

Learner-Centered **Micro-School** An ILM School-Within-A-School



A Tiered Approach

The **Inspired Learner Model (ILM)** operates in US public schools with existing budgets and staffing levels. ILM provides every child with the advantages of learner-centered education in a multi-age classroom while meeting state student performance expectations.

This is a **bridge program** for individual schools to try ILM on a smaller scale before deciding to move forward with a larger implementation.

This document contains school-within-a-school plans for 10-30, 31-60, or 61-90 students.

We are confident that the results will accomplish a dramatic improvement in student outcomes and the quality of instruction.

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**Center for
Inspired
Learning**

THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Learner-Centered Instruction: The Future of Education

This science-based approach to education builds on each child's interests, passions, and strengths. The **Inspired Learner Model (ILM)**, developed by the [Center for Inspired Learning \(CFIL\)](#):

- Utilizes online learning to enable teachers to focus on creating project-and-activity-based learning opportunities.
- Address individual children's needs and aspirations.
- Creates a supportive environment where children are engaged and naturally inspired to learn.
- Assesses students to ensure they are actively engaged in their learning trajectories and making satisfactory progress. This is often done by having children critique their own work to identify areas needing improvement.



“A new future of learning is emerging—one that celebrates the wonder, creativity, and endless imagination in every child.” - [Education Reimagined](#)

Five Elements of Learner-Centered Education

1. **Learner Agency**
2. **Socially Embedded**
3. **Personalized and Relevant**
4. **Open-walled**
5. **Mastery-based**

ILM Development: This model is the result of a concerted ten-year effort to integrate components of the best multi-age, learner-centered education models in a way that can work in US public schools with existing infrastructure, staffing, and budgets.

ILM in Detail: Please refer to the following CFIL documents for a deeper understanding.

[▶ A Brief Introduction to ILM](#)

[▶ ILM Concept Paper](#)

Student Goals

The Inspired Learner Model (ILM) recognizes the value and importance of state essential standards and does not seek to change or disrupt existing student goals or expectations. ILM does, however, have some specific goals that work in tandem with state standards. The point of these goals is:

1. **For students to develop a passion for learning so that they WANT to be in school and do well.**
2. **To set students up for success in their future academic, social, family, professional, and civic lives.**
3. **To give students the desire, tools, and values so that they may have a positive impact on society and help make the world a better place for future generations.**

To these ends, the goal is for all students to:

- Become caring, sharing, inclusive, and compassionate people
- Find their interests and passions
- Participate in extracurricular activities
- Discover and participate in hobbies they enjoy
- Learn at least one foreign language
- Develop conflict-resolution skills
- Become adept at and comfortable with computers and technology
- Achieve digital and media literacy
- Have an awareness of local, state, national, and world issues, and a desire to participate in civic life to help find solutions
- Learn how to mentor others in the skills they master
- Develop leadership skills
- Have exposure to the arts and ample opportunities to participate
- Develop public speaking skills
- Learn self-care skills (i.e., regular exercise, personal hygiene, healthy eating, etc.)
- Learn “home and beyond” skills (i.e., financial literacy, cooking, using hand tools, basic repairs, etc.)



Components

The goal is for students to be naturally motivated to learn and feel supported in their educational journey. Teachers and staff are seen as part of an away-from-home extended family. The structure creates an inspiring environment and safety net for all children.

Core Components / Phase One Implementation

- 1. Project and Activity-Based Learning (PABL):** Participation in learning-oriented projects and activities enables children to actively participate in their learning process. When a student sinks their teeth into a task, they learn without even realizing they are learning. As part of this, extracurricular activities are built into the school day so that no student is left out.
- 2. Online Learning:** Students are challenged at their current mastery level, meaning that teachers don't get bogged down figuring out how to teach to the most and least advanced students and everyone in between, all at the same time.
- 3. Assessment and Tutoring Centers:** Students are assessed regularly to evaluate their progress in achieving their grade-level expectations and optional personal learning goals, along with tutoring as needed.
- 4. Student Choice:** This allows students to develop their interests and create a personalized curriculum with intrinsic value, another way to inspire children to WANT to learn.
- 5. Peer Mentoring:** Younger students benefit from the experience and knowledge of the older ones, older students reinforce knowledge and gain skills, and teachers are freed up to mentor and oversee PABLs.
- 6. Teacher as Facilitator:** The role of the teacher changes from imparting knowledge to facilitating an atmosphere of curiosity, discovery, and self-motivation.
- 7. Charismatic Leadership:** Charismatic leaders inspire, motivate, and support everyone in the school.
- 8. Personalized Student Growth Plans:** A formal plan that sets learning goals based on personal and academic interests, and completion of grade-level requirements.
- 9. Parental Involvement & Community Engagement:** The passion and knowledge in the community are passed on to the students. Parents, guardians, and community members are encouraged to volunteer in the school and share their expertise, interests, talents, passions, and hobbies.
- 10. The Home and School Partnership:** It is essential to maximize the relationship and support for the child at home. One staff member will facilitate and work directly with the home in extending learning and support beyond the child's school day.

Secondary Components / Optional Phase Two Implementation

- 11. Extended School Days:** Schools open earlier and close later. During these earlier and later hours, engaging, supervised activities are offered for any child who shows up at school.
- 12. Longer School Year:** Addresses the “summer slide” when students experience a decline in academic skills, gives more opportunities for social growth and pursuit of educational goals, and allows for more thorough instruction. It also reduces childcare burdens on parents and guardians.



21st Century Curriculum

The Inspired Learner Model curriculum includes subjects that build on the standard public school curriculum. These subjects are essential in developing lifelong habits that lead to happiness, healthy relationships, mental stability, community engagement, good health, career success, and financial prosperity.



1. Self-Care: Includes learning the importance of regular exercise, good personal hygiene, getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, constructively dealing with strong emotions, and contributing to a functional home environment.

2. Financial Literacy: Includes money management, personal finances, value, prices, tipping, saving, taxes, investment, emergency funds, and living within one's means. Such concepts augment and reinforce studies in math, and help realize long-term goals such as paying for higher education, buying a house, and retirement.

3. Conflict Resolution: Students learn, apply, and practice different methods of conflict resolution.

4. The Arts: The visual and performing arts encourage teamwork, build self-discipline, promote a deeper understanding of other cultures, bridge cultures, reach students who are discouraged in school, and even help improve students' achievement in other subjects. Many children learn better when they watch or listen to something expressed creatively.

5. Citizenship: Students become actively involved in progress related to global social, political, economic, and environmental issues. The goal is for students to see themselves as integral and empowered participants in their community, country, and world.

6. Foreign Languages: Students learn at least one foreign language through online programs.

Conversation skills and cultural understanding are included in project and activity-based learning.



7. Media & Digital Literacy: Students develop media literacy by thinking critically about the media, learning to recognize biases, understanding search engine limitations, recognizing and reporting online harassment, avoiding plagiarism, using appropriate privacy settings, understanding digital footprints, employing strong passwords, etc.

Trends & Comparisons

Survey:

- The 2023 [Purpose of Education Index](#) from [Populace](#) reports that the vast majority of Americans want individualized education.

Trends:

- The [Washington State Board of Education](#) reports that private school enrolment has increased by 25% over the past three* years.
- The [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) reports that the number of homeschooled students has increased 42% over the same period*.

school years 2019-20 through 2022-23

Comparison:

4 Elementary Education Models	<u>Whole Classroom</u>	<u>Waldorf</u>	<u>Montessori</u>	<u>Inspired Learner</u>
Learner-centered	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Multi-Age Classrooms & Peer Mentoring	No	No	Yes	Yes
Flexible Curriculum	No	No	Yes	Yes
Personalized Student Growth Plans	No	No	No	Yes
Online Learning	Limited	No	No	Yes
Extended School Days & Longer Year	No	No	No	Yes
Extracurricular Activities Built Into School Day	No	No	No	Yes
Project & Activity Based Learning	Rarely	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emphasis on Meeting State Standards	Yes	No	No	Yes
State Assessments	Yes	No	No	Yes
Uses Existing Public School Budget	Yes	No	Rarely	Yes
Foreign Language Acquisition	Rarely	Yes	Sometimes	Yes
Authentic Assessment based on Mastery	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emphasis on Life Skills & Good Habits	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Global Citizenship Education	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Plan Overview

Transforming a school from the 100-year-old **Whole Classroom Instructional Model (WCIM)** to the learner-centered **Inspired Learner Model (ILM)** represents a radical updating and redesign of the classroom, curriculum, and teaching methods. Although many will view the change with skepticism, we know from our interviews with that students, teachers, and administrators in learner-centered school environments that they generally find this approach less stressful, more engaging, and far more effective than the one-size-fits-all instruction that most of us received when we went to school.

Some may find that transitioning an entire school to ILM is too much change all at once. Furthermore, skeptics may want to see positive results before committing more resources to the change. For these reasons, the **Center for Inspired Learning** has developed a tiered school-within-a school approach. It is a blueprint for a school to try ILM on a smaller scale before deciding to move forward with broader implementation. It will also demonstrate the power and effectiveness of learner-centered education in a public school environment.



In a nutshell, this plan takes students from multiple grades and creates a one-room schoolhouse atmosphere. The teacher/facilitators and monitors will stay

with the students as they move “up” through the grades. This allows them to get to know and understand each child’s unique needs, interests, strengths, and challenges, thus helping them attain their full potential and individual goals in alignment with their **Personalized Student Growth Plans**.



Staff Roles

Coordinators

In the learner-centered environment, the role of teachers changes from “sage on the stage” to “guide on the side.” They take on the role of an expert, recruiter, and facilitator to incorporate the greater community into the classroom, utilizing the ideas and expertise of parents, local citizens, business people, students, and other teachers.

The Online Learning Coordinator is responsible for the student’s **Learning Hub** (homeroom). This is where the following takes place:

- Standards-based online learning
- Virtual reality (VR) learning
- Tutoring
- Assessment
- Development and implementation of each student’s **Personalized Growth Plan**.



They are aided by cutting-edge **learning technology** and incorporating volunteers and mentors in the classroom.

The Small Group Activity Coordinator focuses on the following:

- **Life skills**
- **Problem-based learning** - students work in groups to solve open-ended problems
- **Real World learning** - working with community partners to engage students in projects and experiences.

The Project and Activity Based Learning (PABL) Coordinator serves as the **Student Coach** and oversees PABLs. They help each student discover and nurture their innate interest and curiosity in a wide range of activities that could include anything from sports and recreation to arts, music, history, science, and technology.

How Roles Vary by Tier

In the **10-30 student tier**, the teacher is the Online Learning and Small Group Activity Coordinator. The PABLs are replaced with enrichment activities with the regular school population. In the **31-60 student tier**, one teacher is the Online Learning Coordinator, and a second one is the Small Group Activity Coordinator. Once again, PABLs are replaced with enrichment activities with the regular school population. In the **61-90 student tier**, there is one teacher for each of the three coordinator roles.

Classroom Design

Open Configuration

The creation of a learner-centered environment is vital to the success of the Inspired Learner Model (ILM). Most traditional classrooms have rows of individual desks, with the front of the classroom reserved for the teacher and teaching materials.

In the ILM classroom, the space is arranged to foment creativity, teamwork, student projects, and mentoring relationships. In an open-classroom format, student desks are replaced by tables, chairs, workstations, and activity spaces. Classroom layouts are designed by teachers and administrators in accordance with ILM principles and sometimes with the assistance of an ILM consultant.

Classrooms

With 10-30 student configuration, one classroom serves as both the Learning Hub *and* the PABL Room.

With the 31-60 student configuration, ideally there are two adjacent classrooms arranged so that students in both classrooms can be observed from either room. This may require a minor remodel to remove all or part of the wall between the rooms.

- **Classroom One, The Learning Hub:** a space designed for online and VR learning, small group work, tutoring, and assessment. This classroom includes abundant computers and other technological aids to facilitate online learning and achieve state education standards.
- **Classroom Two, The Project and Activity (PABL) Room:** a space designed and stocked with project and activity-based learning in mind.

With the 61-90 student configuration, there are two or three adjacent classrooms.

Cost

Once implemented, the Inspired Learner Model is designed to operate with existing school staffing, budgets, and resources. However, in the initial design and setup, there are often costs associated with acquiring computers and other technological aids, replacing desks with worktables and chairs, purchasing teaching aids for project and activity-based learning, and training school staff to work effectively in a learner-centered environment.



Classroom Experience

The Inspired Learner Model can be implemented in any public school, regardless of the size of the school, the number of students enrolled, and the socio-economic conditions of the community. The model is adaptable to state and district-level mandates and achievement goals.

The school-within-a-school plan is a path for public schools to transition to learner-centered education on a smaller scale. Students of diverse ages will have the same teachers as they move through the grades, representing a modern version of the one-room schoolhouse. Here is some of what will occur in the classroom:

Workstations - where students work independently on math, reading, science, history, life skills, organizing activities for the week, doing research, etc. Whenever students are not participating in their “activity of choice,” they will be at their workstations.

Project and Activity Based Learning (PABL) Center – music, technology, sports and recreation, performing and visual arts, science, history, global connection, clubs, entrepreneurship, hobbies and games, activities, etc. Each child will participate in a wide variety of high-interest activities in a broad range of disciplines throughout the week.

Testing Center – for evaluation, testing, and to developing test-taking strategies.

Tutoring Center – students can receive support whether they perform at, below, or above grade level standards.

Beyond the Classroom – students will have apprenticeship opportunities and volunteer experiences.

Small-Group Projects – groups of students will be brought together to work on projects or receive additional academic support.



Peer Mentoring – when beneficial for all involved, more advanced students will be teaching other students on topics and activities of mutual interest.

Curriculum - Students progress through the state standards and take state tests. The curriculum is expanded beyond the traditional offerings to include the development of good life habits, learning a foreign language, financial literacy, public speaking, the arts, and more.

Schedule, Calendar, and Transportation

Since this plan is essentially a school-within-a-school, its hours of operation and academic calendar can differ from that of the rest of the school. This may also impact student transportation, which is also addressed on this page.

Schedule

ILM is designed to be flexible in terms of its hours of operation. It can follow the typical 6.5-hour school schedule or be expanded. Because of the demands put on the many parents and guardians who struggle with before and after-school child supervision, some schools may find it beneficial to have a longer school day to help alleviate these burdens.

Before-school hours may include time for students to work on projects and pursue their chosen interests. Children may show up at any time during this period.

After-school hours are similar to the before-school session, but students may leave at any time in compliance with the school supervision policy.

Calendar

ILM is also designed to be flexible in terms of the school calendar. Long summer breaks may also create stressful demands on parents and guardians. Furthermore, a longer school year can help address the “summer slide” that has frustrated educators for decades.

Transportation



A van and driver may be needed to drive children and monitors to activities that happen off school grounds. It may also be used to transport students between home and school outside of regular school hours.

Most school districts have a few vans or small buses available to transport children throughout the day. In the beginning, it may be necessary for monitors to drive the vans.

Four Options Overview

Microschool: 10-30 Students

- One teacher (oversees online learning *and* small group activities)
- One or two aides
- Income from taxpayers at \$20K per student ranges from \$200K to \$600K
- Expenses for staff: ~\$200K
- One classroom
- Enrichment activities with regular school population (age/grade-based)

Microschool: 31-60 Students

- Two teachers (one oversees online learning, the other small group activities)
- Two or three aides
- Income from taxpayers at \$20K per student ranges from \$620K to \$1.2M
- Expenses for staff: ~\$300K to \$350K
- Two adjacent classrooms
- Enrichment activities with regular school population (age/grade-based)

Microschool: 61-90 Students

- Three teachers (one oversees online learning, one small group activities, and one coordinates project and activity-based learning.)
- Three to four aides
- Income from taxpayers at \$20K per student ranges from \$1.22M to \$1.8M
- Expenses for staff: ~\$500K
- Three adjacent classrooms
- Enrichment activities are personalized and offered daily

School-Wide

- School is organized into a series of microschools
- Enrichment teachers take on the role of school-wide project and activity-based coordinators

Real-Life Examples of Multi-Age, Student-Centered, Individualized Learning

There are great micro-schools doing this now! The problem is that very few of them are public. Our goal at the Center for Inspired Learning is to make every public school as good as the best private school.

Acton Academy

Founded in Austin, Texas, Acton Academy currently has over 300 affiliate schools in the U.S. and around the world. Their tagline is “One-room schoolhouses for the 21st century” Watch the video! Click [HERE](#).



Bloom Academy

“We operate under the philosophy that children are natural learners and will learn the skills and knowledge they need through their own interests and natural inclinations- whenever they feel it is relevant or important to their lives. Through self-directed learning, we aim to ensure that all children are given an opportunity to succeed- regardless of their race, economic status, or academic level.” Watch the video! Click [HERE](#). *(In the video, you will see an inspiring story of a student from a conventional school make up years of reading progress in a few months!)*

Templestowe College

Located in Templestowe, Australia, this public school’s vision is “to co-create high quality learning experiences within an inclusive and supportive community”. After its student population had dropped from 1000 to fewer than 300 students, they were threatened with closure. They came up with an innovative plan to focus on student-centered learning and empowerment. They did this by putting students in charge of their own learning. As a result, Templestowe grew to over 1200 students, each with their own Individualized learning plan. Currently, **there are over 150 student-led electives.** When starting at Templestowe, students choose one third of their education program. When they reach functional skill levels, they are allowed to manage ALL of their own curriculum. The school has no grade levels, so students interact and collaborate in mixed-age classes. They have the freedom to explore their own passions and interests. Like the Inspired Learning Model, it costs the same as “regular” schooling. **Their model has been adopted by four other schools.**



Supporting Evidence

A Nation at Risk

“If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might have viewed it as an act of war.” - [A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform](#), a 1983 government report

Since the 1983 [Nation at Risk](#) report, education policymakers have made a concerted effort to “fix” public schools. Unfortunately, every attempt has gone in the wrong direction. Why? Because the [reforms](#) have been trying to rehabilitate an industrial era education model that is structurally flawed.



As the evidence presented in this document shows, the only rational solution is to replace this disastrous and harmful model. This fiasco has cost US taxpayers trillions of dollars, frustrated generations of parents, teachers, and students, and left a legacy of damaged children and unmet human potential.

The Research



"Education reform efforts have failed to 'fix' the American K-12 public education system because the system is not broken. It is doing exactly what it was designed to do—educate the masses in a standardized fashion that completely disregards who students are as individuals."

Read: [Evidence for Student-Centered Learning](#)

The Conclusions



A 2015 report encapsulates the striking conclusions of 28 widely respected educators, scholars, business leaders, parents, and advocates. Their findings reinforce research that has unambiguously shown that public education in its current structure does not prepare children to succeed as adults, especially those facing the greatest social and economic challenges. This diverse

group concluded that it should be replaced by a learner-centered environment. To quote the report, "SIMPLY PUT, the current system was designed in a different era and structured for a different society"

Read: [A Transitional Vision for Education in the U.S](#)

Supporting Evidence (Continued)

The Data

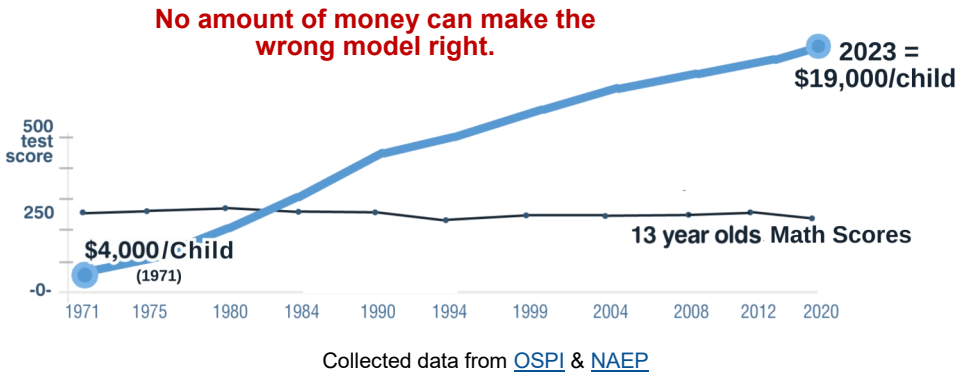


Read: [WA Report Card](#)

Check out your school or district's data!

Read: [WA Public Schools Finance Data](#)

Enter the name of your school district to discover how much money they spend PER STUDENT!



Percent of WA Students who **Failed** to meet state standards

62.3%

Math

49.3%

English

57.3%

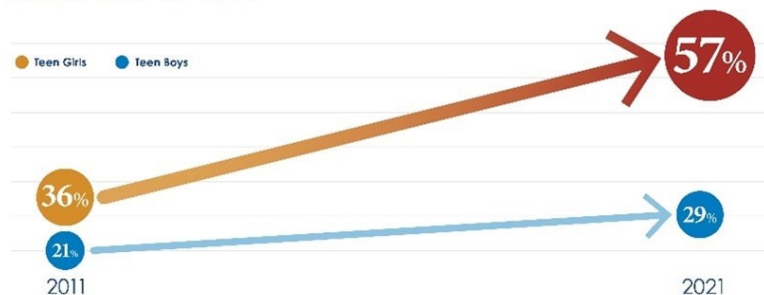
Science



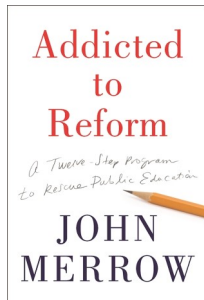
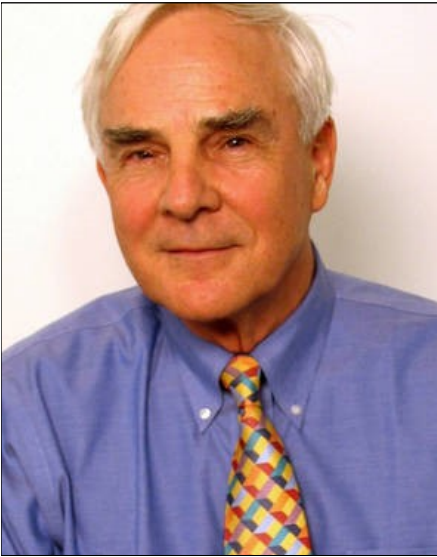
Read: [CDC Report on Teen Girl Mental Health](#)

A 2023 CDC report highlighted the teen mental health crisis, particularly with teen girls. It found that approximately 1 in 3 high school girls have seriously considered attempting suicide and more than half reported feeling "persistently sad or hopeless."

TEEN GIRLS WHO PERSISTENTLY FELT SAD OR HOPELESS INCREASED DRAMATICALLY FROM 2011 TO 2021



The Experts



- “Because we have failed to come to grips with schooling’s fundamental design flaw, every aspect of our schools falls short.”
- “I’ve seen thousands of people trying to change education and nothing has really changed. They have been looking at the symptoms.”
- “Like most of the changes required to remake public education, this shift—close to 180 degree change—will not be easy. Some policies, procedures, and attitudes will have to change, and people who refuse to adapt will have to be moved out.”

— **John Merrow, Ed.D.**, multiple-award winning journalist for NPR and PBS, and author of several books on education including **Addicted to Reform** (2017), **The Influence of Teachers** (2011), and **Choosing Excellence** (2001).

Watch: [NEA President Lily Eskelsen García and John Merrow discuss “Addicted to Reform”](#)



- “Education is the only billion dollar industry that tolerates abject failure.”
- “Over the past five years, I’ve met several (US) Presidents and Secretaries of Education...and there is no plan! If you want to save your children, you’re going to have to do it yourself. It’s just us!”
- “This year there are going to be millions of children that we are going to needlessly lose. Right now we could save them all.”

— **Geoffrey Canada, M.Ed.**, Named one of "America's Best Leaders" by *U.S. News and World Report* (2005), Listed as one of TIME magazine’s 100 Most Influential People in the World (2011)

Watch: [Our failing schools Enough is enough!](#)

The Experts (continued)



- “America spends more money on education than any other country; the problem is, it is **ALL** going in the wrong direction.”
- “Reform is simply no good anymore. It is simply trying to improve a broken model.”
- “We need a radical change in how we think about school—a shift from the old industrial model to one based on entirely different principles and practices. People do not come in standard sizes or shapes, nor do their abilities and personalities.”

— **Sir Ken Robinson, PH.D.** was professor Emeritus at the University of Warwick and was knighted for his services to the arts. His TED talk, **Do Schools Kill Creativity**, is the most viewed in TED talk history. His book, **Creative Schools**, laid the groundwork for transforming educational systems and was translated into 16 languages.

Watch: [Do Schools Kill Creativity](#)



- “So how do we, as a country entrenched in an education system that distributes standardized tests and groups students based on chronological age rather than rate of learning, break through its mental barriers and start to embrace—and demand—the science of the individual.”
- “**Now is the perfect time to focus on individual learning. Using the technology we have on hand, educators can easily create learning environments that are flexible.**”
- “It is no longer acceptable to design classrooms on the average.”

— **Todd Rose, PH.D.**, president & co-founder, [Populace](#); author of *Collective Illusions*, *Dark Horse*, and *The End of Average*.

Watch: [The Myth of Average](#)

The Experts (continued)



Larry Cuban, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Stanford Graduate School of Education and author of over 20 books on education.

When asked, “What would you most like to see change (in public education)?” his answer was:

“For all the rhetoric about school reform, public schools have been organized the same way for the past 150 years — as age-graded schools where every teacher has a classroom and is expected to cover a certain portion of

the curriculum. Teachers have to make sure their students absorb that curriculum, giving them tests and so on as the kids go through the escalator of grades....But kids learn at different ages and different speeds. Some pick up a subject more quickly and get bored easily, so a multi-age group is more sensible – kids can help one another, and it fits their learning pattern. But our existing machinery of schooling doesn’t permit that.”



“Which country has the best education system?

...Every three years, 15-year-olds in dozens of countries have taken...a standardized test...On the inaugural test...the top country came as a big surprise: tiny **Finland**. Finnish students claimed victory again in 2003...and 2006... Just over a decade later, Europe had a new champion...**Estonia... (Experts) have been searching for the secrets behind these countries’**

educational excellence. Instead of teaching a new cohort of students each year, teachers...move up a grade or more with their students...unlike many other educational reforms, (this) doesn’t cost a dime...With more time to get to know each student personally, teachers gain a deeper grasp of the kids’ strengths and challenges (and have) more opportunities to tailor their instructional and emotional support to help all the students in the class reach their potential. In both countries, it’s common for elementary schoolers to have the same teacher...for up to six straight years...Their role evolves from instructor to coach and mentor.

— **Adam Grant, PH.D.**, Organizational Psychologist at Wharton

Read: [What Most American Schools Do Wrong](#)

The Experts (continued)



“Far too many bright, motivated kids are being badly served by their educational experiences—ones at elite, wealthy schools as well as underfunded ones.”

— **Sal Khan, MS, MBA**, Founder and CEO, Khan Academy



“Over the past several decades, we have experienced many reforms, and there have been many well-intentioned efforts to improve our schools. Unfortunately, the results have often been akin to spinning a hamster wheel faster—lots of effort with very little real movement.”

— **Devin Vodicka, Ed.D.**, California Innovative Superintendent of the Year



“If you are a creative, young, and smart person, I don’t think that this is the time to go into education unless a private school would suit you.”

— **Nancy Atwell**, winner, Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize



“We don’t need young people to adapt to a standardized system, we need the system to adapt to the unique learner.”

— **Katie Matin, Ed.D.**, Chief Impact Officer & Co-founder, Learner-Centered Collaborative



“Education is the most important issue this country faces. If we don’t fix it, our country is screwed, plain and simple.”

— **Douglas Band, MLA, JD.**, Founding partner & former President, Teneo; Deputy Assistant to President Bill Clinton



“What is needed is a system that sets each learner up for success according to their unique needs. Only then will we have real equity. .”

— **David Cook, M.Ed.**, CEO, Learning Ecosystem Designs, LLC; Director of Innovative Learning, Kentucky Department of Education



“Everyone who has ever been to school knows that school is prison, but almost nobody beyond school age says it is. It's not polite.”

— **Peter Gray, PH.D**, Research Professor, Boston College

The Experts (continued)



"The education policies our country is pursuing to 'fix' schools only serve to harm students and disillusion teachers."

— **Ted Dintersmith, PH.D.**, Public Education Advocate, Recipient of the Highest NEA Award (2018)



"Our 'leaders,' on both sides of the aisle, continue to claim that our schools are failing and need to be reformed, while in reality our education is obsolete and needs reimagining."

— **Tony Wagner, PH.D.**, Senior Research Fellow at the Learning Policy Institute



"Experiments show that children in unsupervised groups are capable of answering questions many years ahead of the material they are learning in school."

— **Sugata Mitra, PH.D.**, Professor of Education Technology, Newcastle University



"The greatest gifts we can give our children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence."

— **Dr. Maria Montessori**, founder of the Montessori method of education



"Blended learning has the potential to transform education by personalizing learning experiences and leveraging the power of technology."

— **Arne Duncan**, US Secretary of Education, 2009-2015



"Transforming our educational system won't be easy, but I believe that it is the most important and strategic path towards creating more just, peaceful, and sustainable societies."

— **Zoe Weil, M.A., M.T.S.**, President & Co-founder, Institute for Humane Education

For more quotes and information from education experts:

Watch: [Education Experts on Replacing Standardized with Personalized](#)

Read: [Expert Witnesses](#)

A Non-Partisan Movement

We can all agree...

After meeting with hundreds of people in Washington State, we realized that people of all political persuasions and all faiths are generally in agreement that:

- The 100-year-old standardized, teacher-centered, age-based education model is obsolete and harmful.
- Spending more money on a broken education model, or further attempts to “reform” it, will not significantly improve student outcomes.
- Implementing a 21st century, student-centered, multi-age education model has the potential to vastly improve children’s learning experience, mastery, preparedness for their life as adults, and society as a whole.

To be clear, the mission statement for the [Center for Inspired Learning](#) is to change the classroom model. Since this transformation appeals to people across the political and ideological spectrum, we do not take sides or get bogged down in divisive issues such as religion in the classroom, who can use what bathroom, responses to pandemics, sex education, or the other hot button political issues of our day.

We accept EVERYONE of all faiths, political parties, philosophies, and walks of life into our movement. In fact, we believe that working together on this one issue that shares such wide support can help heal the factious divisions in our country and the world.



Final Thoughts

A Broken System

We have spent over a century trying to make the standardized “whole classroom instructional model” (WCIM) work. Over recent decades numerous reforms, implemented with the best of intentions, have made a scant difference in education outcomes but have made teaching in the classroom far more stressful. [Examples include](#) the Improving America’s Schools Act (1994), No Child Left Behind (2002), Race to the Top (2009), the Common Core Standards Initiative (2010), and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). These efforts, combined with increased funding for public education, have only resulted in lower overall student achievement.

It’s time for a reset and to implement a system where every child has an equal opportunity to reach their full potential and live happy, purposeful lives. **We need to admit that no number of reforms can fix an education model that is structurally flawed. Until education policymakers address the model itself, public schools will continue to shortchange students, and by extension, all of society.**

“It is lunacy to claim that every child should learn the same thing, at the same time, in the same way, for 14 or more years of their life. This was not true for me as a learner, nor for my two sons or the thousands of students I have taught in my career as an educator.” - Kapono Ciotti, PH.D., Executive Director, [What School Could Be](#)



A Learning-Rich Environment

The underlying philosophy of the [Inspired Learner Model](#) (ILM) is that children who *want* to learn and *want* to be in school will attain higher levels of achievement, gain more knowledge, and have increased chances of becoming lifelong learners. Becoming an ILM school-within-a-school, or transitioning a whole school, is simply the act of creating the environment for this to happen. The reality is that a good teacher can teach 100 students who want to learn but find it stressful or even impossible to teach even one or two students who do not.

Flexibility

The Inspired Learner Model, including the school-within-a school options, are designed to be flexible so it can work in any public school in the United States. Its components and additional curriculum areas can be skipped or added per the goals, budget, and circumstances of the individual school and school district.

For more information, visit our [website](#) or use this [form to contact us](#).