



SCHOOL FOR SUPERHEROES

DISCOVER PHASE

1. Students in the 21st Century
2. Youth Experiences and Aspirations
3. The Science of Adolescent Learning

1. STUDENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

What are your top three insights about the challenges facing your prospective students in the 21st century, both globally and in your community?

Provide up to 300 words and/or describe and upload 1-3 videos, images, data charts, or other pieces of evidence you can share with your community to illustrate your insights and why they are important.

SUBMITTED 2/11/16:

Our concept does not fit neatly into the boxes provided (isn't that the point?), so we respectfully submit a Discover Phase answer in three parts. We wish to disrupt the constraints of the application, because we find it necessary to transform the dominating model of education. The insights we would most like to feature about "Adolescent Learning" are less relevant for us than the "Challenges" facing students in the 21st century and their "Aspirations," both of which are central to our self-directed learning model.

(PART 1 of 3) If you can pause time, you can see that the future is wide open and full of possibility. We have a choice. We choose how to spend our time and money and energy. We can dedicate our energy to create a platform for the children who will shape the future with their innovation, curiosity, communication, and dedication to make a difference.

How do we get there? First we must rely on students' strengths and passions to guide us. Secondly, we must have the tools to assess our own strengths and biases. We also need to enlarge the table to include the larger learning community.

The three assumptions that we are making are: (1) the map for the preparation for the future that a student requires resides inside her, in a combination of her superpowers (character strengths), passions, interests, and dreams and goals; (2) adults and peers who want to support her carry internal mental models that reflect unexamined beliefs about the “way school is” or should be. These mental models can interrupt the student’s ability to voice her internal direction and to be heard; and (3) relevant learning occurs in the world outside the school walls, as students address shared problems or contribute to a shared goal with the community.

2. YOUTH EXPERIENCE AND ASPIRATIONS

What are your top three insights from young people about how they experience school and learning in their lives, about how they see their education and career opportunities, and about your role in preparing them for the future?

Provide up to 300 words and/or describe and upload 1-3 videos, images, data charts, or other pieces of evidence that illustrate what you’ve learned.

SUBMITTED 2/11/16:

(PART 2 of 3) School for Superheroes is built on the foundation of communication, formalized in three intersecting circles: the Roundtable, the Airlock, and the Conference.

The Roundtable brings the community and key community leaders together with school leadership, staff, students, and parents in order to discuss and address key issues impacting the health and development of EVERYONE. Participants address the needs, assets, and health of the community as a whole including families, the school itself, and community members’ respective organizations. The Roundtable is an essential way to build relationships, share skills, solve problems, support students, help students support the community, and ensure collective action toward the common good. These discussions would ensure that the School for Superheroes can provide project-based learning opportunities that would address shared problems, or contribute to a shared goal.

In the Airlock, everyone who participates in the Conference (school staff and advising team including parents, community members, and students) place their

mental models on the table. Like an airlock on a space station, this circle will prepare participants to enter the Conference ready to embrace change and pivot smoothly with the student's intuition. Using inquiry, role play, and creative tools to discuss the purpose of "school" and the format of the Conference, participants will discuss the biases that could interrupt their ability to listen to the student's passions and intention in the Conference.

The Conference is where the magic happens. The Conference serves to amplify the student's voice, as the owner of the learning process. School advising team, parents, fellow students, and community members (including business, nonprofit, and higher education) seek to understand the student's goals, passions, and strengths, with an eye toward receiving them in the community as future adults prepared for leadership, entrepreneurship, and parenting.

3. THE SCIENCE OF ADOLESCENT LEARNING

What are your top three insights about how young people learn — the insights you're most passionate about bringing to life in your school?

Provide up to 300 words and/or describe and upload 1-3 videos, images, or other pieces of evidence that have informed your thinking and give you confidence that your school can enrich young people's learning.

SUBMITTED 2/11/16:

(PART 3 of 3) How would the circles be run and who would be invited to participate?

The circles would follow a democratic model based heavily on the Restorative Circles developed by the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP). The role of facilitator will be to provide structure, follow the scripted agenda designed for each circle, and to guide the discussion from a position as a "guide on the side." The agenda would include the opportunity for all participants to express their thoughts and feelings and to report how a specific action or change affects them in their role as parent, community member, school representative, etc.

The circles represent a safe, non-judgmental setting where everyone has a voice, takes responsibility for its members as a microcosm of a community. The

set of questions that guide each circle are designed to spend the majority of the time dedicated to discuss community and school needs (Roundtable), personal experiences and opinions about education (Airlock), and the individual student's ideas for a line of inquiry or a project that would combine her superpowers, interests, and passions (Conference).

Since the focus is on the larger community in which the school lives and participates, the Roundtable would be a point of entry to invite anyone interested in learning about or getting involved with the school. The Roundtable would provide the perfect recruiting grounds for people in the community who would benefit from learning about a specific student's passion and interests at his or her Conference. The Airlock would be open to all participants in an upcoming Conference and the participants in the Conference would include the school advising team, community members identified through the Roundtable, fellow students, and parents.

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