

ACTION AGENDA

ASCD calls on parents, educators, policymakers, and communities to join forces to ensure our 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. Specifically, our students must be

HEALTHY

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 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

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

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

To ensure that all students are adequately supported, ASCD recommends, at a minimum:

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

CHALLENGED ACADEMICALLY

To ensure that all students are challenged academically 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.



Educating the Whole Child: The New Learning Compact

The Whole Child Community Conversations Project

A Guide for Preservice Teachers



Today, educational practice and policy focus overwhelmingly on academic achievement. However, achievement is but one element of student learning and development and only a part of any complete system of educational accountability. Communities, schools, and teachers must all support the development of a child who is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

Educating the Whole Child: The New Learning Compact is an initiative by ASCD that advocates a comprehensive approach to learning and teaching. We recognize that successful young people must be not only knowledgeable when they graduate from school, but also emotionally and physically healthy, civically engaged, responsible, and caring. We believe every child deserves a 21st century education that fully prepares him or her for college, work, and citizenship.

ASCD has developed a new Whole Child Compact that identifies the major components of the whole child initiative:

- 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 graduate is *challenged academically*, and is prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment.

From this compact, we've prepared a five-point action agenda (see p. 8) that elaborates on the

initiative and provides a framework around which we can focus our efforts.

As part of ASCD's Whole Child Community Conversations Project, preservice teachers can explore and discuss the concept of the whole child, discover how to work together to support this New Learning Compact, and engage in conversations to inform their practice when they move into the classroom. This guide will help you prepare for and lead a discussion to inspire conversation and answer questions such as the following:

- What does educating the whole child mean to you as a preservice teacher?
- What do you understand about the whole child initiative, and what is still unclear?
- What are your reactions to this initiative? How does this initiative change your outlook toward education?
- As a teacher, what will be your role and your goals in this initiative?
- Do the schools and communities with which you are familiar support the development of skills and knowledge students will need in the 21st century?
- How can teachers, as individuals, and schools, as institutions, work to promote development of the qualities of a whole child within students?
- How can teachers help students achieve these ends?
- How can students help teachers achieve these ends?

The New Learning Compact changes the fundamental values and structure of education. Today's preservice teachers—tomorrow's teachers—can take the lead in helping all stakeholders recognize the need for change. They can help colleagues and administrators shift away from the traditional mindset about education by fostering an

Whole Child Community Conversations Project	
Your College	
Location	
Date and Time	
7:00–7:15 p.m.	Welcome and Introduction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow participants to introduce themselves. • Share background information about ASCD's whole child initiative and the purpose of the discussion
7:15–7:45 p.m.	Discussion Part One: Meaning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delve deeply into guiding questions to ensure clarity. • Address all questions; promote participation by all members. • Allow all participants to talk out their understanding.
7:45–8:15 p.m.	Discussion Part Two: Reactions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage all participants to actively participate, providing feedback and personal responses. • Make certain that all voices are heard.
8:15–8:45 p.m.	Discussion Part Three: Roles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the importance of preservice teachers' input and action.
8:45–9:15 p.m.	Discussion Part Four: Action Steps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage enthusiasm and motivate participants to take further action. • <i>Facilitator</i>: Keep the group on task, clarify points as needed, and use handouts to provide context and capture data. • <i>Recorder</i>: Capture key themes and questions.
9:15–9:30 p.m.	Summary and Next Steps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize major findings. • Discuss next steps. • Thank participants for their time, noting that each will receive a follow-up letter with key themes and next steps.
9:30 p.m.	Adjourn

PART THREE: ROLES	
Guiding Questions	Tools & Handouts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you promote the ideals of the whole child within your classroom, school, and community? How can you help with teacher buy-in? How can you encourage student participation? • How can you generate greater awareness of the initiative within your school and community? • What university colleagues, community members, and partners can you reach out to in order to further advance the ideals of the whole child? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of the five-point action agenda • Copies of the guiding questions

PART FOUR: ACTION STEPS	
Guiding Questions	Tools & Handouts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using your knowledge of school atmospheres and politics, what challenges do you foresee with this initiative? What or who might cause resistance? What are some potential solutions to these obstacles? • What assets can you identify? Who are the people that will support your endeavor and provide constructive feedback? What resources will support your work? • What recommendations can you create for your department, cooperating teachers, schools, and ASCD? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of the guiding questions

DOCUMENT THE CONVERSATION

ASCD is eager to learn more about the issues that preservice teachers find important in the focus on providing every child with a well-rounded education. Be sure to collect the following information during your conversation:

- A summary of key themes, questions, concerns, and quotations from participants.
- Results, including specific plans or steps for the group, individual goals for

the classroom and for raising awareness throughout the school and community, and recommendations for ASCD.

- A list of participants' names, positions, and contact information.

After your discussion, please fill out the feedback form available at www.ascd.org/communityconversations. Also, be sure to send a follow-up letter to participants, providing a summary of the discussion and thanking them for attending.

atmosphere that supports the ideals of whole child education.

ASCD is working to create a world where every student has the skills necessary to not only survive but thrive in our contemporary, global society. So what should this 21st century education entail? Consider the following facts: Young people are growing up in a powerful information age, where data bombard them at lightning speed. They can receive more information by reading the front page of *The New York Times* than a person who lived in the 19th century would obtain in his or her entire lifetime. But schools still adhere to the same basic structure; as everything around us constantly changes, schools remain the same. Educating the whole child means reacting to our evolving society and nurturing all students accordingly, while maintaining a structure to ensure accountability.

WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF A WHOLE CHILD?

- Intellectually active
- Physically, verbally, socially, and academically competent
- Empathetic, kind, caring, and fair
- Creative and curious
- Disciplined, self-directed, and goal oriented
- Free
- Capable of critical thinking
- Confident
- Cared for and valued



PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL SMALL-GROUP CONVERSATION

Small-group discussions allow participants to discuss issues important to them. The process can result in a common vision and shared responsibility. Collaborating with other preservice teachers provides the opportunity to share thoughts and ideas with those who have similar goals and vision, thus creating a supportive, positive, and inspiring atmosphere conducive to discussion. Consider the following when designing small-group conversations about educating the whole child:

- Invite new ideas and a spirited give and take of issues focusing on the whole child approach to learning. Do not squelch negativity; use that energy to provoke deeper thoughts and new ideas.
- Share results and feedback with ASCD and local decision makers, such as advisors, administrators, or school committees. Your ideas will help create a better educational experience for you and your peers.
- Recruit a diverse group of participants with varied backgrounds and specializations, to make the conversation richer and more comprehensive.

SELECT A FACILITATOR AND A RECORDER

To make sure all voices are heard and conversations are well documented, choose a skilled facilitator and recorder. The facilitator is responsible for creating a safe environment, keeping conversation on track, and managing time. The facilitator should also set group guidelines and norms, such as avoiding personal attacks and respecting diversity of opinions, and state these before the meeting. The recorder should work closely with the facilitator to capture key issues, areas of agreement and disagreement, and lingering questions. The work of the facilitator and recorder provides a foundation for future meetings, as well as documented feedback for your ongoing classes, advisors, and cooperating teachers and schools.

DEFINE GOALS

What are the goals of discussions about the whole child among preservice teachers? What would be the results of a successful discussion for a group of aspiring educators?

- Increased understanding about the whole child approach to learning.
- Recognition of challenges and potential solutions.
- Shared commitment to pursue recommendations from these conversations that focus on a whole child approach to learning.
- Raised awareness of the whole child approach, leading to further involvement in creating and promoting a healthy, safe, engaging, supportive, and challenging atmosphere.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What does the whole child mean to you as an aspiring educator? Does educating the whole child matter? If it does, what are your reactions to ASCD's five-point action agenda? We have created some guiding questions to generate conversation and find answers to these issues. You can complete all four parts of the conversation in one meeting or split the meetings up by parts.



PART ONE: MEANING

Guiding Questions	Tools & Handouts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on your best teaching experiences. If you have not yet had an opportunity to teach, consider your experiences as a student and examine what your teachers did to create a positive learning experience for you. What were the methods employed? What were the outcomes? What were the fundamental beliefs and values behind a particular teaching technique? How do you see your experience through the whole child lens? • As preservice teachers, what does the phrase “to educate the whole child” mean to you? What do you understand, and what is still unclear? • How does this concept relate to the way you think about education? What would this model look like within your classroom? How is this different from your concept of a traditional classroom? What specific examples can you provide? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of the five-point action agenda • Copies of the guiding questions

PART TWO: REACTIONS

Guiding Questions	Tools & Handouts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your reaction to ASCD's five-point action agenda? • How would your teaching experience, as well as the quality of your students' education, improve if your school and community followed this agenda? • What are teachers, schools, and school districts already doing to ensure a whole child approach to education? What is missing? How would classrooms and schools change if the five-point action agenda were fully implemented? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of the five-point action agenda • Copies of the guiding questions