CRPE
REINVENTING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation
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Think Forward: Building a Coherent Approach to AI in Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

Our nation, society, and schools are at the cusp of profound change. The rapid proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) is converging with the longstanding institutional shortcomings of our nation's education system. These shortcomings cannot be overcome simply by designing new AI-powered tools. Instead, education leaders and policymakers must design resilient, future-ready schools tailored to the needs of every student. Though these aspirations are not new, they have so far remained unattainable. AI's disruptive potential can either help make this future a reality or exacerbate existing shortcomings.

In early 2024, the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) convened more than 60 state and federal policymakers, ed tech innovators, school system leaders, and advocates for the Think Forward: Learning with AI Forum in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This group focused on the "Wicked Opportunities" AI offers and the greater role the education community must take in guiding how AI is used to transform teaching and learning.

In November 2025, CRPE returned to New Mexico for a second convening and launched its inaugural Think Forward AI Fellowship Cohort, a smaller group of 40 visionary policymakers, system leaders, educators, researchers, funders, parent advocates, and tech experts. The goal of the fellowship is to leverage diverse expertise to develop a coherent approach for integrating AI into a new vision of schooling. The Fellows grounded this vision in the thorny problems of our current

landscape, wrestled with strongly felt viewpoints of what can and should be done in the next few years, and identified strategies to harness today's opportunities while building towards a radically different future.

The discussions and work sessions centered on three integral themes:

- Without a guiding vision from educators and policymakers, AI developers have continued to focus on time- and labor-saving tools, not on **how technology can help prepare young people for, and make our schools responsive to, a radically different future.**
- Point solutions are flooding the market, but education's fundamental challenges are structural. Fellows emphasized the need to **move beyond fragmented tool adoption toward more coherent and integrated school designs.** Instead of designing "AI-powered schools," education leaders and policymakers should focus on designing future-ready schools and consider how AI can help them realize those designs. Above all, school and learning must center on human relationships.
- Now is the time to think big and to think forward. **The world is changing rapidly.** So, too, must education. Institutional failure and profound inequities in K-12 are converging with a highly unpredictable AI future.

AI will either entrench the limits of today's education system or help unlock something fundamentally better. Drawing on the 2025 Think Forward convening, this paper argues that fragmented, efficiency-driven uses of AI fall short of what students and schools need in a rapidly changing world. Left unguided, AI's promise of efficiency risks reinforcing outdated models of schooling. Convening participants described this as an "efficiency paradox" in which systems become faster and cheaper without becoming more responsive to student needs.

We call instead for a coherent, human-centered approach that is explicitly ambidextrous, improving current practice while intentionally building toward new learning models. We outline action priorities that attend to two time horizons at once, focused on enabling policy and infrastructure, whole-school redesign, technology aligned with learning science, reimagined teaching and assessment, and sustained investment in experimentation and fieldwide learning.

> **"If AI represents exponential computing power, education must represent exponential human purpose," one participant said. "We must build learning environments worthy of the complexity we face, grounded in the human [experience]."**

While supporting responsible AI integration in today's classrooms is essential, funders and policymakers must ensure these efforts do not just reinforce factory-model schooling but instead contribute to more responsive, future-ready learning environments.

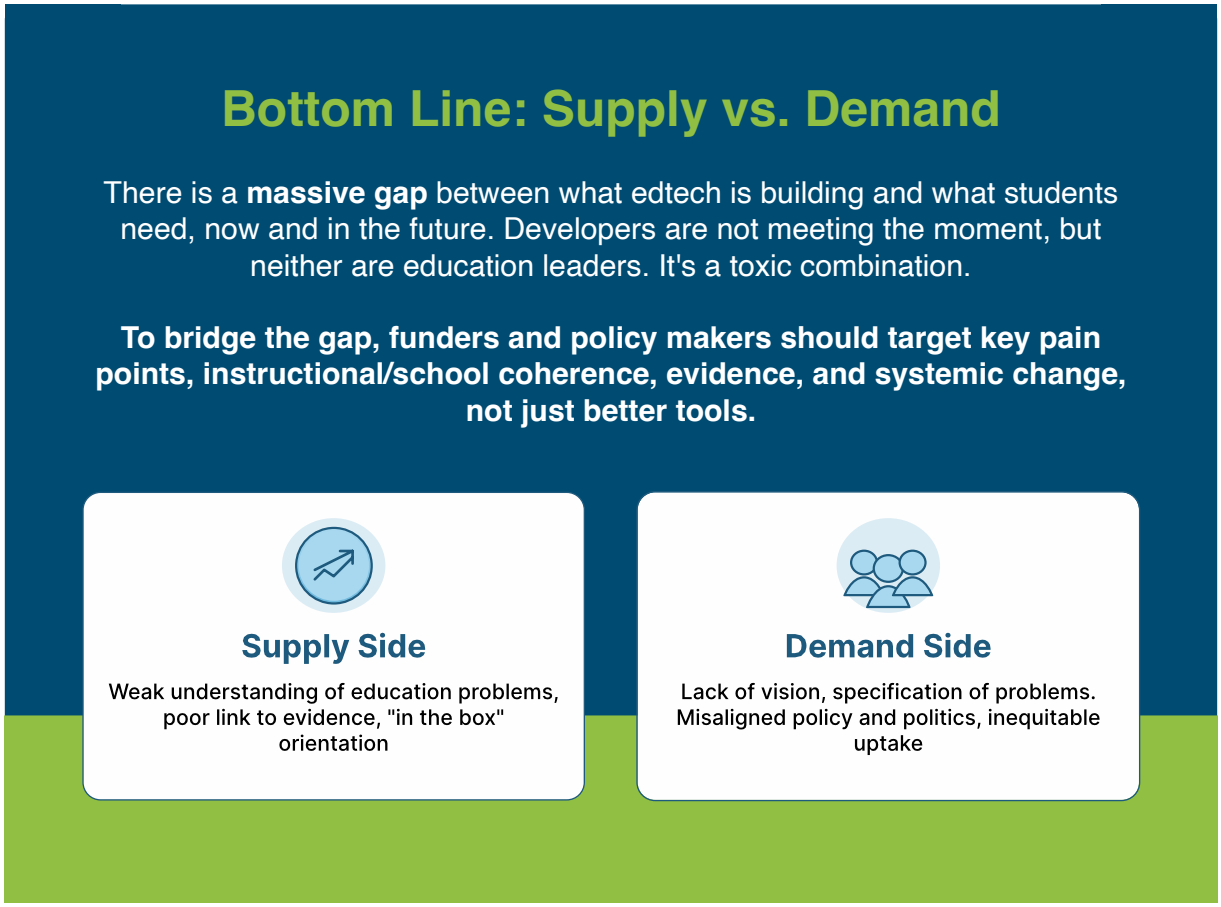
"If AI represents exponential computing power, education must represent exponential human purpose," one participant said. "We must build learning environments worthy of the complexity we face, grounded in the human [experience]."

II. A VISION FOR EDUCATION IN THE AI AGE

The Think Forward Fellows brought personal visions of what teaching and learning could look like if, as one participant put it, "AI becomes not a disruption to education but a partner in its renewal." Yet before turning to these future possibilities, participants first grounded their work in an understanding of the problems the field must solve. This understanding emerged during pre-Forum discussions with Fellows, where participants examined why current AI efforts are falling short and which obstacles are blocking change.

Fellows described a system marked by fragmentation, shallow use of technology, and a lack of alignment with deeper systemic challenges, all of which limit impact in the present even as they create opportunities for more coherent future designs. Fellows also noted that an obsession with tools often defines today's AI efforts. This disconnect stems from the limited capacity, competing demands, and the pace of change on the demand side, as well as from technology suppliers' inability to provide more comprehensive solutions. As one Fellow explained, "We need more investment in capacity and change management."

> **"Perhaps instead of asking what an AI-powered model looks like, we should ask what it takes to design a school where students can learn to own their own paths in a world inhabited by AI."**



Without a guiding vision, districts rarely integrate AI into a coherent instructional strategy. “An app isn’t a lesson plan. Any tool needs to come with a pedagogy,” one Fellow noted. Others described how teachers and principals are left to stitch together disconnected tools: “Teachers often have a core curriculum, plus a handful of supplementals, plus products or programs they like, plus tutoring programs down the hall… the teacher is saddled with the job of understanding how to use all of them together.”

Pre-Forum discussions also revealed concerns that many AI offerings don’t address the underlying challenges impacting student experience and engagement. Several participants pointed to a growing disconnect between the rapidly changing world that students inhabit and the status quo that their schools are preparing them for. As one participant put it, “If we want creative and collaborative people, we can’t keep putting them through a factory.” Another reflected that if schools aim to cultivate creativity and collaboration alongside foundational content knowledge, then they cannot rely on learning environments that feel disconnected from how students experience the world.

Building on this concern, Fellows emphasized that students are already integrating AI into how they write, create, and explore future pathways, often outside of school and with little adult guidance. Participants argued that a learner-centered vision must treat students as active users and co-designers of AI-enabled learning, rather than as mere recipients of AI-enhanced instruction.

At the same time, Fellows cautioned that the tools currently available don't support this kind of learning. They emphasized that many tools are not grounded in learning science or designed to expand the reach of excellent teaching. Furthermore, schools and systems often lack clear guidance for identifying evidence-based tools. At the same time, the rapid pace of AI development is widening the gap between what students need and what current tools offer. "The market is providing tools that are not about the future," one Fellow observed. These misalignments represent missed, but recoverable, opportunities to address real pain points in schools and build toward long-term transformation. As one Fellow put it, "Right now we ask for dreamy, wish-y things." Another noted that AI's capabilities resemble a fully stocked kitchen, yet today's schools are using the technology "like an Easy-Bake Oven."

By surfacing these challenges, Fellows built the foundation for the visioning work that followed, moving from critique to possibility. They agreed that only by naming these problems clearly, including the lack of coherence across efforts, the weak connection between many tools and the knowledge and skills required in the age of AI, and the mismatch between ed tech solutions and education's deepest challenges, could the group begin to articulate the principles that should guide future-ready schooling, including:

- ***Human first:*** AI should be a catalyst for human-centered learning, not a replacement
- ***Purpose over efficiency:*** Focus on education as a step towards meaning-making, curiosity, and compassion, all human emotions in a world of synthetic intelligence.
- ***Students and educators at the center:*** System design and resources must be focused on students as active learners and decision-makers, with educator roles changed to better meet their needs.
- ***Equity and ethics by design:*** Guardrails and policy are at the forefront, not an afterthought.
- ***Community-rooted and globally connected:*** Educators should partner with families and communities to connect learning to students' local contexts and broader global opportunities.
- ***Coherence beats novelty:*** AI solutions should reinforce each other and collectively advance student learning.
- ***Transparency and real-world application:*** Help families understand how learning connects to careers, college options, and the long-term outcomes of different educational pathways.
- ***Continuous lifelong learning:*** Power adult learning through dynamic, adaptive, and data-driven systems.

- ***Infrastructure for liberation:*** AI should operate in the background to reduce friction and expand the capacity of students and educators.
- ***Rigorous personalization:*** Grounded in the science of learning and refined for the age of AI.

Yet participants were clear that this vision remains far from reality, and schools are leaving young people to navigate powerful technologies with little guidance. "Kids are facing an uncertain future," one participant said. "It's different because they know the adults don't know either."

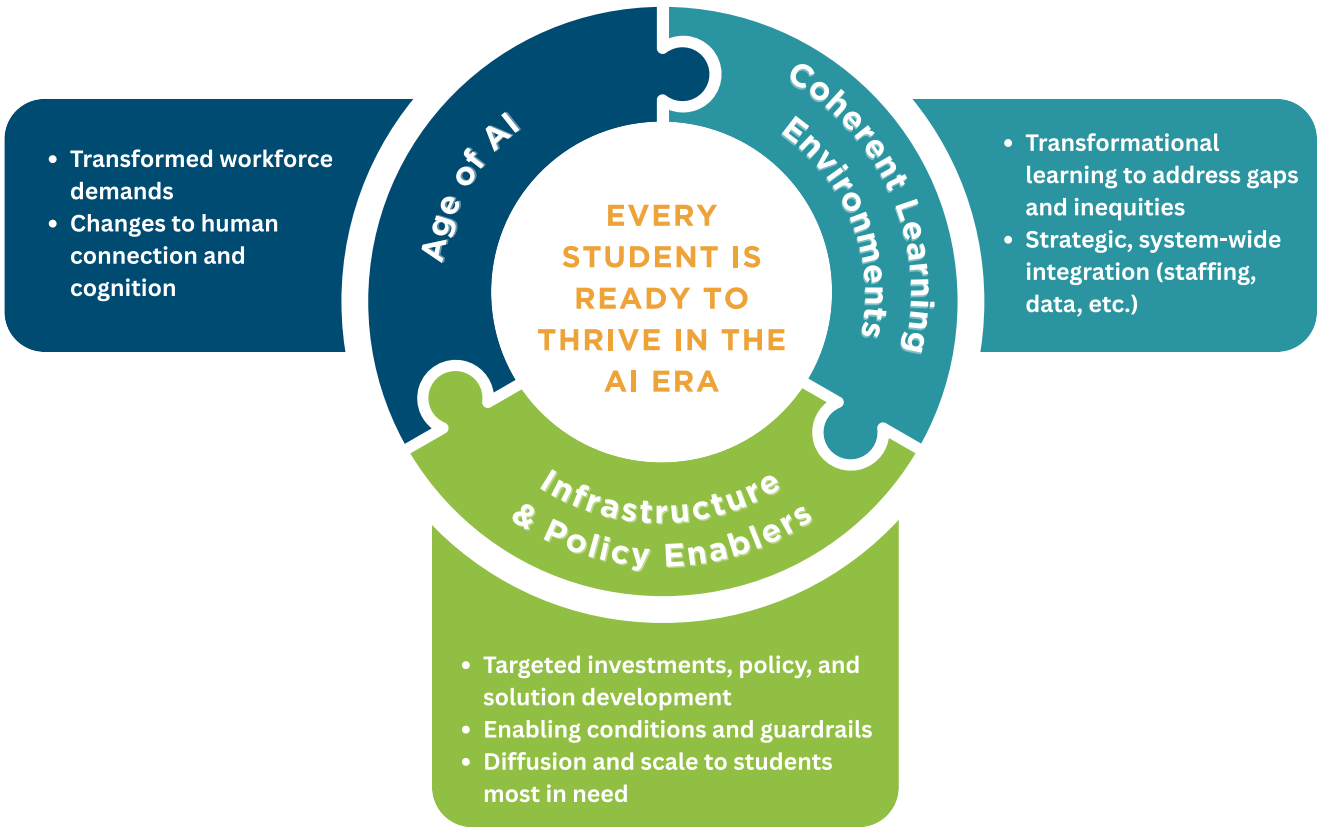
Fellows stressed that realizing a human-centered vision will require deeper partnerships among educators, policymakers, and developers. They urged the field to confront foundational questions about what students will need to know and be able to do in an AI-shaped world. These questions, they noted, must drive the work ahead if AI is to become a catalyst for renewal rather than a missed opportunity.

III. DRIVING CHANGE THROUGH COHERENCE

Catalyzing AI's disruptive potential will require technology providers, policymakers, and educators to take on a far more active role. "Can we drive versus being driven?" one participant asked. "That would require a tectonic shift in our approach to education."

That shift must be driven by a coherent approach to navigating change at the system level that recognizes 1) the changing conditions of the labor market, human connection, and relationships with technology in the age of AI, 2) the need to change learning environments to integrate new solutions and address inequities, and 3) the infrastructure and policy enablers that target investments, create enabling conditions and guardrails, and scale solutions for the students who need them most (see graphic below).

"Can we drive versus being driven? That would require a tectonic shift in our approach to education."



The Age of AI

Students need education systems that can adapt to the rapidly changing demands of an AI-enabled world. A coherent approach centers schools as places of belonging, develops students as critical consumers and producers of AI, prioritizes relational values and skills as outcomes (not just as means to an end), and prepares educators to have bi-directional conversations, in which educators and students learn from one another about how AI is used, experienced, and governed. As one forum participant emphasized, we need to create a new social infrastructure, noting that schools are increasingly the only place where young people are around each other. "But how social is the school day?" the participant asked.

> **"AI is not a tool we add to schools—it is the architecture that can reinvent them."**
> *- Bob Hughes, Gates Foundation*

Coherent Learning Environments

Educators, system leaders, and policymakers must also think through how AI can help address existing needs in schools and transform the systems that support them. Forum participants discussed these models as school-level choices as well as system design decisions that shape staffing, accountability, and resource allocation across districts. In this context, discussions centered on three models of

coherent AI adoption in schools introduced by Bob Hughes, K-12 director of the Gates Foundation.

- Model 1 (AI-assisted): Uses AI to assist educators in the ways classrooms typically work today.
- Model 2 (AI-integrated): Shifts schools from piecemeal tool adoption to more student-centered and personalized learning.
- Model 3 (AI-native): Schools focus on student mastery, career-connected learning, and real-world collaboration, pushing education beyond the one teacher, one classroom model that is rapidly becoming obsolete.

"Pushing out of Model 1 has been more difficult than we imagined," said CRPE Director Robin Lake. Doing so will require a shared vision among leaders, educators, and each school's community, along with constant iteration. Given the rapid pace of change in and beyond education, one participant stressed the urgency of ensuring "no static north star, no new industrial model [that endures] for the next hundred years."

Participants underscored that this tension represents one of the core challenges facing the field. Education systems are being asked to adapt quickly in environments that were not designed for rapid, large-scale adaptation, even as the technologies shaping students' futures continue to evolve at extraordinary speed. Fellows cautioned that navigating this reality will require more than just technical solutions or new models. It will demand greater trust in educators' professional judgment, flexibility in policy and implementation, and a shared commitment to learning and evolving. Participants also emphasized the critical need to pace change for educators, acknowledging the risk of burnout when systems expect constant transformation without providing concomitant support.

Infrastructure and Policy

Empowering schools and school systems to navigate large-scale changes requires an enabling policy environment and technology infrastructure. Yet the sparse guidance provided by states and districts to date has created a climate of uncertainty and caution: "We have all these districts that don't have the direction to do what's needed," one participant said. "Young people are playing with AI and using it all the time, but educators don't feel safe and empowered to innovate," another added.

> **"Young people are playing with AI and using it all the time, but educators don't feel safe and empowered to innovate."**

Policy leaders will need to move beyond their limited focus on acceptable use, provide

resources for statewide strategies and support, and partner with workforce boards, intermediary organizations, and regional service districts. They also must treat families as partners and ensure that AI tools are transparent, inclusive, co-designed with communities, and supported by guardrails for every student.

Participants noted that equity considerations around AI cut both ways. While solutions and capacity building must be made available to the districts that need them, policymakers must also be aware that some affluent districts may opt out of AI-focused practices if they see them only as a way to address staffing or capacity gaps. In either case, students could get left behind.

IV. A CRITICAL TENSION: USING AI TO PATCH THE PRESENT OR DESIGN THE FUTURE?

Forum participants surfaced a core tension between the present and the future that has challenged school improvement efforts for decades. They debated whether leaders should focus on how AI can improve practice within today's schools and systems or on how it can help build radically new school models. As one participant asked, "Are you solving a set of complex problems or a mess? Problems you solve; a mess you dissolve and rebuild."

This tension sharpened when participants warned that the very efficiencies AI promises could become a barrier to more profound change. Several Fellows described what they called an "Efficiency Paradox": Focusing too narrowly on efficiency risks entrenching existing systems rather than transforming them. Making today's models faster, cheaper, or easier, participants argued, can lock in approaches that were never designed to meet students' future needs. Several referenced the "Scantron Effect" as a cautionary example: a technology that once promised modernization ultimately reinforced standardized, low-level assessment practices for decades. Fellows warned that AI could follow a similar path if education pursues efficiency gains without rethinking underlying goals, structures, and measures of learning.

This concern shaped how participants evaluated different approaches to AI adoption. Some participants argued that scarce public resources require careful scrutiny of current initiatives. They expressed concern that efforts such as personalized tutoring or AI-driven lesson planning tools "essentially reinforce the current systems and models, which are fundamentally not working for kids."

On the other hand, other participants stressed the moral imperative to address the current state of learning conditions. "Many kids and families are in schools right now that need to be better, and there are ways to serve those kids much better," one participant said. Another pointed to leaders in existing systems who have "a deeper understanding of the possibilities and pathways to leverage AI,

and who are ready to act." And if leaders focus only on longer-term "moonshot projects," another Fellow said, then they will waste the opportunity to leverage AI to close opportunity and achievement gaps for today's students, many of whom have already been impacted by Covid-related schooling disruptions.

The conviction expressed by Fellows across perspectives was palpable, shaped by decades of service to the sector and a shared sense of urgency. Yet these strong emotions also pointed to common ground. Participants agreed that any credible path forward requires a clear vision for high-quality, human-centered learning in the age of AI and a commitment to coherence across initiatives. They emphasized that innovation must serve every student, not just early adopters or well-resourced communities, and that short-term experimentation should contribute to a broader learning agenda for the field. They also voiced a shared expectation that leaders create the conditions that allow for responsible innovation, rather than defaulting to overregulation or fragmented, tool-driven adoption. As one participant voiced, "Both things are urgent, important, and more possible than ever in the age of AI."

From these shared values came the idea of an ambidextrous, "both-and" approach that addresses needs in the present while preparing for the future. The urgency was clear: If leaders in the field don't address the challenges on both time horizons at once, then they risk either reproducing the existing system's limits or abandoning students in today's classrooms.

Both time horizons require clarity about AI's role as a means to improve learning now and enable more dramatic change later. An ambidextrous approach allows systems to reinforce effective practices, test and learn responsibly, and apply those lessons to invent new models. It also calls for a broader view of AI as an accelerant for change. As one participant put it, "If you search and replace AI with another intervention and everything is the same, you're missing the opportunity of what AI can do."

The action priorities that follow are intentionally designed to operate across both time horizons by addressing urgent challenges in today's schools while generating the infrastructure and evidence needed to redesign education for the future. Now is the time to think big and think forward.

V. AMBIDEXTROUS ACTION PRIORITIES

Envisioning change along two temporal horizons requires "a more fractal evolutionary process than a linear one," as one participant described it. The action priorities and recommendations below illustrate where and how leaders in different roles can move this approach forward, both in the here and now and for the future.

1. Create enabling conditions to develop future-ready whole school models (funders, state policymakers, districts).

The ambidextrous vision: Improve current practice while simultaneously creating space to test and learn from fundamentally different models of schooling.

AI is well-suited for decentralized experimentation and iteration to both address current needs and lay a foundation for future change. However, innovating new AI-supported models that shift the fundamentals of school design will require "a policy stack [as much as] a tech stack," said one participant. These experiments should be in places with strong enabling conditions to "avoid planting seeds on rocks," another noted.

Districts and funders should work together to develop a network of pilots to explore AI-enabled innovations in instruction, governance, staffing, and accountability. In the near term, these pilots can address pressing problems while intentionally generating design insights and evidence that can inform AI-native, system-level redesign over time. Examples could include career-connected learning sites that use AI to solve real-world problems like matching students to internships or tracking skills and credentials. For these experiments to bear fruit, however, state policymakers must first avoid stifling experimentation. State-level "innovation zones" and policy sandboxes can provide targeted flexibility from the rules that have long inhibited new learning models, from seat-time requirements and staffing ratios to assessment mandates. Leaders at these demonstration or pilot sites must also be empowered to make sweeping changes to models and iterate on them. As one participant said. "Don't panic, over-regulate, or punish."

To ensure these pilots generate meaningful learning, participants emphasized building evaluation and learning into the design of new models from the start. This includes identifying a small set of shared outcomes and indicators, such as student engagement, belonging, learning progress, and postsecondary readiness, alongside more traditional academic measures. Participants stressed that pilots should be accompanied by clear learning questions, common data collection approaches, and opportunities for rapid feedback. This will allow school systems, states, and funders to assess what is working, for whom, and under what conditions, and to make course corrections in real time.

At the same time, districts given flexibility to pilot and evaluate AI-enabled approaches will require clear guardrails for equity and transparency, along with what one participant called "The space, tools, and grammar needed for experimentation within systems." District leaders should also actively recruit communities to opt into these models for their schools, not impose them based on top-down decisions.

Shifting policy from a constraint to an enabler will require approaches that reflect the political realities and environments of different states. If done well, these

enabling policies can ensure that new models can advance while maintaining accountability and local support. Policymakers should be more closely embedded in innovation zones or pilot sites than in the past so they can build, evaluate, and adjust policy as results come in. Over time, these results should inform overall policy, helping shift the window of what's possible in every district and school.

2. Anchor ed tech in learning science, while designing for systems transformation (funders, policymakers, technology developers).

The ambidextrous vision: Address immediate procurement and classroom coherence challenges while shaping a market that can deliver the integrated platforms needed for long-term redesign.

To break the unproductive supply-demand imbalance that has led to one-off AI tools that don't actually support student or educator learning, technology developers need clear signals and incentives from the field. "Don't let the market drive this, or we will get the status quo," one participant urged.

Field leaders must set clearer expectations for developers, including quality standards, safety and transparency requirements, and requirements for alignment with learning science and human-centered design. Participants emphasized that system leaders and policymakers must establish guardrails and design principles before tools reach scale, and invite developers to co-create against those standards with educators, families, and students. In this way, partnerships with innovative education leaders can move beyond tool requests and toward shared frameworks that guide the development of integrated, coherent AI platforms capable of supporting emerging school models.

The need for better integration of AI solutions and capabilities led to considerable discussion about the role of ed tech during the Forum. Some participants suggested getting one of the "Big Five" technology giants (Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Meta, or Apple) to do meaningful work in collaboration with school and instructional leaders on an education-focused AI tech stack. This collaboration could involve improving models to be better at education-specific tasks, supporting smaller ed tech nonprofits and companies, or developing a scalable, common infrastructure upon which developers could build innovative products. Conversely, participants also voiced concerns about the impact of a potential AI bubble burst. This would likely not stop the technology's long-term impact, but could disrupt efforts to develop the education-specific tools that innovative models require.

3. Reinvent teaching and assessment for mastery (educators, curriculum developers, ed tech developers, funders).

The ambidextrous vision: Support immediate instructional improvement while also rethinking assessment architecture so that evidence collected now feeds the design of future mastery systems.

To ensure all students reach ambitious, grade-level expectations, teaching and curriculum must reflect both rigorous content and the individualized pathways students need to build and demonstrate mastery. Participants emphasized the importance of providing coherent, high-quality instruction while also tailoring support based on ongoing evidence of each student's progress. AI can play a key role here by helping teachers identify where students are on their learning trajectory, personalize practice and feedback, and extend targeted support, thus allowing more students to achieve at high levels and stay on pace toward long-term goals.

At the same time, Fellows stressed that a credible vision of mastery in the age of AI must extend beyond academic knowledge and durable skills. Working sessions highlighted the need for "full spectrum mastery" measures that foreground students' sense of belonging, confidence, and curiosity, as well as the quality of their relationships. Participants argued that these dimensions are central to preparing students to thrive and persist in complex and uncertain contexts

Making these outcomes visible requires rethinking how assessment functions in schools. Improved teaching and learning must be mirrored by new forms of assessment that capture the full human experience of learning. Next-generation assessments should provide richer demonstrations of learning through verbal reasoning, real-time performance, and project-based evidence, with AI helping interpret that evidence and deliver timely, personalized feedback at scale. These new forms of assessment should be designed to work hand-in-hand with instruction. AI can help unlock targeted supports, small groupings, and individualized learning pathways so that every student can move toward mastery while making progress and growth more transparent and meaningful for families.

4. Rebuild the educator workforce around next-generation educator teams (district and system leaders, higher ed, funders, ed tech developers).

The ambidextrous vision: Support immediate workforce relief and role diversification while testing models that could form the foundation of a different professional landscape for teaching.

Forum participants agreed that the one-teacher, one-classroom model, an obsolete remnant of the industrial age, has become an active detriment to teaching and learning in the age of AI.

Districts should pilot classrooms where multiple adults (teachers, aides, specialists, and subject-matter experts from the community) work in teams, leveraging their distributed expertise with support from AI tools. Near-term pilots should document impacts on workload, student learning, and costs so that longer-term role redesigns (including new career pathways and credentialing) rest on real evidence.

To prepare educators for these settings, universities, ed tech partners, and districts will have to co-design new professional learning pathways that build technical, pedagogical, and ethical fluency. The field will also need new onramps with embedded professional development to bring new kinds of educators, in particular those with career-focused expertise, to the field.

As with past design efforts, human capital remains an unresolved tension. Districts and policymakers should not take AI support as a blanket justification for fewer adults in the classroom. At the same time, stakeholders must develop new definitions for the varied roles of educators in a human-centered model of schooling.

5. Invest both deeply and broadly (funders, intermediaries).

The ambidextrous vision: Balance immediate improvement in existing systems with sustained investment in experimentation that can inform long-term transformation.

Participants emphasized that transforming schooling in the age of AI will require two complementary funding strategies. First, funders should make deep, place-based investments in high-potential regions, such as state-designated sandboxes or innovation zones, where policy flexibility, leadership readiness, and community appetite create strong enabling conditions for coherent AI-enabled redesign. These concentrated investments can support full-system demonstrations of what AI-assisted, AI-integrated, and AI-native models look like in practice, generating the robust evidence and implementation learning that policymakers and districts need to make bigger bets.

Second, participants urged funders not to overlook the power of a "wildflower" strategy that seeds promising, educator-led innovations in smaller, rural, or less-resourced contexts. These lightweight grants can surface creative use cases, diversify learning across different community and demographic contexts, and ensure that the benefits of AI-enabled improvement do not accrue only to early adopters or well-funded systems. Funders should require that place-based and wildflower investments include explicit learning plans that link short-term outcomes to design questions for future scale, and should reserve a portion of funding for translating and disseminating lessons across contexts.

6. Build a learning agenda that drives evidence-based change (funders, researchers, intermediaries, system leaders).

The ambidextrous vision: Ensure that near-term pilots and innovations generate transferable knowledge that can guide future policy, practice, and system redesign.

Past experiments in whole-school reform have often failed to scale from isolated pilots or studies to genuine, systems-level change. A national learning agenda must link career-connected pilots, promising ideas from demonstration sites, and research and development around new models of assessment. This will require shared technology infrastructure that enables cross-site learning, data sharing, and research on AI-powered innovations, while protecting student privacy.

A collaborative research effort could codify emerging practices into design principles, such as new staffing models, assessment approaches, and professional learning, providing states and districts with a roadmap for new models. For this to work, however, policymakers must have the courage to build on what's learned without the risk aversion that has characterized past efforts.

Scaling these new models will require an entire ecosystem of support, including policy development, storytelling, advocacy, and active community-based leadership. One group of participants envisioned a national bus tour focused on the need to prepare students for the future that would recruit "AI champions" as it crisscrossed the nation.

As one participant said, "It's a wrap-around. Everyone's got to get on board."

Taken together, these action priorities are not a checklist, but a portfolio. Some are aimed at strengthening systems for today's students. Others are oriented toward building the foundations for radically different education models in the years to come. The challenge for leaders, funders, and policymakers is to manage these approaches in parallel, ensuring that short-term investments do not crowd out long-term learning, and that future-facing efforts remain grounded in the realities of today's schools.

VI. FINAL THOUGHTS: FROM VISION TO ACTION

Despite the tensions inherent in attending to two different time horizons, Forum participants were united by the belief that the window for change is short and that this opportunity cannot be squandered. Meeting this moment will require decisive action from funders, policymakers, system leaders, and technology developers to move beyond fragmented experimentation toward coherent, human-centered action.

> **"The opportunity is to build learning environments worthy of the complexity we face, grounded in what makes us irreplaceably human."**

"We stand at a rare moment when institutional failure and technological capability converge," one participant said. "The opportunity is to build learning environments worthy of the complexity we face, grounded in what makes us irreplaceably human."

In these AI-native schools, teachers could serve as architects of experience and motivators, personalizing individual student learning through evidence-based and future-focused approaches. A coherent approach to systems change, a focus on human relationships, and an insistence on bold thinking must guide this work. Otherwise, as with the data used to train the AI models that are transforming our world, we will get out of these efforts what we put into them.

"We can rise to this moment, not be overwhelmed by it."

The question is not whether we have the capacity to build what young people and the future demand, but the courage. As one Forum participant said, "We can rise to this moment, not be overwhelmed by it."

CRPE's Inaugural Think Forward Fellowship Cohort

- Yusuf Ahmad – Co-Founder, Playlab AI
- Jen Alexander – Executive Director, PIE Network
- Carole Basile – Dean, ASU Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation
- Scott Bess – President & CEO, Indiana Charter Innovation Center
- Cara Candal – Vice President, Policy, ExcelinEd
- Sunanna Chand – Executive Director, The Reinvention Lab at Teach For America
- Richard Culatta – CEO, ISTE+ASCD
- Michelle Culver – Founder, The Rithm Project
- Dan Effland – Senior Director of Innovation, Marshall Street @ Summit Public Schools
- Julia Freeland Fisher – Director of Education Research, Clayton Christensen Institute
- Chong-Hao Fu – CEO, Leading Educators
- Adam Garry – President, StrategicEDU Consulting
- Tiffany Green – CEO, Uprooted Academy
- Sarah Johnson – President & CEO, Relay Graduate School of Education
- Alex Kotran – CEO & Co-Founder, The AI Education Project (aiEDU)
- Lewis Leiboh – Deputy Director, K-12 Education, Gates Foundation
- Ross Lipstein – Chief Products Officer, Transcend
- Susanna Loeb – Professor, Stanford University
- David Mansouri – President & CEO, Tennessee SCORE
- Pedro Martinez – Commissioner, Department of Education, Massachusetts
- Megan McCarthy – Strategy Officer, Gates Foundation
- Amy McGrath – CEO & Managing Director, ASU Preparatory Academy
- Babak Mostaghimi – Partner, LearnerStudio
- Andrea Pasinetti – Co-Founder & CEO, Kira Learning
- Nick Potkalitsky – AI Specialist, Educational Service Center of Central Ohio
- Beth Rabbitt – CEO, FullScale
- Sasha Rabkin – Chief of Program Strategy and Innovation, AERDF
- Winston Roberts – AI Innovation Lead, Foundation Academies
- Joel Rose – Co-Founder & CEO, New Classrooms
- Andrew Rotherham – Co-Founder & Senior Partner, Bellwether
- Mike Taubman – Teacher and Program Director, Uncommon Schools
- Diane Tavenner – Co-Founder & CEO, Futre.me
- Sonya Thomas – Executive Director, Nashville PROPEL
- Dacia Toll – Co-CEO, Coursemojo

- Ila Deshmukh Towery – Partner, Education First
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- D'Andre Weaver – Vice President & Chief Powerful Learning Officer, Digital Promise
- Cameron White – Senior Partner, NewSchools Venture Fund
- Eden Xenakis – Chief of Staff, Bezos Family Foundation

About CRPE

The Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) is a nonpartisan K-12 education research center at Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation. We rigorously examine and test transformative ideas, using our research to inform action. We are truth tellers who combine forward-thinking ideas with empirical rigor. Since 1993, we have been untethered to any one ideology but unwavering in a core belief: public education is a goal—to prepare every child for citizenship, economic independence, and personal fulfillment—and not a particular set of institutions. From that foundation, we work to inform meaningful changes in policy and practice that will drive the public education system to meet the needs of every student.

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