

Five Years of Canopy: Report Guide

The Canopy project is a collaborative effort to share insights about K-12 schools designing engaging, flexible, empowering learning environments. **Canopy's 2024 report, "Promising progress, fragile foundations: A five-year analysis of school innovation, 2019-2024," draws on five years of survey data and interviews with school leaders to highlight how these schools are addressing pressing challenges, evolving their designs, and preparing for the future.** Explore the key findings and recommendations below.

HIGHLIGHTS

Solutions for urgent, long-standing issues: Some schools demonstrate success in tackling challenges such as learning loss, chronic absenteeism, youth mental health, and college and career readiness.

Success in diverse contexts: Canopy schools operate across geographies and in traditional district, charter, and private school settings, showing that innovation doesn't arise only in a limited set of circumstances or as a luxury for privileged students.

Dive in: Learn how schools are achieving results



Consistency over time: Schools have continued implementing most of the practices they report in surveys from year to year.

Blended learning: Usage surged during the pandemic but appears to be receding now. Leaders said they continue to prioritize personalized, flexible approaches to teaching and learning.

AI integration: Schools are exploring AI to personalize learning and reduce teacher workload, though only a few are early adopters with ambitious implementations.

Dive in: Read about how school designs are evolving



Emerging growth strategies: Some schools plan to open new sites, expand existing sites, or spread their approaches. Leaders want to partner more deeply with students and families.

Sustainability concerns: Many schools worry about maintaining adequate funding and finding educators with the specific skills and mindsets they need.

Policy barriers: Existing policies around accountability, graduation requirements, teacher credentialing, and scheduling may limit the spread of innovative school designs.

Limited tools for new assessments: Leaders are eager to assess nontraditional outcomes such as student agency and social-emotional learning, but need better access to new assessment tools.

Dive in: Discover what leaders envision next for innovative schools





RECOMMENDATIONS

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

This report shows that innovation at the school level is a key lever for shifting students' experiences to be more engaging, flexible, and empowering. However, launching new or redesigned schools is not sufficient for durable and systemic change. Policymakers, funders, and researchers must strengthen the conditions for innovation in schools to take root and succeed.

Invest in new designs: Policymakers and funders should provide startup funding for innovative schools, craft policies that encourage flexibility and experimentation, and develop teacher pipelines tailored to support unconventional instructional models.

Expand evidence of impact: Policymakers, funders, and researchers should recognize unconventional outcomes, such as student agency and career readiness, when evaluating innovative school designs, and should support the development of new assessment tools.

Spread effective approaches: Funders and policymakers can promote sustainable revenue strategies for innovative schools, offer replicable models to guide new schools, and align central office strategies with innovation goals to reduce friction for adoption.

Dive in: Learn how to support innovation



About the Canopy Project

The Canopy is a collaborative project involving hundreds of organizations, stewarded by the Center on Reinventing Public Education and Transcend. The Canopy project documents school-level innovations in K-12 education through surveys and interviews with school leaders. Since 2019, 263 schools have participated in at least two surveys, offering a robust dataset for understanding trends and changes in school design.

Learn more and explore the Canopy school database at canopyschools.org.