



# REFRAMED



How communities,  
schools, and students  
are using graduate  
portraits, learner profiles,  
and student portfolios  
to complete the picture  
of education

# As the world changes around us, so too do the ways teachers teach and learners learn.

Every day, educators make changes to adapt to new challenges and opportunities. For these changes to make a lasting difference, they need to consider the wider frame in which learning happens: the hopes and dreams of the community and the realities and opportunities of the world today.

This booklet collects tools that educators can use with their students and communities to complete the picture of learning.

## Set the Scene

How you plan is as important as what your plan articulates. Start by engaging with:

<b>Circumstances</b>	References and data sources to understand what's happening in your organization, your community, and the world.	Page 4
<b>Communities</b>	People and organizations whose perspectives are essential to making change that is meaningful and lasting.	Page 4
<b>Competencies</b>	Specific and observable learning outcomes that transcend subject matter and get to the heart of learning.	Page 5



## Tools to Try

When you're ready to start framing the future, consider these three tools:

If you want to	Start with a	On
Draw together community stakeholders and education leaders to chart a North Star based on a shared vision	<b>Portrait of a Graduate</b>	Page 6
Develop mutual understanding between educators and students to meet the unique needs of each learner	<b>Learner Profile</b>	Page 8
Create ways for students to share their learning with peers, mentors, and the world	<b>Student Portfolio</b>	Page 10

Consider starting here—it helps you build a vision that guides your next steps

Each tool can be used by itself, often at no cost. Together, they can help everyone involved in the education system understand and express the scope and scale of modern learning.

Many educators are already using some form of these tools—they aren't new ideas! Making these tools more visible allows for collaboration, helps avoid misunderstanding, and builds community support.

# Circumstances

To frame the future, first you need to see the present clearly. Accounting for global conditions, like social, economic, and technological trends, as well as the latest learning research, ensures a broad and aspirational vision. Understanding local context, like regional workforce needs and the hopes and dreams of community members, is essential to creating a plan that reflects reality.

The right mix of references and data sources will be different for each organization. Here are a few places to begin your search:

## Here & Now

### Future Ready PA Index

A collection of school progress measures

[futurereadypa.org](http://futurereadypa.org)

### Partner 4 Work

The workforce development board of the Pittsburgh area

[partner4work.org/research](http://partner4work.org/research)

## There & Then

### Forecast 5.0: Navigating the Future of Learning

Explores the impact of current trends on education

[knowledgeworks.org/forecast-5](http://knowledgeworks.org/forecast-5)

### Inflection Point

Data and analysis on the future of work in Western Pennsylvania

[alleghenyconference.org/beyondinflectionpoint](http://alleghenyconference.org/beyondinflectionpoint)

## Info to Have Handy

Demographic data

Budget summaries

Program calendars

Economic data

# Communities

Each of these tools is made through dialogue: a Portrait of a Graduate emerges from the dialogue between the community and the school or learning provider. A Learner Profile captures the dialogue between an educator and a student. A Student Portfolio is a dialogue between the student and the world.

Before you get started, it's important to identify who needs to be part of these conversations.



Local business owners



Career & technical education



Faith leaders



Parents & guardians



Social service agencies

+

See more resources on page 14

See how your plans connect these stakeholders on page 12

# Competencies

Underlying each of these tools are competencies: specific and observable learning outcomes. Competency-based learning helps students develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are important to success in school, higher education, work, and life.\*

- Learners have acquired **knowledge** when they can recall and apply what they've learned.
- Learners have cultivated a **skill** when they can put that skill to practical use.
- Learners have developed a **disposition** when they exhibit behaviors and habits of mind.

Competencies transcend specific subjects like math, science, and history. They get to the foundations of learning that lead to a student's development, growth, and, ultimately, potential to thrive.

In addition to their use in education, competencies are part of the future of work. Major industries, emerging fields, and even the U.S. Department of Labor are advocating for competency-based hiring models.

- **Competency Model Clearinghouse:** A database sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor featuring competencies across employment fields. [careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel](https://careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel)
- **Remake Learning Competencies:** A collection of community-identified competencies that connect students to pathways to lifelong-learning. [competencies.remakelarning.org](https://competencies.remakelarning.org)
- **Framework for 21st Century Learning:** A set of skills in widespread use and well known for its "4Cs" of 21st century learning: Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity. [battelleforkids.org/networks/p21/frameworks-resources](https://battelleforkids.org/networks/p21/frameworks-resources)

See more  
resources on  
page 14

*\*This definition of competencies is from the Remake Learning Competencies developed by The Sprout Fund and members of the Remake Learning network. See more at [competencies.remakelarning.org](https://competencies.remakelarning.org)*

# Portrait of a Graduate

Educational institutions are tasked with some of society's most important work—preparing the next generation to work, live, vote, and lead. To do this well, they must articulate what it means for a student to be prepared. When a student graduates from school or completes a program, what skills and habits of mind will they need? What hopes does the community have for its young people?

The Portrait of a Graduate is one way for communities to frame a shared vision for each and every student. As new ideas and pilot projects come and go, the Portrait of a Graduate serves as a North Star guiding schools and other learning providers through the long-term process of modernizing learning.

## Why It's Useful

- Considers the changing conditions of learning, work, and life
- Invites the wisdom and perspective of parents, educators, employers, and higher education
- Builds broad, lasting support within the community

## Process Checklist

- Assemble a dedicated and diverse design team
- Establish background knowledge and take stock of circumstances
- Draft a list of the competencies graduates need to thrive
- Refine and define the list in collaboration with the broader community
- Lay out the list as a visual to make it accessible and inspirational
- Adopt your portrait as a community and plan for implementation

read more on page 4 about engaging with community

read more on page 5 about competencies

Learner Profiles and Student Portfolios can be part of this

## In Use

As a new superintendent, Dr. Lisa Duval of *South Allegheny School District* saw the need for a clear sense of direction. She used the Portrait of a Graduate process to rally the entire school community around a bold new vision. [southallegheny.org](http://southallegheny.org)

XQ is on a mission to rethink high school, guided by Learner Goals, a set of competencies depicted as colorful and inspiring images of learners ready to thrive in an ever-changing world.

[bit.ly/xq-learner-goals](http://bit.ly/xq-learner-goals)

The *Virginia Department of Education* adopted a Portrait of a Graduate to ensure every student in the state attained the content knowledge, workplace skills, and civic responsibilities to be "life ready."

[bit.ly/profile-virginia-graduate](http://bit.ly/profile-virginia-graduate)

As part of their strategic plan, *South Fayette School District* superintendent Dr. Ken Lockette and his team engaged teachers, students, parents, residents, employers, and higher education to design a Portrait of a Graduate that clarified the district's focus.

[southfayette.org](http://southfayette.org)

## Example Portrait of a Graduate

Choosing and sharing the 4-6 competencies you want every graduate to possess can create a compelling vision that unites your learning community.

Defining each trait helps everyone understand what they mean.

Each trait is clearly visible and given equal prominence.

### CURIOUS

Explorer of the world, inquisitive thinker, energized by new ideas

### COMMUNICATIVE

Confident and articulate writer and speaker, good listener

### EMPATHETIC

Sensitive and respectful friend, supportive peer

### ADAPTABLE

Navigator of ambiguity, responsive to feedback



### RESOURCEFUL

Skilled at finding and using resources

### RESPONSIBLE

Honest citizen, keeper of commitments, owner of outcomes

Make it your own! Choose layout elements that reflect your community.

What you can't see in this model is the most important part of the process—the deep engagement with educators, parents, students, and community members to select and articulate these qualities.

### Get Started

[PortraitofaGraduate.org](http://PortraitofaGraduate.org), a resource from Battelle for Kids, is a complete toolkit for creating a Portrait of a Graduate. Download a step-by-step guide, browse a gallery of Graduate Portraits made by school districts across the country, and even create your own Portrait using an online tool.

See more resources on page 14

# Learner Profile

Teachers are a students' guide to discover what they don't yet know, practice skills they haven't yet mastered, and develop dispositions they aren't yet used to. This makes learning not just a personal journey, but an interpersonal experience.

A Learner Profile is a document that an individual student creates, together with an educator or other caring adult, to uncover and express their unique strengths and interests, social and emotional needs, cultural background, and learning preferences. The educator and student build on that personalized picture to establish learning goals and expectations.



Think of it as a map to guide learners and educators toward the North Star of your Portrait of a Graduate

## Why It's Useful

- Provides a starting point for deeper, more responsive learning
- Gives students options for how they access, engage with, and express their learning
- Enriches student-teacher relationships; first to get to know them, then to help them learn
- Makes room for broader definitions of success and growth



Building in competencies can help with this

## Process Checklist

- Select or create a Learner Profile template
- Meet with each student to learn about their strengths, interests, and goals
- Guide students through reflections to understand their learning preferences
- Work one-on-one with students to complete profiles
- Use the profile as a "living document" that evolves with the student
- Add examples of student work as evidence of progress



Explore examples below and on the next page



This can become the basis of a Student Portfolio

## In Use

Teachers at *Williams Middle School* create student growth binders for each student. Principal Dominic Salpeck says the binders help teachers provide more individual attention and help students take ownership of their learning. [davidewilliams.montourschools.com](http://davidewilliams.montourschools.com)

As part of their model for personalized learning, *Building 21* created this "dashboard" that teachers and students can build together and return to at key moments over the school year.

[bit.ly/building21-learner-profile](http://bit.ly/building21-learner-profile)

To help elementary school students reflect on their learning, *Distinctive Schools* created this template that prompts students to talk about themselves in ways that come naturally to children.

[bit.ly/distinctive-schools-learner-profile](http://bit.ly/distinctive-schools-learner-profile)

As part of their counseling plans, students at *Greensburg Salem School District* record their work in a digital folder. This helps school administrators like Dr. Ken Bissell deepen their understanding of each student. [greensburgsalem.org](http://greensburgsalem.org)



## José's Learner Profile

Language(s) I speak: English, Spanish

At home, I live with: My Mom & Dad  
My sister Julia

People in my life who support me:

Mom & Dad, Grandpa, Aunt Rosa

↑  
Info about life outside of school  
paints a more complete picture

Grade level / age: 7th / 12

People who worked  
on this profile: José  
Mr. Fish (teacher)  
Ms. Cox (counselor)

↑  
Educators, counselors,  
mentors, and students  
co-create the profile

We wrote this profile on: September 4th

We'll revisit this profile on: November 1st

↻  
These are living documents—be sure to set aside  
time to revisit and update

I learn best when:

I'm interested in the subject, I know  
what's expected, I have time to myself

↻  
Taking the time to write this down helps educators consider  
individualized approaches and learners reflect about themselves

I learn least when:

The classroom is loud, I'm hungry, too  
much screen time, we're moving too fast

When I grow up, I want to:

Be a mechanical engineer  
and play basketball

The qualities I want to develop are:

Patience, writing, being a good teammate

My goals:

Improve my attendance and  
tardiness record  
Write and play a song on my guitar  
as part of a language arts or history  
project

How I'll track my progress:

Check in with Ms. Cox every month to find out  
how I'm doing and talk about strategies for  
getting to class on time  
Find the right project with Mr. Fish, and include  
the project in my portfolio (including a video of  
me playing the song)

↻  
Connecting progress to a Student Portfolio can help  
learners mark their progress and share it with others

### Get Started

The Vermont Agency of Education uses a comprehensive state-wide approach to give each and every student the opportunity to reflect upon their learning and shape their future. Their website features a 6-step self-paced course in implementing the process with students. See more at [bit.ly/VT-PLPP](https://bit.ly/VT-PLPP)

# Student Portfolio

For a long time, grades and test scores have been the only forms of evidence most students could use to demonstrate their achievement. But there is so much more that fits into the frame of learning. How can a student communicate all that they've learned, all that they've made, and all that they've become?

A Student Portfolio is an archive of material evidence of learning.\* Students can use portfolios to explore who they are, and to show college admissions officials, potential employers, and other post-secondary gatekeepers a more complete picture of all that they are capable of.

Students can use portfolios to track progress on the goals in their Learner Profile

Portfolios can be used for many purposes: inviting feedback from peers or experts, giving parents a window into their student's learning lives, rethinking assessment, sustaining a student's creative practice, and more. As you consider implementing portfolios, don't be afraid to try a new approach

## Why It's Useful

- Makes student strengths and potential more visible to more people
- Captures progress and enables feedback that helps learners improve over time
- Bridges K-12 learning, student interests, and post-secondary opportunities
- Provides real, concrete proof of learning

## Process Checklist

- Determine the purpose of the student portfolio
- Consult postsecondary and workforce partners to find out what they're looking for
- Identify criteria for selecting artifacts, projects, and processes for portfolio
- Research and select a format: binders, posters, presentations, websites
- Work with students to curate and narrate examples of their learning
- Conduct a "portfolio review" to support student reflection and improvement

Integrate portfolio planning into Learner Profile development

Link portfolio contents to competencies in your Portrait of a Graduate

## In Use

Teens participating in *Startable Pittsburgh* compile binders of notes, materials samples, product sketches, and more. Program manager Staci Offutt reports that the binders help students stay accountable and organized. [startablepgh.org](http://startablepgh.org)

Students at *Jefferson County Public Schools* in Kentucky gather learning artifacts in a "Backpack of Success Skills." These digital archives are based on competencies identified by businesses, nonprofits, and parents. [jefferson.kyschools.us](http://jefferson.kyschools.us)

During their senior year, every student in the *Los Angeles Unified School District* selects artifacts from their portfolio and presents evidence of how they embody the district's Graduate Profile. [lausportfoliodefense.weebly.com](http://lausportfoliodefense.weebly.com)

To help students see a path to their future, *Laurel Highlands School District* superintendent Dr. Jesse Wallace and his team developed a portfolio system that, combined with internships, creates pathways to post-secondary opportunities. [lhsd.org](http://lhsd.org)

\*This definition of Student Portfolio comes from the Education Reform Glossary.

# Example Portfolio

Portfolios come in many formats: binders, sketchbooks, blogs, websites, Github repositories, presentations, and video reels, just to name a few! The format you choose (and the sections and structure inside) should reflect the kind of learning being captured

About Me

Work Samples


Current Projects

Recommendations

### Breathe Easy

An applied research project where we had to study the air quality in and around our school, develop a plan to improve it, and advocate for changes.

**Teacher: Mr. Malachi**



**Project Goals:**

- + Record and analyze air quality data
- + Raise awareness of air quality issues
- + Change school bus idling policy

**Skills Used:**

- + Data analysis
- + Graphic design
- + Collaboration
- + Public speaking

### Progress Tracking

- + **October:** Collected available data and tools
- + **November:** Measured air quality in 4 locations
- + **December:** Met with expert, developed plan
- + **January:** Presented plan to school board

Read more about my step-by-step process on my blog: [janicegmorrison.com/breathe-easy](http://janicegmorrison.com/breathe-easy)

### Learning Reflections

**Strengths:**

- + Got people interested and excited about the topic
- + Developed leadership role on my team
- + Noticed and fixed data collection error

**Areas for Improvement:**

- + Time management
- + Writing with more clarity and concision

Skills can map to the competencies found in Portrait of a Graduate

Links to other artifacts make learning real and tangible

Portfolios should include the projects that students are most passionate about and proud of. When students feel ownership over their portfolio, their unique voice will shine through, giving them a sense of their personal growth

These can build on reflection practices students develop as they create Learner Profiles

Many portfolios include space (or create opportunity) for supportive feedback from educators, mentors, and peers

## Get Started

Dr. Helen Barrett has developed a comprehensive course to guide educators through the use of electronic student portfolios. Access the self-serve resource at [sites.google.com/site/k12eportfolios](http://sites.google.com/site/k12eportfolios)

See more resources on page 14

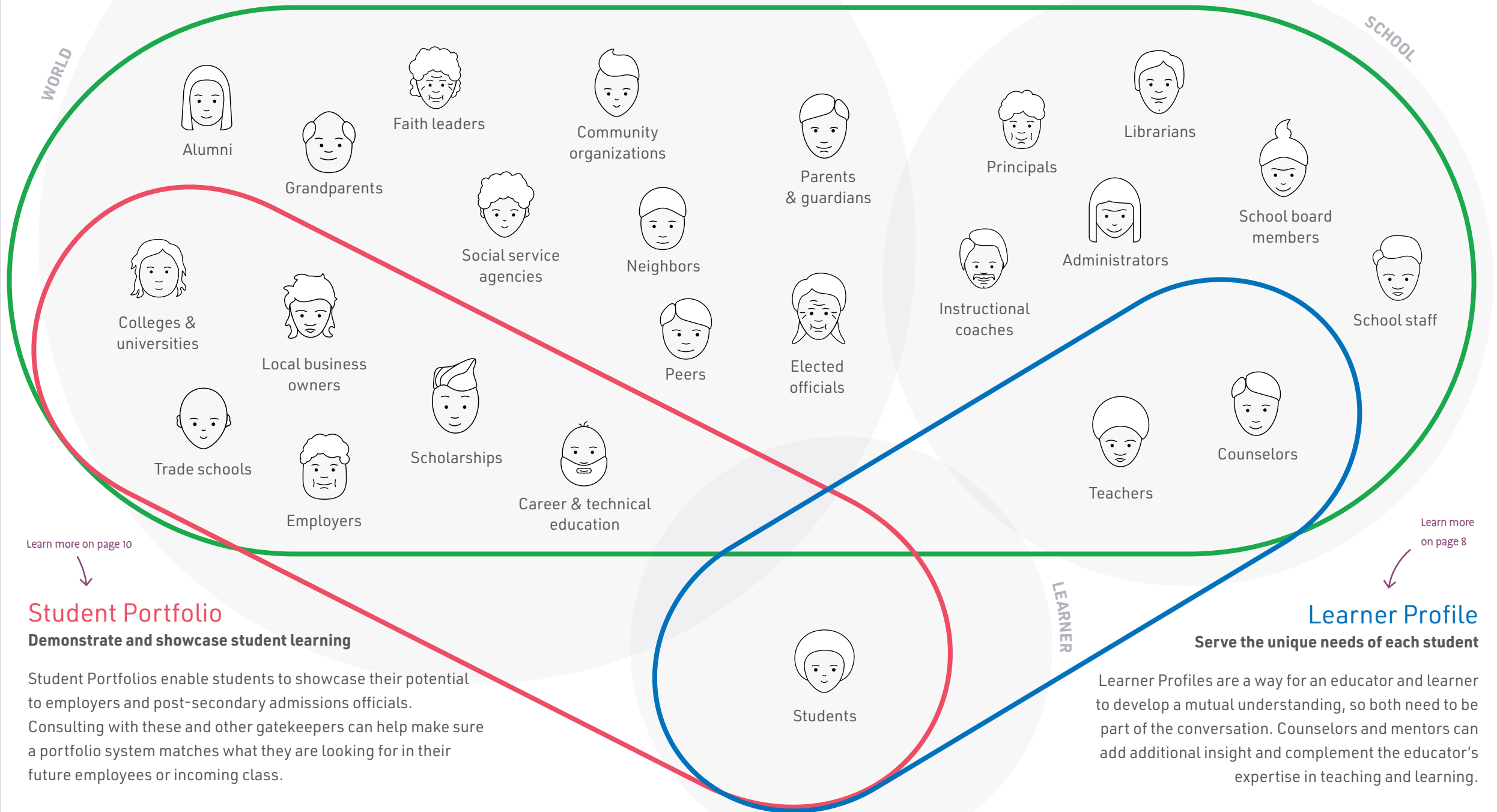
Taken together, these three tools can create a framework connecting **community** to school, **school** to student, and **student** to the **world**.

### Portrait of a Graduate

Learn more on page 6

Set a North Star based on a shared vision

Graduate Portraits need to involve the whole community as much as (if not more than) your school or organization. This is an opportunity to bring new voices to the table—voices that can enrich your understanding of the local context, and voices that can join you in advocating for change.



Learn more on page 10

### Student Portfolio

Demonstrate and showcase student learning

Student Portfolios enable students to showcase their potential to employers and post-secondary admissions officials. Consulting with these and other gatekeepers can help make sure a portfolio system matches what they are looking for in their future employees or incoming class.

Learn more on page 8

### Learner Profile

Serve the unique needs of each student

Learner Profiles are a way for an educator and learner to develop a mutual understanding, so both need to be part of the conversation. Counselors and mentors can add additional insight and complement the educator's expertise in teaching and learning.

# Resources

## Circumstances

### Forecast 5.0: Navigating the Future

**of Learning:** Explores the impact of current trends on education

[knowledgeworks.org/forecast-5](http://knowledgeworks.org/forecast-5)

**The Future of Jobs Report:** A global perspective on the skills needed for tomorrow's workers  
[weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2018](http://weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2018)

**Future Ready PA Index:** A collection of school progress measures [futurereadypa.org](http://futurereadypa.org)

**Inflection Point:** Data and analysis on the future of work in Western Pennsylvania  
[allegHENYconference.org/beyondinflectionpoint](http://allegHENYconference.org/beyondinflectionpoint)

**Partner 4 Work:** The workforce development board of the Pittsburgh area  
[partner4work.org/research](http://partner4work.org/research)

## Community

**Design Thinking for Educators:** Toolkit for facilitating collaborative design activities  
[designthinkingforeducators.com](http://designthinkingforeducators.com)

**Glossary of Education Reform:** Definitions of key terms in education [edglossary.org](http://edglossary.org)

## Competencies

**Competency Model Clearinghouse:** Database of workforce competencies  
[careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel](http://careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel)

**Deeper Learning:** A set of competencies designed to capture what students need to succeed in and out of the classroom  
[deeper-learning.org](http://deeper-learning.org)

### Framework for 21st Century Learning:

A set of widely used learning competencies  
[battelleforkids.org/networks/p21/frameworks-resources](http://battelleforkids.org/networks/p21/frameworks-resources)

### Remake Learning Competencies:

Community-identified competencies for local learning pathways  
[competencies.remakelarning.org](http://competencies.remakelarning.org)

## Portrait of a Graduate

**PortraitofaGraduate.org:** A complete toolkit for creating your Portrait of a Graduate  
[portraitofagraduate.org](http://portraitofagraduate.org)

## Learner Profile

**Character Playbooks:** A series of evidence-based playbooks for educators and students  
[characterlab.org](http://characterlab.org)

**Personalized Learning Planning Process:** A 6-step self-paced course for adults and students implementing Learner Profiles [education.vermont.gov/student-learning/personalized-learning](http://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/personalized-learning)

## Student Portfolios

### Introduction to K-12 ePortfolios:

An online course covering the planning, development, and implementation of electronic student portfolios.  
[sites.google.com/site/k12eportfolios](http://sites.google.com/site/k12eportfolios)

**LAUSD Portfolio Defense:** An explanation of the Los Angeles Unified School District's student portfolio initiative, including replication resources  
[lausdportfoliodefense.weebly.com](http://lausdportfoliodefense.weebly.com)

**Maker Ed Open Portfolio Project:** A common framework for documenting, sharing, and assessing maker learning through portfolios.  
[makered.org/opp](http://makered.org/opp)

A Root + All project

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# What belongs in our picture of learning?

*Reframed* looks at the ways communities, educators, and learners are expanding their view of what matters and what counts when it comes to learning:

**Portrait of a Graduate:** Communities and educators use this process to chart a North Star for their schools and learning spaces, based on a shared vision.

**Learner Profile:** Educators and students use this method to develop a joint understanding of how best to serve the unique needs of each student.

**Student Portfolio:** Students use these tools to demonstrate their potential to future employers and post-secondary opportunities.

*Reframed* includes an introduction to each of these tools, along with annotated models and resources to help you get started.

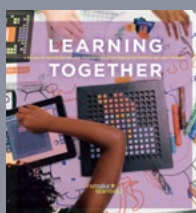
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