

## The Problem

Every student deserves the chance to learn. For too many—especially youth who are black, brown, and Latino, and especially those living at or near poverty—our schools have failed and students feel alienated and disengaged. It is not students alone who are alienated by the system; educators too are alienated, robbed of the agency to create the climate and culture students need to succeed.

## The Vision

One day, our public schools will bring greater equity to society empowering educators to develop a culture of compassion, trust, and high expectations so adolescent learners who were once failed by the system can excel.

## Our Mission

Eskolta is dedicated to catalyzing the capacity of educators to reinvent schools, inspiring the students the school system has failed and unleashing their potential.

# Changes must be made not only at the classroom level, but at the school and district level if we are to transform the culture of education.



# Theory of Action:

Eskolta brings a researcher's mindset, a designer's approach and best practices for equity and excellence to their work

## Rationale

Education is a **complex system**. Too often, solutions to problems are offered as if a single panacea will finally "fix" what is broken.

We approach this complex system recognizing that it will **always need fixing** and there are **no simple solutions**.

By being **disciplined and data-informed** we can learn from our own efforts and build a **habit of improvement**.

Inquiry, self-study, and collaborative learning –the hallmarks of scientific research– are rooted in the ideas of **John Dewey, Donald Schön, Peter Senge, and Anthony Bryk**.

## Strategies



### Researcher's Mindset

#### Establish

existing research base to inform new learning

#### Investigate

data through disciplined search for understanding

#### Analyze

to engage in deep quantitative and qualitative research

#### Collaborate

across multiple schools exploring similar problems

#### Provide action research tools and resources

for others to engage in their process

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Solutions **imposed** on educators from outside **do not last**.

When educators instead experience the **agency of design**, they are more likely to achieve success: creating solutions that align to **school goals** and **student needs**, **prototyping** those solutions, and **refining** them through iterative tests (**David Kelley**).

The sense of **coherence** (**Richard Elmore**) and collective **efficacy** (**Jenny Donohoo**) educators experience this way can have a dramatic impact on student learning.

This results in tools and materials **personalized** to the schools using them.

## Strategies



### Designer's Approach

#### Seek to understand

lived experience of students affected by the problem

**Build capacity of educators as learners and leaders**  
exploring and driving possible solutions

#### Test and refine

ideas through use in practice

#### Align projects to core goals

and shepherd from concept to completion

#### Synthesize and distill learnings

into cogent, user-friendly materials and resources

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**Adolescent learners**, particularly students of color and students in communities of poverty, are too often **failed by the school system**.

Many experience school as a place where they do not have **purpose, belonging, or efficacy** to learn (Hulleman; Cohen; Steele; Dweck; Yeager).

The feedback they have received tells them that **they are the problem** (Hattie & Timperley; Herman).

They have not had the personalized guidance to practice **metacognitive and comprehension skills** critical to future success, or to learn about the **historical and societal background** that affects them.

Practices that address this can **turn around learning for these students**. (Hattie; Farrington et al)

## Strategies



### Best Practices for Equity & Excellence

**Strength-base culture**  
that cultivates students' learning mindsets

**Mastery learning**  
of comprehensions skills through relevant content

**Transparent, actionable feedback**  
that develops student's metacognitive skills

**Student-centered scheduling and programming**  
for personalized pathways to postsecondary success

**Personalized guidance**  
on the path to successful college, career, and life

**Culturally responsive classrooms**  
addressing historical inequity affecting students' lives