

Educating the Whole Child: The New Learning Compact

ASCD calls on parents, students, educators, policymakers, and community members to join forces to ensure that all children become productive, engaged citizens. Our children deserve an education that emphasizes academic rigor as well as the essential 21st century skills of critical thinking and creativity.

The Challenge

At a time of rapid change and innovation, our education system is struggling to keep pace with this dynamic, digital world. Too often, young people are asked to learn 21st century skills with 20th century tools. Demands for a highly skilled and educated workforce are growing. The global marketplace is a reality. But the alarming fact is that we are still losing too many kids and wasting too much talent.

The Whole Child Community Conversations Project

In response, ASCD has launched a public engagement campaign in communities across the country to encourage schools and communities to work together to ensure that each student has access to a 21st century education--that is, a challenging curriculum in a healthy and supportive environment with an accountability system to match.

The New Learning Compact

ASCD proposes a broader definition of achievement and accountability that promotes the development of children who are **healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged**. Educating the Whole Child: The New Learning Compact asks local, state, and national policymakers to support comprehensive approaches to learning that focus on educating the whole child.

The compact asks that communities make sure that

- Each student enters school *healthy* and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
- Each student learns in an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally *safe* for students and adults.
- Each student is actively *engaged* in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
- Each student has access to personalized learning and is *supported* by qualified, caring adults.
- Each student is *challenged* by a well-balanced curriculum and is prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment.

How Information Will Be Used

Feedback from sites participating in the Whole Child Community Conversations Project will help further shape ASCD's initiative and advocacy at the national level by ensuring that local voices are heard.

We are eager to hear your thoughts and share what we learn along the way. Thank you for your participation in our conversation today!

Please visit www.wholechildeducation.org for more information.

E-mail: wholechild@ascd.org

About ASCD

Founded in 1943, ASCD is an educational leadership organization dedicated to advancing best practices and policies for the success of each learner. Our more than 170,000 members in 136 countries are professional educators from all levels and subject areas—superintendents, supervisors, principals, teachers, professors of education, and school board members. Our nonprofit, nonpartisan membership association provides expert and innovative solutions in professional development, capacity building, and educational leadership essential to the way educators learn, teach, and lead.



Educating the Whole Child: The New Learning Compact

Our children deserve an education that emphasizes academic rigor as well as the essential 21st century skills of critical thinking and creativity. Specifically, our students must be

Healthy

It makes sense that for students to learn at high levels, they must first be healthy. Students who are sick, come to school hungry, can't breathe because of asthma, can't see the blackboard because of poor vision, or can't concentrate because of pervasive toothaches or depression are unlikely to do well academically. To ensure that all students are healthy, ASCD recommends, at a minimum:

- Schools have a health advisory council with students, family, community, and business members.
- Students are routinely screened for immunizations and for vision, hearing, dental, and orthopedic concerns.
- Physical education and health classes emphasize lifetime healthy behaviors.
- Healthy food choices are available at school.

Safe and Secure

It makes sense that for students to learn at high levels, they must first feel safe and secure. Students who are fearful, bullied, or distracted by fights and other disruptive behavior are unlikely to do well academically. To ensure that all students are safe, ASCD recommends, at a minimum:

- Students, school staff, and family members establish and maintain behavioral expectations, rules, and routines.
- Families are welcomed by school staff as partners in their children's education.

Engaged

It makes sense that for students to learn at high levels, they must first be motivated to learn and interested in their studies. Students who are bored by their classes, don't feel motivated to achieve, or don't see the connection between what they're learning in school and their real-world goals are unlikely to do well academically. To ensure that all students are adequately engaged, ASCD recommends, at a minimum:

- Students may participate in a wide array of extracurricular activities.
- Schools provide opportunities for community-based apprenticeships, internships, or projects.
- Teachers use active learning strategies such as cooperative learning and project-based learning.

Supported

It makes sense that for students to learn at high levels, they must first feel supported by caring, qualified adults. Students who don't have access to adult role models, advisors, mentors, counselors, or teachers who understand their social and emotional development are unlikely to do well academically. To ensure that all students are adequately supported, ASCD recommends, at a minimum:

- Each student has an adult advisor or mentor.
- Students have access to school counselors or other student support systems.

Challenged Academically

It makes sense that for students to learn at high levels, they must have access to a 21st century curriculum that both challenges and inspires them. Students who spend most of their day listening to lectures or being drilled in reading and math only--without access to courses in the arts, music, social studies, civics, and other broadening courses--are more likely to tune out and less likely to do well in school. To ensure that all students are academically challenged with a well-balanced curriculum, ASCD recommends, at a minimum:

- Schools provide a well-rounded curriculum for all students.
- Students have access to rigorous programs in arts, foreign languages, and social studies.
- Schools maintain flexible graduation requirements.

Visit www.wholechildeducation.org for more information.

