

Syllabus for the “Turning on the Lightbulb” Book Club
Building Student Ownership

The goal of this book club is to help participants to:

- 1) Develop a vision for the work their organizations can do to improve the capacity of central offices in building student ownership; and
- 2) To create a plan for doing ongoing design and execution work in the area of student ownership, either by serving as a central office, taking on central office roles, funding central offices, or authorizing central offices.

Through readings and discussion, we will be learning about why student ownership is so critical, what mindsets are necessary for building student ownership, and how educators build those mindsets. But we will be pairing that learning with conversations to plan how you and your organization can either do design work to be rolled out by central offices, or support design work being done by central offices in this area.

Completing the assigned readings is critical to participating in the discussion. There will not be a presentation or summary given at the meetings.

The “prepared reflection” prompt for each of the first three sessions is a thought—not writing—assignment (though jotting down a few notes may help).

Meeting 1: Why is “turning on the lightbulb” so important?

Readings:

- [“Turning on the Lightbulb”](#), (MFS design handbook) Section I (pages 1-12)
- [“Who Gets to Graduate?”](#) Paul Tough in the *New York Times*
- Mindset survey results and GPA, attendance, and suspension data from (anonymous) MFS high schools (sent via email) – survey was administered on a scale of 5; look for relationships between survey results and student data

Prepared reflection:

At the central office(s) touched by my work, what information do I have about whether there is a design for ownership and whether it’s working? Is student ownership a priority? What is the impact of that prioritization or lack of prioritization?

Meeting 2: What are the mindsets we must build in kids to get their lightbulb turned on, and to keep it on? How are these mindsets related to motivation?

Readings:

- “Turning on the Lightbulb,” remainder (pages 13-end)
- [Casco Bay Family Grading Guide](#), on pages 27-30 of the school handbook, with special attention to the “Habits of Work” grading
- Panorama survey template (sent via email)

Prepared reflection:

What would be your hope and vision for how your organization can play a role in ensuring the schools and central offices you work with are designed to build ownership?

Meeting 3: Going deeper on *how* schools and educators grow those critical mindsets.

Readings:

- [“How Kids Learn Resilience,”](#) Paul Tough in *The Atlantic*
- [“How a Bigger Purpose Can Motivate Students to Learn,”](#) Ingfei Chen in *Mind/Shift*
- “The Importance of Developmental Experiences and Relationships,” Chapter 2 in [Foundations for Young Adult Success](#), from the Chicago Consortium for Schools Research (pages 37-56)
- Capital City report card and Habits of Work reflection (sent via email) (optional)

Prepared reflection:

How could I prioritize design work, including ongoing learning, planning, and implementation, and measurement, in my work and organization?

Meeting 4: How does my work need to change to support/require/grow Detroit schools being organized to build student ownership?

Readings:

- [“College Initiatives Redefined,”](#) by Yes Prep

Prepare to discuss / workshop:

What will I do over the next six months and twelve months with what we’ve been discussing? How will I know if what I am doing is having an impact? Each participant will share a simple workplan for his/her organization that we have built over the first three sessions and that they refined and formalized following session three. Participants will be asked to identify particular challenges and fears for the group to workshop and provide ideas about. We will allot 20 minutes to discussion of each workplan.