

The John I. Goodlad Institute for Educational Renewal

Mission, Vision, Goals, Strategy, and Operating Principles

Mission

To promote the public democratic purposes of education by supporting, studying, and publicizing the continuous renewal of public schools, universities, and their communities.

Vision

To develop ideas, examples, leaders, and networks that highlight the public democratic purposes of education so well that the Institute can energize and lead a new conversation among education professionals, policy makers, and local communities about what high-quality education is in a democracy and how it can be achieved.

Goals

To realize this mission and vision the Institute works closely with the National Network for Educational Renewal to achieve four goals:

Goal 1: (Successful local renewal): To support, study, and highlight the process of local educational renewal by collaborating with widely-dispersed school-university-community partnerships to develop concrete examples of how to achieve both the student learning on which democracy depends and the civic processes through which high-quality schools can be sustained.

Rationale: While some quality improvements in schooling can come from better policies regarding how schools are organized, financed, staffed, and evaluated, and other improvements can result from technical advances in research on teaching and leadership, the catalyst that makes all other ingredients work is local—the will of each local school community to ensure that its children and youth succeed, the willingness of the many competing interests to compromise in order to attain that goal, and the vigilance to respond to whatever local barriers arise to threaten its accomplishment. And, because all parts of the education system depend on the others, local school renewal necessarily involves simultaneous changes in PK-12 schools, colleges of education, and colleges of arts and sciences. New thinking about school quality starts with strong examples of local renewal in all parts of the mutually dependent educational system.

Goal 2: (Networks supporting local innovations): To develop, facilitate, and study networks of support that encourage and sustain local educational renewal.

Rationale: Local innovation thrives best within networks of support. Individuals and organizations engaged in similar work in different settings stimulate commitment and creativity as they share information, critique progress, and encourage persistence in the face of local challenges. Some of the most important contributions to knowledge about schooling comes from studying similar improvement efforts across communities that each respond to their own contexts. The NNER is unique in its commitment to a common set of values regarding the public democratic purposes of education, a shared commitment to simultaneous renewal in schools and universities, and a focus on local innovation. This network and others that may develop with similar commitments serve as critical bridges between isolated local accomplishments and the understandings about schools, the education of educators, and school change that lead to broader influence.

Goal 3: (Leadership for local renewal): To develop and support the work of educational and community leaders who are committed to achieving balanced learning results for students by working across boundaries among educational professional, local communities, and policy makers.

Rationale: Tension always exists between the way that education’s public purposes are framed by any single group and the democratic processes through which educational goals are developed and sustained. Local leadership is necessary, both to enrich the dialog about democratic public purposes and to facilitate local civic dialog about schooling. Consequently, investments in individual people are critical to the success of a national strategy to achieve school quality through local renewal. If local engagement and civic will are as critical to sustainable high quality in schools as we believe, then local leadership—from all the groups on which schools depend—is a key lever for change.

Goal 4: (National influence) To foster a supportive national context for pursuing the public democratic purposes of education by providing information that supports, informs, and encourages collaboration among professional, policy, and local civic leadership for school renewal.

Rationale: Innovative approaches to improving schools and places that prepare teachers ultimately depend on convergence among many constituents—families, school board members, state legislators, local businesses, professional associations, unions, and so on. Sustainable changes occur only when new ways of thinking become a part of the public conversation and begin to shape a willingness to change established patterns. Local demonstrations provide the foundation for new ways of thinking, but these must then be translated into books, articles, presentations, and media that show others what is possible. The Institute will provide leadership for communicating the intellectual basis for a focus on democratic purposes and local renewal processes as critical elements of the effort to achieve high-quality schools.

Strategy

To achieve these goals, the Institute will develop and seek funding for projects that (a) offer opportunities to leverage national change toward education’s democratic purposes and (b) take advantage of and further develop a set of distinctive capabilities that the Institute brings to its work. **Three broad considerations both guide project development and frame the core capabilities of the Institute:**

1. Institute projects focus on efforts to achieve sustainable high quality in schools and universities where local groups work across boundaries to define and achieve the public democratic purposes of high-quality education.

Rationale: This aspect of our approach is based first on a belief that, in our diverse nation, the public purposes of education can be realized and sustained only through democratic processes. Differences in views about what public purposes are and how these should be achieved must be resolved through deliberation, negotiation, and democratic decision-making. A particular focus of the Institute’s boundary-crossing is an effort to bring better information, alternative structures, and new ways of thinking that help education professionals, families and other local public groups, and policy makers reach wise collective decisions regarding education at all levels.

Related Institute Capabilities:

- Leadership development for those who can advocate, sponsor, facilitate, and support local renewal efforts

- Facilitation for developing and sustaining school-university-community partnerships.

2. The Institute's projects add value to local educational renewal by supporting cross-setting collaboration, critique, inquiry, and dissemination. Networks of innovation provide the context for the Institute's work.

Rationale: The institute's approach to inquiry and dissemination involves cross-setting efforts to understand and respond to educational challenges. We depend on networks of mutual support to stimulate creativity in how these challenges are addressed and collaboration among teams of scholars to understand and communicate about results.

Related Institute Capabilities:

- The existing collaborative culture and organizational infrastructure of the NNER, where commitment to shared values combines with work in very different settings
- Frameworks for managing dispersed projects that rely on team leadership for project development and operations
- Communications infrastructure among settings and with the Institute.

3. The Institute emphasizes external impact of projects and programs.

Rationale: While the process of studying local innovations will naturally provide some support for the local efforts, the primary purpose of the Institute's work is not to support local work of NNER settings. Rather, it is to increase the impact that such work has on national policy, practice, and dialog. Consequently, the institute is primarily interested in projects where results have potential for wide dissemination and impact. The Institute's projects will emphasize this external dissemination of information that is useable by policy, public, and professional groups

Related Institute Capabilities:

- Professional writing, editing, and publishing
- Communication with and through public media (e.g., current Journalism and the Public Good projects)
- Alliances with other national groups to increase support and impact.

Operating Values and Principles

1. Close collaboration with NNER settings based on values of equitable opportunity for participation, recognition of the opportunities that prior accomplishments create, coordination when seeking grants from the same source, and collaboration in framing agendas for inquiry and development. These values will be realized through the following operating principles:

- A. Most projects will involve only a subset of settings, so some selection will always be necessary in either project development or implementation. *Selection of participating settings will be based on the capacity of each setting's partnership to contribute to the project area, the setting's participation in project development, and its previous accomplishments in related local work. Projects may also include partners outside the NNER when this contributes to the quality of the application and the anticipated impact of the project.*
- B. Since much of the work of the Institute will involve supporting and studying local educational renewal, many projects will naturally build on advances and innovations that have been initiated by one or more settings. *In partnership with the settings that accomplished early*

development, the Institute will actively seek opportunities to study these innovations and explore their applicability in different contexts.

- C. Because many settings seek funding from the same foundations and government programs that might support the Institute, it is important that competition between the Institute and settings not undermine collaborative work. *The Institute will communicate with local setting contacts about its intent to apply for funding from particular sources, and will depend on settings to clarify when participation in a collaborative project would compete with local efforts.*
- D. Selection of project areas is important because the success of the Institute depends ultimately on its engagement in high-impact projects whose results can influence public and professional dialog as well as current policies and practices. The Institute will participate in the NNER Conference in ways that involve settings in ongoing conversations about potential project areas and will convene planning groups to develop new initiatives.

2. **Close partnership with the NNER** to ensure coordinated engagement with settings and collective efforts to influence practice and policy, guided by values of participation in decision making, open information, and clearly established roles of each entity. Operating principles to realize these values include:

- a. *The Institute's advisory board will include the NNER Executive Director and at least two members of the NNER Executive Board and two additional representatives from the Governing Council, selected to ensure representation from the tripartite structure, in order to ensure full consideration of the NNER's organizational priorities and coordination with NNER activities.*
- b. *Information will be regularly shared with the NNER Director and Executive Board concerning the Institute's finances, progress of projects, and strategic plans.*
- c. *The Institute and NNER will define and regularly review areas of distinctive work and areas in which both entities expect to become engaged. (For example, the NNER has primary responsibility for constituency services, conferences, training events, and possibly third-party evaluation, while the Institute's work would likely involve research, development, and training grants and partnerships with other groups in order to advance and study practice in ways that influence the broader public and professional conversations about schooling and school quality.)*

3. **Opportunities for individuals in NNER settings** and elsewhere to collaborate in research and development projects that advance the AED, based on values of intellectual rigor, creativity, and commitment to advancing public democratic purposes of education.

- a. *Leadership teams for Institute projects and programs will be formed by the institute director with concerns for ensuring project success, collaboration, impact, and staff diversity.*
- b. *The Institute will give particular attention to creating writing opportunities for setting faculty members who are engaged in partnership work.*