What Is Next Generation Learning?

Next generation learning tailors a student’s educational experience to meet their unique strengths, interests and needs. In addition, it provides opportunities for increased interaction with teachers and peers and results in higher levels of student engagement. Students are encouraged to play a greater role—and be more invested—in their learning. Coupled with flexibility in pace and delivery, next generation learning is grounded in the idea that students should progress when they demonstrate mastery of key content and skills, regardless of the time spent in class or even where instruction takes place.

THE CHALLENGE

While the Illinois General Assembly and Illinois State Board of Education have provided some flexibility through programs and incentives for local leaders to support next generation learning, participation rates are not uniform across the state. Far too many stakeholders remain unaware of how to leverage flexibilities afforded under current law and regulation. Each district and school will likely have unique goals to meet the needs of their community, so it is important school leaders have information on the flexibilities needed to innovate.

THE SOLUTION

A flexibility guide was developed to help establish an inventory and raise awareness of existing flexibilities available to district and school leaders.

Next Steps for Advocates and Policymakers

Policymakers in Illinois have the opportunity to take the lead on expanding state policies that provide education leaders with increased flexibility to meet the needs of their local communities. Ultimately, this will help them achieve the goals the state and schools have set for their students.

- Engage with stakeholders across the state to develop a unified vision for next generation learning in Illinois.
- Establish a state-level innovation program and expand existing pilot programs.
- Build awareness of existing opportunities.
- Ensure there are feedback loops in place to surface what flexibilities are being utilized and existing needs.

To learn more, explore the ExcelinEd Next Generation Learning model policy. To view the flexibility guide, visit the Empower Illinois website.