

# SPARK motivation, IGNITE LEARNING



By creating learning experiences that are *designed for discovery*—that affirm and tap into each student's identity and assets, especially those from communities that have been historically marginalized—we can navigate the unique challenges this school year will bring and take a step toward equity by helping young people not just recover but *grow and achieve*.



TURNAROUND  
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**The start of this school isn't what anyone hoped it would be. Concerns about perceived learning loss and students' and teachers' physical safety in light of the Delta variant, as well as arguments over masking and teaching anti-racism, have clouded our excitement about returning to school. The well-being of all students and staff must be our foremost priority.**

**But disruption can also present opportunity: This year, let's reimagine *how* we go back to the school environments and relationships we cherish. Instead of merely remediating deficits, we can ensure students' re-entry into school is affirming and supportive, while stimulating their intellectual curiosity, by celebrating their identities and their individual growth despite the collective trauma and isolation so many have faced (and which has been disproportionately experienced in communities of Color).**

**Using an asset-based lens encourages educators to really get to know and learn all about their students rather than just focusing on trying to solve challenges. The science of learning and development demonstrates that an asset-based classroom environment makes students feel more comfortable taking academic risks and expanding their learning.**

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## INSPIRATION

**“One’s ability to learn does not stop outside of the classroom, and adversity in life is not predictive of one’s cognitive capacity. Our plans for moving past the effects of the pandemic should be inspired and energized by this understanding ...**

***Students are still able to embrace learning when it is purposeful, joyful, and sparks curiosity.”***

**—ZARETTA HAMMOND**



[crtandthebrain.com](http://crtandthebrain.com)

American Educator, Summer 2021:  
Integrating the Science of Learning and Culturally Responsive Practice



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# **SPARK** motivation, **IGNITE LEARNING**



**THREE  
THINGS  
TO FOCUS  
ON RIGHT  
NOW:**

**STAY**  
**ROOTED IN**  
**RELATIONSHIPS**

**ELEVATE**  
**STUDENT VOICE:**  
**CREATE**  
**CLASSROOM**  
**CULTURE**  
**TOGETHER**

**INSTEAD OF FOCUSING  
ON WHAT'S BEEN MISSED,**  
**BUILD**  
**ON WHAT**  
**STUDENTS**  
**BRING**

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**STAY**  
**ROOTED IN**  
**RELATIONSHIPS**

**It's no secret that relationships are important. Attuned, responsive, positive developmental relationships—among teachers, students, school leaders, and community—can help position students to tackle rigorous academic content and should become the foundation for all we do in schools.**

**Research shows that strong relationships and supportive developmental experiences are what cultivate potential. A deep focus on building strong relationships, fostering a sense of belonging, and attending to social, emotional, and cognitive development is not in conflict with efforts to accelerate academic learning; these strategies are mutually dependent and reinforcing.**

**Designing all of our learning settings with relationships at the core could not be more important than it is today—for reducing stress for both children and adults, for addressing trauma, and especially for re-engaging young people and bolstering their belief in themselves and their futures.**



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**ELEVATE**  
STUDENT VOICE:  
**CREATE**  
CLASSROOM  
CULTURE  
TOGETHER



**Students have the greatest stake in their education, but often too little say in their own school experience. We can invite students in as their whole, authentic selves—affirming their identities, agency, cultures, communities, skills, and their experiences, especially during the pandemic, as valued assets.**

**Student voice is critical. The science shows us that building from the assets and interests of young people is essential to creating better conditions for learning and development.**

**This year, work together with students to co-create a supportive school and classroom environment that is physically, emotionally, and identity safe, while creating a strong sense of authentic community and belonging.**

**By shifting the balance of power toward students, we affirm their identities and recognize them as active agents within the learning process.**

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INSTEAD OF FOCUSING  
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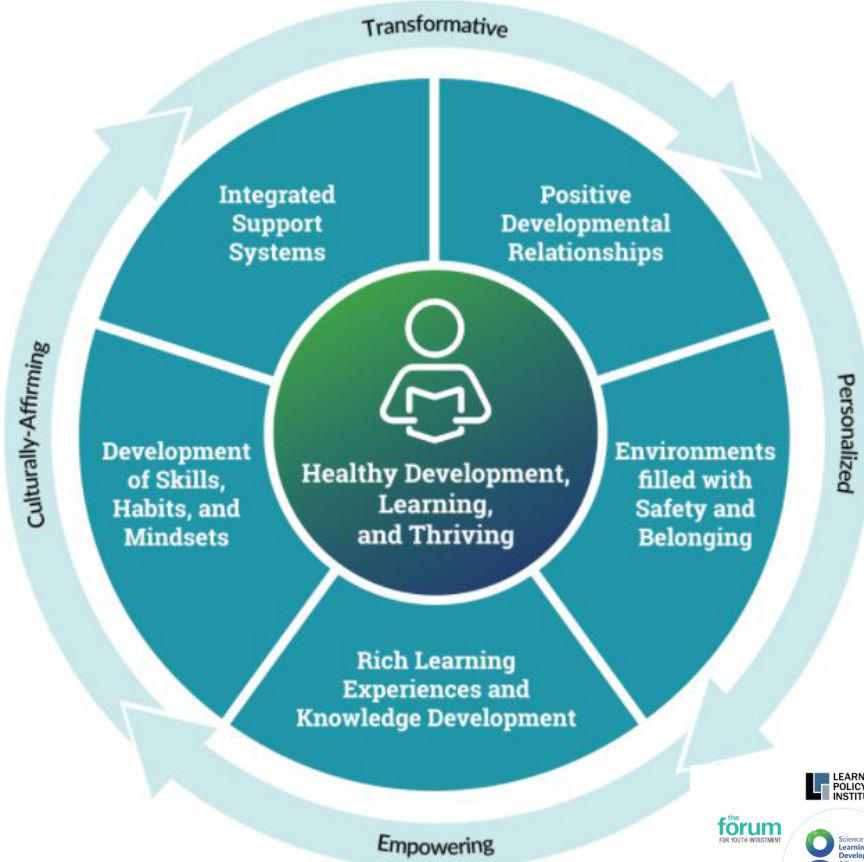
**BUILD  
ON WHAT  
STUDENTS  
BRING**

**We have been pummeled with deficit-oriented messages about loss and gaps, but we know that learning never stopped for most students, even though school doors may have been closed. Students have mastered new technologies, taken on new challenges, and practiced managing stress and expressing their feelings as they navigate a tumultuous time. Instead of thinking about the past year as a loss of learning, we must build from these new skills and experiences.**

**Black, Latinx, Pacific Islander, Indigenous and students from other historically marginalized communities are subject to disproportionate levels of remediation. Rather than asking, "How will we ever remediate lost learning?" let's ask "How can we build from what students bring and help them along their own unique developmental trajectory?"**

**Now is the time to focus on building students' knowledge, skills, and mindsets. We have an unprecedented opportunity to not just remediate but redesign foundational elements of our education systems. Building from students' assets will promote growth, helping students to become engaged, effective learners.**

How can we spark engagement and promote learning and development, especially during this time of crisis? We can anchor in what the [Design Principles](#), based on the science of learning and development, tell us about how young people learn and reset with a commitment to equity through an asset-based, whole-child approach.





How can educators operationalize the Design Principles in schools and ignite learning this fall? Turnaround for Children's [Whole-Child Design Blueprint](#) positions educators to look through the asset-based lens of whole-child design and start creating the conditions for equitable learning.



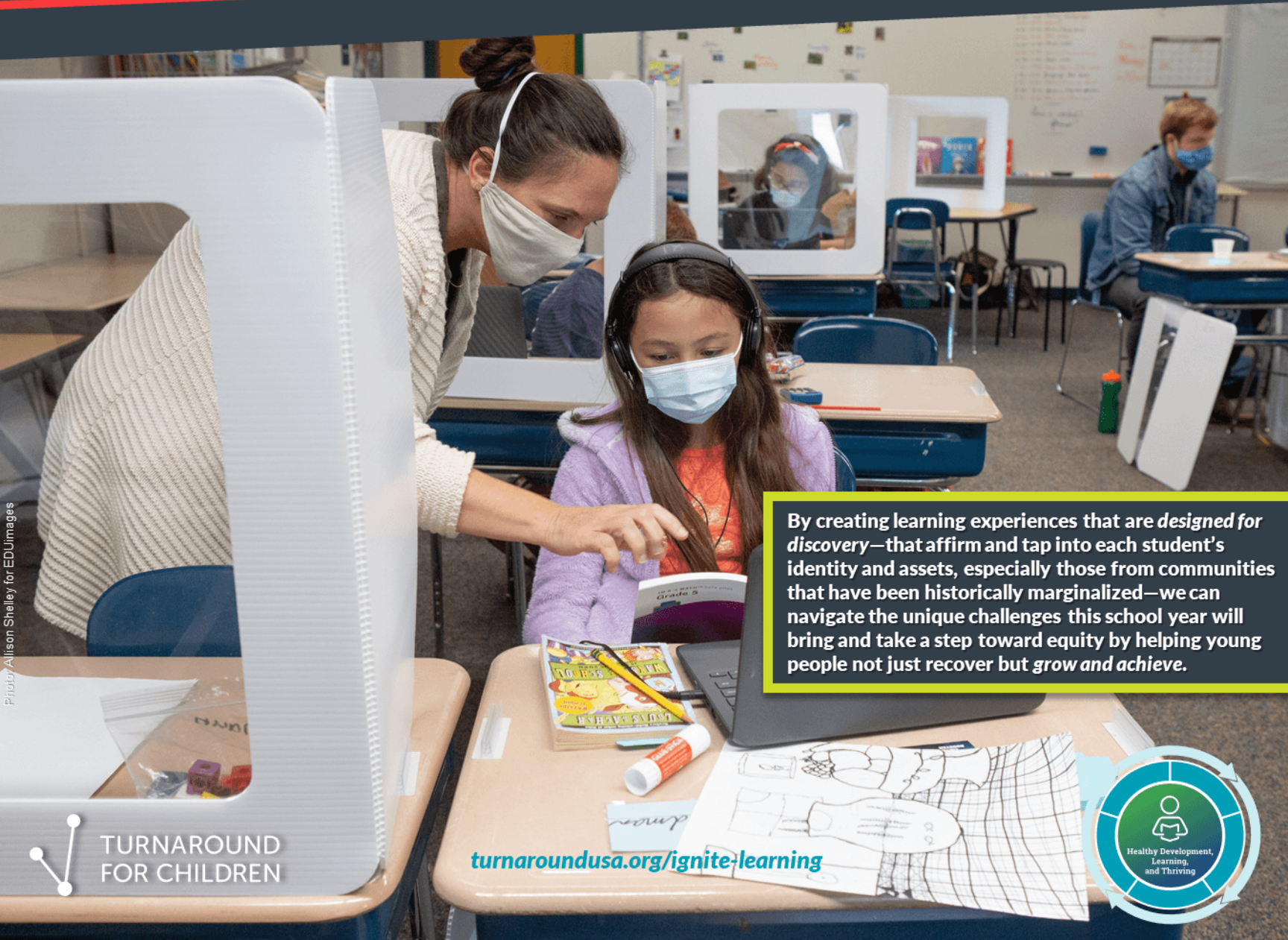
**Measurement tools that enable educators to take a whole-child, asset-based approach:**

**See the whole picture: Use Turnaround for Children's [Whole-Child Design Inventory](#) to assess and reflect on implementation of whole-child design in a school or system.**

**Each student is on their own unique developmental pathway. Academic instruction and student supports are most effective when they are driven by a holistic picture of the learner. Use Turnaround's [Well-Being Index](#) to get a holistic look at how students are feeling and functioning and understand individual student well-being through an equitable whole-child lens.**

**Turnaround's [Toolbox](#) offers hands-on resources to capitalize on the understanding gained from the Well-Being Index and Whole-Child Design Inventory and deliver the individualized supports students need, so we can spark motivation, wonder, passion, and engagement and ignite learning.**

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