

REMAKING MIDDLE SCHOOL INITIATIVE DESIGN TEAMS & PRODUCTS: 2019-20

OVERVIEW:

Research presents us with the narrative that early adolescence is an extraordinary opportunity for long-lasting, positive learning and development. The great challenge is that middle schools, by and large, appear out of sync with the needs and interests of today's middle school students. In fact, data shows the steepest declines in student outcomes occurring between sixth and ninth grade.

The purpose of the **Remaking Middle School (RMS) Design Teams** is to promote collaboration among professionals of diverse backgrounds to generate actionable ideas, with the goals of transforming teaching and learning in the middle grades and promoting access to experiences that support the developmental needs of young adolescents.

Three Design Teams participated in the 2019-2020 design cycle. Each team focused on one specific priority area that surfaced at the [Remaking Middle School Summit](#) (2019), including:

- **Translating Research-to-Practice**
- **Teacher Learning & Professional Development**
- **School Climate & Culture**

Each team developed and prototyped a product that is described below. The next step is for each of these products to be piloted and evaluated in the field, and continually refined based on practitioner feedback.

DESIGN TEAMS & PRODUCTS: 2019-20

TRANSLATING RESEARCH-TO-PRACTICE

Goal: To inspire and support educators to translate the science of young adolescent development into intentional teaching and learning strategies.

Product: Quick and informative assessment tools to help educators gauge what they know and how they apply their knowledge of adolescent development in four key domains: (1) Supporting Autonomy, (2) Fostering Belonging, (3) Advancing Competence, and (4) Promoting Identity. This tool is meant to be a doorway into the rest of the Design Team products, as it increases practitioners' awareness of their knowledge and practices related to research.

TEACHER LEARNING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal: From the premises that (1) young adolescents have distinct developmental characteristics, (2) students benefit from learning environments attuned to their needs, and (3) educators teaching in the middle grades often lack specialized training to meet these students where they are, this Design Team aims to promote targeted teaching strategies to achieve student-focused outcomes.

Product: An open-access online resource bank organized by the four student-focused outcomes: Autonomy, Belonging, Competence, and Identity. Each section of the resource includes a research-based rationale explaining why the outcome is critical, and provides a minimum of ten multimedia resources that illustrate how to teach toward that outcome. Organized by the same four competencies of the Research-to-Practice Design Team, this product is a great second stop for educators in their engagement with the Design Team products.

SCHOOL CLIMATE & CULTURE

Goal: From the premise that school climate and culture heavily shape student experiences and learning outcomes in the middle grades, this Design Team aims to inspire and support educators in better understanding and advocating for youth voice in the middle grades.

Product: A four-part toolkit including a Rationale Statement, a Questionnaire (forthcoming), a collection of Inspirational Stories, and a list of "Getting Started" prompts and resources. The aim is to help educators: (1) more deeply understand the importance of youth voice in the middle grades, (2) identify ways to integrate youth voice in building and sustaining a positive school culture and climate, and (3) leverage resources and adopt practices that center youth voice in schools.