



Participant's Guide to the Vision 2021 Scenarios

Vision 2021 Scenario Toolkit

Created By



Institute for Alternative Futures

<<This Page Intentionally Left Blank>>

Contents

- Introduction to the Scenario Toolkit 1**
 - Forecasts for the Future of Education 2
 - Scenarios for the Future of Education..... 2
 - Examples of Successful Scenarios..... 3
- Forecasts for the Future of Education 5**
- Scenarios for the Future of Education 10**
 - IAF’s Aspirational Scenario Method..... 10
 - Scenario #1: Doing the Best We Can 12
 - Scenario #2: Fighting for What We Believe In..... 15
 - Scenario #3: Setting Learning Free of Boundaries..... 18
 - Scenario #4: Leading Learning Communities..... 21
- Readiness Survey/Futures Quiz Exercise 24**

<<This Page Intentionally Left Blank>>

Introduction to the Scenario Toolkit

In the year 2021 the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) will celebrate one hundred years of service to principals in pre-K-8 schools. It will also be the year that kindergarteners from today's classes graduate. In preparation for this future NAESP has commissioned the Institute for Alternative Futures (IAF) to conduct a far reaching futures project to help the principalship understand and prepare for future changes in education. NAESP's *Vision 2021* initiative asks the important questions: What will schools be like in 2021? What will be the role of principals in 2021? What needs to be done today to prepare schools for the next generation?

The *Vision 2021* project is based on the idea of anticipatory learning. Anticipatory learning begins with understanding the world as it is and as it could be as trends, issues and new developments shape the future. It requires organizations to understand how their history, values and preferences create their identity and shape their assumptions about what is possible. Then they can set a direction for the organization that is inspired by a shared vision and goals. But the learning does not stop with the decision. Organizations enter a new phase of learning how to lead change and innovate in a changing world. No one can create a preferred future without learning first how to do it.

There are four inter-related phases to anticipatory learning:

- 1) Developing foresight through environmental scanning, forecasting and scenarios;
- 2) Exploring through dialogue the history, values and preferences that shape an organization's identity and reflecting on what the future may require;
- 3) Setting direction through vision, goals, strategies and plans; and
- 4) Innovating strategies and solutions to achieve the vision.

In the foresight phase, an organization conducts an **Environmental Scan** of a broad range of issues including social, technological, environmental, economic, political and values trends. Information is gathered from a variety of sources, such as literature reviews, expert interviews, focus groups and surveys. Next, **Trends** that could affect the organization are selected. A trend is a pattern of change over time in something of importance to the observer. These trends are evaluated to identify **Key Drivers** shaping the future – issues, trends and developments with the greatest potential impact and the highest levels of uncertainty. **Provocative forecasts** project these key forces into the future. **Scenarios** are created using the forecasts and key drivers shaping the future and are designed to help organizations innovate new strategies and solutions.

The *Vision 2021* project has completed all of the steps of the first phase. The *Vision 2021* project created four scenarios on the future of education and a scenario toolkit to help the leadership of NAESP, their state affiliates and principals worldwide answer these important questions. These scenarios build on the in-depth research conducted by IAF and numerous workshops with a select group of leading principals. The *Vision 2021* project has also completed an extensive environmental scan. The results are available at http://vision2021.org/anticipating_the_future.pdf. Nine forecasts on the future of education were also created and are available at http://vision2021.org/provocative_forecasts.pdf.

In order to help their members to innovate new strategies and solutions for their own educational communities, NAESP created this scenario toolkit. The *Vision 2021* project has taken the forecasts and scenarios developed and created a scenario toolkit to help leaders facilitate a dialogue on the future of their educational communities.

This is the second part of a two part scenario toolkit. The first part is a facilitator's guide that provides all the tools necessary to run a scenario workshop. This second part is a guide for the participants in the workshop. It provides an overview of the forecasts and scenarios developed during the *Vision 2021* Project. It also provides a futures readiness survey to help you decide if you and your organization are ready to use scenarios to create change in your educational community.

Forecasts for the Future of Education

Provocative forecasts explore key drivers of change by projecting them out into the future. The goal is to examine the possible impacts of changes in the current environment. They are not predictions of the future, but guides to help explore the possible impacts of current changes in the environment. They are learning tools designed to help leaders question their assumptions about the future and identify emerging threats and opportunities before they occur. It is more important to see forecasts as opportunities for leadership than as predictions about the future.

Scenarios for the Future of Education

Scenarios are alternative descriptions or stories of how the future might unfold. They compile information about divergent trends and possibilities into internally consistent images of plausible alternative futures. Scenarios are designed to systematically explore future challenges and opportunities and aid in strategy development. In the process, they often provoke the imagination, raise fundamental questions, make explicit our deeply held values, and stretch our worldviews.

Scenarios are not predictions of the future. Rather, they encourage people to think about how to navigate successfully across the different circumstances that might be encountered. Scenarios can expand our 'field of view' and help people to see possible threats and opportunities that would otherwise have remained hidden.

Scenarios are an investment in learning. A set of several significantly different scenarios helps "bound the uncertainty" of the future so that organizations can systematically plan for future contingencies and clarify their vision of the future they prefer. Scenario thinking is real and useful, but it happens only when you actively use the scenarios. The scenarios are not the end product, but merely a powerful tool.

Assessing trends and key forces can reduce some uncertainties about the future, but it cannot eliminate them, and it often will highlight just how great the uncertainties really are. The key forces and forecasts identified through environmental scanning are important for constructing scenarios. The scenarios serve three purposes:

1. To bound the range of uncertainty and display the broad range of possibilities ahead.
2. To stimulate participants to explore both dangers to be avoided and positive possibilities that can be used in constructing a vision of the preferred future.
3. To test how potential strategies and actions might work in different future circumstances, in order to identify the most "robust" strategies that make sense across a wide variety of future conditions.

Scenarios need not be elaborate or highly quantitative to be valuable. In fact, they are often used as an antidote to highly quantitative approaches to strategic planning that sometimes lose in imagination and adaptability what they gain in precision. What is more valuable about scenarios is that they change the way people who use them think about the future.

Examples of Successful Scenarios

Scenarios have been successfully used in a wide variety of situations. Businesses often use scenarios as part of their strategic planning process in order to identify future threats and opportunities. Government agencies around the world have used scenarios to help guide their policy decisions and tackle tough issues. Associations often use scenarios to help guide needed changes in their professions. Below are two of the more famous examples of using scenarios to shape the future.

Royal Dutch/Shell Scenarios

The long investment cycle of oil and gas projects lend themselves to using scenarios for strategic planning. Royal Dutch/Shell has one of the most experienced and successful scenario groups. In his book *The Art of the Long View*, Peter Schwartz details how Royal Dutch/Shell's scenario group were able to anticipate major changes in the price of oil as well as the fall of the Soviet Union. While they did not accurately predict exact prices and dates, they were able to have models and plans in place for when those events did occur. While their competitors scurried to adjust to the "surprises," Shell was able to rise from a small player in the oil industry to one of the largest.

South African Mont Fleur Scenarios

At the end of apartheid in South Africa there was a need for an inclusive discussion on the future of South Africa. Twenty-two prominent and diverse leaders from across South Africa were brought together to discuss the future of the country as it marched toward its first fully democratic, multi-racial elections. The scenarios depicted the positives and negatives resulting from a variety of popular opinions on how to successfully transition power in the country. Because both the good and bad of each strategy were brought to light and discussed, downsides were mitigated and the country underwent a successful transition in three years.

Forecasts for the Future of Education

Provocative forecasts are designed to help leaders question their assumptions about the future and explore the uncertainty and opportunity ahead for their organizations. The National Association of Elementary School Principals commissioned the Institute for Alternative Futures to explore areas of uncertainty and opportunity for schools and the principalship as part of its Vision 2021 Project. IAF crafted the nine forecasts in this section to start a dialogue with school principals, other educators, and the public about a preferred future. The complete report is available on the Vision 2021 at http://vision2021.org/provocative_forecasts.pdf.

These nine provocative forecasts provide a good introduction to the issues that are driving change in education. It is more important to see these forecasts as opportunities for leadership than as predictions about the future. As you read these forecasts think about how these forecasts will affect you and your work.

1. Schools become the learning portals to a global workplace.

Schools will shift from learning environments producing workers suited to an industrial era to integrated settings producing lifelong learners for the global workplace. State of the art school design in 2021 will integrate students into a work world that relies on project-based learning, team building, and technologies that remove the barriers between schools and companies, organizations and communities around the globe.

This forecast explores what schools must become to align with the new requirements of a global society. The interacting drivers of global collaboration and competition are driving every aspect of our society. In the future, our knowledge economy will need workers who can think critically, work collaboratively and adapt and innovate in a changing world. Education is not immune to these changes. Education is undergoing intensive globalization as schools all over the world respond to similar ideas about what and how students should learn.

2. Free market forces favor school choice over educational equity.

For the first decade of the 21st century, school choice proves to be a popular public policy. The public trust free market approaches to deliver results and as consumers they like having it their way in the marketplace. People with the means and smarts secure the best for their children. However, by 2021 the nation's growing immigrant and

minority population has made attacking this two-tier system a priority to restore the American dream of equal opportunity through education.

This forecast probes social preferences for choice and the possibility for recommitting to educational equity. In this scenario, school failures over the next decade strengthen the school choice movement and the Baby Boomer generation dominates public policy with their strong, often polarizing, ideologies. School failures over the past decade strengthen the school choice movement.

Growing populations of immigrants and minorities will mean a growing number of children and parents will need more services from schools. However, there is cause for hope on the horizon as the Millennial Generation and Generation X, who are both more accepting of diversity, support the redistribution of funds to underperforming schools in minority communities.

3. Hyperlinked learning explores meaning through multimedia.

Teachers and students in 2021 are making sense of an increasingly complex world using multimedia and learning technologies that honor multiple forms of intelligence and different ways of knowing. Learners are finding these hyperlinked experiences provide the context that connects facts and skills into understanding. As these learning technologies enable more collaborative and accelerated learning, they are redefining the boundaries of place, curriculum, and grade.

This forecast examines new capabilities to enrich and transform the learning experience. Rapidly improving online learning and learning technologies are expanding the options for schooling. At the same time, the growing amount of information available today is pushing demand for knowledge technologies, such as intelligent agents, to improve learning and decision making. New capabilities in visual forms of learning such as serious games, digital video and simulations are already creating new education opportunities for innovative educators.

4. Scientific knowledge brings new understanding to child development.

Scientific knowledge from neuroscience, psychology and biology will confirm how brain function, biological factors and life conditions contribute to intellectual capabilities. Students will use assistive technologies to gain access to a wider range of personal capabilities. Educators will use this new knowledge and technologies to customize developmental pathways for students that redefine and re-sequence elementary and middle school pedagogy.

This forecast anticipates scientific research that clarifies individual differences and defines appropriate learning approaches for different students. New imaging technologies, such as optical imaging are allowing researchers to study brain function in free environments such as schools. Researchers are also getting better at understanding and building a base of knowledge about different forms of intelligence and developmental patterns. This will provide educators the ability to differentiate and nurture mental abilities. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) will help to drive these advances due to the many references (111) references to ‘scientifically based research’ and promises billions of dollars to support such research.

5. Holistic standards expand expectations for achieving student potential.

The first No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law mandated in 2002 that schools be responsible for the success of every student under an important but narrow definition of achievement. In subsequent reauthorizations, educators and public officials have widened the scope to hold schools accountable for educating the whole child. Standards in effect in 2021 require individualized learning and hold schools accountable for meeting holistic indicators of student potential.

This forecast explains how today’s proficiency standards will necessarily morph into standards that support educating the whole child. The public continues to demand accountability and transparency for school performance. This trend is unlikely to abate anytime in the future. However, vast data fields will provide exquisitely tailored comparative groups for developing standards for education. This will make it easier to develop standards that are more nuanced and appropriate to different individuals. There is also likely to be a backlash against the very narrow view of achievement currently seen in measures of school and student achievement. The public will naturally push for more holistic indicators of student potential.

6. Networks of learning innovation experiment with new learning strategies for children.

Networks of learning innovation research find new ways to accelerate and deepen student learning. These 2021 networks emerged from a fertile period of experimentation and uneven success in charter, magnet, home, university lab and virtual schools. They rigorously evaluate their practices and use learning technologies to collaborate with and transfer knowledge into the wider education community.

This forecast anticipates networks of research and development that link schools to centers of innovation in collaborating in research and knowledge sharing. Many new types of schools are identifying strategies that work for failing students and they are attracting sufficient public and private support to continue innovating. However, these innovations often do not diffuse to other public schools. Better networks for diffusing these innovations would create a virtuous cycle where innovations are shared throughout a network of schools. Many knowledge technologies will help to create these networks by making it easier for educators to communicate, collaborate and share ideas.

7. Surveillance society links schoolhouses into electronic safety network.

Schools in 2021 are linked into an electronic safety network that features sophisticated threat detection and rapid response. Biometrics clear students and personnel for entry while profiling systems warn when a “person of interest” tries to come on school grounds. Biosensors are used to detect sudden changes in patterns of behavior or activities. Schools are becoming more open to parents and the community through secured entries and virtual visitation.

This forecast projects today’s concerns about school safety into a future where surveillance is ubiquitous and welcome. Sensors and monitoring equipment are improving dramatically thanks to government and industry spending on security. Within a few years it is likely that sensors and monitoring equipment will be ubiquitous in public areas to continuously scan for risks. The security industry is also refining behavioral research and data gathering systems to help government agencies prevent terrorist or aberrant behavior. Many of these technologies will find their way into schools.

8. Society’s mounting debts compromise future investments in education.

Although Americans buy into nationalistic appeals to invest in science and technology to keep the economy globally competitive over the next decade, mounting debts make it difficult to invest in education. The public treasury is stressed by rising costs for health care and pensions, national security and a long neglected public infrastructure. High levels of personal debt make increased taxes politically untenable.

This forecast takes a hard look at the limitations schools face and asks what it would take to create a tipping point where education is a priority. Aged Baby Boomers nearing end of life are placing extraordinary demands on Social Security and Medicare. This will lead to tight finances all the way from the federal government to the local. There is also a growing push to balance fairness of funding per student with fairness of tax

burden placed on taxpayers. It is likely that many public programs, including public education, will face increased competition for limited funding. However, as a counterpoint, a growing number of the super wealthy are becoming philanthropists who step in where government funding is unavailable.

9. Principals set the standard for chief learning officers.

Effective principals in 2021 have become the model that other chief learning officers in corporations and organizations want to emulate. They are masters in leading their schools to learn and adapt in an uncompromising pursuit of what is best for their students. Emerging from an era of intense accountability few corporations will ever experience, these principals are creating learning organizations that are transforming individual lives and communities.

This forecast acknowledges that principals will be using continuous learning processes to engage students, teachers, parents and the community in achieving learning outcomes for students. As more is known about how to close the education gap for under-achieving students, the public will recognize the integral role principals play in the continuous improvement of learning processes. With so many corporate leaders falling into low public esteem for acts of corruption and greed, the public will turn to other sectors to find leaders to trust and respect. Principals and other educators could fill this void and garner support for the importance of education to a knowledge based society.

Scenarios for the Future of Education

IAF's Aspirational Scenario Method

IAF used its aspirational futures approach to develop the scenarios in this toolkit for NAESP. In this method, two of the four scenarios describe a visionary future. People often have difficulty imagining or clarifying what they may most want in a preferred future. These two scenarios help facilitate this dialogue. One scenario describes what people expect will happen and helps them surface their assumptions about their future. A fourth scenario confronts the fears people have about their future. In a set, these scenarios are often ordered with the expected future first, then the feared followed by the scenarios that explore a preferred future. In a typical scenario workshop, while everyone may read all scenarios in advance, they will only work to analyze and understand the implications of one scenario.

EXPECTED FUTURE

This scenario is the future the organization expects will occur. It represents the “official future.” And it is an important reference point in a strategic planning process.

For schools and the principalship, the expected future can best be described as **Doing the Best We Can**. It includes the trends most likely to continue over the next 14 years such as the importance of assessment in education, pressures on school finances, improvements in educational research and the continued importance of preparing students to compete in a highly competitive global workplace.

FEARED FUTURE

This is the scenario most people in an organization fear. It looks at important forces of change that could create challenging conditions for the organization. The feared future scenario is strategically vital because it explores what people must work to avoid. It is also a powerful motivator for bringing people together in a shared vision of a preferred future.

For schools and the principalship, the feared future can best be described as **Fighting for What We Believe In**. This scenario focuses on the negative aspects of school

choice, the fiscal crunch on public schools caused by an aging population and increases in the digital divide between rich and poor students.

PREFERED FUTURE

Visionary scenarios identify the most promising opportunities for the future. They are inspirational because they challenge assumptions of what is possible and help build momentum for change. These scenarios can focus on striking advances in technology, shifts in thinking and dramatic changes in the operating environment.

In this scenario set for NAESP, one preferred future scenario is described as **Setting Learning Free of Boundaries**. This scenario looks at striking advances in education technology, global learning communities and the development of networks of innovation among schools and universities. The other preferred future scenario is **Leading Learning Communities**. It focuses on a shift in thinking among principals to focus on holistic standards in education, developing new ways of integrating scientific knowledge and educational research into education and addressing educational equity.

As a final note, alternative futures can be presented in a variety of ways. The images can be portrayed as a personal narrative, an editorial in a newspaper, a keynote speech, or even as a skit or videotaped public service announcement. At the end of each of the four scenarios, we have tried to capture the essence of the elements of each of the futures as a blog post written by a principal in 2021.

Scenario #1: Doing the Best We Can

In 2021, schools and principals are tackling many of the difficult challenges facing society with limited resources. Schools struggle to do the best they can to prepare students for a highly competitive global workplace while facing the growing needs of immigrant and minority students as well as a tightening public purse.

Principals are the miracle workers expected to experts on integrating sophisticated technology, better research on learning, and new standards and metrics for learning into increasingly dynamic schools. Principals now have access to better networks of support for professional development and knowledge sharing.

Key Drivers for the Expected Future Scenario

- Highly competitive global workplace demands hard and soft skills.
- Assessment of skills remains a top priority.
- Educational research improves dramatically.
- Learning technologies improve.
- Immigration grows the ranks of students from underserved communities.
- Schools are expected to address social problems.
- School finances are under pressure from cash strapped governments.

Crisis	Opportunity
Greater global competition requires improvements in skills.	Schools are leaders in global learning & collaboration.
New metrics & standards tie the hands of schools and principals.	New standards & metrics improve basic skills & draw attention to education disparities.
Principals are inundated with research on learning and child development.	Educational research provides ways to individualize learning for students.
New technology increases education expenses.	New technology improves the quality of education.
Schools are at the forefront of our majority minority nation.	Diversity is a source of strength & inspiration for schools.
Schools are forced to compete with other public priorities for smaller pools of public funds.	Schools are more creative in providing value both to students and the larger community.

By 2021, the average graduate competes not only with her classmates, but with competitors around the globe. Schools are under pressure to provide their students with the skills they need to compete—the hard skills of reading, writing, math, science and foreign languages as well as the soft skills of creativity, innovation, professionalism, a strong work ethic, collaboration skills and oral communication skills. Skill assessment is a central mission of schools and their principals. Since hard skills are easier to assess, they are the main focus of assessment tests leaving many schools with little incentive to improve their students' soft skills.

At the beginning of the century, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) provided a spark to educational researchers to use “scientific” methods to investigate learning in complex and dynamic classrooms. Now educators have a more precise body of educational research to facilitate individualized learning for students. Many schools are part of large networks of schools, universities and companies that help to diffuse this research into practice in the schools.

Students live in a minority-majority nation and a significant number of students are from homes where English is not the primary language. Schools are under constant pressure to provide multilingual education and services to both students and their parents. Schools struggle to balance the needs of diverse students and parents with different beliefs about the importance of education and the role schools should have in teaching cultural values. Principals are forced to accommodate as many of these differences as possible while not letting the “middle ground” get lost in the mix. Increased immigration has meant that many students come from underserved communities where access to affordable healthcare is limited and access to quality food and after school activities are restricted. Addiction and family problems are prevalent and violence is pervasive. To meet these needs, many schools are transformed into 24-7 communities providing expanded health coverage, school meal programs, after school and social service programs.

While these rising demands on public schools in 2021 have increased, school funding has not increased. Retiring Baby Boomers places a large burden on the finances of state, local and federal governments. The problem is particularly acute for state and local governments. They are now paying the price for keeping control on wages of public workers by increasing retirement and health benefits without adequately funding these commitments. The public demands more action from the federal government to address education, but it is as cash strapped as the states. What the federal government can do is create more mandates for education and leave the problem of funding them to others.

Scenario #1: Doing the Best We Can

SEARCH • TheWEB • IAF.com The Expected Future

SEARCH

Home Page

World

U.S.

Politics

Business

Health

Law

Education

Science

Society

Technology

Economics

Environment

Politics

Video

Culture

Values

Living

**National
Association of
Elementary
School
Principals**

Want to Advance
in Your Career?

*Learn Chinese
Today!*

Updated: 1:00 p.m. EST (18:00 GMT), June 1, 2021

Schools do the best they can as principals become the miracle workers in education

As this spring break begins it is instructive for principals to reflect on our profession. We feel like we're asked to be miracle workers just to keep our schools doing the best they can. We're all struggling to keep up with the new standards and metrics for education that seem to come out at the state and federal level every few years. Our schools have never been better at preparing students with the math and science skills needed to compete in a global workplace, but are we letting all this testing stifle the creative, collaborative and risk-taking attributes that leading global companies say they need for success?

Thankfully we've seen more federal funding for education research and professional development to help teachers apply the research. We are proud to be part of a growing research network of schools, universities and companies that diffuse innovations to public schools. It is hard to recall the days when people talked about learning as something that occurred largely inside the school walls.

We all feel the fiscal pinch as governments at all levels struggle to pay for the pension and health care costs of older workers. Like many schools, more than half of my students are the children of recent immigrants. While it is a joy to teach them, it is a struggle to fund classes for second language learners, the remedial classes they need and after school activities. It often seems like our days never end, but if we don't step up, who will prepare our students to succeed in the world in which they now live?

Scenario #2: Fighting for What We Believe In

In 2021, schools fight for what they believe in against growing social unrest and restricted funding. The public chooses school choice over educational equity leading to voucher systems that let parents “top-up” vouchers to attend private schools. The end result is a tiered system where a few top schools in each city attract sufficient funding to buy new learning technologies and the best students, while the remaining public schools are the clear outcome of years of neglect.

Principals find few government leaders willing to listen to their stories of struggle for the community’s children. The parents of school children cannot drown out an aging population determined to protect its interests in health and pensions. Principals have discovered new allies in the politically powerful immigrant communities who are determined to secure the promise of a good education for their children.

Key drivers for the Feared Future Scenario:

- The public demands school choice over educational equity.
- An aging population feels disconnected from public schools.
- New learning technologies deepen the digital divide among in rich and poor schools.
- Cash strapped governments have little discretionary funding to appease vocal voters.

Crisis	Opportunity
School choice creates fierce competition between schools.	Competition creates pockets for excellence among schools that strive to be schools of choice.
Principals don’t fight for school funds.	Schools mobilize the forces for educational equity.
An aging population feels disconnected from public schools.	Schools engage older populations in caring for future generations.
The digital divide grows as many schools are unable to afford new technology.	Leading schools become early adopters in developing affordable technologies for everyone.
Principals adopt a survivalist mentality and fail to set high expectations.	Principals give their communities hope for a better future through good education.

Over the next fourteen years, the public pushes for school choice over educational equity in small ways. School voucher programs give some children access to innovative and specialized schools. Problems quickly arise in school districts that allow parents to “top-up” vouchers with additional funds to attend pricier schools.

These schools have the additional funds needed to compete with public schools for the best staff and students. Underachieving students, students with special needs or problem students tend to concentrate in underfunded schools. Tight public finances exacerbate the problem as additional funds originally designated for underperforming schools are redirected to shore-up underfunded public pensions and healthcare systems. Without the funds to address the underlying problems, these schools continuously fail to improve on standardized tests scores and many are shut down. This only leads to a vicious circle as the students are moved to another school which then becomes in danger of failing due to poor standardized test scores.

Schools lose the battle for public funding. Instead of rallying their collective voice for preserving a quality education for every child, teachers, principals, administrators and school boards are paralyzed by conflicting visions and values. Increased competition for students and staff also changes the dynamic inside school districts and schools as people fight for limited positions and promotions in the viable schools.

Most principals feel powerless to make meaningful changes in their schools. All educators are turning to their professional associations to protect what turf may remain for the last stand of public education. Only a resurgent bloc of immigrant and minority voters is making a clear case for equity in education that gets heard over the voices of a large and politically active older Americans movement. By 2021, a third of all federal income taxes are used to pay for Social Security and Medicare leading to widespread cuts in other programs from defense to education.

Many public schools are chronically underfunded and without the resources needed to adequately compensate staff, update technology or maintain facilities and programs. Parents are disgusted that they have better technologies in their home for entertainment than their children have in schools for learning. The only certain investment in technology seems to come when schools have to prove they have a way to curb violence. With such bleak prospects for good working conditions and income growth, few talented young people are willing to choose a career as a teacher or principal. Many parents have concluded their only choice to assure their children are learning in safe environments with competent adults is to do the job themselves.

SEARCH

The WEB • IAF.com

Feared Future

SEARCH

Home Page

World

U.S.

Politics

Business

Health

Law

Education

Science

Society

Technology

Economics

Environment

Politics

Video

Culture

Values

Living

**National
Association of
Elementary
School
Principals**

Griffin Online
An Accredited
Virtual Private
Elementary
School

Updated: 1:00 p.m. EST (18:00 GMT), June 1, 2021

Principals fight for what they believe in as the public gives up on the promise of public education

This missive goes out to the few principals who still feel as I do that we must do something to stop the forces undermining our schools. Now, more than any time in the past, we need to band together to fight for what we believe in.

Every day the divide between the schools and the students who have access to resources grows wider. When a family chooses private or home schooling over public schools they take valuable dollars from underfunded public schools, making it harder for us to meet the costs of educating other children. It is becoming a devastating cycle of destruction among our schools which is compounded by the growth of immigrant children. The government says we must give them second language learner classes, remedial education and other services, but they never give us the money to do right by these new citizens.

I know exactly how we got in this mess. The state of the public purse has never been in worse shape. The federal government is too burdened by the debt of previous generations and the astronomical health and pension liabilities caused by an aging population. We lost a recent effort to pass an educational bond measure in my district because the public said it would not put another penny in a failing school system. If this isn't what it means to be in a death spiral, I don't know what it would be.

How are we supposed to improve when we cannot pay the qualified staff we need or catch up with the technology curve? Most of our children lack mobile computing devices and broadband access. Our laptops can't even run simple virtual worlds or learning simulations. Meanwhile, private school children are learning valuable multicultural skills through learning portals closed tight for our students.

Scenario #3: Setting Learning Free of Boundaries

In 2021, schools have integrated advances in technology into the classroom to set learning free of boundaries. Serious games create options for kids to learn at their own pace and to choose among a wide variety of subjects. They also help children learn to be creative, innovative and to take risks in a controlled virtual environment. Knowledge technologies embedded in the serious games enable teachers to assess student progress in real time across a variety of hard and soft skills. Schools use dynamic learning systems to tailor the style, pace, and content to individual students.

Principals are connecting their schools to global learning communities where students collaborate in becoming global citizens with the knowledge and skills to sustain life in an interconnected world. These communities' help students learn the foreign languages and cultural competencies they will need to collaborate in a global society. Schools are also connected to other schools and universities from around the world in networks that help foster and share innovations in education.

Key Drivers for the 1st Preferred Future Scenario:

- Educational technology experiences a number of breakthroughs.
- Teachers use tailored learning systems for individual students.
- Global learning communities connect students across the world.
- Schools and universities develop networks of innovation.

Opportunity	Crisis
Principals can advocate for the use of a number of breakthroughs in learning technology.	There are multiple competing technologies for principals to evaluate, purchase and integrate.
Teachers are able to use new technology to develop individualized learning plans for students.	There is increased tension between the learning goals of individuals and cohort groups.
Global learning technologies connect students across the world.	Educators are required to become more aware of cultural differences.
Schools and universities develop networks of innovation.	Innovation requires rapid change in schools.

New technologies have transformed schools as most parents and grandparents knew them. In 2021, interactive learning stations are commonplace in classrooms. These stations create a completely digital teaching experience that removes the barrier between the classroom and the digital world. Digital video conferencing enables students to attend class from remote workstations, record classroom experiences for later replay by students as study aides and enable parents to observe classroom instruction in real time. Teachers use digital video to improve their performance. Students and teachers regularly embed user generated media in their school work.

Powerful and affordable mobile computing is widely available. Students use them to run serious games, models and simulations. Advances in wireless mesh networks blanket schools with high speed access and hyperlinks between the physical world and knowledge resources. User friendly simulations enable students to test hypothesis in real time. The greater use of games, models and simulations reduces the need for dedicated labs and classrooms for subjects such as art, music and science. Teachers can pull student assessments embedded in serious games, models and simulations and to keep track of student progress in real time. Teachers and principals can surround students with a dynamic learning system that tailors learning to individualized needs.

Global learning communities have set learning free of the boundaries of distance. Economic growth combined with low cost computing and communication have extended learning technologies to students in previously unconnected parts of the world. Cheap video teleconferencing and easy to navigate virtual communities enable students and entire classrooms to interact with each other from a world away.

Robust networks of learning connect schools and universities to find new ways to accelerate and deepen student learning. These networks emerge from a fertile period of experimentation and uneven success in charter, magnet, home, university lab and virtual schools. Those schools that succeed in creating new innovations have established channels to share their successes with other schools in the region. This creates an innovation network where innovative schools become a hub for innovation.

University education departments often act as facilitators to these networks where they rigorously evaluate the practices of innovative schools and use learning technologies to collaborate with and transfer knowledge into the wider education community. They are part of a well coordinated support system that identifies schools where an innovation is not working and moves quickly to find more appropriate solutions to local situations and individual student needs.

SEARCH

TheWEB • IAF.com

SEARCH

Home Page

World

U.S.

Politics

Business

Health

Law

Education

Science

Society

Technology

Economics

Environment

Politics

Video

Culture

Values

Living

**National
Association of
Elementary
School
Principals**

Tired of Looking
Like Everyone
Else Online?

Get Your Free
Calvin Klein
Digital Avatar

Updated: 1:00 p.m. EST (18:00 GMT), June 1, 2021

Schools use technology to free themselves of boundaries as principals become chief technology advocates

For this Principal's Office blog, I want to reflect on the amazing success we've had in integrating technology into education. Where are the Luddites now...in the nursing home? While I am still learning new tricks every day from our students and teachers, I am proud to be the chief advocate for what technology can mean to our schools.

Just last week I had one of those experiences. One of our students had used a simulator to create a virtual city. She was recreating ancient Rome based on her history course and was even applying some of the theories on supply and demand she learned in her economics course by manipulating the supply of wine in the city. Another student had created a series of shifting virtual art murals that can be displayed on the virtual space on our walls. Our virtual displays are alive with wonderful examples of student work that click into view when I pass by.

It wasn't until we had our new management and administration technologies that we could really practice distributed leadership. Our teachers love sharing particularly good learning experiences with other colleagues, parents...and even me. Students and parents love this access and get quite caught up in learning beyond the school day. I find it much easier to communicate with everyone through our secure learning portal. There would be no way we could handle dynamic student scheduling without real time communication links to home. Setting up mutual learning experiences with our sister school in Bangalore also has been much easier.

Scenario #4: Leading Learning Communities

By 2021 the public push for accountability has created a renaissance in public education as poor performance by students in underserved communities is no longer tolerated by the public. Public support for education has increased as have more holistic standards that measure both the hard and the soft skills necessary for future success. Advances in scientific knowledge and educational research have transformed how educators think about learning.

The role of the principal has changed to meet this demand for learning results for all children. Principals have become chief learning officers (CLO)s in charge of developing a culture of learning, identifying critical needs for improvement and disseminating best practices. Principals have become leaders in developing learning communities and are a source of inspiration for learning officers in industry, government or other organizations where the public requires trust and demands results.

Key Drivers for the 2nd Preferred Future Scenario

- The principalship changes to embrace new models based on the chief learning officer concept.
- The public demands increased accountability and access to schools.
- There is a movement for more holistic standards in education.
- The public pushes for equity in education leading to a renaissance in public education for underserved communities.
- Advances in scientific knowledge and educational research transform how educators think about learning.

Opportunity	Crisis
The principalship changes to embrace new models based on the Chief Learning Officer concept.	The role of Chief Learning Officer adds additional responsibilities to principals.
The public takes a higher interest in quality public education for all.	The public demands more accountability & access to schools.
There is a push for more holistic standards in education that assess both hard and soft skills.	Schools have to manage a wider range of student assessments tests for both hard and soft skills.
Advances in scientific knowledge and educational research transform how educators think about learning.	A significant population of older teachers require retraining in new methods of education that capitalize on this knowledge.

By 2021, the role of chief learning officer (CLO) is an established part of both the business and education landscapes. Advances in scientific knowledge and educational research have transformed how educators think about learning. To integrate this learning into schools, principals are in touch with the latest scientific and field research on developing multiple intelligences and fostering a culture of learning. Principals are the champions for the importance of education to the larger community.

Principals have the ear of executives in the highest levels of business who understand how vital their leadership is preparing a qualified workforce and an informed citizenry. Corporate and government CLOs are borrowing best practices from elementary and middle school principals because they respect the wisdom of their goal-driven and individualized approach to student and team performance.

Principals honed their expertise under a harsh public spotlight. Poor performance on standardized tests in poor and minority schools sparked public outrage about inequalities in education. New laws were passed to disconnect school funding from property values and provide equity of funding across school districts. The public also pushed for quality pre-K education for low income children and extra funds for students with special needs. In return for additional funds, the public demanded results.

The public was quite literally watching over principals' shoulders to make sure this turnaround happened. Parents used their access to live streaming video of classrooms to monitor the quality of education of their children in real time. The public also looked at the record of student assessments mandated by the NCLB Act and decided schools should teach more than the hard skills of reading, writing, math and science. Schools now have a variety of means for creating and assessing student progress in soft skills such as creativity, innovation, professionalism, a strong work ethic, collaboration skills and oral communication skills. This relentless focus on accountability, quality and equity is creating a renaissance in public education in underserved communities. Live streaming video brought the poor conditions of many of these schools to the attention of the public in a very real and visceral way.

Principals are organizing students, teachers, parents and citizens into learning communities that are developing a lifelong commitment to achieving individual and collective potential. They see themselves as facilitators of a network of support that surrounds their schools with whatever people need to put learning first. If a student needs an advanced course not offered by the school, he gets it. If a teacher demonstrates a particular aptitude for teaching specific learning styles or subjects, she gets matched to those who need her gifts. If a child cannot get her basic needs for food and security met, she gets tied into a seamless system of social services.

Chief learning officer is not a job for everyone but it is a job that now appeals to people who believe they can make a difference in the lives of children, their community, and perhaps even the world. They are guiding students to be global citizens in a world that is counting on them for its survival.

SEARCH

The WEB IAF.com

SEARCH

Home Page

World

U.S.

Politics

Business

Health

Law

Education

Science

Society

Technology

Economics

Environment

Politics

Video

Culture

Values

Living

**National
Association of
Elementary
School
Principals**

Get Your MBA
in corporate
learning
strategies at
Griffin Online!

Updated: 1:00 p.m. EST (18:00 GMT), March 15, 2021

Schools become learning communities as principals lead as Chief Learning Officers (CLO)

It may seem odd to have a middle school principal writing an opinion piece in a prominent online business journal, but the editors realize what we have learned in the public schools could make a difference in the success of your businesses.

In many respects principals are taking the lead in creating learning communities. One of our unique advantages is our close connection to the new research on learning. New studies on brain imaging have created breakthroughs in understanding learning styles and critical learning periods.

Leading researchers in education are tying those breakthroughs to the learning process to create customized learning and development for children from hard skills such as math and science to soft skills such as emotional intelligence, facilitation and trust building.

Educators realize that it is impossible for us to create the workforce of tomorrow without focusing on building the moral character of children. Considering your long history of business ethics scandals I am sure you agree that corporate CLOs could learn something from our insights about developing the whole child. Just imagine what your company could accomplish with a “whole” employee.

The public school system has made a concerted push to fully develop every child in our schools. We’ve doubled down and focused our attention on building up a future workforce that is creative and ethical with skills needed for critical thinking and collaboration. To my corporate colleagues ...we are entrusting you with our best and brightest. Please don’t let us down!

Readiness Survey/Futures Quiz Exercise

This "test" consists of 15 questions that measure your ability to think like a futurist. The questions are designed with no clear right answer. Instead they probe your assumptions about the future. The text following the items describes how futurists usually answer these questions.

1. Can we know the future?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Are there one or many futures?
 - a. One
 - b. Many
3. What is the longest that we can usefully forecast?
 - a. 1-2 yrs
 - b. 3-5 yrs
 - c. 5-10 yrs
 - d. 10-25 yrs
 - e. More than 25 yrs
4. Which is better for understanding the long-term future?
 - a. Single, clear predictions
 - b. Multiple possible futures
 - c. Neither
 - d. Both
5. Which is the most important characteristic for a good forecast?
 - a. Accuracy
 - b. Precision
 - c. Utility
 - d. Clarity
6. Is the future already determined?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. Which influences the long-term future the most?
 - a. Trends
 - b. Events
 - c. Choices
 - d. All influence the future equally
8. Which type of future is most useful?
 - a. The most probable future
 - b. Plausible futures other than the most probable
 - c. The future we prefer
 - d. All are equally useful

9. Which influences the long-term future the most?
- a. Demographics
 - b. Physical environment
 - c. Technology
 - d. Economics
 - e. Government
 - f. Culture
 - g. All influence the future equally
10. Which is the most serious cause of forecasting errors?
- a. Lack of information
 - b. The forecaster's assumptions
 - c. External events
11. Which attitude toward the future is most often correct?
- a. Optimism
 - b. Pessimism
 - c. Transformationalism
 - d. Fatalism
 - e. All are equally correct
12. Telling stories about possible but unlikely futures is useful.
- a. True
 - b. False
13. Who sets the vision for the organization?
- a. The leader
 - b. The top management
 - c. The strategic planning team
 - d. Managers in general
 - e. Everyone
 - f. None of the above
14. Which are the three most important characteristics of an effective strategic plan?
- a. Commitment to carry it out
 - b. Coverage of everything the organization does
 - c. General direction for fundamental change
 - d. Detailed implementation plans
 - e. Understanding by everyone
 - f. Valid planning methodology
15. Which is the most frequently overlooked characteristic of successful change?
- a. Communication
 - b. Trust
 - c. Vision
 - d. Commitment