

FAQs

What is *Bravely*?

Bravely enables school leaders and your teams to work with peer-leaders and skilled facilitators to tackle your highest-priority challenges—and do so in ways that build new operating norms aligned with the equitable, deeper learning that you envision for students. School teams will learn about, experience, and apply effective change practices to solve one or more systemic challenges or inequities through the analysis of research-based organizational conditions. Over 12 months, school teams will receive direct support from NGLC, highly skilled facilitators, and content experts organized around two key supports:

1. Monthly support toward implementation, capacity building, and change management of school/system redesign, through responsive school-based liberatory transformation teams.
2. Monthly coordination meetings with district representatives to ensure alignment with the district's vision and goals

Participating teams will leave with a change toolbox and a set of practices to implement with their colleagues, a plan, and a concrete idea to transform student learning that addresses the self-identified systemic challenge or inequity.

What are the core elements of the *Bravely* experience and who is involved?

Teams will get support for this crucial work in high-trust, intensive communities of practice—a different kind of community of practice than most educators typically experience. Each community of practice includes about 4-8 school-based teams. NGLC fundamentally believes change should be representative of the needs of people closest to that change and that the only way to solve your biggest challenges is together. The only way to reimagine what schools can be and successfully implement that vision is together.

All teams will focus on a change idea that addresses the systemic challenge or inequity their district self-identifies as important. To help, NGLC offers teams tested practices that leading districts have used to successfully transform the learning experience for their students. We brought these practices together into a framework called [Transformation Design](#) and the mini-courses are designed to help you use them in your district.

To bridge the twin goals of equitable and deeper learning, embedded into *Bravely's* design are the mindsets and practices of National Equity Project's [Liberatory Design](#).

There are also organic and frequent connections embedded into the work with district personnel in order to remain aligned to the district's broader vision of change as team members pursue a reimagination of success for kids.

The *Bravely* journey was co-designed with educators. An array of content experts and highly-skilled facilitators from NGLC and a small and cohesive set of partners further support school teams.

What is the purpose of *Bravely*?

COVID-19 and the latest chapter of the social justice movement helped district leaders see the inadequacies and inequities of our K-12 system more clearly than ever. But we know our sector is stretched thin. Given how exhausted many educators feel (teachers and administrators alike), it's a challenging time for many school districts to act on their vision for student success.

Launching and sustaining the journey toward a big vision at *any* time is a tough challenge for any school district, and extraordinarily difficult to accomplish alone. Superintendents and teacher leaders need to orchestrate experiences that inspire audacity, inclusion, and follow-through. They need to move from incremental program and project implementation to the development of a different community-wide mindset—one that mirrors their student-centered, whole-child, 21st-century vision of student success and commits to turning that vision into their operating norms. Because the only way students will broadly develop the attributes we all claim to care about is if the adults—and the systems and operating habits they create—reflect exactly the same attributes.

Who is Bravely for? Who should participate?

Bravely is for future-focused, courageous K-12 school district teams that seek connection and support for their school change idea aligned to a district's vision. It's for anyone ready to take a brave leap in equitable, deeper learning redesign to meet this moment—when our democracy, our lands, and our communities require dedicated, committed action from K-12 education.

Bravely is open to school teams within districts of 4-6 school teams with 7-8 team members each focused at any grade span (K-8; 6-8; 9-12; all). We believe in inclusive participation and distributing the change effort to those closest to it and those who will be most directly impacted by it. That's why we recommend that teams include the following:

- District administration, with at least one senior district leader
- School-based staff: Principals or other school-based decision-makers, teachers, staff, and students
- Community partners, including but not limited to parents/families, workforce and industry partners, and school board members

We further recommend that teams represent the diversity of their district community by race, gender, and other factors. And we recommend that districts intentionally invite participation from individuals and groups that have historically been “at the margins” or excluded from important decisions or system changes.

Bravely helps school teams advance their skills for developing the trusting, durable relationships throughout their district community that are essential for their change effort to be effective. *Bravely* provides tools and processes to scale deep, with constant input and feedback loops with its larger community.

How many schools can participate within a district?

Bravely works best with a small set of schools within a district with no more than six schools as part of the change efforts at a time. While the majority of time will be spent in community of practice groupings, school teams will have the opportunity to interact with and learn from our partners and expert facilitators. Ultimately, we envision *Bravely* serving hundreds of districts and helping to shape the work of other like-minded initiatives serving hundreds or thousands more in future years.

What is the time commitment?

This isn't your typical community of practice that meets once a month and never rises past “nice to have.” *Bravely* is an “absolutely must have” mechanism to drive stronger learning and stronger culture in your district. You'll get as much out of *Bravely* as the time you put into it.

Each month, school teams meet with others internally and with their community of practice facilitator for coaching sessions. Teams will also perform asynchronous work throughout each month to address their self-identified systemic challenges or inequities.

Each team member should prepare to dedicate 1-3 hours per week over the course of the academic year to this work.

What are Bravely's three founding agreements?

We are looking for communities that are committed to take action on three founding agreements:

1. To re-envision success comprehensively and equitably, enabling core academic and life skills for each and every student.
2. To transform learning fundamentally, putting students at the center, as the only way to bring our revitalized vision of success to life.
3. To lead, learn, and model our vision of success organizationally, as our operating norms, to ensure that these changes endure.

We believe—and our [research](#) bears out—that true transformation is achievable when these principles are embraced and applied.

How is Bravely different from other district professional development programs?

The sector has no shortage of Zoominars, strategic consulting engagements, weekend workshops, executive learning courses, and design institutes. *Bravely* is not any of these things.

Bravely brings together great people and experts, some of them peers with direct experience, to help school teams solve common challenges, applied to their self-identified purposes. This is FOR practitioners WITH practitioners, because we know you will get farther by working with others. We all need community to do this work. *Bravely* will feel different because it is different.

The following attributes, integrated holistically, together make *Bravely* unique:

- **Liberatory, Transformational Design, Oriented around Student-Centered, Next Gen Learning.** *Bravely* unites your goals for student-centered, deeper learning experiences with your efforts to develop the organizational culture and set of operating norms and mindsets needed to make those learning experiences a reality for all students.
- **Like-Minded Peers.** *Bravely* recognizes that the perspectives, advice, and fellowship of school peers doing similar work are the most valuable support for transformation.
- **Culture and Practice.** *Bravely* addresses mindsets and relationships as well as the practical tactics and policies needed to transform learning districtwide.
- **Strengths-Based.** *Bravely* is about identifying strengths and building on good work and deep commitments already underway.
- **Community-Centered.** *Bravely* uses change practices that are inclusive, rely on stakeholder involvement including those most impacted by the change, and listen to those who are historically marginalized.
- **Your Vision.** *Bravely* doesn't ask you to start over but gives tools, support, and skill-building to advance your strategic priorities, plans, and vision.
- **Take Action to Learn.** *Bravely* is professional learning by doing. See short-term wins while creating the conditions for long-term transformation.
- **Grounded in Practice.** *Bravely* connects you to change practices used in leading districts that have successfully transformed the learning experience in their schools with positive outcomes for their students.
- **Designed for This Moment.** *Bravely* offers a way to design a path through the pandemic into a new future defined by your community.

What makes NGLC qualified to design and facilitate a district transformation experience?

Deep experience. [Over the past decade](#), NGLC has invested more than \$90 million in a range of innovations and school transformation efforts designed by educators. We began by catalyzing educators to experiment and develop the central tenets of next gen learning. Over the past four years, we have learned how some districts have catalyzed enduring transformation of their learning model, in part by pairing that work with transformation of their operating model. *Bravely* is the result, our best idea for how to help the work of transforming districts spread in ways that honor and reflect the strategies those districts used.

How much is the annual fee for this year-long experience?

Please contact Carlos Beato, NGLC co-director, at cbeato@nextgenlearning.org for more information about the costs for in-district school teams to participate in the 2023-2024 school year.

What is the yearlong schedule?

See slides 6-7 of the [Bravely intro deck](#), available on the [Bravely webpage](#). The year begins with building a foundational understanding of transformation design and liberatory design using collected qualitative and quantitative data organized around research-based organizational conditions. School teams then move from understanding where they are to implementing change ideas and learning from them along the way for the second half of the Bravely experience.

Where will the *Bravely* communities of practice take place? Will *Bravely* be in-person or virtual?

This decision is customized and largely depends on the nature of each community. NGLC's ability to support travel and/or convening costs for in-person gatherings depends on our success in raising philanthropic funds or the collective readiness of districts to support travel costs for the NGLC team. Although districts have become fairly accustomed to asynchronous work during the pandemic, *Bravely* will provide some online tools (some via partners) to assist in synchronous and asynchronous professional learning and collaboration.

I'm interested in sponsoring a *Bravely* community of practice or supporting *Bravely* philanthropically, or in joining the initiative as a partner provider. Where can I learn more?

We're glad you're interested! Potential sponsors should reach out to Andy Calkins, NGLC co-director, at acalkins@nextgenlearning.org. Potential partner providers should reach out to Carlos Beato, NGLC co-director, at cbeato@nextgenlearning.org.