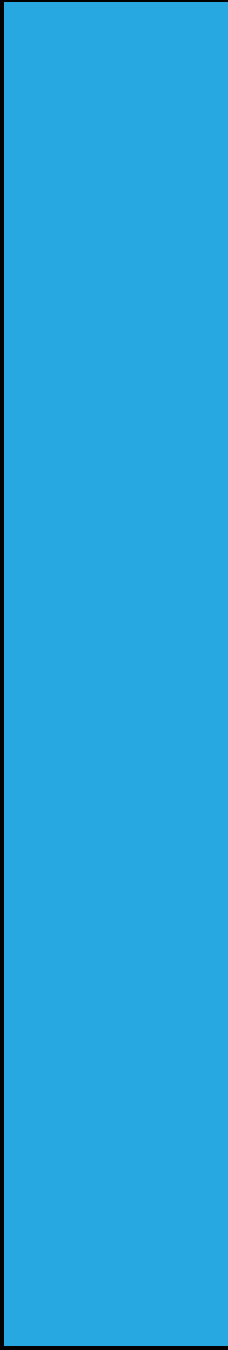





Partnerships for High School Transformation at Scale

An overview of what it takes to create and sustain transformative change





XQ Institute is the nation's leading organization dedicated to rethinking the high school experience so every student graduates ready to succeed in college, career, and real life. We share what's working with other schools and districts, so they can tailor new models to the needs of their own students and communities. We know that seeing is believing, so we meet people where they are to share the importance and possibility of change through listening, learning, and storytelling. And our open-source tools, based on research and design thinking, empower people to take up the challenge of transforming their high schools with a unifying goal: **unlocking the American promise of a high-quality education for everyone.**

To support high school transformation at scale, we work in communities throughout the country, with individual schools and entire school systems, to help them dream big about what high school could be, turn their innovative ideas into action, and create more rigorous and equitable schools.



XQ System Partnerships

XQ forges system partnerships with states and districts whose leaders believe, as we do, that high schools must do a better job of ensuring that all young people are well-prepared for college, careers, and everything the future has to offer. We seek out committed partners who acknowledge that transformation is hard—and who are nevertheless determined to commit the leadership, resources, and concentrated effort required to take on the formidable challenge of high school redesign.

To each partnership, XQ brings a rigorous and inspirational design process grounded in research on what makes high schools effective and how young people learn. We help mobilize

the broader community through energizing events, strategic outreach, and informative communications with local leaders, neighbors, and cultural, career, and community organizations. We also support the system itself as it builds capacity to enable and sustain high school redesign.

The XQ partnership design journey is an in-depth, rigorous, community-led process of high school redesign. XQ works closely with both our system partner (usually a state or district) and with individual schools and school design teams. The process follows a well-defined but flexible series of steps, which we customize in collaboration with our partner to meet local needs.

Learn more about three ongoing XQ partnerships.



And see page 30-31 for a snapshot of the DC+XQ Design Journey.

XQ Partnership Design Journey

INITIATE

Forge a partnership grounded in common goals and expectations.

ACTIVATE

Build community understanding, enthusiasm, and engagement so community stakeholders are the agents and owners of the change.

FACILITATE

Support and inspire school teams as they create bold, transformative school designs.



DISCOVER

Generate urgency and commitment through a focus on equity, opportunity, and possibility.



DESIGN

Cultivate an understanding of XQ Learner Outcomes and Design Principles and develop a unique, bold, and coherent design concept.



DEVELOP

Prototype, incubate, and scale as the design is put into practice.

SUSTAIN

Ensure capacity for continuing high school transformation.

INITIATE

Forge a partnership grounded in common goals and expectations.

In this phase, XQ and the system partner build a working relationship and establish the foundation for high school design and redesign, grounded in XQ Learner Outcomes and Design Principles. Together, we develop clear, common expectations regarding purpose, strategy, process, and roles for the design process, including necessary policy changes and financial support. This also is the moment to begin thinking.

ACTIVITIES

- Establish alignment regarding purpose and expectations.
- Clarify processes and specify roles and responsibilities of XQ and partner.
- Assess schools' readiness, capacity, and willingness.

COLLABORATORS

- System leader
- Redesign leaders
- XQ systems leader and team

Initiate

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Thought Leaders Series

Get inspired by thought leaders from all walks of life—arts and culture celebrities, policymakers, educators, scientists, youth development experts, business leaders, and social or civic activists—share their thoughts on the “what is” and “what ifs” of education.



Yo-Yo Ma



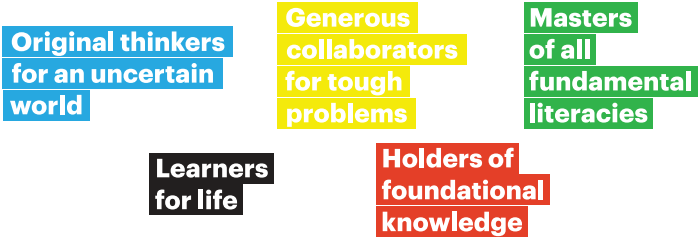
Margarita Bianco



Michelle Purdy



Common

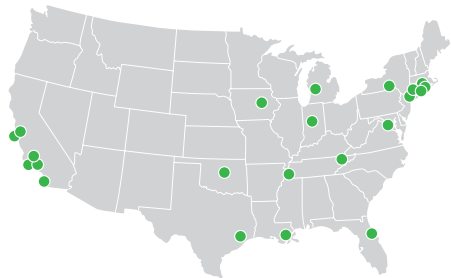


XQ Learner Outcomes

The XQ Learner Outcomes are fundamental to all our work. The Learner Outcomes are the North Star—the knowledge, skills, and capacities all high school graduates need.

XQ Design Principles

The XQ Design Principles are our guiding pillars for rethinking what high school can be.



XQ School Snapshots

What do XQ schools look like? See what’s possible by exploring XQ’s School Snapshots, which provide rich information about each XQ school and partnership.

ACTIVATE

Build community understanding, enthusiasm, and engagement so community stakeholders are the agents and owners of the change.

XQ and its partner introduce the initiative to key audiences using a variety of push-and-pull engagement tactics to ensure that the process is truly community-led. This phase focuses on learning from the community, building relationships, raising awareness, and planting seeds for deeper engagement and ownership. This is also a moment to begin thinking through layers of participation from community members, school teams, district and state-level support and collaboration.

ACTIVITIES

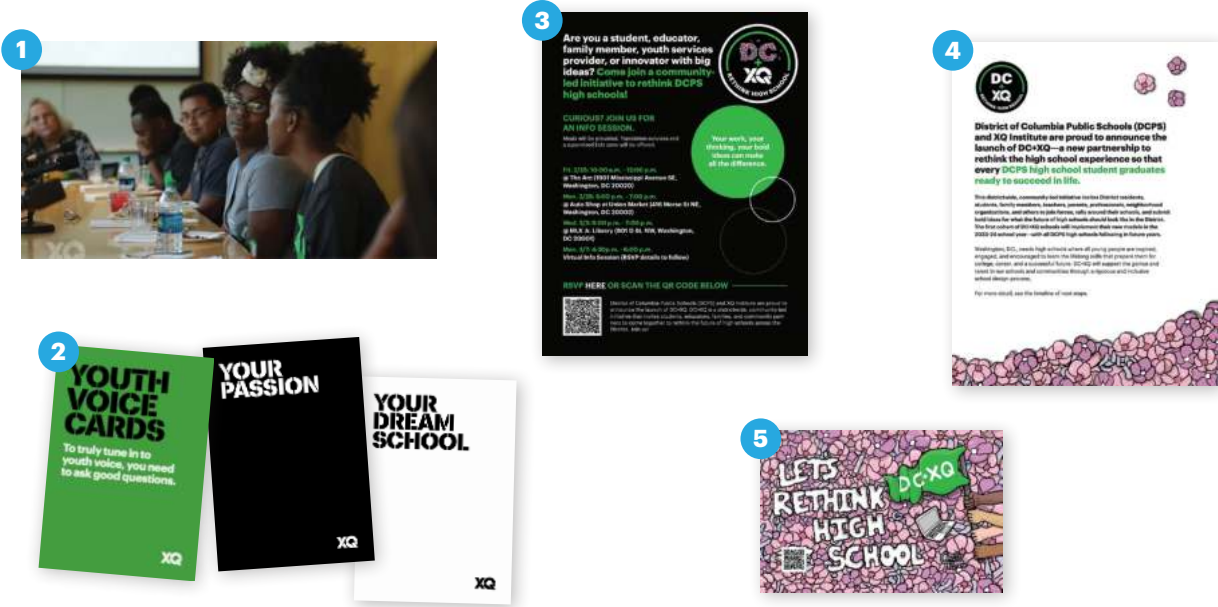
- Welcome student voice through a student advisory committee to build urgency and a sense of possibility and responsibility.
- Develop core messaging and branding assets.
- Launch a community engagement strategy alongside the system partner.
- Use activations and engagement tactics, including info sessions, advertising, paid outreach, earned media, youth voice, and community presence, to drive awareness and to generate excitement and ideas.
- Engage high-impact stakeholders.
- Develop strategies and tactics to follow up with community members.
- Foster student leadership and engagement by asking students to articulate their big dreams of what they want from their school experience.

Activate

COLLABORATORS

- System leader
- Redesign leaders
- XQ systems leader and team
- Student advisory committee
- Local leaders and community-based organizations

TOOLS AND RESOURCES



1. Youth Roundtable Facilitator's Guide

The roundtable format is an essential component of how to elevate student voices and stories.

2. Youth Voice Cards

To truly tune in to youth voice, you need to ask good questions.

3. Flyer for DC+XQ Info Session

Info sessions and outreach increase community awareness and involvement.

4. DC+XQ One-Pager

5. DC+XQ Direct Mail

TOOLS AND RESOURCES



Info sessions and outreach increase community awareness and involvement.

6. DC+XQ Promo Video

7. DC+XQ Join Us Video

8. DC+XQ Quote Cards

9. DC+XQ Buses

10. DC+XQ Cohort 1 Announcement

11. Data Wall

Activate

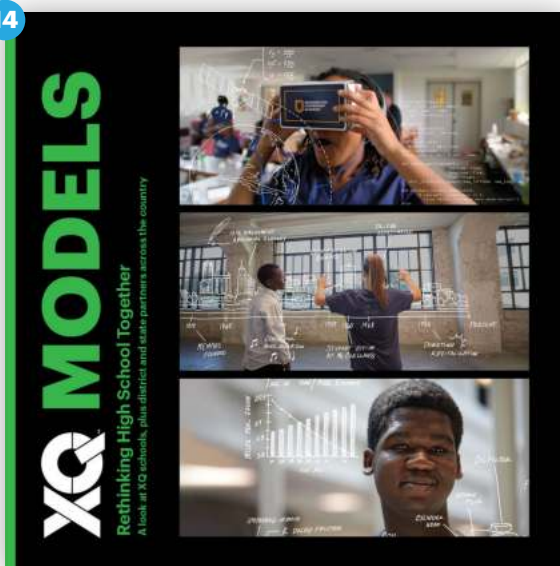
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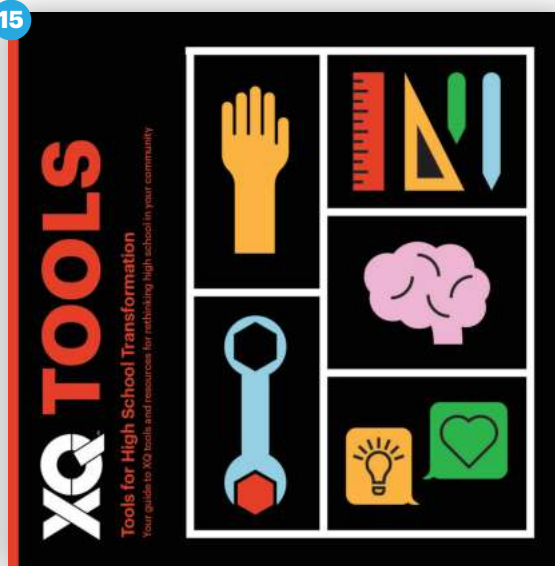
13



14



15



Videos and interactive school stories show that high school transformation is necessary, possible, and underway.

12. Urgency for Change Video

13. School Stories Digital

14. XQ Models Book

15. XQ Tools Book

FACILITATE

Support and inspire school teams
as they create bold, rigorous designs.

The school design journey starts here. With the system partnership well-established, the action shifts to school design teams.

In this phase, school teams take on the challenge of creating transformative designs—fueled by community ambition and the partners’ support. Working together, XQ and the partner ensure teams have the resources they need—from data and information through coaching, inspiration, and feedback—to imagine and achieve rigorous, transformative school designs.

Facil

THE SCHOOL DESIGN JOURNEY

DISCOVER



DESIGN



DEVELOP

itate

DISCOVER

Generate urgency and commitment through a focus on equity, opportunity, and possibility.

Educators, students, families, and community members form school design teams, with students and the student experience at the center. Teams deepen their sense of urgency by listening to student voices, exploring community assets, and examining inequities in student opportunities and outcomes.

ACTIVITIES

- Support teams to come together and recruit a diversity of members, including school staff, students, families, community partners, and experts.
- Conduct an equity analysis of students' college and career readiness and provide findings to school teams.
- Coordinate inspiration visits so teams can experience innovative schools.

COLLABORATORS

- Redesign leader and core team
- XQ systems team
- Local leaders and community-based organizations
- School leaders and school design teams
- Student advisory committee
- Consultant or analyst to conduct the equity analysis, if needed

Discover

TOOLS AND RESOURCES



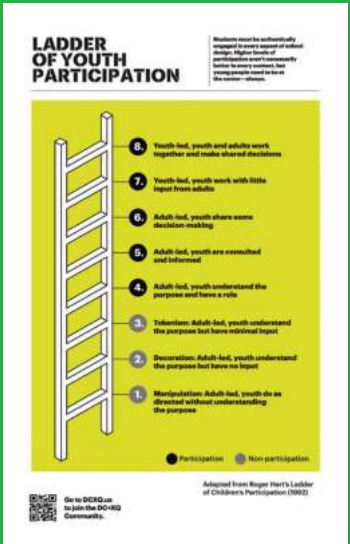
XQ Design Kit

This big set of printed posters, design prompts, and other materials helps teams come together, get inspired, and put students at the center of everything they do.



Casting Our Team

Every community has the talent to design a super school. We just have to find it.



Ladder of Youth Participation

Students must be authentically engaged in every aspect of school design. Higher levels of participation aren't necessarily better in every context, but young people need to be at the center—always.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

DISCOVER

Explore the landscape of education and the realities of the community your school will serve.

Look at the realities of the community. What do you see?

Explore new research on how people learn. What ideas excite and inspire you?

LOCAL CHALLENGES:
What did you hear from local experts about teaching and the future of work?
What are the challenges you most want to solve?

WHAT YOUTH VOICES ARE SAYING:
What did you hear about the challenges students face? How will you confront and address inequities that limit student opportunity?

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN:
Think about what you have read, watched, and heard about how people learn. What ideas most excite and inspire you? Review the XQ Learner Outcomes as a place to be inspired.

OUR EXCITING IDEAS:
Based on what you've discovered, what kind of school are you excited to create? What is your radical idea?



XQ
Get inspired! Explore our videos and other design resources in XQ in a Box at xqinspireschool.org/inabox/

Discover Worksheet

Explore the landscape of education and the realities of the community your school will serve.

XQ | XQ IN A BOX

BEGIN DISCOVER DESIGN DEVELOP



XQ In A Box
A roadmap for high school transformation

The XQ Design Process

Inside this virtual toolkit, you'll find everything you need to create a high school that truly meets the needs of our students and prepares them for the future. Explore the 13 XQ Knowledge Modules, complete with expert advice, knowledge and resources, videos and podcasts, and downloadable planning tools. Dig into core materials such as the XQ Learner Goals and XQ Design Principles. And sign up as a member of the XQ Community, to enhance your experience of these materials and build connections with XQ and others around the country.

XQ Knowledge Modules

XQ in a Box (XQIAB)

This comprehensive digital toolkit helps teams work together to rethink high school in their communities by engaging thoughtfully and creatively with the big challenges of high school design.

Discover



Inspiration Visits

Visits to XQ schools and other innovative schools give school teams a chance to see what's possible and get inspired.



EOA

XQ's Educational Opportunity Audit gathers and analyzes student and school-level data that looks at equity from various angles, synthesizes it, and presents the results back to people positioned to make needed change.

DESIGN

Cultivate an understanding of XQ Learner Outcomes and Design Principles and develop a unique, bold, and coherent design concept.

During this phase, school design teams develop and clarify their bold concepts. Teams must have a secure understanding of XQ Learner Outcomes and Design Principles and apply them rigorously. For XQ and the partner, this is the time to challenge and inspire school teams to think differently about their work in fundamentally different and transformative ways, rather than defaulting to conventional approaches.

Design

ACTIVITIES

- Host Design Days to provide teams with powerful, immersive experiences that build an understanding of XQ Learner Outcomes and Design Principles.
- Provide coaching and support to teams as they develop design plans and/or applications that:
 - Are grounded in academic rigor and equity
 - Contain bold, transformational elements within a coherent overall school design
 - Make a compelling case for change, reflecting lessons from equity analysis
 - Leverage diverse expertise, partnerships, and community connections
 - Are feasible, actionable, and sustainable
- Require teams to submit preliminary applications—then assess their proposals rapidly and give them detailed feedback on how to improve.
- Recruit a diverse panel of external and internal reviewers to assess final proposals, using a fair and rigorous selection process.
- Select and announce schools that will move forward to implementation.

COLLABORATORS

- Redesign leader and core team
- XQ systems team
- School leaders and school design teams
- Facilitators/coaches
- Panel of internal and external reviewers
- Student advisory committee

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

DESIGN

Use what you discovered to design the high school your community needs.

Propose an innovative school model. How will you describe your school to others in the community?

Put yourself in a student's shoes. How will learning be different, more rigorous, exciting? How will their learning experiences prepare them for good jobs, successful careers, and the real world? How will students take charge of their learning? How will students connect with their community and the wider world?

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL:
Write an inspiring mission statement that captures the essence of the powerful idea at the heart of your super school.

Write on the back of this page or on a separate sheet of paper.

EIGHT CORE EXPERIENCES OF OUR SCHOOL:
Imagine core experiences that exemplify your mission and advance the XQ Learner Outcomes.

Write on the back of this page or on a separate sheet of paper.

WHO CAN HELP:
Who are local partners whose support and advocacy will help you create these core experiences for your students?

Write on the back of this page or on a separate sheet of paper.

XQ
Get inspired! Explore our videos and other design resources in XQ in a Box at xqsuperchool.org/inspire/

Design Worksheet

Use what you discovered to design the high school your community needs.

DC • XQ COHORT 1 APPLICATION

SCHOOL CONCEPT MAP

Briefly describe the bold concept that defines your school. Then list the key ways in which your model will exemplify the XQ Design Principles.

MISSION & CULTURE
Key elements:

MEANINGFUL & ENGAGED LEARNING
Key elements:

CARING & TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS
Key elements:

USE OF TIME, SPACE, & TECH
Key elements:

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
Key elements:

YOUTH VOICE & CHOICE
Key elements:

SCHOOL CONCEPT
1-3 sentences that summarize and connect the heart of your bold and compelling idea.

ARTIFACTS

School Concept Map

How will your school design be expressed coherently through the six XQ Design Principles?

Design



Design Principle Reflections

How will you prioritize principles like caring, trusting relationships and meaningful, engaged learning?

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Think about the learning experiences you designed for your school vision. For each, describe the purpose, the learning experiences, the assessment, the teacher/adult roles, the time/location, the facilities/resources/technology needs.

Learning Experience 1	Learning Experience 2
Describe the learning experiences, 1-2 sentences.	Describe the learning experiences, 1-2 sentences.
Knowledge/Skills Developed	Knowledge/Skills Developed
Assessments	Assessments
Teacher/Adult Roles	Teacher/Adult Roles
Time/Location	Time/Location
Facilities/Resources/Technology Needs	Facilities/Resources/Technology Needs

Learning

Experience Planner

Design a learning experience that exemplifies your school vision.



Competency Cards

Imagine learning experiences that bring the XQ Learner Goals to life in your school.

DEVELOP

Prototype, incubate, and scale
as the design is put into practice.

Selected schools move into an incubation year to test their models, make adjustments, and build the systems and capacity to fully implement and scale their designs. Meanwhile, the system partner establishes internal capacity to support schools in the ongoing work of transformation.

ACTIVITIES

- Establish system capacity to support schools in developing implementation plans, clear measures of success, and three-year budgets.
- Celebrate early wins and accomplishments, keeping the experience of students at the center of all communications.
- Introduce schools to developmental tools such as XQ's Design Principles Rubric to help identify strengths and weaknesses and take action to address challenges.
- Develop a clear and viable funding strategy to complement and eventually replace XQ's financial support.

COLLABORATORS

- Redesign leader and core team
- XQ systems team
- School leaders and school design teams
- Facilitators/coaches
- Student advisory committee

Develop

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Develop Worksheet

Map out a formidable plan to turn your school idea into reality.

DEVELOP

Map out a formidable plan to turn your school idea into reality.

Build systems that support your core goals.
How can you describe every available resource—people, facilities, technology, time, money, community connections, student voice, and more—to create the best possible experience for students?

Build onto your foundation! How will you balance innovation with the practicalities of implementation? What elements will you need to prioritize?

FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS:
What elements of your school design are most essential to your vision?

PROTOTYPING AND LEARNING:
What can you try right now, even on a small scale, to advance your priorities and get insight tested?

REVIEW AND FEEDBACK:
As you fine-tune your plan, when can you go for additional insights and advice?

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM:
Some challenges are foreseeable, others aren't. How will you keep up the momentum as you manage the hurdles ahead?

Get Inspired! Explore our values and other design resources in QX in Blue at qxdesignschool.org/inspire/

Expert Series

Listen to conversations with transformational leaders in education in XQ's podcast series.



XQ Design Principles Rubric

This tool helps ambitious high schools understand where they are on the journey to excellence—and how to take practical steps to achieve their goals.



SUSTAIN

Ensure capacity for continuing high school transformation.

With support from XQ, the system partner takes ownership of the continuing work of transformation. The partner builds evidence about the impact of redesign on students, develops a strong narrative to cultivate community support, and establishes a policy structure to sustain the integrity of redesigned schools and enable continuous improvement.

ACTIVITIES

- Encourage schools to maintain and deepen their engagement with XQ by using XQ products and tools and participating in XQ's community of practice.
- Identify and ensure long-term staffing and financial resources to support the integrity of school redesigns and continuous improvement.
- Maintain a communications and community organizing strategy to sustain and increase community support.

COLLABORATORS

- Redesign leader and core team
- School leaders and school design teams
- Facilitators/coaches
- Student advisory committee

Sustain

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Student Performance Framework

The Student Performance Framework offers a new way to assess, document, and certify students' learning, measured against concrete milestones for acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for future success.



XQ Math

A project-based algebra curriculum that activates and upgrades students' math knowledge—and their enthusiasm for learning.



Let's rethink high school together.

XQ believes in the power of partnerships because we believe that every community, city, and state knows what's best for its students. Our approach to high school transformation starts with empowering people to own and build a vision for their students, in collaboration with educators.

XQ has developed a rigorous design process that's grounded in research on what makes high schools effective and how young people learn. Our approach draws in particular on new findings from the science of learning about the potential for growth during the adolescent years and the learning experiences that can unlock students' capacities.

Our partnerships are about recognizing all that is possible and identifying ideas from those closest to the school and community. Through outreach, the assets of the broader community—people, businesses, organizations— can enrich what high schools have to offer their students.

Rethinking high school is a journey, not a destination. At XQ, we embody Learners for Life through ongoing reflection, tool design, and learning from communities and leaders like you.

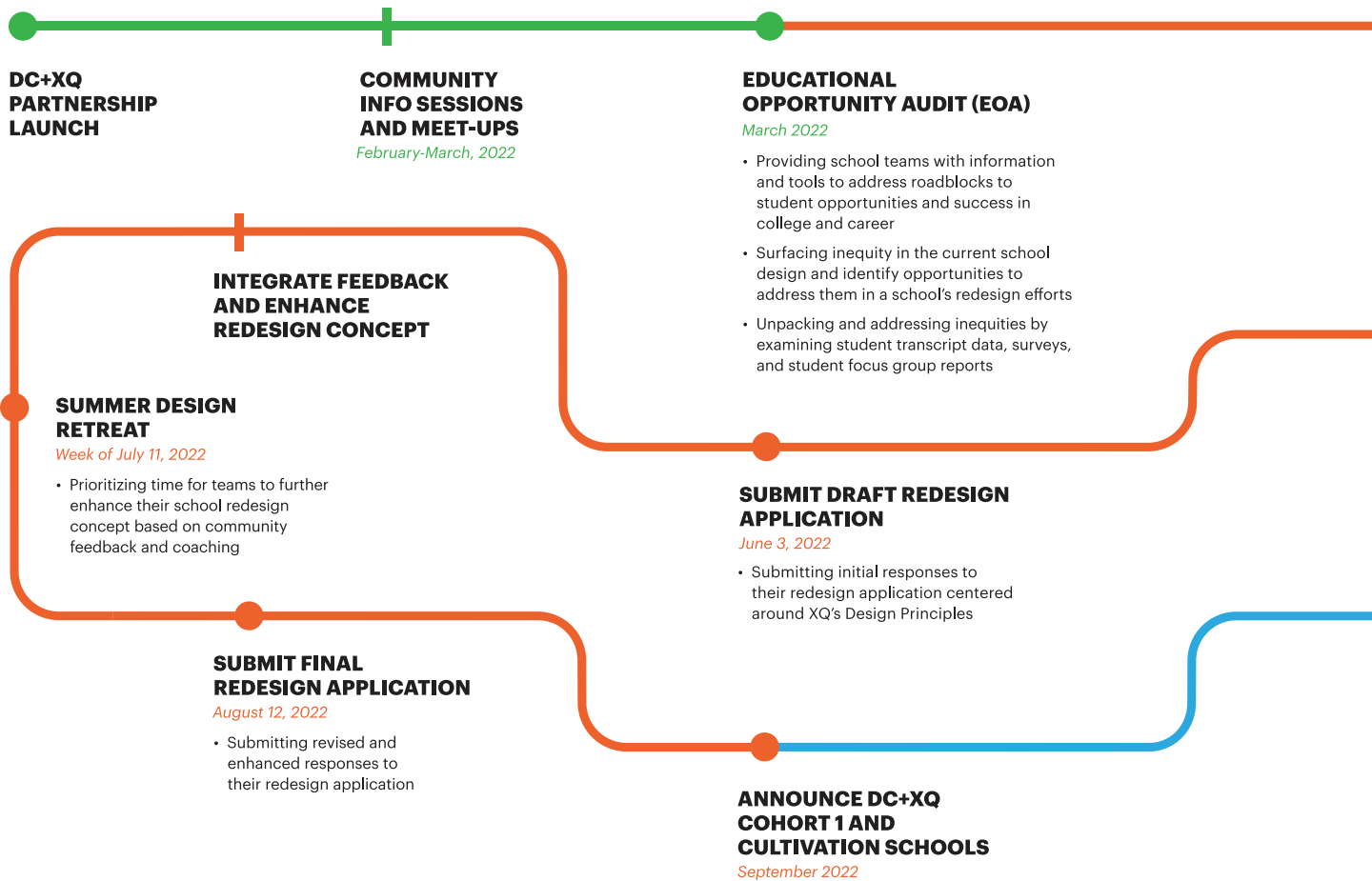


**Scan to access all of these
tools and resources.**



Sample of Partnership Design Journey

The DC+XQ Design Journey



1. COME TOGETHER



2. EXPLORE AND IMAGINE



3. DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT



DESIGN DAY 1

March 31, 2022

- Overviewing the partnership and grounding in the design journey process
- Explaining the critical role students and community play in the redesign process
- Introducing Design Thinking and equitable design practices

DESIGN DAY 2

April 18, 2022

- Grounding in the XQ Learner Outcomes
- Gaining inspiration from other innovative models and practices
- Creating opportunities for youth voice and choice through student voice cards and the ladder of youth of engagement
- Developing a transformational mission and vision by drafting an initial aspiration statement

SCHOOL INSPIRATION VISITS

April-May 2022

DC+XQ COHORT 1 SCHOOLS START FULL REDESIGN PROCESS

September 2022-July 2023

- Creating unique school designs with students and community input at the center
- Prototyping and piloting bold ideas
- Fine-tuning implementation plans

CONTINUE TO ACTIVATE COMMUNITY IN BOLD REDESIGN CONCEPT

May-June, 2022

DESIGN DAY 3

May 10, 2022

- Building off the inspiration of other school models
- Designing a learning experience grounded in XQ Learner Framework
- Connecting experiences on the DC+XQ design journey to create a school redesign concept

DC+XQ COHORT 1 SCHOOLS LAUNCH THEIR FULL REDESIGN MODELS

SY 2023-24

CULTIVATION SCHOOLS

- Additional interested school communities continue to learn, prepare, and build momentum for future redesign journeys.



Join the conversation
to #RethinkHighSchool
on Twitter @XQAmerica

