

# Emerging Trends: The Future of Education

## Session 1: Student-Centered Learning

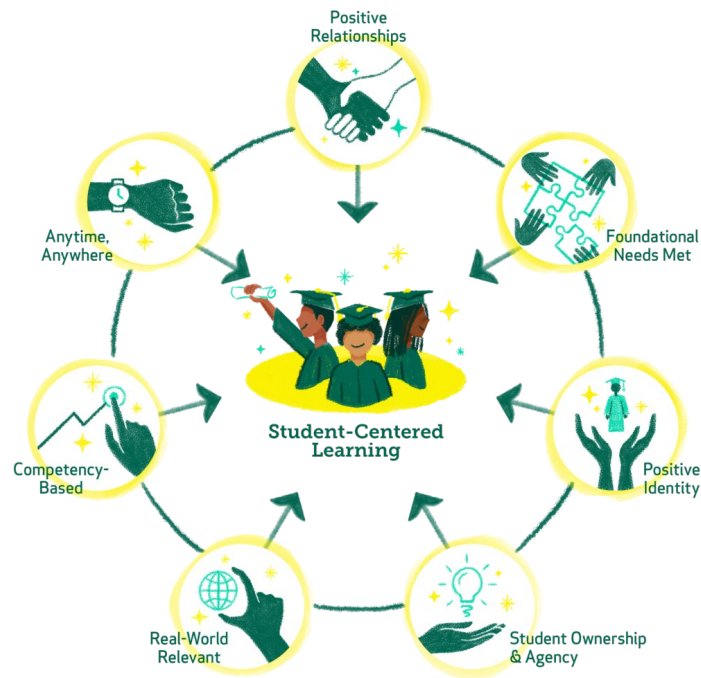
This session is being co-led by Education Evolving, a Minnesota-based nonprofit, nonpartisan organization driving transformational designs for learning, larger professional roles for educators, and policies that catalyze community-led innovation.

### Background and Context:

One of the Board's goals is meeting the current and emerging needs of Minnesota's students and schools. To do this effectively, the Board must consider the future needs of learners and how to best implement policies that meet those needs over the next few years. To help with this work, the Board has invited Education Evolving, a community partner with extensive experience researching and advocating for student-centered learning, to co-lead a conversation on the meeting the needs of Minnesota's students.

### Key Terms and Definitions:

Education Evolving has identified seven common principles of learning that are present when students are at the center of school design decisions. These principles were identified by [listening to students](#) and educators, and a careful review of [academic research](#).



**Positive Relationships.** Students develop strong relationships with other students and with adults who care about them, believe in their potential, and hold them to high expectations.

**Foundational Needs Met.** Students are supported in meeting fundamental physical, psychological, and safety needs. Students get help navigating social services, or may receive them directly in a community school environment.

**Positive Identity.** Students are fully embraced for who they are, in the context of their communities and cultures, and feel that they belong. They develop a positive sense of their own identities, including elements such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation and see those identities reflected at school.

**Student Ownership & Agency.** Students take responsibility for their learning, exercising choice to pursue their interests and passions, and agency to shape their school environment. Teachers serve increasingly as facilitators and guides.

**Real-World Relevant.** Students solve problems that exist in the real world, learning skills and knowledge in a multidisciplinary context that they will use in their future lives and careers.

**Competency-Based.** Students advance by demonstrating mastery of clearly articulated learning objectives, rather than by age, receiving extra support when they struggle and new challenges when they're ready to move on.

**Anytime, Anywhere.** Students have flexibility in when and where they learn within the school, as well as places outside of school (at home, out in community, at local businesses, etc.) and times beyond the typical school day and year.

## Facilitators/Speakers:



### **Lars Esdal, Executive Director**

Lars is a graduate of the Minnesota New Country School in rural southwest Minnesota, where he benefited first-hand from the student-centered, teacher-powered education that Education Evolving champions. Lars first became active in education policy as a student advocate, and has been involved ever since.

Before becoming Education Evolving's executive director, Lars worked as a freelancer for youth-focused organizations, focusing on policy and digital media. He has helped dozens of policy organizations, foundations, and

government agencies to develop and distribute ideas, and advance justice and policy change for young people. Lars holds a Master of Public Policy from Georgetown University, and a Bachelor of Arts from Macalester College.



### **Aqueelah Roberson, Policy Director**

Dr. Aqueelah Roberson is a transformational servant leader who has supported students, families, and community members as an educator in the public and private education sectors for the last 17 years. She has held roles in the Minneapolis and Saint Paul school districts, and served as director of Concordia University's Dr. Cheryl T. Chatman Diversity Center.

Having artistic and loving parents who strongly emphasized the importance of a formal education, Roberson received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre at

North Carolina Central University, Master of Fine Arts at the University of Central Florida – Conservatory Theatre, and Doctorate of Educational Leadership at Concordia University, Saint Paul. Through educational avenues, Roberson finds ways to blend her passion for the performing arts, working with young people, and cultivating cultural awareness and sensitivity in her work.



### **Alex Vitrella, Program Director**

Alex is a former Minneapolis Public Schools teacher and has a JD from the University of Minnesota with a focus on immigration and education law, and a BA from Carleton College. She has done extensive research on multicultural education and its role in self-determination. Alex is a native Spanish speaker and believes in the power of language reclamation.

Alex also believes in being a strong local steward. She lives in Minneapolis with her husband, two kids, and dog, where among other things she enjoys facilitating restorative conferences for the community led Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice Partnership.

### **Key Issues for Discussion:**

1. How do we best identify the future needs of students?
2. What kinds of partnerships are needed to move this work forward? How do state entities work with districts and community partners, for example? How do we center student voices in this work?
3. What does the process of turning identified needs into state policy and practice look like? Who is involved in this process?