

Dear Watershed Community,

All schools talk about educating young people for the future – but the follow-up question should be, “what kind of future?” We have to ask, in conventional schools, “Are we preparing for a status quo future, or something better?” We should ask, “In a world that is rapidly changing, why does the curriculum in most schools look eerily similar to the curriculum of 50 years ago?” We should also ask, “Why aren’t students given more opportunities in their classes to put their learning to use – to make a contribution to the world.” It’s as if people don’t believe students are capable of making real contributions.

At Watershed we name in our [Strategic Vision](#) that we are not preparing for a “status quo” future, rather we are preparing for a better future – “a future that is more just, more sustainable, and more compassionate.”

For us, an *education for a better future* refers to three things:

1. A better future for our students – becoming creative problem-solvers, contributing to the world, and doing so with purpose and joy.
2. A better preparation for college – I’ve shared more thoughts on this in this [previous Thursday note](#).

AND (crucially):

3. A better future for our world – meaning our students learn not just about the challenges of the future, they learn (from experience) how to work on them. Mmantsetsa Marope, former Director of the International Bureau of Education put it this way: “*The transformative aspect of curriculum underscores the point that, more than just adapting to fast changing 21st century contexts, curricula must lead change... In a proactive role both formal and informal curriculum are powerful catalysts for social change, transformation, and for disrupting the status quo.*”

If we hope our graduates will take on great challenges and will help build a future that is more just, more sustainable, and more compassionate, our school curricula must reflect this. We should not *wait* for students to become active, effective citizens, instead we should support them to do the work they are capable of *now*.

Now is the time for schools to unlock the potential of future changemakers.

Thanks for reading.

Warmly,

Tim