

About America Forward



Lead Collective Advocacy



Build Capacity for Sustainable Policy Work



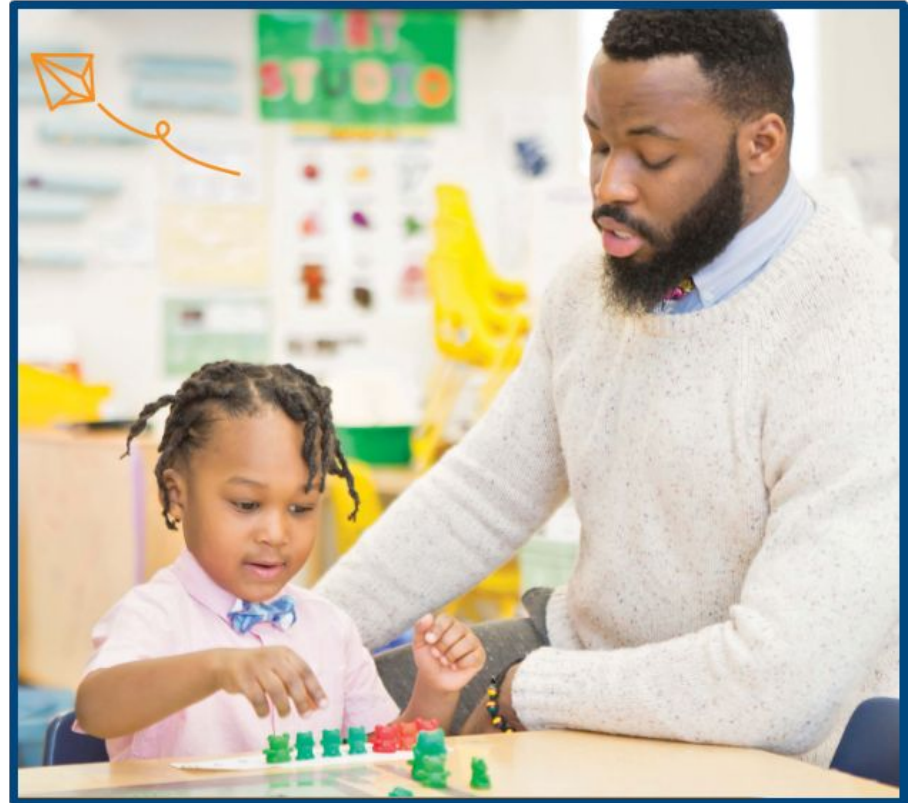
Amplify the Voice of Social Innovation

What is Whole-Learner Education?

Supporting Academic Achievement with Holistic Approaches

Federal Policy Recommendations

- Reimagine and Support the Remodeling of our Current Education System
- Attract, Support and Retain Transformative Educators
- Effectively Engage Families
- Foster Successful Systems through Effective Partnerships
- Leverage Science and Evidence



The Whole Learner Act



Goal: To address student needs through a whole-learner approach to education by:

- Establishing a definition for whole-learner approaches that is rooted in evidence-based practices
 - Creating a competitive federal pilot grant program to incentivize:
 - Mental health, trauma-informed supports in schools
 - Learning through play in the classroom
 - Whole-learner focused professional development & training
 - Active parent and family engagement
 - Prioritizing low-income, high-need schools

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Whole Learner Act Execution

- **Funding Level:**
 - \$200 million for FY25 and such sums for each of the 5 succeeding fiscal years
- **Eligibility Requirements:**
 - Partnerships consisting of a nonprofit organization with expertise in whole-learner approaches, a local educational agency, and one or more of the following entities:
 - Additional local educational agencies
 - State educational agencies
 - Institutions of higher education
 - Other nonprofit organizations



Whole-Learner Approaches in Action

Whole-Learner White Paper

- Articulates the vision of whole-learner education
- Highlights Federal Support for Whole-Learner Education
- Spotlights example organizations who embody a whole-learner education approach
- Emphasizes the need for a dedicated federal funding stream to support whole-learner education initiatives

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Meeting the Moment: Supporting Students Through Evidence-Based Whole-Learner Education

The Vision

Across the country, millions of students are struggling to overcome the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, from profound learning delays to increased social isolation. For many students, the impact of the pandemic was compounded by existing challenges – economic hardship, hunger, housing instability, and exposure to trauma – that already created significant barriers to learning. Creating equitable, sustainable pathways to healthy learning and development is essential for all students to thrive. And that is only possible if every student has access to safe, supportive learning environments that provide the opportunity to explore and fully participate in meaningful, engaging, iterative, socially interactive, and joyful learning experiences that develop a breadth of skills and knowledge.

That's the concept at the heart of **whole-learner education**.

What is Whole-Learner Education?

Whole-learner approaches to education are evidence-based strategies that support the development of the full breadth of skills all students need to thrive, while addressing the unique context and complexity of each student's learning.

Healthy learning and development requires that a range of skill domains—physical, social, cognitive, creative, and emotional— be interwoven into accessible, engaging educational experiences in environments where students feel supported by trusting, positive relationships. Whole-learner approaches to education, including learning through play, intentionally design learning experiences – from direct instruction, to guided teaching, to open exploration – that set the stage for integrated skill development, foster academic success, and provide students with the knowledge and tools they need to thrive today and succeed later in life.

Federal Support for Whole Learner Education

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, federal policymakers recognized the importance of addressing students' holistic needs. To date, the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund (first enacted under the CARES Act in 2020) has provided billions in federal-

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Whole-Learner Act Hill Engagement



Jan 2024 Whole Learner Hill Days

- Advocacy Hill Days Training on storytelling, drafting talking points, and highlighting lived experiences of underserved communities
- Hill meetings with over 30 congressional offices from the House of Representatives and Senate & meeting with White House Domestic Policy Council

Feb - May Engagement

- Additional Hill meetings with key legislators
- House & Senate Appropriations Strategy

Questions?

Get Engaged in Whole-Learner Education!



The Whole Learner Act

Newly Proposed Legislation from the
America Forward Coalition

Follow our social media pages and reach out:

<https://www.americaforward.org/about/contact/>

States for Additional Targeted Outreach:

- Maine
- Minnesota
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Virginia

Contact your Representatives and Senators' offices to express your support for whole-learner education!