

Students As Leaders, Inventors, Designers and Problem Solvers

Building Nine Capabilities to Solve the World's Most Critical and Complex Local and Global Problems

How might K-12 independent schools use public service, service-learning, social entrepreneurship, and civic engagement to graduate students that will be the world-class changemakers needed to meet the local and global challenges of the 21st century?

Today's world is hungry for authentic and effective leaders. This retreat is structured around Nine Capabilities that can transform how we see leadership, public service, teaching, creativity, and social change. We'll participate in a series of highly interactive, minds-on, research-based activities that are counterintuitive but practical and can be used in the classroom. The weekend will be a deep dive into mindsets and toolboxes that can be used to give new depth and meaning to public service and service-learning.



Intended Audience: Independent school faculty interested in public service, service-learning, community engagement, design thinking, creativity, and/or social entrepreneurship. You do not need prior knowledge or experience in these areas to attend.



PRESENTER: Dr. James Toole is a global changemaker that works with youth, social entrepreneurs, governments, teachers, and NGOs to support a new generation of leaders that are designing innovative solutions to pressing social challenges. Over the past decade, he has taught over 300 youth leaders from 60 countries that are tackling everything from gender-based violence in Botswana and teaching English in Brazilian slums to protecting the oceans in the Philippines and supporting female education in Syrian refugee camps. His curriculum on social innovation and entrepreneurship for the International Youth Foundation is translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish, and Arabic and used in 22 countries. He is also the co-founder (with his wife) of the National Youth Leadership Council's Service-Learning Professional Development Department.

Dr. Toole is a Senior Fellow at the University of Minnesota's School of Social Work and College of Education and Human Development, the President of Compass Institute, and a Senior Consultant to the International Youth Foundation. He works with leading independent schools throughout the U.S. and abroad. He has taught at every level from pre-school and kindergarten to graduate school. His main mentor is his 13-year-old daughter who teaches him daily about the desire to participate, new ways to see the world, the need for differentiation, and the power of curiosity.

Friday Evening

Capability #1: Teambuilding. 7:30 to 8:10 p.m.

Challenge: How Might We Build a World-Class Team?

How do you build a team that can change the world? We'll participate in activities to build our own team for the weekend and reflect on how we mobilize student engagement and collaboration to make a difference.

Capability #2: Self-Awareness. 8:10 -8:45 p.m.

Challenge: How Might We Help Students to Discover and Use Their Personal Leadership Style?

Effective leaders possess a high degree of self-awareness. This session models a simple but powerful approach to helping students identify their own leadership style. It will also help us get to know one another by how we ourselves engage with the world. The activity can be used before and during service projects to improve both self-awareness and teamwork.

Saturday Morning

Capability #3: Service-Learning. 8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m

Challenge: How Might We Design Service-Learning Experiences Where Students are Leaders, Inventors, Designers and Problem Solvers?

Great teachers mix and match multiple models of teaching to deliver instruction. What can service-learning add to your classroom that is valuable? We'll start the weekend by quickly reviewing the value of service-learning, how it is different than community service, what makes it unique, and what are the essentials of great practice. Come ready to connect and share about your school's public service and service-learning initiative with your peers.

Capability #4: Leadership. 9:45 – 11:00 a.m.

Challenge: How Might We Guide Students to be Extraordinary Leaders?

Although we live in a world that often values sameness and standardization, all students possess a unique superhero hiding inside waiting to break out! It lies at the intersection of what they love to do, what they are passionate about, and what the world needs! We'll explore how teachers can help youth to identify their unique superpowers, the counterintuitive ways to grow them, and why they are the key to their educational, career, and civic futures.

11:00-11:15 BREAK

Capability #5: Mindsets. 11:15-12:30 p.m.

Challenge: How Might We Transform Student Mindsets to Change the World?

Computer pioneer Alan Kay once wrote: "A change of perspective is worth 80 IQ points." There is no more powerful educational intervention than changing how students see themselves and the world. Service-learning possesses a unique potential to both change student's mindsets and to make a positive "dent" in the world. This is a workshop about what it means to be transformed, how it happens, and how we can deepen the transformative power of service-learning. (Hint: It's not just about skills and knowledge).

12:30 to 1:30 LUNCH

Saturday Afternoon

Capability #6: Creative Confidence. 1:30 –2:45 p.m.

Challenge: How Might We Support Students to Design Out-of-the-Box Social Innovations?

While innovation is essential to both business and civic success today, research shows that youth become less creative as they move from kindergarten through 12th grade. How might we use service-learning and community problem-solving to help every student to develop their own creative confidence and skills? Come test and grow your own problem-solving abilities and learn seven practical strategies to help students sustain or regain their creativity in this highly interactive and fun session!

2:45 to 3:00 BREAK

Capability #7: Systems Thinking. 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Challenge: How Might We Help Students See the Big Picture to Deepen Service Project Impact?

Public service efforts have long talked about the importance of getting at the root causes of problems and not just hacking at the branches. If students want their service projects to make a deep and lasting changes, they will need to learn to see and influence systems. Systems thinking is a missing piece not only for preparing service-learning projects, but for students' general education. We'll take a lively and hands-on approach to explore the nature of systems and classroom-friendly tools that can help students achieve better results with fewer resources in more lasting ways.

4:30 to 6 p.m. BREAK. "Birds of a Feather." Refreshments and opportunity to informally chat with other conference participants.

6:00 p.m. DINNER

Sunday Morning

Capability #8: Resilience. 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Challenge: How Might We Help Students to Sustain Their Own Spirits and Health?

Public service initiatives typically teach students the why, the what, and the how of changemaking, but leave one critical element out: the who! This workshop is about helping students learn at a young age how to take care of their spiritual and physical health so they don't burn out or suffer from "compassion fatigue." We'll explore how we as adults do or don't sustain our spirits and how we can better teach students what it means to have a balanced life of service.

Capability #9: Celebration and Reflection. 10:00 to 10:30 a.m.

Challenge: How Might We Celebrate and Reflect on the Weekend?

Strong professional development ends with a bang, not a whimper! We'll demonstrate celebrating and reflecting on what we have learned, what it means to us personally, and how we will take it home.