EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
Community-Based Design

"The boldness of community-based design is that students help to lead the work. This isn't just another strategic planning process. Students' voices matter and they are at the center of the process; this just doesn't happen in school improvement generally."

- Dr. Lynn Moody, Former Superintendent of Rowan-Salisbury Schools

For a long while, many have agreed that the 100-year-old industrial design of same-age, standardized progression in schools is neither effective nor equitable. **But how do we go about changing such an entrenched model?**

We've learned that making big and long-lasting changes in the design of schools requires working together as a community: young people, caregivers, teachers, experts, and other important community members coming together to figure out what kinds of learning experiences will help kids succeed in the future. We subscribe to an approach called community-based design.

Community-based design is a local process where young people, educators, administrators, caregivers, and experts come together to collaboratively design better learning experiences and outcomes.

The goals of community-based design are to create powerful school designs that provide extraordinary and equitable learning experiences and better outcomes for all young people, preparing them for this century's greatest challenges.

This resource is designed to help schools, communities, and systems understand the power of community-based design as a pathway to transforming learning environments and opportunities. Here's what you'll find:

1. An overview of community-based design—its aims and how it works

2. Links to tools that will help you engage one of the most important features of the community-based design journey—understanding the experiences of young people in your schools and classrooms

3. Profiles of school communities who have embarked on community-based design journeys, including the results and lessons emerging from their efforts

Community-based design is an empowering process that harnesses untapped strengths and brings communities together around the shared goal of creating more extraordinary and equitable learning environments for all young people. At a time when so much of the country—including education—is polarized, we need processes that bring communities together more than ever. This work has never been more necessary, and more possible.