Transcend

COMMUNITY CONDITIONS

At Transcend, we've supported hundreds of communities on their journeys to create extraordinary learning environments, and we've seen some common trends emerge when those journeys are successful.

Specifically, communities see the most success when they have:

- **Conviction** in the importance of the journey and a deep, shared belief in the need for change
- **Clarity** on their vision and what it will take to achieve that vision over the short and long-term
- **Capacity** to design and implement their ideas
- **Coalition** of broad and diverse stakeholders who share this conviction and clarity
- **Culture** of innovation, trust, and learning

CONVICTION CLARITY CAPACITY COALITION CULTURE

We've come to see these conditions as essential "soil" in which a design journey and a learning environment take root.

The framework on the next page lays out these 5 conditions, as well as 3-4 critical dimensions within each condition. Keep in mind as you reflect on and use these conditions throughout your design journey:

> The conditions describe how well set up *a person or group* is to help move *all or part of the community's learning environment* toward extraordinary learning through a community-based design process.
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> - These statements are applicable to any person or group in the community (e.g., system administrators, families, educators, students, school boards, school administrators, etc.); the term 'we' in each statement can be substituted out for any of those people and groups.
>
> - These statements are applicable to any part of the community's learning environment (e.g., a specific part of the student experience, the entire overall design, portrait of a graduate, a cross-cutting theme, etc.), at any level of scope (e.g, system, school, department, classroom, out-of-school setting, etc.). The term 'this learning environment' in each statement can be substituted out for any focused-on part of the learning environment, at any level of scope.

CONVICTION *A deep and sustaining belief in the importance and potential of the work being undertaken that fuels engagement and ensures it is prioritized.*	**Conviction in a vision of extraordinary learning for all*:** *We* believe deeply that for all students to be successful, *this learning environment* must look and feel very different than how it has looked and felt for the last 50 years.
	Conviction to engage in a community-based process: *We* are invested in ensuring that the process of making any major changes to *this learning environment* is done in ways that both draw on outside perspectives and also deeply involve all groups within the community and especially center students and families.
	Conviction to improve learning through our vision: *We* have a clear position on the role *this learning environment* should play in supporting all young people to learn in ways that enable them to thrive in and transform the world.
	Conviction through prioritization: *We* are willing to make moving toward a vision of extraordinary learning for *this learning environment* one of our highest priorities, now and for as long as it takes to make progress.
CLARITY *A comprehensive and crisp understanding of the work ahead that provides direction and a path forward.*	**Clarity in community aspirations:** *We* are clear on what various members of our community want for *this learning environment*.
	Clarity in vision: *We* are clear on the design choices that we believe can enable *this learning environment* to meet our collective aspirations.
	Clarity in journey path: *We* are clear on the approach that we're taking to improve *this learning environment* toward our vision.
CAPACITY *The support of personnel, funding, and time required to successfully carry out the work.*	**Capacity in skills and capabilities:** *We* have the skills, knowledge, and mindsets we need to help move sustainably toward a vision of extraordinary learning for *this learning environment*.
	Capacity in time and bandwidth: *We* have the time, headspace, and flexibility we need to help move sustainably toward a vision of extraordinary learning for *this learning environment*.
	Capacity in resources and supports: *We* have the supporting resources - physical, financial, and human - needed to help move sustainably toward a vision of extraordinary learning for *this learning environment*, now and into the future
	Capacity through continuity: There is enough continuity in people in key roles across our community - as well as healthy turnover when needed - for *us* to move sustainably toward a vision of extraordinary learning for *this learning environment*, now and into the future.
COALITION *The investment of a committed group of stakeholders who are helping the work become a sustained success.*	**Coalition with students and families:** *We* are better able to move toward a vision of extraordinary learning for *this learning environment* because students and families are consistently involved and invested alongside us.
	Coalition with educators and school administrators: *We* are better able to move toward a vision of extraordinary learning for *this learning environment* because educators (and any unions they're organized into) and school administrators are consistently involved and invested alongside us.
	Coalition with district staff and administrators: *We* are better able to move toward a vision of extraordinary learning for *this learning environment* because district-level staff and administrators are consistently involved and invested alongside us.
	Coalition with others within and beyond our community: *We* are better able to move toward a vision of extraordinary learning for *this learning environment* because others within our community (e.g., our Board, religious and political leaders who represent diverse perspectives in our community, etc.) and outside of it (e.g., support organizations, sources of funding or policy support, etc.) are consistently involved and invested alongside us.
CULTURE *Values, norms, and practices that support effective and sustainable innovation and learning.*	**Culture of trust:** *We* trust each other to fulfill our commitments, execute our roles effectively, make thoughtful decisions, value each other's sustainability and wellbeing, and do what is right for all learners above all else.
	Culture of learning & innovation: *We* authentically celebrate saying 'what if,' digging into evidence (in multiple forms), trying out bold improvements, and openly sharing successes and failures.
	Culture of inclusion and connection across lines of difference: *We* relate with all members of our diverse community in ways that cultivate authentic interactions, that honor each of our strengths and differences, and that share power in decision making to help us contribute to change together.

* Shortened in the rest of the statements to "a vision of extraordinary learning"

Keep in mind as you engage with these conditions

Conditions **does not mean preconditions** - communities can build their conditions throughout a design journey, and they don't need to start strong on all conditions among all community groups in order to be set up for success.

Related, each of these conditions exists on a **developmental progression**. This is NOT a situation of "either you have it or you don't." Consider where you currently have strengths in each condition and where you currently have room for improvement. You might also ask: "where are we now, and where do we want to be a year from now?".

At their broadest, conditions can be applied to a **community overall** and about changing **the learning environment overall**. E.g., the first conviction statement would be:

Conviction in a vision of extraordinary learning for all: [Our community overall] believes deeply that for all students to be successful, [this entire learning environment] must look and feel very different for students and adults than how it has looked and felt for the last 50 years.

In that case, given that communities are diverse and not everyone in the community has the same conditions, there is usually a weighting of some community members' conditions higher than others. Most often, this includes members of the community that have outsized influence over a community-based change effort, such as (potentially) design team members, school principals, and district leaders.