

# Networks & Partnerships

How can we expand the boundaries of learning beyond school?

2  
EDITION



**Schools are  
embedded  
within  
networks—  
educational,  
cultural,  
professional,  
and social.**

**By identifying  
and building  
strong  
relationships  
with the right  
partners, schools  
can open up new  
opportunities for  
student learning.**

**When we  
bridge  
the divide  
between  
school and  
community,  
students gain—  
and so do their  
communities.**

# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT



## 01

What kinds of experiences enable students to explore college options and potential careers, develop their talents and passions, deepen connections to their community, and access vital social and health services?



## 02

Are local institutions, organizations, and individuals currently offering learning experiences to young people in your community? Are they working in partnership with schools?



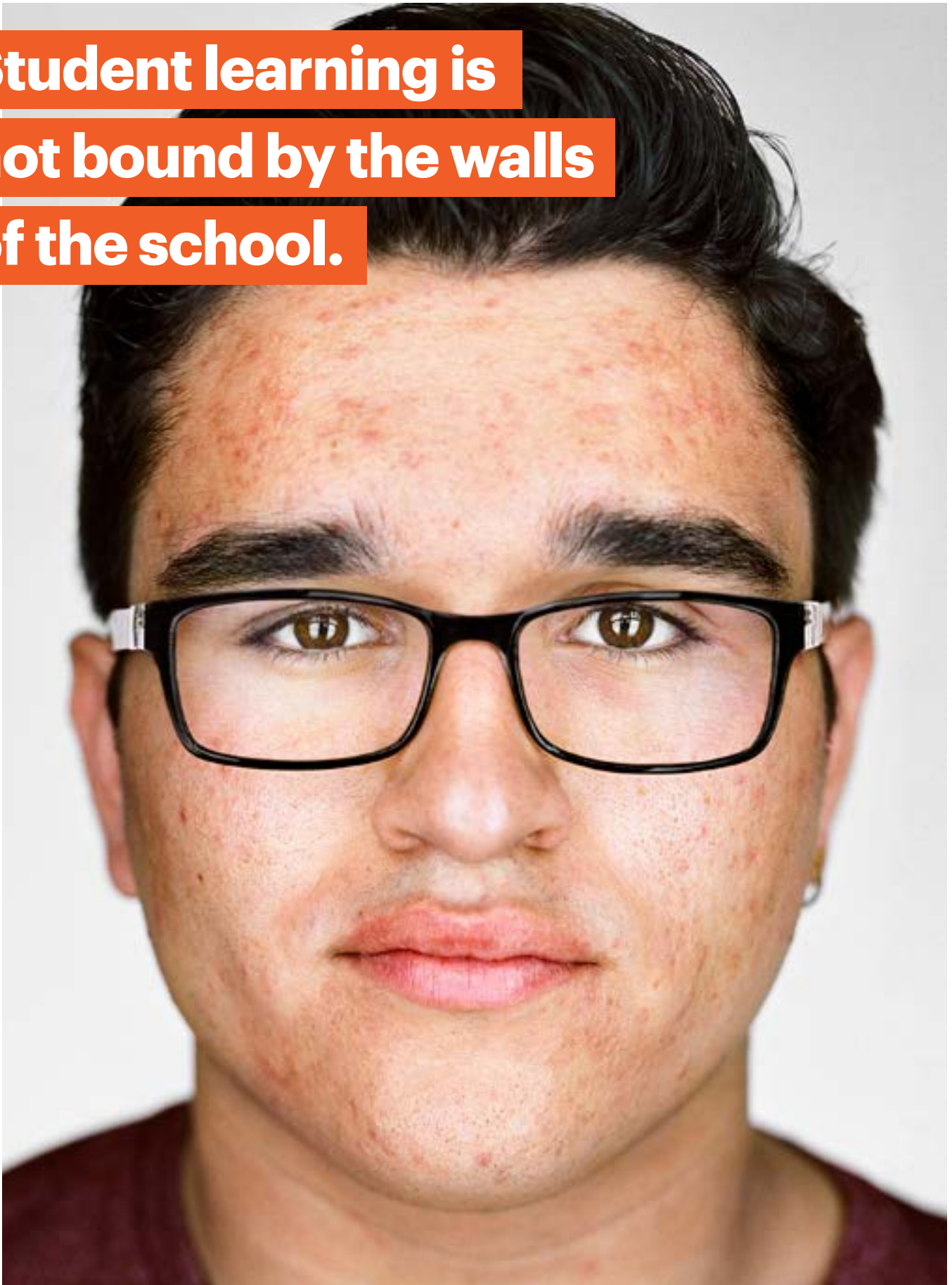
## 03

Are there untapped or isolated resources in your community that could enrich learning for young people? How can schools help connect young people to these organizations to open up new learning opportunities?

**RE-  
IMAGINING  
EDUCATION  
PARTNER-  
SHIPS**

## FACT 19

**Student learning is  
not bound by the walls  
of the school.**



# Learning can thrive in the most unexpected environments

Authentic, meaningful educational experiences can occur in almost any setting. Students can learn from educators who are not teachers in the traditional sense, but are committed to working and sharing their expertise with young people.

A business education class at Mission Bay High School in San Diego, for example, gives students the opportunity to pitch their entrepreneurial ideas to local executives. College Track recruits and trains volunteer professionals in nine communities across America to give young people from underserved communities the academic support, leadership training, and financial advice they need to attend and graduate college. Through ExpandedED's Options program, New York City teenagers are placed in afterschool and weekend apprenticeships at community organizations, where they earn academic credit and gain experience that can lead to summer jobs.

It's clear that school boundaries are becoming more porous and expanding beyond the physical classroom to the local community. Valuable partnerships can be built with colleges, science and arts organizations, youth development agencies, and businesses. Schools and communities need to leverage their networks to redefine where teaching and learning can take place and open up new opportunities for all young people.

Think About →

Think about a time when you someone taught you a lesson that made a big impact on you, outside of school. Was it from a sports coach? A mentor? A grandparent? Your first employer?

Who, besides classroom teachers, can provide students with rigorous, meaningful learning experiences?



**“Education is not something to keep in a box, even when the box is classroom-shaped. The habit of learning, an urge to find out more, develops when we feel inspired. The world outside the school is richly inspiring, constantly reenergising [sic] what takes place within the classroom. It is the source of all our learning—about our history, about our culture, about our place in the world, and our relationships with each other. This two-way flow can be embedded in every child’s education, entirely at ease within a super school’s ethos.”**

**REAL WORLD LEARNING PARTNERSHIP**  
*Out of Classroom Learning*

## Community Career Apprenticeships

In New York City, high school apprentices in the ExpandedED Options program earn academic credit and learn skills that set them up for paid summer jobs.



## College Track

For most students who attend college, a parent at home is their best teacher as they navigate the path after high school. But what about kids whose parents never went to college? College Track provides them with guidance.



## Work-Based Learning that Works

Change the Equation explains how companies and STEM professionals can work with schools and teachers to create great work-based learning experiences. This guide includes tips and activities that work for companies in any industry.



## Partnerships for Community Health

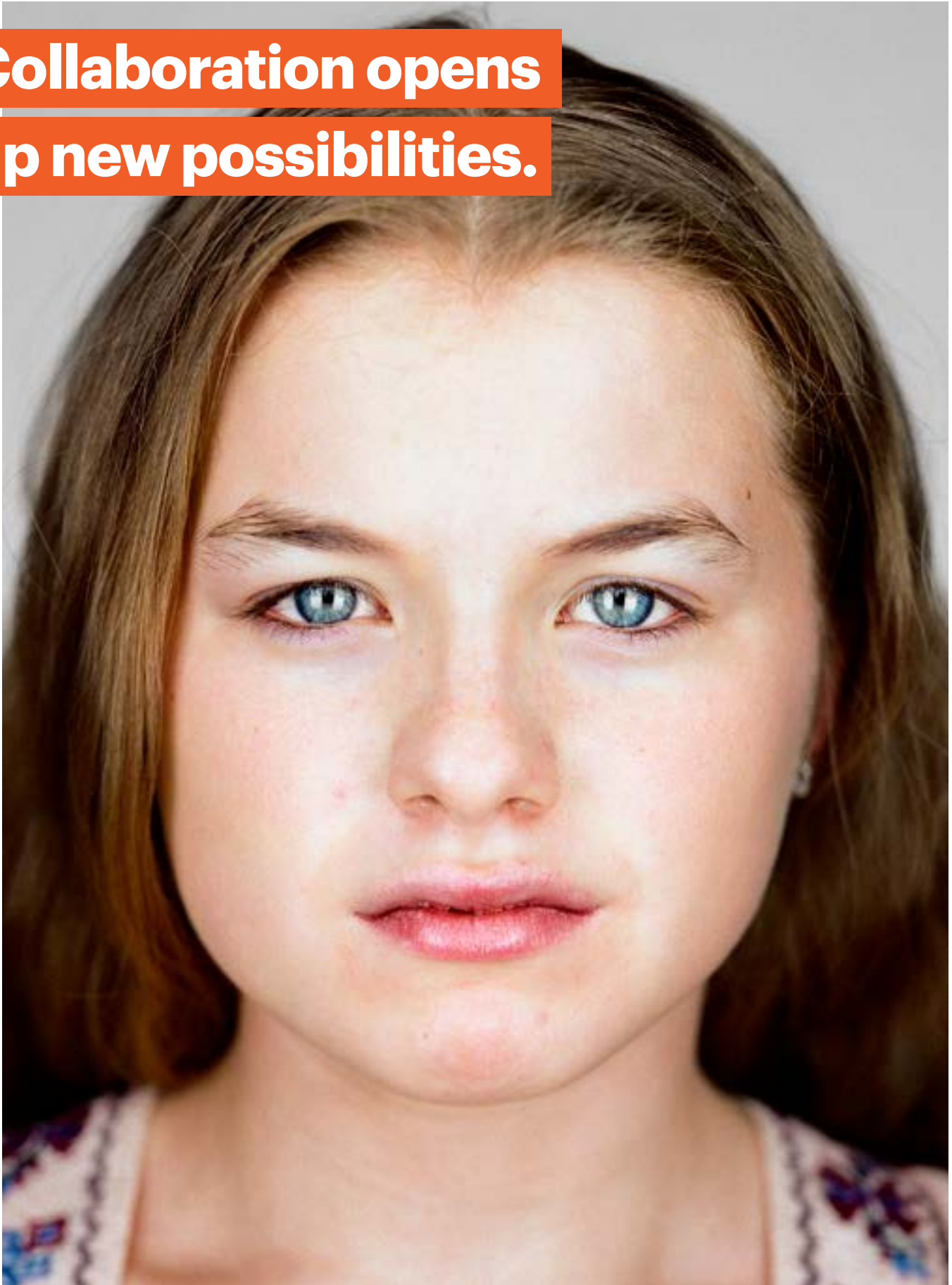
This Wisconsin school teamed up with academic research centers and the Music and Memory Project to create a program in which young people study dementia and help local families.





**FACT 20**

**Collaboration opens  
up new possibilities.**



# Good high schools are portals to their communities.

To achieve the best possible outcomes for students, schools need to expand the range of expertise and resources available to students and create new pathways to real-world learning.

At Iowa BIG in Cedar Rapids, teams of students work on projects “pitched” to them by local government, nonprofit, or business partners, or on ideas they dream up themselves—from starting their own tech company to creating an anti-violence public art installation. Their facility is located in a co-working space downtown, where students work side-by-side with local entrepreneurs. Teachers make sure every project is deeply grounded in rigorous learning, and students earn academic credit for their work. A partnership among three districts, five high schools, and a network of dozens of local partners, Iowa BIG turns the Cedar Rapids community into the curriculum.

At Montpelier High School in Vermont, students use design thinking to find out what local government and businesses need, and then propose possible solutions. For example, one team of physics students analyzed the air quality downtown and submitted their findings to the city with recommendations on how to reduce pollution and improve driving patterns.

Through experiences like these, students develop innovative thinking skills, build empathetic relationships with their communities, and learn what it’s like to solve real issues with real adults.

Think About →

How can high schools help young people envision a future beyond their immediate circumstances? Can partnerships expand the possibilities for students and help them reach that future?

**“One of the main lessons I have learned during my five years as Secretary-General is that broad partnerships are the key to solving broad challenges. When governments, the United Nations, businesses, philanthropies, and civil society work hand-in-hand, we can achieve great things.”**

**BAN KI-MOON**  
Former Secretary-General,  
United Nations

## Iowa Big

Iowa BIG connects student teams with intriguing initiatives that build connections with every sector of the community.



## Co-design, Co-delivery, Co-validation

What principles should guide partnerships between high schools and colleges to increase effectiveness? JFF shares lessons learned from El Paso, Texas.



## Boston Day and Evening Academy

This “last-chance” school uses community connections to help young people who have struggled in regular high school to succeed and graduate.



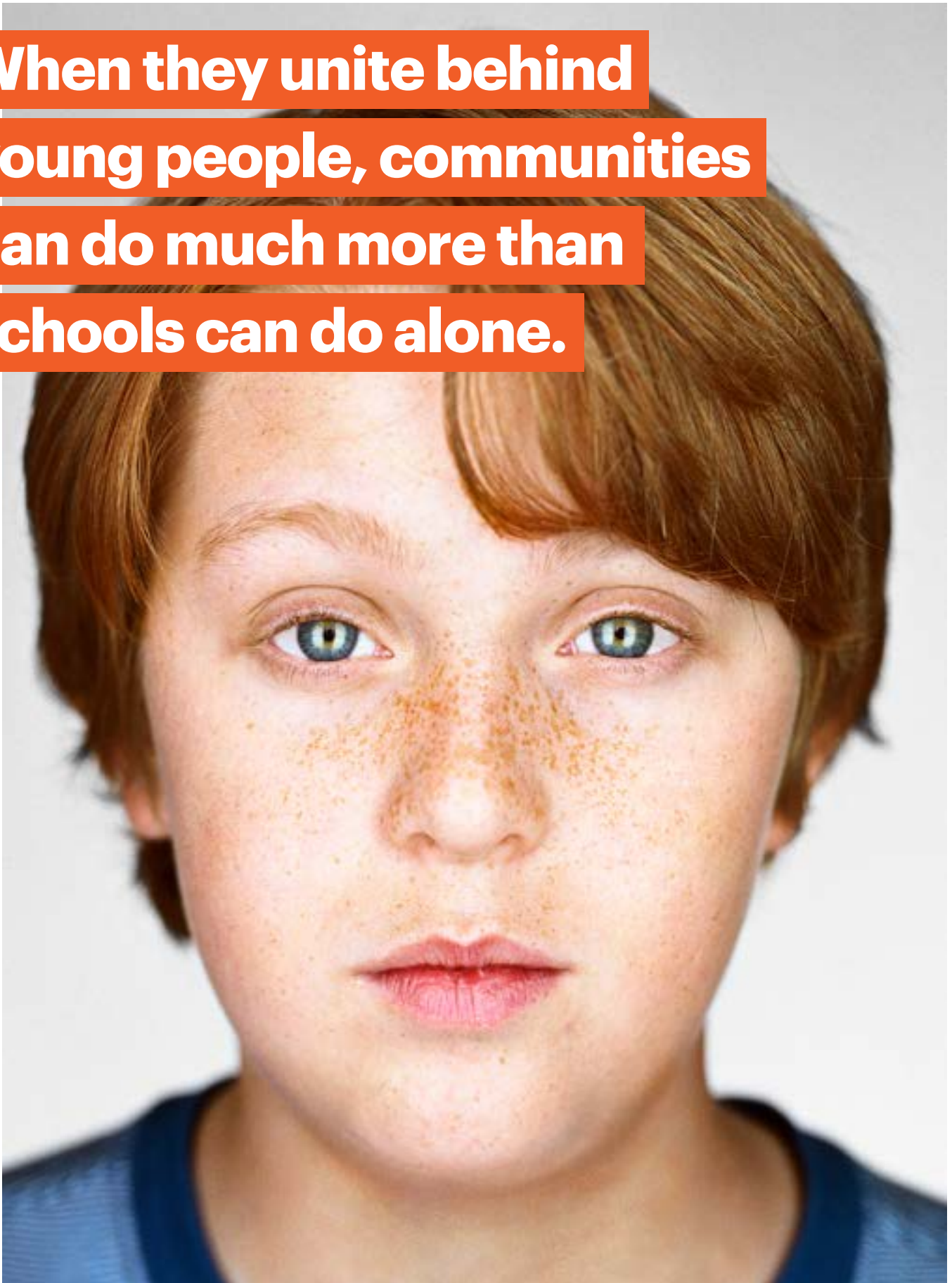
## Community Collaboration

Learn more about community-based learning at Montpelier High School from this blog post on Edutopia.



## FACT 21

**When they unite behind young people, communities can do much more than schools can do alone.**



# Strong collaborators are greater than the sum of their parts.

When multiple organizations share a commitment to collectively define goals and values, the result can make an impact greater than the sum of their individual contributions. The idea of collective impact assumes that all partners—institutions, individuals, and families—are included as legitimate, valued contributors in planning and decision making.

In Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, for example, the Strive Partnership brought together people and organizations from across the region to improve the quality of education. Their substantial investments of time, talent, and financial resources are paying off in a double-digit increase in high school graduation rates and a 10 percent increase in college enrollment among students in the area.

Partnership is a fundamental premise of the Urban Assembly school network, which manages 21 small public schools in New York City. Each school is centered around a theme that comes alive for students through connections with partners—businesses, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and colleges. The UA School for Collaborative Healthcare, for example, partners with the Greater New York Hospital Association and the United Healthcare Workers union. The UA School for Global Commerce collaborates with Arizona State University, the Parson Brinckerhoff design firm, CSX Corporation, the NYC Department of Transportation, and the Port Authority of NY & NJ.

Think About →

What are the big challenges facing your community? How might young people and adults work together to solve them? What unique insights and contributions would students bring to the table?



**“My real dream is that everybody will see their self interest tied up with someone else, whether or not they see them, and see that as an opportunity for growing closer together as a culture and as a world.”**

**MAJORA CARTER**

Founder, Sustainable South Bronx

## What is Collective Impact?

Wondering what collective impact is? Check out this short video from Stanford Social Innovation Review and FSG on using a collective-impact approach of cross-sector collaboration to solve complex social problems.



## What Does Collective Impact Look Like in Action?

The Stanford Social Innovation Review and FSG share how diverse leaders and organizations in the Cincinnati Strive initiative worked together using a collective-impact approach oriented around student success.



## Strive Partnership

StriveTogether is making measurable improvements in student achievement. Check out all the ways universities, companies, government, and nonprofits have come together for their youth participants.



## Urban Assembly Schools

Read about the schools in the Urban Assembly network to see how partnerships can make themes like wildlife conservation, law and justice, and design and construction real.



**Young  
people  
have a  
stake in their  
communities.  
Schools can  
help them  
claim it**

**Everyone has a role to play  
in building and supporting  
a deeply connected  
community.**

To build truly effective schools, educators, parents, and neighbors need to think about how they can collaborate to provide transformative learning experiences. When schools are embedded within their neighborhood, everyone benefits.



# GET INSPIRED



## A Ladder to a Career in Science

High school students who participate in NYSCI's Science Career Ladder program have a chance to absorb skills from scientists and other museum professionals at the NY Hall of Science.



## Real Learning, Real Credentials

The Providence After School Alliance is a network of community-based educators who provide real-world learning experiences to students, earning them relevant skills, professional experience, and credentials that count toward graduation and college.



## Y-PLAN, Engaging Youth in Policy

Y-PLAN (Youth - Plan, Learn, Act, Now) is a youth engagement program at U.C. Berkeley that connects young people and schools to local policy making, city planning, and advocacy.



## Reconnecting McDowell

Learn about a promising public-private partnership in McDowell County, West Virginia.



**EXPAND  
THE BOUND-  
ARIES OF  
SCHOOL.**