

Whole-Child Design Academy

Turnaround for Children's **Whole Child Design Academy (WCDA)** is a learning experience for teachers comprising courses that are aligned to Turnaround's Whole-Child Design Blueprint. The WCDA is hosted online, and includes both asynchronous, self-paced learning modules and scaffolding for teachers to develop their own professional learning communities. The WCDA encourages participants to collaboratively apply the principles of Whole-Child Design in their unique contexts.

About the WCDA Experience:

The WCDA has been designed based on four pillars, and is:

1

Driven by the science of learning and development

Key insights from the science include:

- ✓ Development is Bi-Directional: The on-going, dynamic interaction between nature and nurture – our genes and environment – drives all development
- ✓ Context Matters: The malleable nature of development is both an opportunity and a vulnerability, depending on the context
- ✓ Learning is Integrated: Learning isn't "academic" OR "social and emotional" - students become increasingly capable of complex skills through the integration of their cognitive, social and emotional development
- ✓ Pathways are Unique: There is no such thing as an average student – each is on their own individual developmental trajectory
- ✓ Student Voice is Critical: Developing agency and resilience requires shifting the balance of power towards students

2

Grounded in design thinking and improvement science problem-solving approaches

Throughout the courses, teachers will have opportunities to engage in activities in a non-linear cycle of design work guided by these principles:

- Show the forest through the trees: Participants are guided to focus on specific core practices while the integrated nature of development is reinforced
- Encourage thinking by doing and learning from experience: Participants are prompted to try ideas and tools with students immediately and consistently, and to discuss, reflect on and tune implementation – and repeat
- Keep it simple: Learning is bite-sized and manageable; participants are prompted to experiment with small shifts
- Design with and not for our users: We believe people are experts in their challenges and contexts and can solve their own problems – participants are empowered to do so, and, further, to hold this mindset about their students
- Facilitate collaboration and bi-directional change: Participants are prompted to take a collaborative and shared approach to change by including multiple stakeholders from their students' contexts. Participants are guided to share and learn from one another

3

Designed to be used by a professional learning community

Integrating the science of learning and development with the design process requires a deep understanding of the unique context of each school and classroom. The WCDA acknowledges that learning is inherently social and thus courses are designed to be used by a team of teachers with a shared commitment to working, learning, planning, practicing, and reflecting together, towards a shared goal of creating equitable opportunities, holistic learning, and developmental outcomes for students.

4

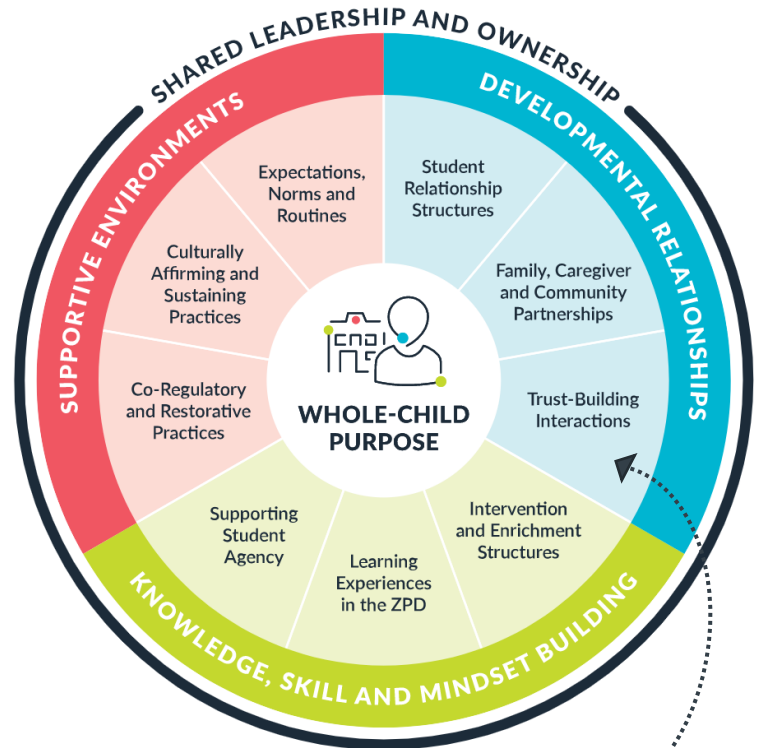
Attuned to adult learning principles

We understand that participants in the WCDA are working professionals in the field of education and therefore deserve a learning opportunity that honors their expertise and experience. Our courses offer choice, benefit from the lived experience of teachers, prompt tackling real problems of practice drawn from participant context and facilitate self-directed action.

Each WCDA course incorporates these four pillars. Courses are designed to prompt practice change in each of the nine core practices that comprise the central components of Turnaround's **Whole-Child Design Blueprint** and move educators along continuums aligned to each core practice.

Courses are broken into modules that offer asynchronous input (readings, videos, recorded presentations), and activities (assignments, quizzes, discussions, reflections), and culminate with a synchronous team meeting with an offered agenda at which team members leverage asynchronous learning to plan to implement a strategy or tool or reflect on recent implementation and lessons learned.

The introductory course of the WCDA orients participants to the foundations of Whole-Child Design, using the classroom level Whole-Child Design Inventory to determine which course to engage in next, acknowledging that due to the integrated nature of the Whole-Child Design Blueprint and the core practices, teams will eventually get through all of them, on their own contextualized path.



Each core practice in the Whole-Child Design Blueprint (above) is one course.

What makes the WCDA experience unique?

Through the WCDA, educators will collaboratively take action toward the change they seek, moving away from the old way of schooling to one aligned to Turnaround's Whole-Child Design Blueprint:

20th Century Approach

Academic Purpose

- Solely a vision or mission statement
- Focused only on academic outcomes (e.g., test scores, college acceptance rates)
- For only some students

Top-Down Leadership

- Defaulting to top-down, high-control models for change, even if the initiative is seen as high-stakes
- Hoarding decision-making power
- Providing tokenistic opportunities for input, feedback, and participation in a change effort
- Using one-size-fits-all programs and initiatives that ignore the context, experience and expertise of others

Transactional Relationships

- Learning is teacher-driven
- Just being friendly to children and families
- Successful simply because we have good intentions
- One-size-fits-all
- Transactional and directive

Whole-Child Approach

Whole-Child Purpose

- An explicit commitment that lives in all aspects of practice and drives decision making
- Focused on holistic outcomes for all students to ensure success in life, work and citizenship
- Used to identify priorities and make tough choices in the best interest of students

Shared Leadership and Ownership

- Naming, discussing and reflecting on values and beliefs when making decisions.
- Including and valuing the expertise, skills, and experiences of others, especially those most proximal to the challenges to be solved.
- Embodying a continuous, multi-directional, multi-dimensional view of change.
- Empowering others to make decisions, engage in collaborative problem solving, and engage in collective learning and development.
- Creating time and space to build and deepen personal and professional relationships among staff members.

Developmental Relationships

- The responsibility of all educators and worthy of time and space within the school day
- Created on a foundation of trust
- Built through repeated, reciprocal interactions
- Bi-directional and ever-changing based on needs and growth
- A way to center traditionally marginalized groups in decision-making, culture building, and creation of an identity-affirming environment

Authoritarian Environments

- Always highly rigid, structured, and educator controlled for the sake of calm, quiet, and order
- Relying on authoritarian, punitive or exclusionary discipline practices to control student bodies and choices
- Allowing unchecked stereotypes, bullying or microaggressions
- Limiting opportunities and choice based on assumptions about student potential



Supportive Environments

- Co-created around shared values, beliefs, and high expectations
- Co-regulating, predictable, and consistent, especially for students who have experienced chronic stress or trauma
- Culturally competent meaning educators understand the role of culture in education and interrogate their own identity and biases
- Encourages students to see themselves as accountable for their actions and as agents of social change

Siloed Learning

- A set of isolated curricula or programs, an add-on, or enrichment activity
- The same for each student, or rigor for some students and not others
- Seeing students as empty vessels to be filled up
- Irrelevant to students' lives and interests
- Asking students to demonstrate grit or resilience without addressing sources of chronic stress, including structural racism and systemic oppression



Knowledge, Skill and Mindset Building

- Learning experiences simultaneously develop content knowledge and disciplinary ways of thinking alongside essential skills, mindsets, and habits
- All students receive holistic supports and enrichment that are matched to their unique developmental pathways and unlock potential
- Students are empowered to make choices and actively question and interrogate why things are the way they are

Getting Started: Program A Courses

The **first four courses in the WCDA** include an introductory course, and one course from each component within the Whole-Child Design Blueprint.

COURSE 1: “Introduction to Whole-Child Design”

The introductory course of the Whole-Child Design Academy takes participants through the four pillars and culminates with teams using the classroom level Whole-Child Design Inventory to set a baseline understanding of where each practitioner sees their current implementation of the core practices. At the end of the course, participants will be able to articulate and/or refine a purpose statement as an educator, based on what the science of learning and development tells us about how learning happens and what students need to grow. Additionally, educators would have formed Academy Teams and begin the strong collaborative work of planning, reflection and refinement of their practice in alignment with a Whole-Child Purpose.

COURSE 2: “Trust-Building Interactions”

Trust is the cornerstone of developmental relationships – and it is created when we go “beyond being nice.” Trust can be built through interactions characterized by gestures of caring, empathetic listening, personalization, consistency and dependable support. Strong, developmental relationships built on trust are also bi-directional, meaning each person in the relationship holds power and is influenced by the other. Therefore, individual adult and student perceptions of the relationship matter, routine care and reflection must take place and students’ growing autonomy and voice must be supported. Through this course, participants will be able to describe, practice and reflect on their work to build positive developmental relationships with students through trust-building interactions.

COURSE 3: “Supporting Student Agency”

Diverse research converges on the understanding that learning engages multiple, cross-wired, functionally integrated neural systems, including cognitive, affective, social and emotional processes. These processes are malleable to experience and are composed of both foundational skills, such as stress management and self-regulation, as well as higher-order skills like self-direction and curiosity. Developing these skills requires attention, support and thoughtful engagement with students, who are the active drivers in their own growth and development. Supporting student agency means meeting each student where they are, leveraging their unique strengths and designing experiences that build skills in ongoing, integrated and increasingly complex ways. Through this course, participants will be able to describe, practice and reflect on their work to actively build and support student agency.

COURSE 4: “Culturally Affirming and Sustaining Practices”

Creating a strong sense of belonging and safety in the school community means doing more than just celebrating diversity. Practices that affirm students’ multifaceted identities and sustain cultural knowledge and ways of being are critical as we seek to reimagine a system of education that has systematically oppressed, silenced and erased groups based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability, language, etc.

Culturally affirming and sustaining practices happen at all levels and throughout a school – from designing curriculum to setting up empowering dynamics within classrooms to capacity-building for leaders and staff, and more. These practices serve ALL students and school communities, including those who hold privilege and power, as it sets students up to engage as curious, critical thinkers on topics of identity, culture and equity in the world around them. Through this course, participants will be able to describe, practice and reflect on their work to create culturally affirming and sustaining contexts to support their students.

Participants Say:

In the 2022 school year, 82 educators participated in the Whole-Child Design Academy.

- ✓ **100%** of participants said their experience in WCDA **impacted their practice** as an educator.
- ✓ **90%** of participants said their **students benefited from their growth as a teacher** as a result of the WCDA.
- ✓ **95%** of participants said they would **recommend the series to their colleagues**.
- ✓ **95%** of participants agreed that WCDA was **more supportive of practice change** compared to other professional learning experiences they had been a part of.
- ✓ **95%** of participants agreed that WCDA was **more relevant to them and their role**, compared to other professional learning experiences they had been a part of.

Beyond the WCDA experience, **participants are stepping up to lead this work in their schools and districts** -- 12 teachers who participated in WCDA were selected to become Whole-Child Leads at their schools in 2023.

"Before I thought that whole-child and anti-racism were separate and distinct. Now I understand that they are integrated and integral to our entire approach to any child."

"I am taking the time to process the why behind the behavior and not reacting. I now use more "I statements" that take the weight off the child and place it on me."

"I am reaching out to more families. I am making sure that I make connections. I make sure that I spread the knowledge to others."