At Transcend, we believe that to design extraordinary, equitable learning environments, communities must cultivate conducive internal conditions for innovation, which we refer to as the **5C’s**. These conditions include various forms of **conviction**, **clarity**, **capacity**, **coalition**, and **culture**. We believe these conditions make up “the soil a design is grown in” and support both the creation of a school or model design and the implementation of that design in one or more contexts. Because of the importance of the 5C’s to R&D work, we believe a community should continually reflect on its current conditions and work to further strengthen these conditions. The table below goes into greater detail about each of the 5C’s. It lists the various dimensions of each along with some general indicators intended to deepen understanding of the dimensions. We imagine that—as part of their journey—each community will set their own goals related to these conditions and determine more specific indicators of success.

### 1 - CONVICTION

A deep and sustaining belief in the importance and potential of the work being undertaken that fuels engagement and ensures it is prioritized.

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<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Example Indicators</th>
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| **1.1 - Need to Transform Schooling:** Conviction in the need for extraordinary, equitable learning environments--both generally and in one’s own context--that redefine student success and reimagine the experiences intended to foster success. | - Understanding of how traditional education practices are misaligned to future trends and how people best learn  
- Prioritization of school transformation work through time, funding, and resource allocations  
- Efforts to design a learning environment that demonstrates shifts from traditional ways of doing school |
### 1.2 - Importance of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
Conviction in the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in how R&D is undertaken and in the school design itself.
- Working to understand how diverse, equitable, and inclusive the local context and/or current learning environment is
- Discussing the critical roles schools play in sustaining or distributing patterns of oppression
- Designing a school that drives toward greater diversity, equity, and inclusion within the learning environment itself and/or within our larger society
- Engaging in activities—including who leads and participates, how they are run, etc.—in a way that honors the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion

### 1.3 - Value of R&D
Conviction that ongoing cycles of learning, defining, building, and testing are an impactful way to transform schooling.
- Building capacity needed to engage in R&D through hiring decisions, professional learning, or other strategies
- Engaging in R&D activities like learning from academic research and practitioner experience
- Engaging in R&D activities like building out a prototype of an idea and piloting it to make it stronger before fully implementing it

### 1.4 - Benefits of Sharing & Adaptation
Conviction in the importance of learning from other school designs, sharing one’s own design or lessons learned from developing it, and (for some) spreading design to multiple contexts to impact more learners.
- Learning from the R&D journeys and learning environments of others
- Willingness to share own successes and failures to support others through activities like storytelling
- Willingness to help others’ understand school design through activities like resource sharing
- Willingness to help others to implement school design through activities like coaching

### 2 - CLARITY
A comprehensive and crisp understanding of the work ahead that provides direction and a path forward.

### 2.1 - Current Context(s)
Clarity regarding the current and ever-evolving local and global context(s) in which a design will be implemented, include the desires, opportunities, conditions, and constraints within the context(s).
- Understanding of beliefs, cultures, values, interests, needs, and goals of learners and caregivers within relevant context(s)
- Understanding of current conditions for innovation
- Understanding of current learning environment(s) and the outcomes being achieved
- Understanding of social, political, economic, financial, and educational factors in relevant context(s) and how they may constrain or accelerate transformation efforts
- Understanding of where design fits within the larger education landscape and what demand for the design is likely to be

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### 2.2 - Goals:
Clarity regarding the overarching goals—whether they are goals for designing, redesigning, adapting, or spreading a design.

- Goals related to changing conditions for innovation, experiences students have in school, and/or student outcomes
- Targets for when change is desired by, where change will occur, and or how much change will occur

### 2.3 - Strategy for Success:
Clarity regarding the actions, timeline, capacity, and stakeholders needed to achieve goals.

- A set of actions that will support goals whether these actions entail designing, adopting, adapting, and/or spreading a design
- A timeline actions will be completed on
- Budget for completing these actions on the desired timeline
- Mapping of stakeholders who need to be involved and in what ways

### 3 - CAPACITY
The support of personnel, funding, and time required to successfully design and implement a transformative school design.

#### 3.1 Funding:
Capacity in the form of funding that is sufficient for the scope of the work ahead including costs like hiring, overtime, travel, professional learning, space, materials, etc.

- Short-term funding for one-time costs associated with initial design work and for initial implementation of the design
- Long-term funding for costs associated with sustaining implementation or spread and for engaging in ongoing R&D efforts
- Pathways for additional funding if needed

#### 3.2: Capable Design Team
- Capacity in the form of individuals with the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to successfully lead and participate in R&D activities.

- Correctly explaining key findings from neuroscience, psychology, and cognitive science related to how people best learn
- Proficiently discussing the bleeding edge of school innovation
- Engaging in R&D activities—including learning, defining, building, and testing activities—with proficiency

#### 3.3: Space and Time
- Capacity in the form of schedules and personnel allocations that ensure those involved in the work have the time and space to do it well.

- Individuals engaged in R&D work have a clearly defined amount of time allocated to these activities, which is considered in planning
- Space is provided for individuals to collaborate and work independently on design activities

#### 3.4: Capable Implementers
- Capacity in the form of individuals who together have knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to implement the design with

- Teachers, school leaders, and other adults involved in implementation know the details of the design, including how it differs from what they already do, and understand the theory of change that underpins it
- Teachers, school leaders, and other adults involved in implementation know the specific roles they play in implementing the design, including where they have autonomy and choice

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increasing quality.

regarding making modifications

- Teachers, school leaders, and other adults involved in implementation have the knowledge and skills needed to play these roles

## 4 - COALITION

The support of a committed group of stakeholders who are helping the work become a sustained success.

### 4.1 - Leaders:
Coalition includes an engaged, accomplished, and respected leader, or leaders--such as school leaders, system leaders, or governing bodies.

- Leadership has a strong track record of innovation and leading people through change initiatives
- Leadership has a strong track record of achieving ambitious goals
- Leadership prioritized R&D Journey through funding and allocation of other resources like people and time
- Leadership play hands-on role in the work
- Leadership activity works to bring other decision makers and influencers into the work

### 4.2 - Educators:
Coalition of educators who believe in and take ownership over the success of the R&D Journey and the evolving school design stemming from it.

- Educators take an active role in R&D work dedicating time and energy to driving it forward
- Educators can explain design’s potential--or proven ability--to more positively impact learners
- Educators advocate for the journey and the developing design to others both within and beyond the system

### 4.3 - Students & Caregivers:
Coalition of students and their caregivers who have a voice in shaping evolving school design and believe the design reflects their interests, needs, values, beliefs, and culture.

- Students and caregivers voluntarily participate in the design and implementation process
- Students and caregivers can explain key ways that schooling is being transformed by the evolving school design
- Students and caregivers can explain ways the evolving school design honors their interests, needs, values, beliefs, and culture

### 4.4 - Community Members:
Coalition of community members who help ensure the design and implementation of the evolving school design is a success through public support.

- Community members advocate for the R&D process and the evolving school design
- Community members provide their time or additional resources to further design and implementation

## 5. CULTURE

Values, norms, and practices that support innovation and learning in the interest of improved opportunities for young people.
| 5.1 - Learner-Centered: Culture demonstrates a deep commitment to what is best for learners. | ● Opinions and experiences of young people are heard and understood  
● Decision making processes include steps to ensure young people’s interests and needs are a primary driver  
● Educators, leaders, learners, and their caregivers can explain how decisions about the design and implementation of the design honor what’s best for young people |
|---|---|
| 5.2 - Trust & Risk Taking: Culture empowers those doing the work to take risks and try new things. | ● Individuals exercise judgement when making decisions and driving toward results  
● Boundaries or guardrails for innovation are well understood  
● Internal risk taking is not constrained by external restrictions and accountability  
● Leaders communicate and upholds an expectation that staff is taking risks and innovating within guardrails |
| 5.3 - Continuous Improvement: Culture creates a shared sense of responsibility for success and enables learning from both successes and failures. | ● Data are gathered that can help the community learn about its progress  
● Benchmarking (internal or external) is integrated and used regularly to step feasible but rigorous targets  
● Individuals are open and honest about goals for their own improvement  
● Processes exist for sharing and reflecting on successes and failures in order to support everyone’s learning  
● Third-party experts brought in to assist in reviewing progress, assessing needs, and defining a path forward |
| 5.4 Radical Collaboration: Culture prioritizes individuals looking outside of themselves to communicate, share ideas, and learn from others, especially those who have diverse perspectives that may challenge their own. | ● Individuals have knowledge of what others are working on and how it relates to their own work  
● Opportunities for working with others are regularly available and welcomed  
● Individuals have planned time to regularly work on projects and solve problems with others  
● Limitations and blind spots are known and compensated for by forming partnerships with other expert individuals and organizations  
● Students, caregivers, community members, and other stakeholders beyond school leaders and staff are collaborators during the R&D Journey |

Do you know a school or district that is strong in the 5 C’s? Use [this form](#) to let us know!