



STUDENTS

MUST BE PREPARED
FOR THE DEMANDS OF
THE 21ST CENTURY.



Young people who have opportunities to develop creativity, self-direction, the capacity for critical thinking, and collaboration skills are best prepared to be active agents in their own development and success. Intentionally designed, student-centered school models that work for all young people are essential in imparting the skills that empower students to succeed in an increasingly complex world.

SCHOOLS

MUST BE REIMAGINED
AS ADOLESCENT
LEARNING ECOSYSTEMS.



Positive youth development is a key driver of both a strong school design process and a successful school model. Schools are—first and foremost—places where young people form their identities and begin to see themselves as independent adults. As such, young people learn best in environments where they feel valued and are supported to explore new interests, build agency, and meet high expectations.

COMMUNITIES

MUST BE DEEPLY
ENGAGED IN THE SCHOOL
DESIGN PROCESS.



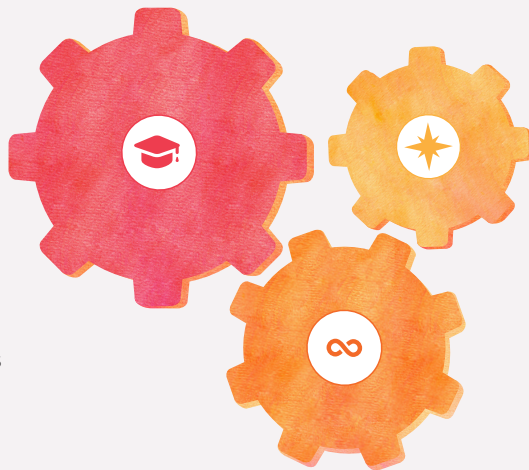
When schools are designed for and with the communities they serve, students and stakeholders have a crucial voice in the process—which promotes equity and embeds the school within the fabric of its community. Intentional school design is a pathway to more equitable schools as it leverages the collective knowledge, skills, and resources of the community.

Why School Design?

- ⊗ Traditional school models were not intentionally designed to help young people develop the skills necessary for today's postsecondary education and work opportunities.
- ⊗ Many schools also perpetuate achievement gaps rather than close them, leaving behind and failing millions of students each year. As such, they have come to represent an inequitable and unresponsive education system.
- ⊗ Students and communities have not historically been considered or included in the conception of school design, which leaves room for a misalignment between school models and the communities they purport to serve.
- ⊗ A ones-size-fits-all school model does not work for most young people as they have diverse needs, assets, and backgrounds. Cookie-cutter school models do not take into account where young people come from and how they engage with school.
- ⊗ When school models are not designed to adapt to the shifting needs and realities of students, they run a greater risk of eventually failing to serve students—especially as new groups of young people enter the school community.

Design Priorities

Young people. In order for school models to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of all students—especially those who are traditionally underserved—young people must be the central focus of any design process and meaningfully included as stakeholders in that process. This equity-informed approach enables the development of school models that are responsive to students and their needs, and steeped in the tenets of positive youth development.



Great practice. When school designers identify and develop the great practices, ideas, and systems that work for their specific students, resulting school models will manifest high expectations for both students and adults, and embody great practice through high-quality instruction, curriculum, and resources.

Iteration. A culture of iteration, in which an entire school community embraces the idea that school design is never done, allows schools and systems to be nimble and responsive to new demands and evolving student needs.

The Process

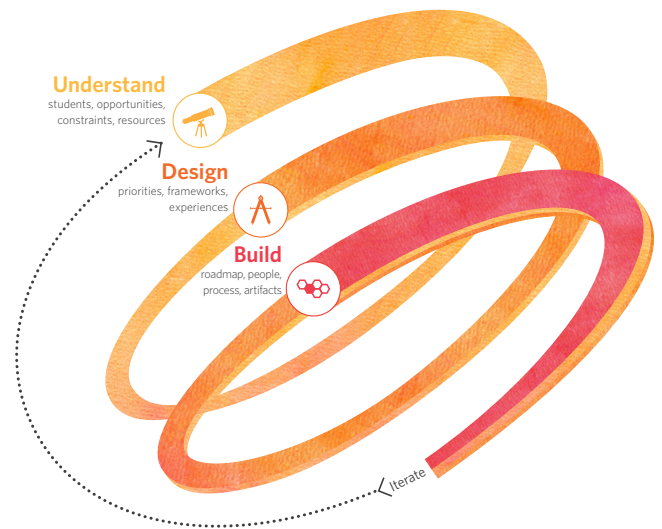
While there are numerous ways to approach school design, Springpoint has developed and refined a student-centered process to help our national partners create new school models tailored to the needs of their communities and adaptable to new challenges and opportunities. Below is a quick overview of how we structure this process. For more, please see our school design guide at bit.ly/springpoint.

Understand. Student-centered school design begins with a deep understanding of the students and communities the model will serve. These understandings—sourced through data-gathering efforts such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations—drive the development of a mission and instructional vision, and inform the school’s “Portrait of a Graduate.” This document acts as a lodestar throughout the process and includes students’ goals and ambitions, as well as the skills and experiences they want to have prior to graduation.

Design. In this phase, designers craft a school model and a set of experiences that enable students to become the graduates in the “Portrait of a Graduate.” Designers codify model elements through artifacts such as model design frameworks and student experience maps. Mapping a scope and sequence broadly against time allows designers to visualize the systems, staffing, and resources required by their model.

Build. Once design teams have created drafts of their designs, tested as many elements as possible, and refined their vision into a model, they begin concretizing implementation essentials such as operational systems, competency and curriculum frameworks, and hiring and onboarding plans. Then, they translate designs into fully operational school models.

Iterate. Schools models that are built around young people by definition must be constantly evolving learning organizations, committed to continued adaptation. School designers code a culture of iteration in the DNA of the school model, carefully considering how and when to use data to inform iteration, and plotting out key inflection points and priorities.



Springpoint is a national nonprofit that partners with districts, charters, and networks to design and launch innovative high schools that can meet the needs of all students, preparing them for college and career success. We help partners “do school differently” by providing school design and planning workshops, implementation supports, tools and resources, customized coaching, and adult learning experiences.

LEARN MORE:

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