initiative exploring whether and how children can benefit from intentional partnerships between schools and out-of-school time programs focused on building social-emotional skills.

The Initiative

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Disruption created opportunity.
But PSELI leaders were already on the path towards sustainable, system-level change

Think
and talk
Differently

See
and hear
Differently

Act
and react
Differently

…and Coordinate Differently

Recognize and advocate for sustained coordinating capacity that makes it easier to expect that individuals within families, programs, organizations and systems can get access to and have the authority to use the information, people, resources, cover they need to make ecosystem-responsive decisions.

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Early Lessons From Schools and Out-of-School Time Programs Implementing Social and Emotional Learning

RAND study —largest to date — offers lessons from 38 sites on implementing SEL in school and out-of-school time programs.

Strengthening SEL skills in adults helped foster SEL skills in students

School staff and OST providers benefited from professional development sessions and coaching on SEL skill building

Communities implemented in three ways

Teaching SEL skills explicitly, integrating SEL into in-school and OST activities, and creating an overall positive culture and climate

SEL-focused partnerships developed strategies to overcome barriers

These included committing to SEL, taking time to meet and creating new roles and structures to support collaboration

Creating a shared vision was a vital early step in implementing SEL

Defining success, developing common SEL terminology, and establishing frequent communication protocols were integral to successful SEL implementation

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The Partnerships for Social and Emotional Learning Initiative
Episode 1: Explains the importance of social and emotional learning and the initiative's design

Developing Adults' Capacity to Promote Social and Emotional Learning
Episode 2: Why building adults' skills is a starting place for promoting SEL in children

Building Effective Partnerships for Social and Emotional Learning
Episode 3: What it takes for schools and districts, and afterschool programs and out-of-school time intermediary organizations, to work together

The Role of Coaches in Promoting Social and Emotional Learning
Episode 4: Helping schools and OST programs adopt SEL instruction and providing feedback

Social and Emotional Learning In and Out of School
Episode 5: Steps to integrating SEL across settings and what to look for

The Panelists

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Building Lasting Partnerships

DALLAS

- **Greg MacPherson**
  Chief Big Thought Institute Officer
  Big Thought Dallas

- **Juany Valdespino-Gaytan**
  Executive Director for
  Social Emotional Learning
  Dallas Independent School District

TULSA

- **Stephanie Andrews**
  Interim Executive Director of Student
  and Family Support Services
  Tulsa Public Schools

- **Caroline Shaw**
  Executive Director
  The Opportunity Project

Empowering All Adults in All Settings

DENVER

- **Miranda Cook**
  SEAL Manager/DAA Learn Lead
  Denver Afterschool Alliance

- **Kim Price**
  SEAL Manager
  Denver Public Schools

PALM BEACH COUNTY

- **Kristen Rulison**
  SEL Manager
  Palm Beach County Public Schools

- **Katherine Gopie**
  Director of Professional Development
  Prime Time Palm Beach County, Inc.

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PARTNERSHIPS

What made connecting these two systems hard?

- Different
- Distant
- Distrust

What made the partnerships successful?

- Trusting Relation*ships*
- Shared Leader*ship*
- PD Co-owner*ship*
- Idea Ambassador*ship*

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All adults, All settings, All learners, All approaches
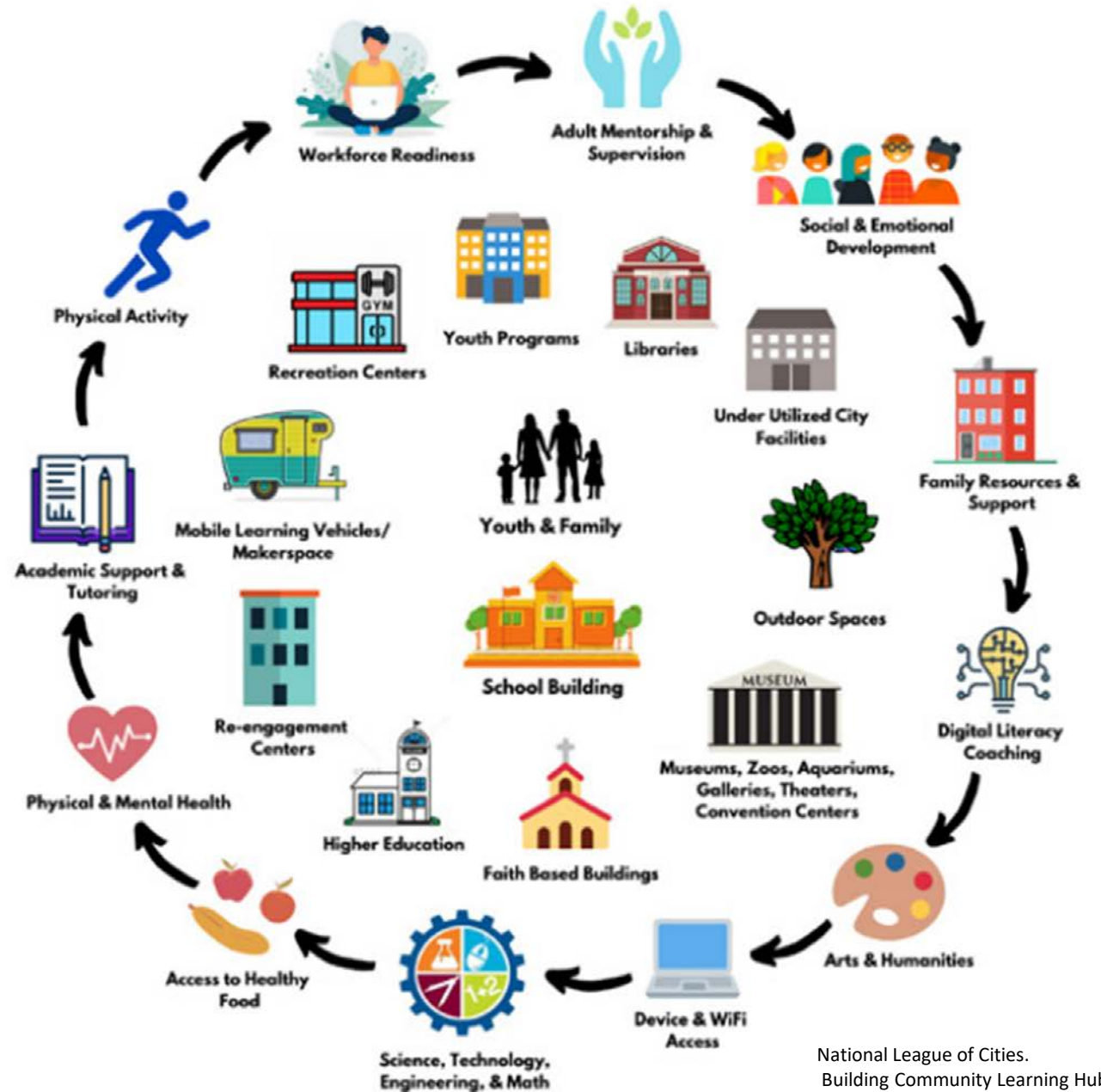
National League of Cities.
Building Community Learning Hubs

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The Five Non-Negotiables:
Essential Principles for Equitable Whole Child Design

Transformative

Personalized

Empowering

Culturally-Affirming

Integrated Support Systems

Positive Developmental Relationships

Development of Skills, Habits, and Mindsets

Healthy Development, Learning, and Thriving

Environments filled with Safety and Belonging

Rich Learning Experiences and Knowledge Development
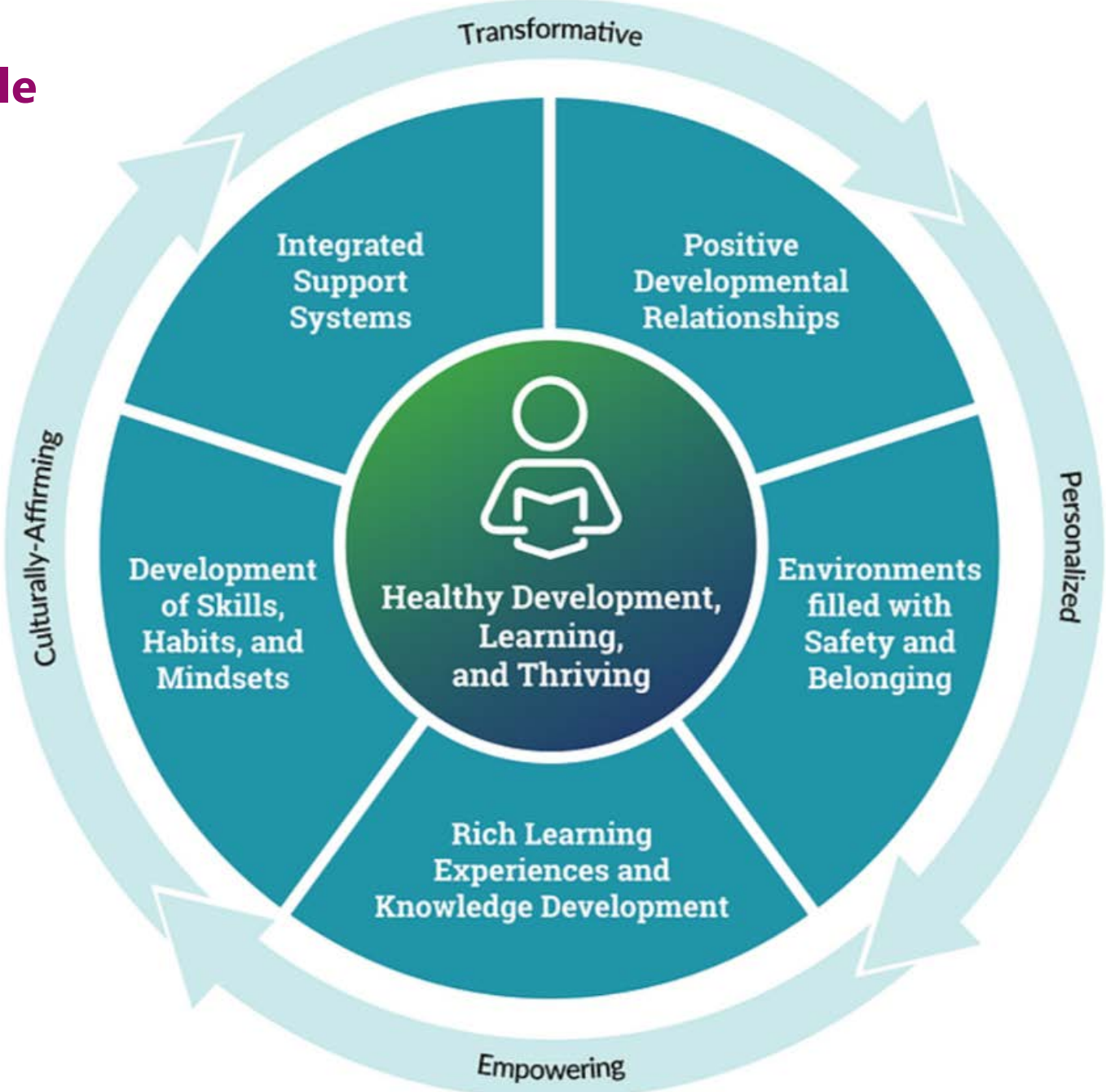
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We can do more to empower adults and youth to co-create optimal experiences

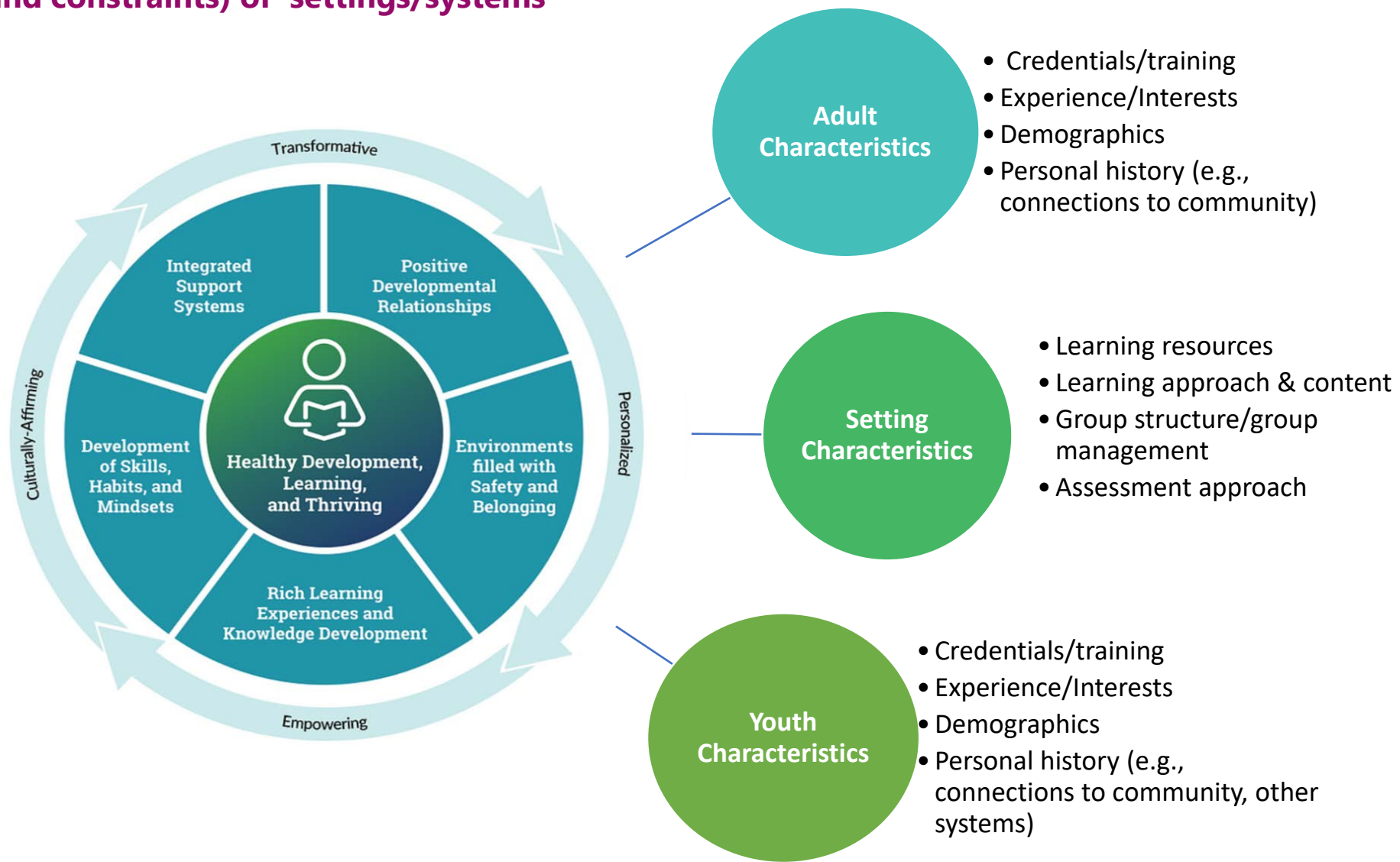By giving them permission, language, and tools to assess the assets (and biases) they bring into settings and the assets (and constraints) of settings/systems

Adult Characteristics
- Credentials/training
- Experience/Interests
- Demographics
- Personal history (e.g., connections to community)

Setting Characteristics
- Learning resources
- Learning approach & content
- Group structure/group management
- Assessment approach

Youth Characteristics
- Credentials/training
- Experience/Interests
- Demographics
- Personal history (e.g., connections to community, other systems)

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What Next

Changing the Odds   Remix

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Allied Youth Fields

ECOSYSTEM FOR YOUTH BELONGING, OPPORTUNITY, AND SUCCESS

Community, Societal and Cultural Contexts
Aligned Infrastructure and Connections

Education — MANDATORY
LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT
Pre-K
K-12
Post Secondary
Education and Career Certification

Family, Peer Neighborhood and Virtual Contexts
Supportive Relationships

Community-based Learning & Development — VOLUNTARY
LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT
Community, Faith, Civic and Social Justice Organizations
Afterschool/Summer
Employment Pathways and Jobs

Protection & Enforcement
PROTECTION & BASIC SERVICES
Child Welfare
Juvenile Justice
Police
MANDATORY

Basic Services
PROTECTION & BASIC SERVICES
Housing
Health/Mental Health
Social Services
Transportation
Income Security and Unemployment
VOLUNTARY

Allyship

the active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which an **organization** of privilege seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group of **organizations**.

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I didn't realize there's actually been a lot of harm, non-intentional harm, working with our outside partners where, we've just made decisions and excluded them and not even considered them in many of our decision-making processes.

One of the things we did really have to work on is ... treating our youth care workers as professionals. I didn't realize that there was this thing around a certified classroom teacher versus a professional youth care worker. It's been a big learning experience for me in this project.

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