

## Transcend and the Blueprint:

### Evaluating the whole child model of school culture using the Blueprint

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## OVERVIEW

Transcend Education plays a key partnership role to fuel and grow R&D capacity. Given day-to-day demands of school, visionary educators are often held back in the innovation they can pursue. We believe they will make the best progress when afforded the time, capacity, and support to not only imagine and design but also build, prototype, assess, iterate upon, codify, and ultimately replicate breakthrough new models. Through partnering with school operators, Transcend aims to play a vital role in affording visionary educators – and the sector more broadly – the deep R&D capacity needed to accelerate breakthroughs in the creation and spread of new “school” models.

The BIRD-E Blueprint is a free, open-source framework that aims to modernize education research through a common, research-based language to bridge the divide between research and practice in the K-12 data ecosystem. The Blueprint aims to provide a structured, universal, and consistent approach to design, collection, and reporting of research to answer the most pressing question of what works, for whom, and under what conditions. It contains a list of critical data elements that summarizes and represents key education data needs in the K-12 spectrum including early childhood.

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## APPROACH

The evaluation process entailed two distinct approaches:

1. Assess the applicability and coverage of the Blueprint by cross-mapping the modules and submodules of the Blueprint against the established evaluation framework of different pilot partners.
2. Instrument a research question with the partners using the Population, Intervention, Comparison and Outcome framework and use the Blueprint to identify and classify the elements needed for evaluation in the specific context of the research question.

The success of the pilots was measured by 3 major criteria:

1. **Coverage:** The coverage is defined as the total number of elements mapped as a percentage of the total number of elements identified to represent the education data needs in the evaluation frameworks of the pilot partners.
2. **Understandability:** The understandability is defined as the assessment of clarity in definitions and understanding of the elements by other stakeholders. The precision, organization and ambiguity was assessed using qualitative and quantitative data.
3. **Generalizability:** The generalizability is defined as the extent to which the elements, modules and sub-modules are aligned to real-world application and experiences. The generalizability was calculated as a median of the coverage for all pilots and aggregated the scores of all pilots to determine the overall generalizability of the Blueprint.

Transcend Education, in collaboration with Van Ness Elementary School, implemented the Whole Child Model that focuses on providing a set of school-wide practices that create a safe, connected environment for children and adults. For the pilot, at the intermediary level, the research team cross-mapped the existing evaluation framework being currently used to collect data against the newly formed Blueprint to assess coverage and applicability of their evaluation framework.

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## APPROACH CONT.

Transcend used the Blueprint to validate a well-defined research hypothesis around school culture and mindset, especially from the Whole Child Model using the Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome (PICO) framework. It used the Blueprint to identify variables that will be needed to answer the research question and to conduct an analysis on a subset of schools that implement the Whole Child Model with technical assistance from Transcend Education. The major modules identified by the research team included student/population characteristics, identification & implementation elements, academic & non-academic outcome indicators, as well as social-emotional competencies.

The pilot demonstrated an effective use case for the practitioners on the design of a well-defined research hypothesis and the use of the Blueprint to articulate and identify the data needs to internal and external stakeholders for effective research evaluation. It also highlights the value of Blueprint as a translational layer between practitioners, researchers, and solution providers.

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## RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- 85 elements were identified for the process of this evaluation. This was specifically carried out to assess coverage and whether the Blueprint had all the elements needed for the evaluation to answer the research question.
  - A total of 52% coverage was found between the initial elements identified and the elements that would eventually be needed for evaluation.
- Pilot recommendations included adding an element related to free reduced lunch (FRL) in the school memberships sub-module, and adding modules or sub-modules related to continuous learning & improvement and learner experiences.
- Transcend's repository contains many elements related to school model design; these elements were used as a basis to include personalized learning elements into the BLueprint.
- The pilot proved the strength of the population module of the Blueprint -- Transcend concurred they can add more population elements in their repository based on those included in the Blueprint.