

let's restore humanity,
together



Human Restoration Project

2025 Yearly Impact Report

on the future

This year has challenged us to hold two truths simultaneously: the education and nonprofit landscape remains turbulent and uncertain, yet we've witnessed remarkable transformations in classrooms.

Despite what dominates national headlines about education, we've been privileged to see real, meaningful change taking root in public schools. In 2025, we've successfully navigated a dynamic and challenging environment by working directly with teachers, students, and communities who are ready to reimagine what school can be.

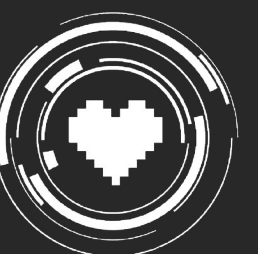
Real Change in Western Michigan

Our partnership work through the [Third Coast Learning Collaborative](#) has become a powerful demonstration that experiential, community-based education isn't just theory, it's happening right now in schools across Western Michigan. What makes this work so meaningful is the unwavering support from school leaders, both administrative and

teaching staff, who strive every day to put students first.

We've watched students conduct water quality labs on Lake Michigan, analyzing human impact on local ecosystems and advocating for environmental change. We've seen them design and construct a disc golf course on their campus, managing a project from conception to completion. We've witnessed young people assess accessibility barriers in their communities and propose concrete solutions to make their towns more inclusive.

These aren't isolated projects, they represent a fundamental shift in how these schools approach learning. Students aren't just preparing for the future; they're actively engaged in interdisciplinary learning within their communities right now, building skills, knowledge, and agency that will serve them throughout their lives.



Listening to What Matters Most

We're continuing to put students at the center through empathy interviews, expanding to new districts that understand the importance of listening to young people and their communities before implementing change.

This approach, learning from who matters first, has resonated with educators who are tired of top-down reforms that ignore the voices of the people most affected by them.

We've also invested in new ways of scaling this work through [Polaris Education](#), to help schools move from shallow surveys to deep listening that preserves student stories and generates meaningful insights for change.

Building the Tools for Transformation

Behind the scenes, we're developing additional resources to help educators shift toward human-centered systems. One exciting project is "[Floop 2.0](#)," a new version of feedback-forward software designed to

move away from traditional one-and-done grades toward a recursive improvement loop. The goal is simple: help teachers and students focus on growth and learning rather than ranking and sorting.

Growing the Movement

The interest in our work has expanded well beyond what we anticipated. We've seen educators, administrators, and community members from across the country reaching out, wanting to bring these ideas to their schools. And this year, we've taken a significant step by formally launching [Human Restoration Project Australia](#), led by Vaughan Cleary, extending our community of practice internationally.

The Path Forward

None of this work happens in a vacuum, and none of it is easy. But what we've seen this year confirms what we've always believed: people want education to be more human. They want schools where students are

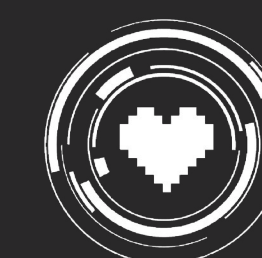
engaged, empowered, and excited to learn. They want classrooms built on empathy, creativity, and authentic connection to the world.

The challenges ahead are real, but so is the progress we're making together. Every transformed classroom, every student voice lifted up, every community partnership strengthened: these are the building blocks of lasting change.

We have the power to change the world. Let's keep advocating, resisting, and fighting for it. Let's restore humanity to education.

Chris, Nick, and Cassie

Directors, Human Restoration Project



theory of change

Human Restoration Project is listening to, connecting with, and reimagining a movement toward a progressive, human-centered education system.

We are bringing together a network of human-centered educators who are transforming classrooms across the world.

Grassroots, Systems-Based Thinking

We believe that young people, families, educators, administrators, and community members must take control of their schools to push for change. Top-down reforms from governmental organizations uphold traditional standards and often lead to more problems than they attempt to solve.

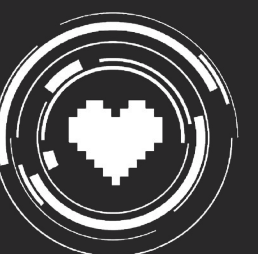
When one system changes, each other system changes in-turn. All depend on each other. Change will only occur when we change underlying systems rather than attempting to make human-centered practice work in inherently inhumane places.

A Human-Centered Education

HRP has identified twenty systems, summarized within 4 values statements, that must be changed for a human-centric, equitable system that creates a better future for all:

- . Learning is rooted in purpose-finding and community relevance.
- . Social justice is the cornerstone to educational success.
- . Dehumanizing practices do not belong in school.
- . Learners are respectful toward each other's human worth.

We provide the platform toward systemic change in reimagining education.



third coast learning collaborative

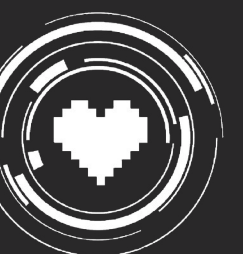


Alongside amazing educators, we are reimagining what's possible in Western Michigan public schools through interdisciplinary, hands-on learning with a focus on community, student well-being, and authentic assessment.

Learn more about this 5 year initiative (which is where we spend 90% of our time/resources!)



guide



reach

Data in this report reflects
January - November 2025
vs. 2024 (year to year).

+13%

more website users

685,000 (+17%)

page views

~21,340 (+17%)

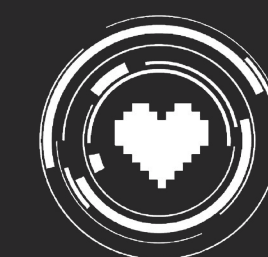
average articles read
/ month

Most Read Articles

[This is why we should stop giving homework](#)

[Unsettling The Science of Reading:
Who is Being Sold A Story?](#)

In just 5 months since we changed podcast hosting platforms in June, allowing us to crosspost episodes to YouTube/YouTube Music, we've had **12,886 downloads** from listeners from **50 countries** across **6 continents!**



writing

in-depth articles

there is no change without hope

"Let me tell you how public education changed my life as the child of an immigrant family. In telling it I hope you can feel the hope I have in making change and join in the movement of making it real."

February 26, 2025



my iep, my future

"This journey was overflowing with growth for students and me. Relinquishing so much control and trust to my students allowed me to see them as the wonderful humans they are. They encouraged me to become not only a better teacher, but a better person."

Catherine Patton
June 27, 2025



a student's view: perspectives on a gradeless and growth-centered classroom

Sofia is an 8th grade student in Theresa Walter's English Class on Long Island, NY. Sofia is in her second year of an ungrading experience in the English Language Arts in her school. Theresa is a teacher, and also the Department Chair who has supported her teachers' shift to a feedback-centered growth practice. The two sit down to reflect on the practice and its implications in their lives.

Theresa Walter
March 3, 2025



art as a liberatory practice in school

In my work as a school counseling graduate student intern working with elementary-aged students, I have been finding art to be an incredibly important tool in helping to promote students' empathy, self-expression, self-confidence, and healing.

Gianna Buzzano
March 19, 2025



time to question: lessons on social and emotional learning from one collaborative teacher group

Teachers have many SEL programs available, but often face strict district mandates or limited time to assess cultural relevance. How can systems create space to support educators in collaborating and adapting authentic SEL in ways that truly meet students' needs?

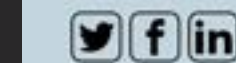
Emma McMain
July 8, 2025



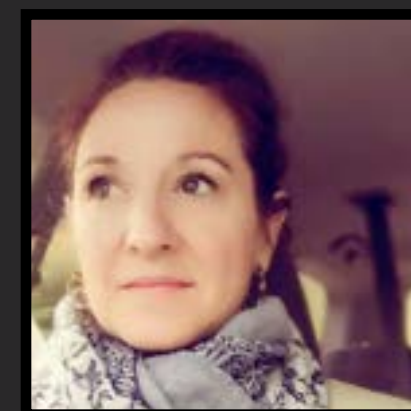
reflections on teach truth day of action 2025

How can John Dewey's ideal of a thriving democratic education revitalize an American commitment to freedom and democracy?

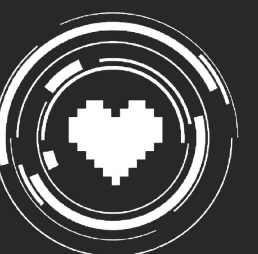
Nick Covington
June 18, 2025



contributors



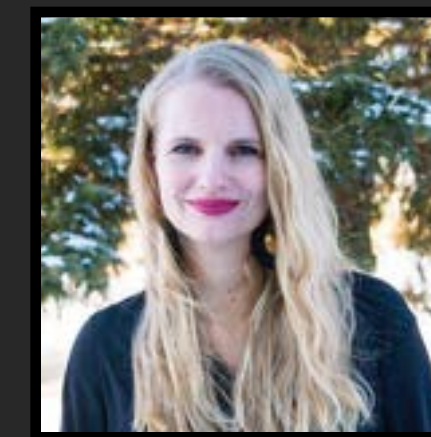
inform



podcasts

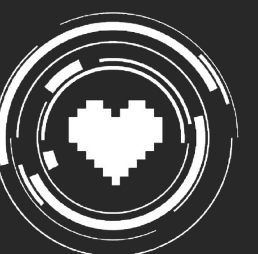
- **From the Classroom to the Capitol: A Conversation w/ New...**
E177 · Human Restoration Project
00:26:48 · 2 months ago
- **Taming the Turbulence in Educational Leadership w/...**
E176 · Human Restoration Project
00:52:00 · 2 months ago
- **BS Universities: The Future of Automated Education w/ Rob...**
E175 · Human Restoration Project
00:53:04 · 3 months ago
- **Cultivating Mental Health Mindsets in The Empathetic...**
E174 · Human Restoration Project
01:06:04 · 3 months ago
- **Confronting the Education Polycrisis w/ Dr. James Mannion**
E173 · Human Restoration Project
01:26:47 · 4 months ago
- **DIY, Mutual Aid, and Human-Centered Learning for...**
E172 · Human Restoration Project
01:02:50 · 4 months ago
- **Reclaiming Teaching & Learning in an Age of AI w/ Chanea Bond**
E171 · Human Restoration Project
01:07:05 · 4 months ago
- **Parenting with Purpose w/ Steven Shapiro & Nancy Shapiro-Rapport**
E170 · Human Restoration Project
00:44:27 · 5 months ago
- **Teaching Contentious Topics in a Divided Nation w/ Ryan Sprott**
E169 · Human Restoration Project
01:14:05 · 5 months ago
- **"It's Like a Baby Jail!" Power & Early Childhood Education w/ Dr...**
E168 · Human Restoration Project
01:01:56 · 6 months ago
- **Conference to Restore Humanity! Quest for Connection 2025 Trailer**
Human Restoration Project
00:03:39 · 6 months ago
- **Beyond Anthropology For Kids w/ Nika Dubrovsky**
E167 · Human Restoration Project
00:37:30 · 7 months ago
- **Showcase: Spotlight on Bismarck Public Schools' Empower[Ed]**
E166 · Human Restoration Project
00:48:16 · 7 months ago
- **From Pixar to the Classroom: Teaching Storytelling w/ Story...**
E165 · Human Restoration Project
00:43:51 · 7 months ago
- **Sensemaking and Cybernetics in Classroom Teaching w/ Christian...**
E164 · Human Restoration Project
00:53:23 · 8 months ago
- **Inquiry, Play, and Early Childhood Education w/ Heidi Echemacht**
E163 · Human Restoration Project
01:00:00 · 8 months ago
- **Sustaining Love, Hope, and Community Through Nonviolenc...**
E162 · Human Restoration Project
00:46:27 · 9 months ago
- **A Danish Perspective on American Education w/ Pernille Ripp**
E161 · Human Restoration Project
00:53:01 · 9 months ago
- **The Privateers: How Billionaires Creates a Culture War and Sold...**
E160 · Human Restoration Project
00:40:56 · 10 months ago
- **The Landscape Model of Learning w/ Dr. Kaponi Ciotti**
E159 · Human Restoration Project
00:44:29 · 11 months ago
- **Making School Finance As Public As Possible w/ David I. Backer**
E181 · Human Restoration Project
01:06:53 · 12 days ago
- **The Buzz About the Human Hive w/ Kate McAllister**
E180 · Human Restoration Project
00:54:48 · 25 days ago
- **Lessons in Powerful Learning from the Fringes w/ Dr. Sarah Fine**
E179 · Human Restoration Project
00:31:45 · 1 month ago
- **Will Work for Food: Labor Across the Food Chain w/ Laura-Anne...**
E178 · Human Restoration Project
00:44:01 · 1 month ago

fantastic guests



24 new conversations with 28 guests

inform



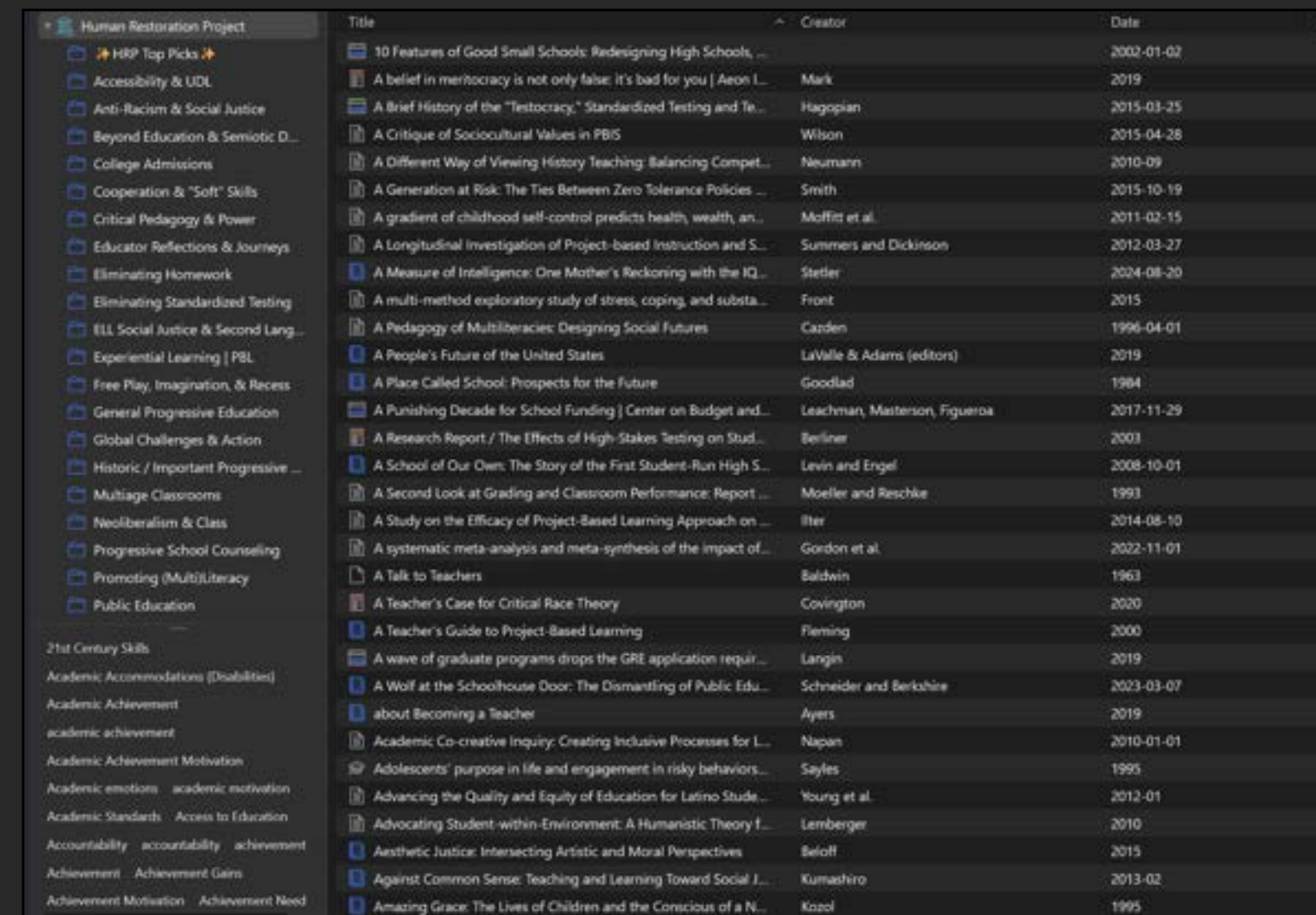
research

All of our research is consistently updated on our Zotero database (which links into our new systems, like Polaris Education).

39%
articles

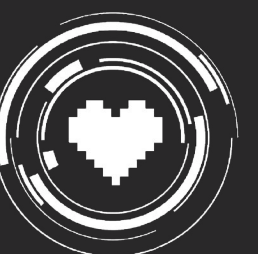
31%
studies

30%
books



Title	Creator	Date
10 Features of Good Small Schools: Redesigning High Schools, ...		2002-01-02
A belief in meritocracy is not only false: it's bad for you Aeon L...	Mark	2019
A Brief History of the "Testocracy," Standardized Testing and Te...	Hagopian	2015-03-25
A Critique of Sociocultural Values in PBS	Wilson	2015-04-28
A Different Way of Viewing History Teaching: Balancing Compet...	Neumann	2010-09
A Generation at Risk: The Ties Between Zero Tolerance Policies ...	Smith	2015-10-19
A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, an...	Moffitt et al.	2011-02-15
A Longitudinal Investigation of Project-based Instruction and S...	Summers and Dickinson	2012-03-27
A Measure of Intelligence: One Mother's Reckoning with the IQ...	Stetler	2024-08-20
A multi-method exploratory study of stress, coping, and substa...	Front	2015
A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures	Cazden	1996-04-01
A People's Future of the United States	LaVelle & Adams (editors)	2019
A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future	Goodlad	1984
A Punishing Decade for School Funding Center on Budget and In...	Leachman, Matterson, Figueroa	2017-11-29
A Research Report / The Effects of High-Stakes Testing on Stud...	Berliner	2003
A School of Our Own: The Story of the First Student-Run High S...	Levin and Engel	2008-10-01
A Second Look at Grading and Classroom Performance: Report ...	Moeller and Reschke	1993
A Study on the Efficacy of Project-Based Learning Approach on ...	Ilter	2014-08-10
A systematic meta-analysis and meta-synthesis of the impact of...	Gordon et al.	2022-11-01
A Talk to Teachers	Baldwin	1963
A Teacher's Case for Critical Race Theory	Covington	2020
A Teacher's Guide to Project-Based Learning	Fleming	2000
A wave of graduate programs drops the GRE application requir...	Langin	2019
A Wolf at the Schoolhouse Door: The Dismantling of Public Edu...	Schneider and Berkshire	2023-03-07
about Becoming a Teacher	Ayers	2019
Academic Co-creative Inquiry: Creating Inclusive Processes for L...	Napan	2010-01-01
Adolescents' purpose in life and engagement in risky behaviors...	Sayles	1995
Advancing the Quality and Equity of Education for Latino Stud...	Young et al.	2012-01
Advocating Student-within-Environment: A Humanistic Theory F...	Lemberger	2010
Aesthetic Justice: Intersecting Artistic and Moral Perspectives	Beloff	2015
Against Common Sense: Teaching and Learning Toward Social J...	Kumashiro	2013-02
Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscious of a N...	Kozol	1995

inform



human-centered PD

~680

educators involved in PD & workshops

~1,000+

students involved in focus group conversations

Development of [Polaris Education](#): an entire new system supporting student voice

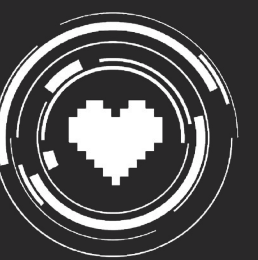


Students at MIT's Youth Listening Lab hosted by Cortico in partnership with students engaged in listening/learning, including HRP partner schools.



Design-focused, collaborative planning with teacher teams in the Third Coast Learning Collaborative.

guide



conference to restore humanity! 2025

151 (-7%)
attendees

100%(!)
rated our virtual conference
design positively

97%
stated our virtual conference was
better than, or the best they've
attended

100%(!)
said they'd attend the conference
again

continuing our success in a one-of-its-kind event
a format swapped aimed at easier accessibility and more
workshops, made **available to all** following the live event

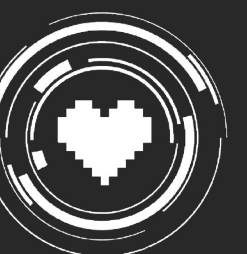
keynote by
Dr. Sarah Fine

workshops by
Nawal Qarooni
Dr. Emma McMain
Angela Stockman

student presentation by
Great Plains Action Society



grow



thoughts from attendees

>> The Conference to Restore Humanity was a bright spot in the challenging educational landscape. By bringing together passionate educators from diverse backgrounds and regions, we learned from each other, pushed our thinking, and engaged in dialogue around issues that are crucial to supporting today's students. In the end, regardless of the structures or systems education is functioning within, **it is the people who make or break the experience of school, and this group of people is top notch!**

>> This isn't an easy time for many. **This conference helped recalibrate my outlook, making me eager** and ready for school to start.

>> The HRP Conference brings together educators and humans from so many fields to discuss some of the big problems of practice in education right now--that are often overlooked or not seen as problems in many spaces. It is a space where I feel people view the problems in similar ways and are ready to take on big action to change status quo. **It is a great learning, growing and planning space.** It is connection.

>> CTRH reminds us what this whole teaching and living endeavor is all about. It reminded me to engage in my daily work by centering what's so easily felt but so difficult to measure and control. It reminded me what our collective work is really about, and that's love, compassion, connection, and joy - those essentially human things.

>> CTRH brings together people with diverse perspectives and experiences with the unifying goal of making education accessible and enjoyable to more humans. **The conference models accessibility, flexibility and joy** and is a great space to expand my thinking and connect with other educators each summer.



conference presentations & presence



SXSW EDU
March | Austin, TX



Student Power Summit
March | Newark, OH



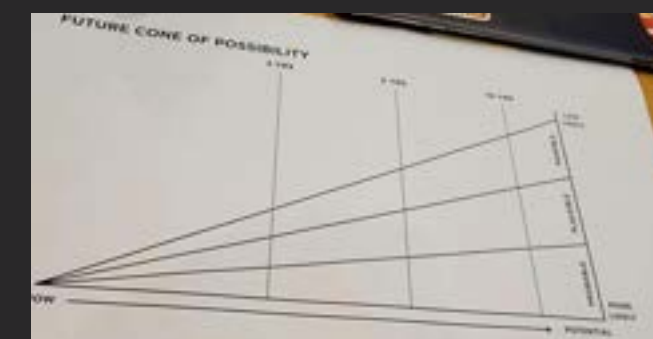
uLead / Mental Health Summit
April | Banff, Alberta



Youth Listening Lab
May | Boston, MA



MASSP
June | Traverse City, MI



The Long Now of Education
July | Detroit, MI



Student-Led Restorative Practices
August | Columbus, OH



Global Math Summit
September | Sardinia, Italy

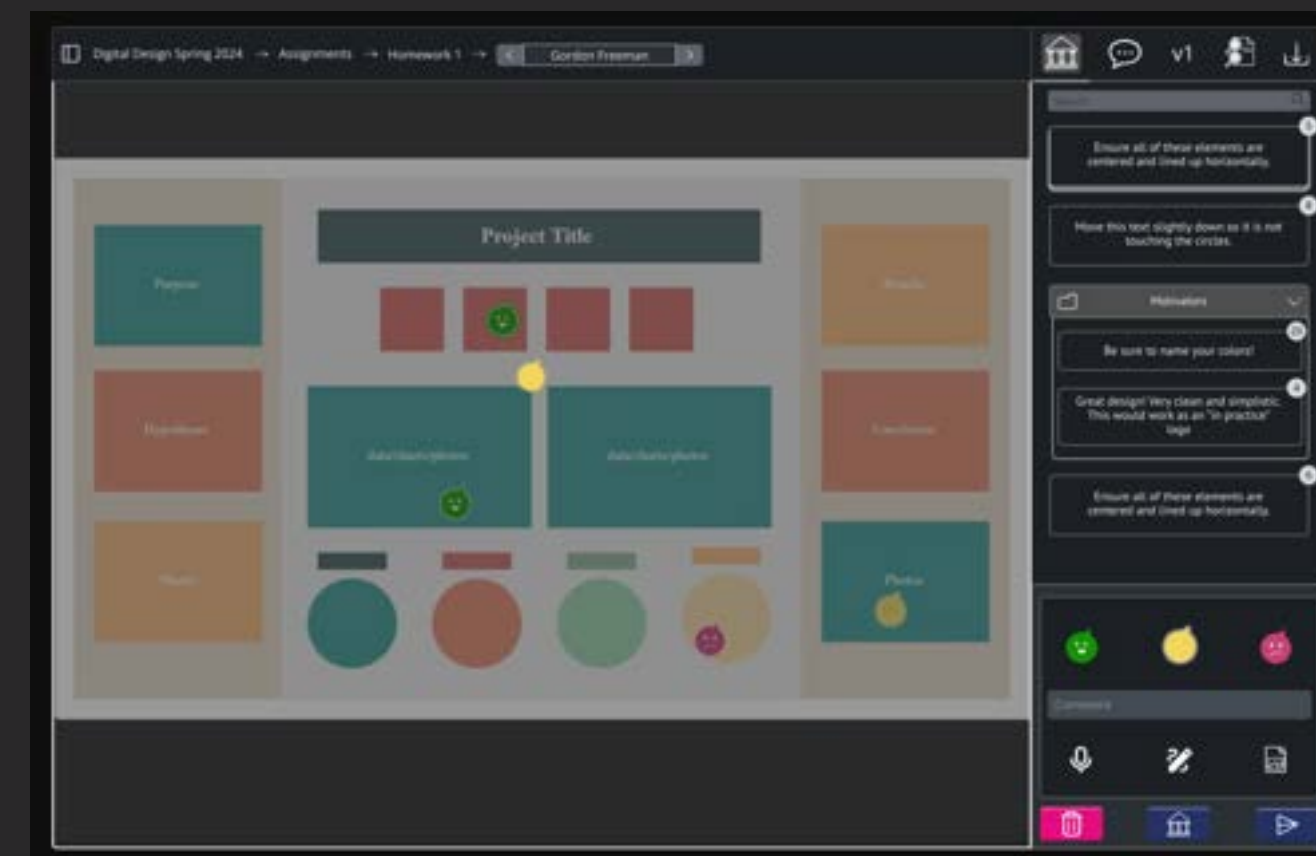
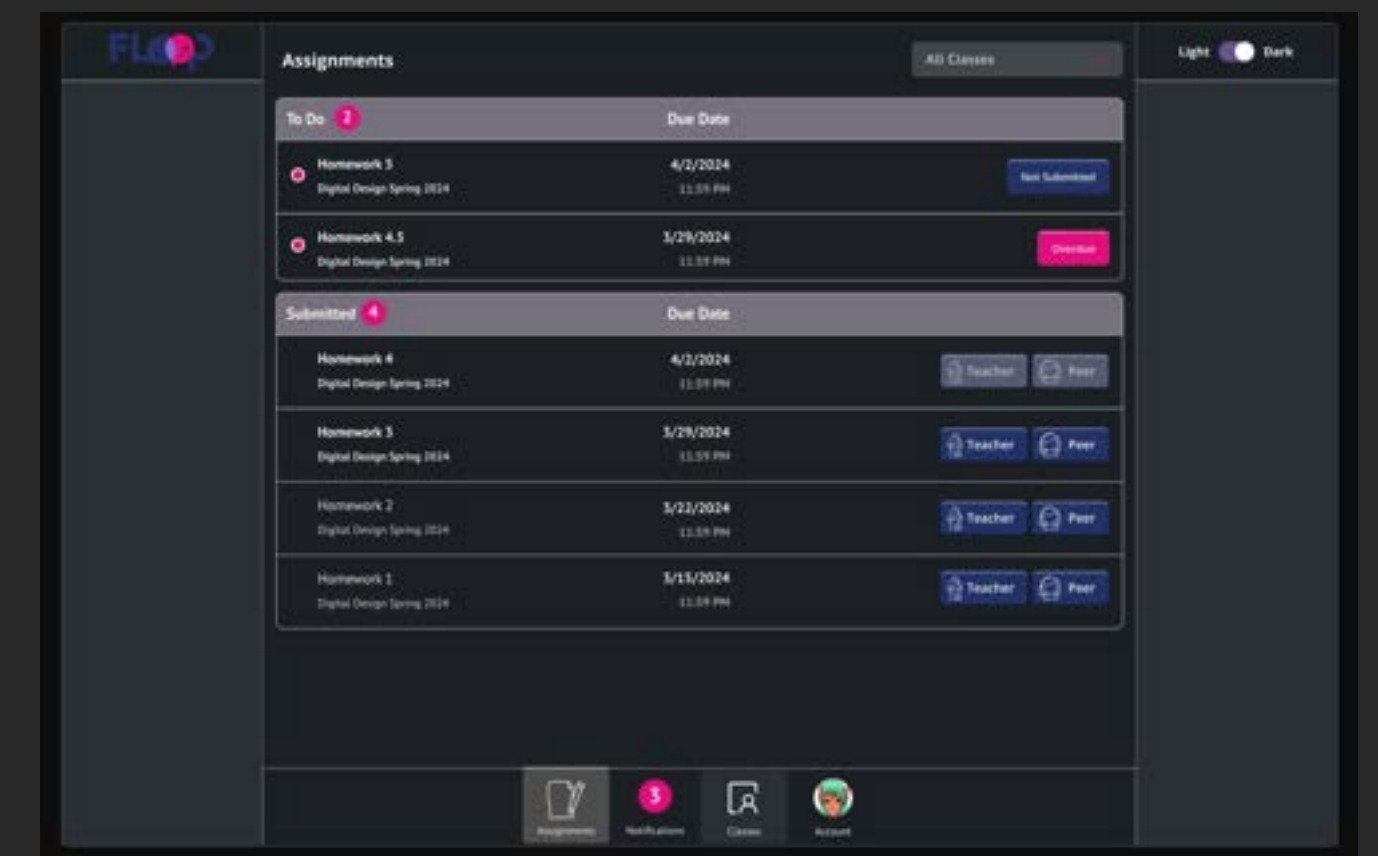
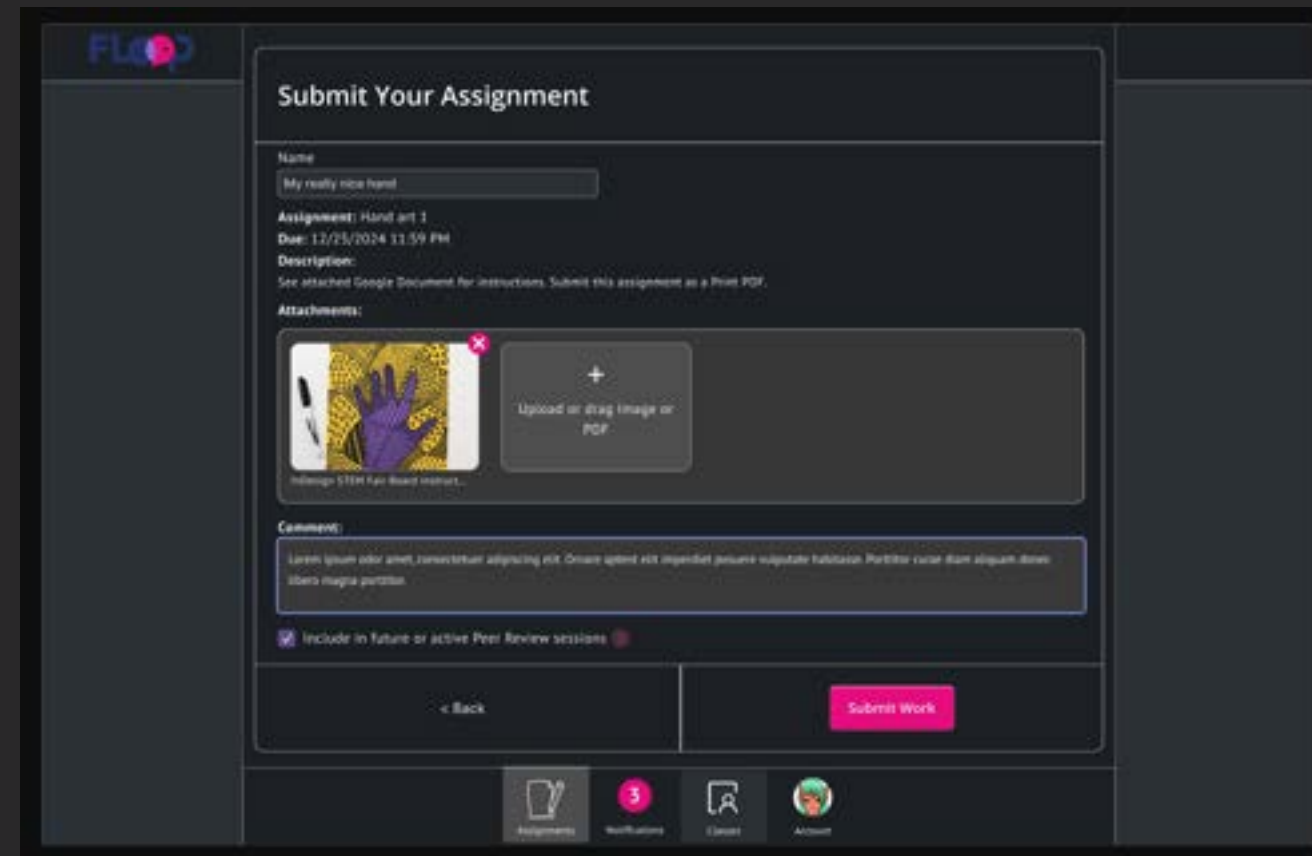
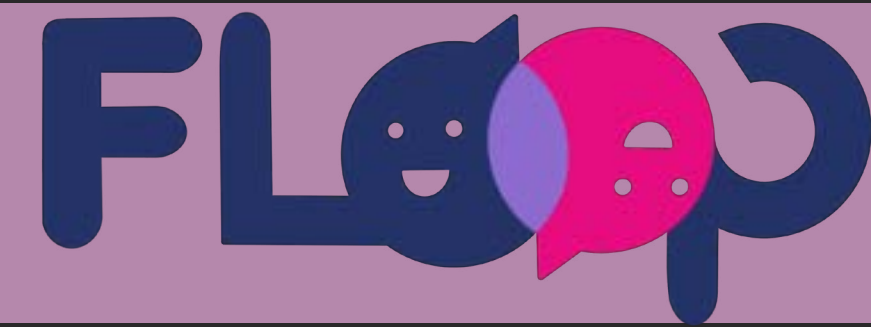


Teacher Powered Schools
October | Ypsilanti, MI



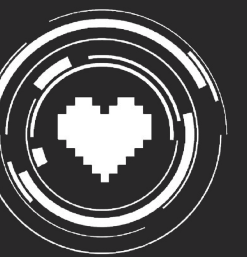
EDUTech Asia
November | Singapore

Floop

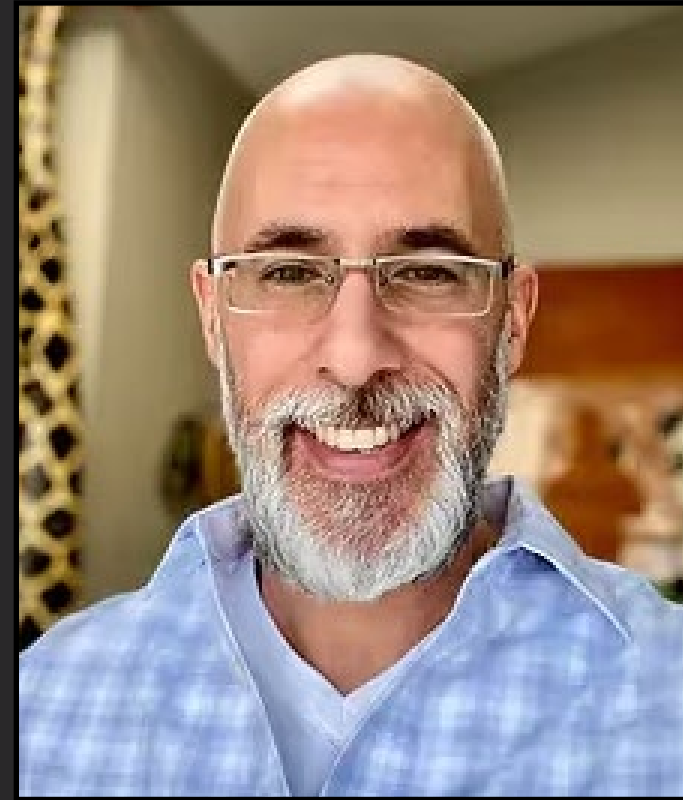


We are developing a new version of our feedback-forward learning software, Floop.

grow



our board



Jason Blair



Dr. Susan D. Blum



Hedreich Nichols



Krissy Wright Quinn



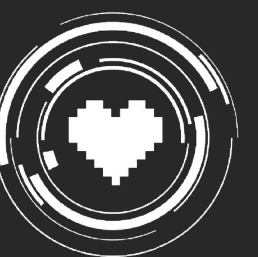
Dr. Traci Nicole Smith



Dr. Yong Zhao

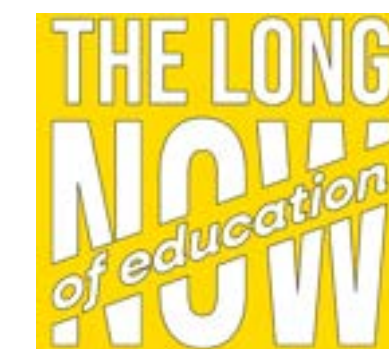


Waverly Zhao

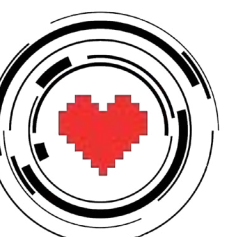


partners

our merchandise is
sustainably sourced
& union made!



we've worked with these organizations (and more) to further develop HRP throughout 2025.



revisiting last year

These were our goals for
2025 from our last impact
report.

reimagine what's possible with TCLC

We've been consistently blown away by what the teacher teams are accomplishing at Orchard View and Reeths-Puffer Middle Schools, and highly encourage you to check out what's being supported in the [Third Coast Learning Collaborative](#).

fight for student rights

We've partnered with Great Plains Action Network (for our yearly conference) and One Iowa throughout the year, alongside promoting students at the MIT Youth Listening Lab, furthering our listening work broadly.

seek alternative sources of funding

Although we have not found a major additional funder beyond our existing grant structure, we have promising leads, especially pertaining to our new tool, Polaris Education. We're hoping that this support will be approved at the start of 2026.

be a light in dark spaces

Our continued release of resources, especially surrounding our conference, aims to equip educators the tools they need to sustain their teaching practice while fighting back against dehumanizing elements of school.

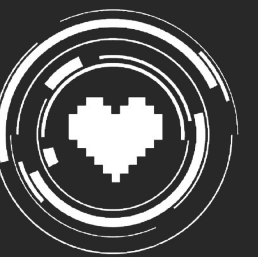
provide resources on low investigated topics

We want to continue to provide resources on topics less familiar to educators in the field (e.g. the youth toxic masculinity crisis, critical SEL) and are seeking additional partners on this work in the coming year.

build actionable partnerships

We have successfully partnered a huge array of schools and organizations, focusing our conference outreach on networking rather than partnering with our services. This has led to serious expansion abroad, primarily in Australia.

grow



goals for 2026

fund & release Polaris Education

Our student empathy interview tool is taking much of our time right now, not only because it's a promising development but because it's a route toward financial sustainability. Track along with our progress via [the website](#).

release a prototype build of "Floop 2.0"

The new version of [Floop](#) (our feedback tool) continues to progress and will likely be ready for the 26-27 school year in "prototype" form (as in, we will begin to pilot and test the tool with students). In an age of increasingly automated grading, Floop stands out as a human-centered review tool.

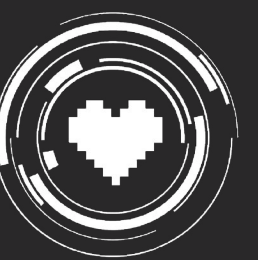
continue to support and expand TCLC

As we will continue to focus our support until the end of 2028, we will continue to share tools, lessons learned, and awesome educational experiences happening via the [Third Coast Learning Collaborative](#).

offer more outlets for student analysis & advocacy

We've found a ton of success in providing our empathy interview analysis work with students (rather than simply listening and analyzing to everything ourselves). We want to expand access to this line of inquiry and develop closer connections to organizations offering an outlet in this work (e.g. MIT's Youth Listening Lab).

grow



financial

Revenue (\$824,846)

EIR Grant (<i>expenses to right</i>)	93.7%
Grants (Other)	3.3%
Donations	1.3%
MISC (Conference Sponsorships, Content Creation, etc.)	1.7%

Direct Expenses (\$629,704)

Full-Time Staff Pay & Benefits	43.3%
Grant/School Partner Contracts	55.6%
Travel (TCLC)	1.0%
Website (TCLC)	.01%

Indirect Expenses (\$82,610)

Part-Time Staff Pay	50.40%
Office Expenses	4.78%
Techstack (all remote platforms)	32.30%
Accounting & Auditing	12.50%
Professional Learning (e.g. books, courses)	0.02%

This grant is a momentous achievement for our organization, school partners, and grant partners to do this work on a larger scale. However, it has come at, perhaps, an inopportune time. Our federal grants are guaranteed by Congress and not attached (financially) to the Department of Education. Therefore, during a hypothetical closure of the US DOE, we will still retain financial services through 2028.

That said, with the elimination of the department there will be a lack of coordination and communication about these funds which could be disastrous for actually receiving/transferring them to the organization. Further, there is a possibility that these grants will not be honored given the state of our political system.

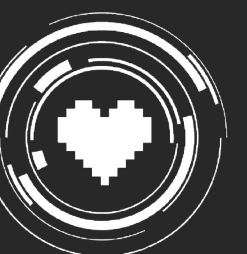
what you'll see on our form 990:

top paid employees: Cassie Nastase, Nick Covington, & Chris McNutt
salary: \$74,000-82,500 / yr + benefits (secured 100% through grant funding)

grant funding: \$~800,000

our board and volunteers are not compensated

**Reflects budget as of late Nov 2025*



thank you to our supporters

(In no particular order...)

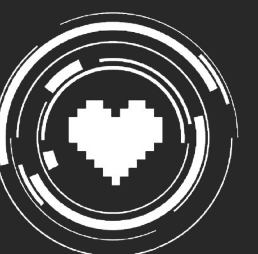
Mary Alice Delia (In Dedication)
Karen Sedoti
Taxi Lumm (In Dedication)
Kyra Canfield
Corey Jung
Nicholas Caraballo
Harrison Ansel White
Jane Kennedy
Hugo Genesse
Jennifer Berkshire
Tish Jennings
Martha Holden Jennings Foundation
Stimpunks
Emi Takemura
Bryn Orum
Joshua Tripp
Lauren Lumm
Cayne Letizia
Paul Perez
Ezra Friedlander
Matthew Thomas Fahey
Melissa Staley
Clint Conroy
Parvathi Sivaraman
Zaynab Baalbaki
David van Reyk
Troy German
Bruce Rayson Fehn
Danielle Woodhams
Stephen Crawford
Wendy Fairon
Grace Poudrier
Matthew Clark
Lydia McDermott
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