

NOTE: The following document is a provisional draft based on crowdsourced input, elaborate analysis, and the collaborative review and refinement of nine leading voices in education and child development. All are welcome to use this document to facilitate continued reflection and action, mindful of the potential for subsequent revisions based on continued input.

## Covenant to Help Inspire Learning and Development (C.H.I.L.D.)

Instead of standing on the shore and proving to ourselves that the ocean cannot carry us, let us venture on its waters just to see.

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

In the context of a gathering on November 10, 2012\*, nine leading voices on education and child development — Carol Dweck, Richard Gerver, Nikhil Goyal, Ken Kay, Alfie Kohn, Steven Jones, Wendy Mogel, Ken Robinson, and Yong Zhao — engaged more than 600 educators and parents from 125 private and public schools in reflection on our deepest commitments to the lives and the learning of school-aged children at school and at home. What follows is a statement of common principles — shaped by participants' input and these leaders' collaborative reflection and design — that may help schools and families to determine how best to support our highest aspirations for the welfare of the children in our care.

As Sir Ken Robinson noted in his contribution to the dialogue, "there are many practices to share, but the practices will all be different. They'll be vernacular in nature. They'll be customized and crafted to local circumstances." Nevertheless, our collective efforts, in collaboration within and between our schools and our homes, "should adhere to certain common principles."

In that spirit, we invite schools and families to examine what practices might authentically support these principles, and what practices might predictably defy them. This covenant, affirming our common commitments, might therefore serve as "a framework for collaborative action that could take us a very long way into creating the kinds of education systems that we need."

As educators and parents/guardians, we believe that we should develop a culture of learning defined by intentional practices that explicitly honor the following principles.

### STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- 1 Nurture each child's great curiosity, interest, and potential to achieve high levels of success
- 2 Allow learning to develop at a pace determined by the child's needs and interest
- 3 Honor the voice of students and promote self-awareness and expression
- 4 Honor children's questions and value their opinions
- 5 Develop independent thought and self-efficacy in a community of engaged learners
- 6 Provide explicit opportunities for unstructured and uninterrupted play

### CHARACTER & COMMUNITY

- 7 Foster interdependence and collective responsibility as members of a learning community
- 8 Encourage resilience, persistence, and responsibility in the face of ambiguity, challenge, or conflict
- 9 Promote ethical decision-making with a balance of critical thought and compassion
- 10 Develop children's cultural competencies to include, respect, and support each other

### DEEPER LEARNING

- 11 Promote learning in meaningful contexts of experience and 'real world' challenges
- 12 Develop children's abilities to solve problems creatively and collaboratively
- 13 Support critical thought about information and media to which children have access
- 14 Promote interdisciplinary learning without compartmentalizing 'subjects' and 'departments'
- 15 Connect children's learning to opportunities to make a better world
- 16 Discontinue practices and policies likely to undermine a child's love of learning

\* From "#PSP2012: TEACHING AND LEARNING AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL," hosted by the Center for the Future of Elementary Education at Curtis School (CFEE). For more information, please see <http://cfee.me/PSP2012> or contact [info@CurtisCFEE.org](mailto:info@CurtisCFEE.org)