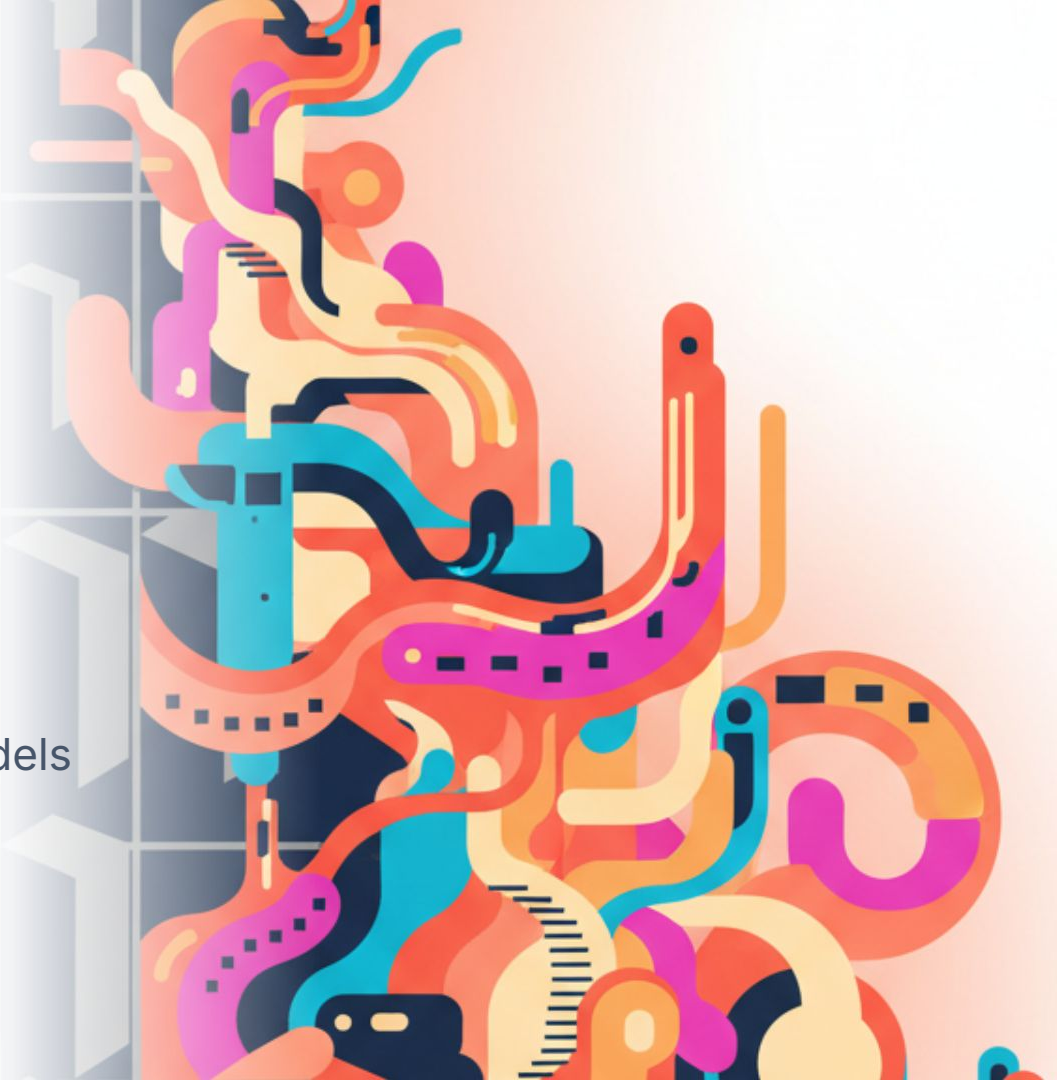


RETHINKING EDUCATION

Schools Were Not Designed For You.

Why 19th-century factory models
fail the 21st-century mind.

archit mittal



THE ORIGIN

The classroom you sat in was designed to build **obedience**.

Horace Mann's 1837 Prussian model was revolutionary for its time. Its goal: produce compliant factory workers who could follow instructions, tolerate repetition, and accept hierarchy.



Factory Bell

Classes start and stop on command, mimicking shift changes.



Uniform Rows

Students face forward, like workers on an assembly line.



Age Batching

Children grouped by manufacture date, not ability.

1837



THE EVIDENCE

The system is failing by its own metrics.

66%

Student Disengagement

Two-thirds of high school students report being bored in class every single day.

Gallup Student Poll, 2023

85%

Jobs Not Yet Created

Of the jobs that will exist in 2030, most have not been invented yet.

Dell Technologies / IFTF

150+

Years Old

The fundamental classroom design has remained virtually unchanged since 1870.

Architectural Review

40%

Skills Gap

Of employers say graduates lack critical thinking and collaboration skills.

World Economic Forum

THE MODERN LEARNER

Today's students think differently. They deserve spaces that do too.

● 1870 MODEL

Memorization

Isolated work

Fixed
curriculum

One pace

Test scores

Passive
listening



● 2025 NEEDS

Critical thinking

Collaboration

Personalized
paths

Self-paced

Real projects

Active creation



Neuroscience Says

Movement increases cognitive function by 20%. Static desks fight biology.



Learning Research

Students retain 90% through doing, vs 10% through lecture. Design must enable action.



Social Learning

Peer collaboration improves outcomes 50% more than individual study.



Saunalahti School, Espoo, Finland. Designed by VERSTAS Architects.

#1

Global education
ranking (PISA)

0

Standardized tests
before age 16

CASE STUDY: FINLAND

They abolished classrooms. Test scores went up.

Finland redesigned schools around open learning landscapes, flexible furniture, and student agency. Teachers became guides, not lecturers. The result? World-leading outcomes.

"We don't teach subjects. We teach children."

Finnish National Curriculum Framework

• Open
spaces

• Teacher
autonomy

• Play-base
d

CASE STUDY: USA

High Tech High: No textbooks. No tests. 98% college rate.

San Diego's project-based charter network proves that when students build real things for real audiences, everything changes.

98%

College acceptance

16

Schools in network

- | Learning through making real projects
- | Exhibition of work to public audiences
- | No bells, no tracking, no silos



High Tech High, San Diego. Students work on real engineering and design projects shown at public exhibitions.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Six shifts that transform learning spaces.

01

Flexible Furniture

Moveable, modular pieces that adapt to any learning activity in seconds.

03

Natural Light

Windows everywhere. Studies show daylight boosts focus by 20%.

05

No Front of Room

Circular and cluster arrangements that decentralize authority.

02

Maker Spaces

Dedicated areas for hands-on creation, prototyping, and experimentation.

04

Breakout Zones

Quiet corners and nooks for reflection, reading, and small group work.

06

Outdoor Access

Direct connections to gardens, courtyards, and nature-based learning.

THE EVIDENCE

Design isn't decoration. It's a learning multiplier.

+25%

Learning Progress

Students in well-designed spaces progress 25% faster in reading and math.

University of Salford, HEAD Project

+16%

Attendance Rates

Schools with natural light and flexible spaces see higher daily attendance.

Heschong Mahone Group

-40%

Behavioral Issues

Redesigned spaces reduce disciplinary incidents by nearly half.

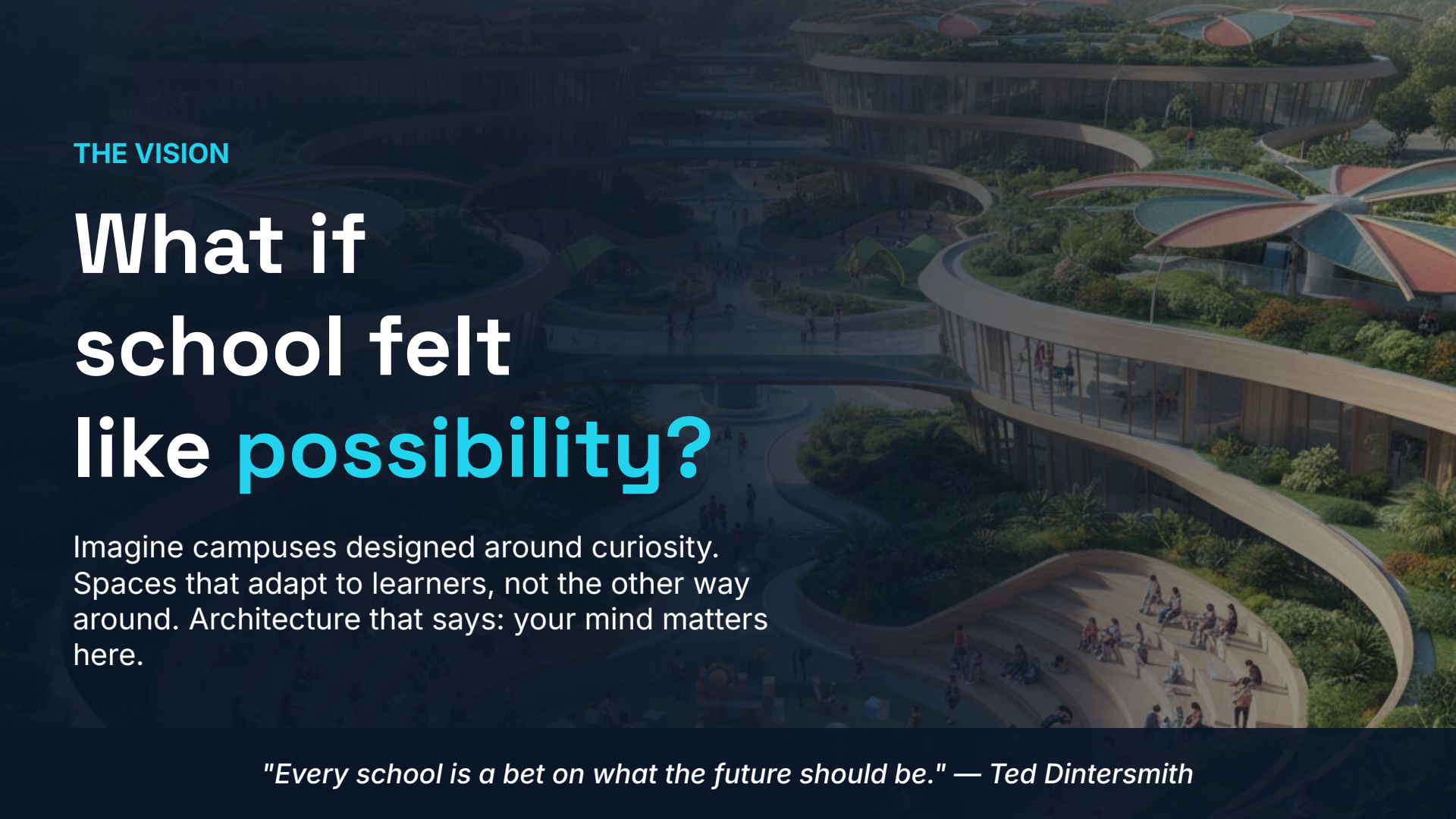
Barrett et al., Building Research

2x

Creative Output

Collaborative zones double the quantity and quality of creative work.

Steelcase Education Research



THE VISION

What if school felt like possibility?

Imagine campuses designed around curiosity. Spaces that adapt to learners, not the other way around. Architecture that says: your mind matters here.

"Every school is a bet on what the future should be." — Ted Dintersmith

The question isn't can we change schools. It's will we.

Every child deserves a space designed for who they could become, not who we needed them to be 150 years ago.

 Share this deck

 Learn more

archit mittal