

Case Study No. 19

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION GRANTMAKING

Poised for the Unknown: A Responsive Grantmaking Strategy for Teaching and Learning

by RAFAEL OTTO

OCTOBER 2020

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION GRANTMAKING

Discipline & Focus	Knowledge	Resources Linked to Results	Effective Grantees	Engaged Partners	Leverage, Influence & Collaboration	Persistence	Innovation & Constant Learning
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Grantmakers for Education exists to improve outcomes for all learners by serving as a trusted partner for all education philanthropists as they adapt to the changes impacting our world. To accomplish this, Grantmakers for Education's purpose is two-fold:

1. To provide members with an informal and balanced environment for collaborating, discussing and acting on important issues in public education.
2. To help members identify and prepare for what's next. With our finger on the pulse of our diverse network and eye on the broader horizon, we keep members informed of relevant and pressing issues, and equip members with the tools and knowledge required to shape the future.

Grantmakers for Education developed its series of case studies on effective education grantmaking as reflection and discussion tools. Cases are not intended to serve as endorsements, sources of primary data or illustrations of successful or unsuccessful grantmaking. In addition, to help make the case a more effective learning tool, it is deliberately written from one foundation's point of view, even though other foundations may have been involved in similar activities or supported the same grantees.

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INTRODUCTION

When Kent McGuire joined the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation in June 2017 as the education program director, his arrival marked a turning point. The foundation's Deeper Learning strategy was entering its eighth year and was due for a "strategy refresh." That meant McGuire would need to evaluate what had been accomplished while setting the stage for the next phase, a process that would ultimately include a broad range of tools and inputs to inform the evolution of the foundation's Education Program. It would also involve developing a team that would help shape a new national strategy to transform teaching and learning, one that was inherently responsive and adaptive to complex conditions impacting students, families, schools and communities.

Because of the efforts of the prior Education team, McGuire knew that deeper learning was possible, what it looked like when done well, and how its impact on students could be measured. Now he wondered what it would take to deliver it to the kids who needed it most. When considering the issue, McGuire examined the broader social context within which Deeper Learning launched and evolved alongside the conditions of the present moment. That included looking back to 1954.

"It has always been true, going all the way back to *Brown v. Board of Education* and moving right up to the present," McGuire said, "that we have been in a national struggle to make sure that the 'good stuff' is available to all kids."

Despite all of the reform efforts of recent decades, achievement gaps remained entrenched and educational opportunity remained largely unequal, particularly for students of color.

The good stuff, in the context of the Hewlett Foundation's Deeper Learning strategy, refers to a rich educational experience supported by resources, opportunity and skilled, caring teachers that, as McGuire described, "help students develop a command of what they know and the skills to apply their knowledge to addressing and solving problems in their own lives."

McGuire could see that progress had been made in some key areas but found himself unsatisfied. "The work my predecessors did was necessary and essential, just not sufficient," he said. "Which meant that, among other things, we would need to assess the extent to which the strategy was sensitive enough to big questions about equity and opportunity when it came to education." By this point, the field also recognized that deeper learning was not accessible equitably and was primarily available to affluent and advantaged students.

McGuire, with a background working to advance public education in the American South while focusing on equity and excellence, understood plainly enough that, despite all of the reform efforts of recent decades, achievement gaps remained entrenched and educational opportunity remained largely unequal, particularly for students of color.

It was clear that many students simply did not have access to a deeper learning environment in their schools, a failure of the systems to create the conditions for students to acquire the skills needed in the 21st century. It was also clear that the children being left behind were also the fastest growing segment of students in U.S. schools — students of color, low-income students and recent immigrants. Something needed to change.

“It’s one thing to prove that schools can do this, as the first iteration of our strategy had done,” McGuire said. “It’s another to demonstrate whether the system can actually change.”

Despite the call to action in *A Nation at Risk*¹ in 1983, *No Child Left Behind*² legislation in 2001, and *Race to the Top*³ funding in 2009, it was clear that little progress had been made in terms of improving student outcomes and the overall learning experience for the most vulnerable young people in the nation’s K-12 systems.

The *No Child Left Behind* era ushered in specific ways of thinking about education reform: a focus on assessing and evaluating teachers and working to remove those considered ineffective in the classroom; attempts to disrupt the role and power of teachers’ unions; efforts to expand formative assessments that linked and correlated teacher and student outcomes; a stronger focus on school governance policies coupled with a push for greater school-level autonomy; and the expansion of charter schools combined with an emphasis on choice and competition. These approaches were reflected in the grantmaking strategies of foundations of all kinds. The Hewlett Foundation’s strategy focused largely on improving standards and assessments.

Matt Wilka, managing director at FSG with a long history of working with the Hewlett Foundation as a consultant on strategy, worked closely with McGuire and Mercer throughout their strategy refresh process. Wilka said that the more top-down form of grantmaking embraced by the foundation from 2009-2016 coincided with a federal education agenda that was focused on standards and assessments, along with federal pressure on the nation’s education systems. “What the Hewlett Foundation was doing in the Education Program matched what was happening at the federal level quite well,” he said. “Similarly, the foundation’s overall shift was in keeping with the sector’s evolution toward approaches more attuned to exploring the complexity of the nation’s education systems.”

“We made significant progress over the past decade or so,” McGuire said. “We have better tests, new assessments and we have better tools. But quite honestly, those theories have not proved powerful enough, in and of themselves, to make the difference we need to see.”

With the *Deeper Learning* strategy, the Hewlett Foundation also sought to capitalize on two significant developments at the time, namely, emerging knowledge of cognitive science about how students learn, and a growing recognition that 21st century students would need a unique set of skills to become successful workers and citizens. The Hewlett Foundation articulated these as six deeper learning competencies:

- Master core academic content.
- Think critically and solve complex problems.
- Work collaboratively.
- Communicate effectively.
- Learn how to learn.
- Develop academic mindsets.

Charmaine Mercer, an education program officer at the Hewlett Foundation, joined the foundation four months after McGuire in October 2017. “Coming in, Kent and I were aligned on wanting to see if the type

of teaching and learning associated with deeper learning was truly possible for all children.” Mercer and McGuire were also committed to creating a program team that embraced the foundation’s core values⁴ while working to make significant changes to grantmaking in the Education Program.

The strategy refresh process — an approach that takes place approximately every five years at the foundation — presented itself as an opportunity for the Education team to pivot and to leverage the foundation’s grantmaking capacity in new ways. It was also a fundamental tool used by the Hewlett Foundation to ensure grantmaking strategies continued to evolve over time. That spirit of continuous improvement, supported by a commitment to learning while remaining flexible and responsive to current context, would ground the team’s work developing the strategy and help prepare them for a turbulent grantmaking environment by the time they moved to implementation.

“We wanted to know if entire school systems could really be transformed to deliver this versus having a few exceptional bright spots.”

Charmaine Mercer

“We wanted to know if entire school systems could really be transformed to deliver this versus having a few exceptional bright spots,” Mercer said.

McGuire and Mercer found themselves asking this question: Given what we know now, what does it make the most sense to do next?

ABOUT THE WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION

Established in 1966, the Hewlett Foundation is among the largest philanthropic organizations in the United States with long-standing programs that focus on education, environment, global governance, reproductive health, U.S. democracy, performing arts and effective philanthropy. Headquartered in Menlo Park, California, much of the foundation’s work seeks national and global impact with a focus on policy and broad systemic change. With assets of approximately \$11 billion, the foundation awarded nearly \$455 million in grants in 2019 with \$56 million awarded in their education portfolio.

OUTCOME-FOCUSED PHILANTHROPY

The Hewlett Foundation uses a framework called Outcome-Focused Philanthropy (OFP)⁵ to guide its philanthropic work. It is an approach to strategic philanthropy that informs all aspects of grantmaking within the foundation, regardless of program, issue, field or budget. Finalized in 2016, OFP succeeded the foundation’s original framework known as Outcome-Focused Grantmaking (OFG).

Years earlier, OFG helped the Education Program shift from a strategy focused on California policy to a broader approach with the Deeper Learning strategy which embraced a national lens and the goal of “helping students develop the knowledge and skills required to succeed in the job market and civic life of the 21st century.”

Larry Kramer, the Hewlett Foundation’s president since 2012, sought to build on the basic components of OFG when developing the OFP framework. Those essential pieces included setting clear goals and specific outcomes, identifying key assumptions, establishing a plan of action, tracking progress, evaluating the work and making course corrections as needed. In doing so, he shifted away from the foundation’s

previous and somewhat more technical and technocratic blueprint for strategic philanthropy and rebuilt a focus on grantee collaboration, flexibility and transparency. As described in the guidebook, OFP “reflects the foundation’s commitments to being rigorous, flexible, adaptive, transparent and open while staying focused on results and actively learning at every juncture. It embodies our guiding principles of working in partnership with grantees and other funders, and of promoting the values and practice of diversity, equity and inclusion in our workforce, culture and grantmaking.”

Lori Grange, the strategy officer in the Hewlett Foundation’s Effective Philanthropy Group — the internal team at the foundation that functions like an advisory group for program teams on strategy, evaluation and learning — said that the concept of strategic philanthropy is frequently misunderstood. “Strategic philanthropy is commonly viewed as too rigid, too inflexible. In reality, a framework like OFP is designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of program teams, grantees and the field while still remaining outcome focused.”

Rather than a blueprint, OFP provides a roadmap that embraces rigor and results alongside continuous learning and adaptation. Those features proved essential for the Education team during the strategy refresh process and offered flexibility for the team when implementation was met with a host of unexpected and unprecedented challenges.

OFP uses a strategy lifecycle with four stages: origination, implementation, refresh and exit.

Our Strategy Lifecycle



ORIGINATE	IMPLEMENT	REFRESH	EXIT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the problem or opportunity • Identifying promising approaches • Exploring opportunities for leverage and partnership • Setting the goal and outcomes, tracking progress, and evaluating the work • Developing the strategic approach and implementation plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting, supporting, and engaging grantees • Engaging other funders and stakeholders in the field • Tracking progress and evaluating the work • Monitoring the external and internal landscape • Learning and adapting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking back: comprehensively evaluating progress to date • Scanning the landscape: scanning for developments in the field and at the foundation • Looking forward: refining the strategy • Contemplating exit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for an exit • Understanding and summarizing results • Managing the exit with external and internal stakeholders • Using and sharing what we have learned

Reexamining the Deeper Learning strategy, while working alongside the Effective Philanthropy Group, meant McGuire and his team needed to understand the OFP approach. They also needed to wrestle with the tension of bringing new ideas to the table while aiming to build on the body of work established by the previous team.

Kramer said that transitions on Hewlett Foundation teams are intentional and designed to give the work continuity over time, something that reflects the ethos of continuous improvement and learning within the foundation. “This is really long-term work,” Kramer said. “The shift from Deeper Learning to K-12 Teaching and Learning in the Education Program represents movement from the first phase to the second, after which there will be a third.”

“Because using term limits is built in to how we operate,” Grange said, “we have to make the most of a program officer’s eight years and create the conditions for them to be successful. At the end of a term, they’ve invested in the work, and so has the foundation.” (See sidebar below for more information on term limits.)

The strategy refresh process began in early 2018, and Wilka commented that the Education team worked purposefully to embrace the complexity inherent in helping students succeed. “Kent’s point of view was that if you want to change outcomes for the majority of kids in the K-12 system, you have to be working inside the plumbing of the K-12 system.”

Throughout the process, Mercer and McGuire worked with both Grange and Amy Arbreton, the evaluation officer in the Effective Philanthropy Group, to build a shared understanding of the refresh process. The new team needed to understand the taxonomy and terms used and begin to work through an analysis about what happened in the past, what the current landscape presented and where the team wanted to go.

“Outcome-Focused Philanthropy is by design meant to be flexible and adaptable to any kind of effort and support work on complex problems,” Kramer said. “It doesn’t require a particular kind of evidence or specific kinds of measurements. You need a goal, a story or theory of change about how your grantmaking will achieve that goal and some way to assess whether you’re moving in the right direction.”

PERSPECTIVES ON EIGHT-YEAR TERM LIMITS

The Hewlett Foundation uses eight-year term limits for its program officers and directors, a policy embraced by the board of directors, including Walter Hewlett, the eldest son of William and Flora Hewlett and board member from 1966 to 2014. Administrative staff do not have term limits, including the foundation president and members of the Effective Philanthropy Group who consequently provide continuity to the work. Term limits are not without controversy, however. Some feel they create perverse incentives, force program officers to focus too much on their personal legacy in a relatively compressed time period, create anxiety among grantees and partners and are at odds with the kind of persistence needed for long-term change. On the other hand, term limits represent a way to ensure that the foundation continues to tap into new perspectives that might inform solutions to complex issues, many of which the foundation works to address over long periods of time amid continually evolving contexts. They also create periodic opportunities to refresh relationships with grantees and promote a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace. Despite the controversy, term limits will continue to serve an important purpose at the Hewlett Foundation, stirring and influencing the exchange of ideas among the foundation’s program areas.

A DEEPER LEARNING DEEP DIVE

The Deeper Learning strategy, launched in 2010, emerged in response to the No Child Left Behind era, which created a national climate geared toward testing, accountability and ensuring basic proficiency for its K-12 students. The Common Core State Standards launched the same year, and the Education team at the Hewlett Foundation decided to focus on learning and pedagogy, recognizing that the 21st century was demanding skill sets that would require the nation's education systems to respond and evolve to help its students succeed.

This climate resulted in the six competencies now associated with deeper learning (see page 6), but it also meant that a great deal of time and attention was dedicated to defining what deeper learning meant for educators and whether it could positively influence students' lives in the long term. As part of that effort, the Hewlett Foundation supported studies to develop measures for these competencies, invested in new formative assessments, developed new models of classroom instruction to align with the competencies and funded the creation of new instructional materials.

By 2013, the United States reached an unpropitious milestone: low-income students became the majority in the nation's public school systems, the very students U.S. schools have always struggled to educate.

In 2014, Jal Mehta, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, wrote an article for Education Week called "*Deeper Learning Has a Race Problem.*"⁶ In the article, Mehta described how deeper learning, historically, had belonged to advantaged students. "Research on both inequality across schools and tracking within schools has suggested that students in more affluent schools and top tracks are given the kind of problem-solving education that befits the future managerial class, whereas students in lower tracks and higher-poverty schools are given the kind of rule-following tasks that mirror much of factory and other working class work."

Mehta continued, "To the degree that race mirrors class, these inequalities in access to deeper learning are shortchanging Black and Latino students."

When McGuire arrived at the Hewlett Foundation in 2017, he could see that the foundation for deeper learning was established and that the approach was consistent with how a national funder would typically approach change.

"Foundations like Hewlett often focus on leverage and policy change," McGuire said. "In education, we spent time looking for

By 2013, the United States reached an unpropitious milestone: low-income students became the majority in the nation's public school systems, the very students U.S. schools have always struggled to educate.

strategies that would have national effects relatively quickly. And that made the Deeper Learning strategy dramatically appealing during that time.”

The Hewlett Foundation’s approach with the Deeper Learning strategy accomplished several things. The strategy created better definitions of deeper learning, including a better understanding of organizational conditions and structures to support deeper learning, and improved the skills and knowledge of many educators. It incubated deeper learning practices in classrooms and schools and helped build a policy infrastructure nationally. It also yielded a wide range of data collection tools, including survey and interview protocols for analyzing deeper learning practices and outcomes.

One criticism of the Deeper Learning strategy was that the implementation was focused heavily on individual schools, many of which were part of charter school networks — High Tech High, Envision Learning Partners, Big Picture Learning and New Tech Network. The hope was that this would be a good way to demonstrate that deeper learning made a difference for low-income students, since many of these charter schools were quite diverse.

But Peter Rivera, an education program officer who joined the Hewlett Foundation in January 2019, knew High Tech High in San Diego very well. He conducted charter school oversight as a program manager and monitor for the San Diego Unified School District. “I knew who High Tech served and what they represented in the city. It wasn’t the Barrio Logan or Logan Heights community. It was the Point Loma community. And that was always a point of contention and criticism.”

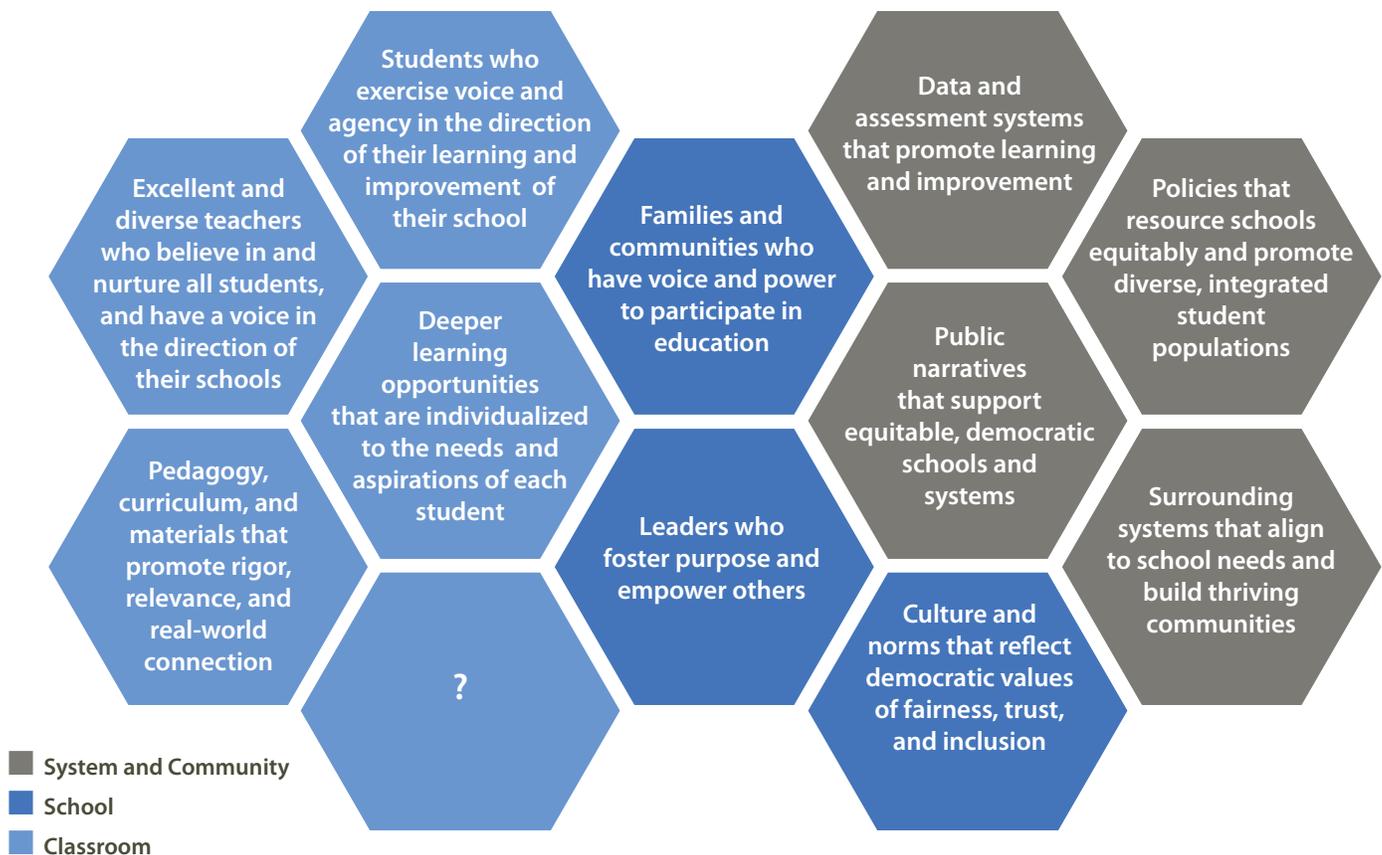
“When you saw the layers of support that went to a place like High Tech High,” Rivera said, “it made you question how important public school systems and public school systems of color, specifically, were to Hewlett.”

The aspiration, of course, was to build on innovative approaches in education often found in charter networks and apply what was learned to broader public school systems. And if what the Hewlett Foundation learned from investing in charter schools could not be applied to public school systems then something needed to shift. What else would the foundation and the Education team need to consider? Would it be possible to engage complex public school systems and advance deeper learning?

“Hewlett’s strategy was not, at that time, concerned with having an effect on school systems,” McGuire said. “But we asserted that there would be no large-scale adoption of deeper learning practices in this country if all we do is work in a small number of charter networks.”

To build understanding internally at the foundation about the complexity of education in public school systems, McGuire, Mercer and Wilka created a visual tool to capture the range of factors necessary to help build more equitable, democratic schools and systems.

Multiple “puzzle pieces” need to fit together to support equitable, democratic schools and systems



“What is crucial to understand,” Wilka said, “is that context is important. Each community has a different constellation of assets and needs. Understanding what those are will influence the work the team undertakes in any particular place.”

Wilka continued: “This was useful for conversations about the evolving strategy inside the foundation for why you need to attend to complexity in place-based work. You can’t affect all of the different variables represented in this puzzle unless you are working deeply in place.”

In addition to an evolving view of Deeper Learning within the Hewlett Foundation, the national context changed with the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).⁷ ESSA restructured the federal role in education and granted more authority to the states and school districts, a significant shift from the approach in the No Child Left Behind era. How would the national context influence the development of the new strategy?

Adding to the complexity were internal discussions about what focusing on equity meant for Deeper Learning. What would it take to construct a grantmaking strategy with a deliberate focus on equity? “It was clear to me that equity was integrated into the Deeper Learning strategy,” Mercer said, “but it wasn’t always clear how. When we started having tough conversations, and really agreeing that our public school systems were designed to give us the results we now have, the Deeper Learning strategy began to evolve.”

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE: LISTENING AND EVALUATION INFORMS STRATEGY

The Hewlett Foundation's commitment to continuous improvement, to building knowledge and to having that knowledge influence and inform its grantmaking, is connected to a set of values⁹ that include listening, learning, openness and transparency. These values were foundational pieces of the Education team's strategy refresh process throughout 2018 and helped shape the way in which input was solicited and collected.

"Listening and learning have always been a priority for the foundation," Grange said, "and I think we have improved over time. We've been intentional about reaching out to capture external voices and perspectives and ensuring it's not just us making decisions in our ivory tower."

Arbreton described an approach to developing and refining new strategies within the foundation that was flexible and capable of wrestling with complex topics. The process included asking lots of questions: Why, how and for whom are we doing this work or taking this approach? What might we expect to accomplish in five years? Given the context in which we are operating, what could we reasonably expect to change?

"In order to develop your strategy and evaluate your work," Arbreton said, "you have to make your thinking visible and talk about the assumptions behind it."

She continued, "People tend to think about change as linear. But there are lots of ways change happens. Maybe you're looking for something transformative with a more drastic change. Or maybe we're tracking a narrative and are working to prevent things moving in one direction or another, so change might be more incremental and that's just fine."

"The education team purposefully decided that we wanted to go beyond the act of listening," McGuire said, "and really focus on the act of engaging in place. We wanted to move toward co-creating with our partners to discover the specific set of activities we should support, rather than fit their work into a frame or activity that we designed."

DEEPER LEARNING AUDIENCE INSIGHTS FROM 2017

The Hewlett Foundation's work with grantees from 2010-2017 made it apparent that the way in which many stakeholders defined deeper learning was getting in the way of the work. Many did not find the term intuitive and some were skeptical of it. The six competencies (see page 6) were more easily understood, but parents and teachers were unsure if packaging the competencies under an umbrella term was necessary or useful. Interviews and focus groups⁸ resulted in some suggestions for communicating about deeper learning that would help the concept resonate with audiences.

- Focus on the competencies: parents, teachers and students generally agreed that students need to be developing these skills in school.
- Show how the competencies lead to skills: describe what skills students gain and what classrooms might look like when teachers implement deeper learning practices.
- Avoid jargon and "eduspeak": use simpler, everyday language to inhibit skepticism, facilitate understanding and build trust with parents and teachers.
- Connect deeper learning to skills in and out of the classroom: stories of students applying the skills to other areas of their lives will help people value the competencies as essential for life, classroom and career experiences.

“At the beginning of the process,” Mercer said, “we were aware of the possibility of wanting more information than we could possibly consume. We decided we would prioritize the questions we needed answered to move forward. During the refresh, we organized the topics and issues we wanted to examine and the types of stakeholders and organizations we wanted to listen to. We also wanted to be mindful of the time and effort that our grantees, partners and others made to prepare and provide us with information and feedback.”

McGuire and Mercer also acknowledged the power dynamic between the foundation and current and potential grantees. “The power dynamic is real,” Mercer said, “so it’s best to recognize that early on when you are trying to listen and learn, and then find solutions for how to best handle that in a relevant situation.”

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The Education team also attended a workshop by the National Equity Project (NEP) called “Liberatory Design in Complex Systems” that offered tools for addressing equity challenges when working to effect change.

Victor Cary, senior director at NEP, said that Liberatory Design¹⁰ offered a framework that emphasized working in relationship with communities on a given problem. “It recognizes that you can’t solve the problem alone, that you have to get into a relationship and do some codesigning to frame what you will be working on,” he said. “And that question is critical, because foundations historically have tended to base their grantmaking on a set of predetermined predictions about what will happen tied to performance outcomes.”

Cary continued, “If you bring equity into the mix, you can’t predetermine outcomes because of the need to codesign while working in community. So, there must be a balance between performance expectations and the learning that needs to take place.”

The refresh process for the Education Program, launched in January 2018, took nearly a year to complete. The team sought to model the foundation’s values with communities and stakeholders it wanted to engage and made an intentional effort to include voices typically excluded from the public education discourse. The process included 11 inputs that significantly shaped the Education team’s thinking and established a robust data set from which to build the new strategy:

- **An evaluation of the previous strategy:** The evaluation involved a review of previous evaluations and revealed that deeper learning practices became better defined and key conditions to support deeper learning in schools were better understood. Deeper learning studies developed many data collection instruments and analytic tools that demonstrated how deeper learning could be measured summatively and formatively. The focus on academic outcomes, however, meant that teaching practices were not examined closely enough and the foundation’s grantmaking under-emphasized learning and improvement.

“If you bring equity into the mix, you can’t predetermine outcomes because of the need to codesign while working in community.”

Victor Cary

- **White papers on pressing strategy topics:** The foundation solicited position papers from grantees and thought leaders on a range of education topics, including but not limited to deeper learning, to capture nuanced and detailed views on key issues.
- **Interviews with diverse stakeholders across the education ecosystem:** The Education team captured input from more than 60 people to learn from and better understand different perspectives. Interviewees comprised researchers, policy experts, teachers, school leaders, parents and community leaders, including those who historically disagreed with the foundation’s approach.
- **Roundtable discussion with civil rights groups:** One criticism the Hewlett Foundation faced was that it had not done enough on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in previous years. The foundation sought input from civil rights organizations and their perspectives on public education, resulting in several new partnerships and fresh thinking about how to move the needle for students furthest from opportunity.
- **Superintendent convenings to explore leadership and district change:** The Education team convened groups of superintendents from across the country to examine the role of leadership in supporting deeper learning and how to move from piloting to systemic impact. They also sought input on how to engage districts while honoring local context, accelerating existing efforts and building system capacity.
- **School visits and conversations with teachers and students:** The Education team visited a variety of schools and learned about the challenges teachers faced in shifting their practice toward deeper learning. They also learned about the importance of context and how new forms of learning were taking hold.
- **Focus groups with students, parents and employers:** The team found many common points of view among these participants with agreement that schools needed to help students think analytically, work in teams, adapt to challenges and problems and work effectively with new facts and information.
- **Research into the language used to describe “deeper learning”:** Individual interviews, roundtable discussions and focus groups helped the foundation understand how people talk about teaching and learning. The term “deeper learning” sparked skepticism among some, along with education jargon in general.
- **Grantee input and engagement:** The foundation regularly seeks guidance and input from its grantees through surveys and annual convenings. Grantees gave the team high marks for advancing knowledge and influencing public policy and lower marks for understanding the social, cultural and socioeconomic factors that impacted their work. During the refresh, the Education team requested interviews, hosted a Twitter chat and sought candid input on the emergent strategy.
- **Research into trends, challenges and opportunities:** The Education team, working with the consultant team at FSG, investigated a broad range of issues, including ways of supporting teacher practice, the use of assessments to measure learning, school segregation and promoting democratic cultures in schools. They also commissioned a literature review by Public Agenda on polling trends about attitudes toward K-12 education¹¹ and explored lessons from philanthropic engagement in education while working to understand effective strategies for working in place.

• **Ongoing feedback from grantees, partners and colleagues:** Along the way, the Education team shared drafts of their strategy with grantees and partners, engaged colleagues in other program areas at the foundation and worked to simplify the language describing the work. This approach embraced the spirit of learning and collaboration that the Hewlett Foundation hoped to find in the school systems they would support.

“Among the most difficult things for us to hear, difficult for me in particular, was that the civil rights community felt we were not listening,” Mercer said.

“Some in the civil rights community did not feel represented in the previous Deeper Learning strategy,” McGuire said. “We heard that and wanted to explore it.”

“We hosted a facilitated meeting with about 40 civil rights leaders,” Mercer said. “Inside that meeting they said things like, ‘Do you think we only support shallow learning?’ There was tension, and I found myself sitting in that meeting, with people who look like me and I heard how it felt for them to have things pushed on them, that we weren’t listening. That was tough to hear, and it was a reminder that just being Black doesn’t make me immune, and that if anything I need to be more sensitive inside of these spaces. It’s something I still carry with me.”



A graphic representation of the input received in the meeting with civil rights leaders.

Some meetings were difficult to schedule; people felt like the foundation ignored their efforts and wondered why they should take the time to engage. At other moments, emotions ran high when people heard perspectives from Black or Native American K-12 students and realized how different their experiences were compared to their white peers.

Mercer reflected on their findings at one point in 2018 during the refresh process: “We’ve found a shared sentiment that foundations don’t always consider the people closest to the problems when coming up with solutions to address educational disparities and instead seek to ‘fix everything’ from outside. In another example, we convened a group of superintendents from around the country who also talked with us about the importance of letting grantees lead the work and using the foundation’s voice where necessary to influence large-scale changes.” What kind of impact would this knowledge have on the Education team’s new grantmaking strategy?

“An important aspect of reshaping the strategy,” Wilka said, “was examining and understanding the democratic purposes of education. This is something that Kent was able to crystalize. He was looking at the longer trajectory of education in America and the public purpose of public schools, something that had fallen out of vogue during the reform era of the previous 20 years.”

Internally at the foundation, this perspective became an important tool in the shift toward working in place-based public school systems. McGuire felt that the nation’s education systems “had for far too long focused on a narrow range of skills and lost sight of the broader civic purpose of education in a democratic society,” a perspective linked to the famous quote from Justice Thurgood Marshall: “Unless our children begin to learn together, there is little hope that our people will ever begin to live together.”

One grantee offered this comment: “Jefferson said education is to make citizens. We’re not making citizens anymore. That’s a huge failure in education that we are not attending to.”

Preparing young people to be future citizens, to be voters and to be engaged community participants offered another way to strengthen the foundation’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion through its education grantmaking. “The basic idea is that the only way to get to a more participatory and pluralistic society is if you have schools that mirror those values,” Wilka said.

LAUNCHING TEACHING AND LEARNING

By November 2018, the Education team successfully assessed the national landscape in which they were operating, analyzed the results of the previous Deeper

A TEACHER DEFINES EQUITY IN EDUCATION

In January 2018, 40 teachers from across the U.S. offered thoughts and perspectives for the Hewlett Foundation on the purpose of K-12 education. One teacher commented: “Equality and equity are not the same in education. Students who are furthest behind — most often low-income students and students of color — require more of the resources to catch up, succeed and eventually close the achievement gap. This is equity. Equality just gives kids the same access but not the resources needed to be ‘equal.’”

Learning strategy, captured a tremendous amount of data and input from grantees, partners, funders, teachers, families and students and outlined the anticipated strategic shifts in their approach to grantmaking for the Hewlett Foundation's board of directors. The Deeper Learning strategy became the K-12 Teaching and Learning strategy.

The premise for the shifts in the K-12 Teaching and Learning strategy was that a place-centered approach could help the foundation advance its national goals. A key assumption in the new strategy was that by working in specific public school systems in diverse locations across the country, localized efforts could collectively help the nation better understand how to advance deeper learning at scale.

As 2019 started, the Education team finalized their criteria for selecting the districts they hoped to work with, a significant pivot from the prior focus on charter schools. Rivera joined the team and, together with Mercer, began engaging districts in California and a selection of other states.

"We started by looking at which states the foundation had relationships with," Mercer said. "That brought us to 25 states, and then we wanted to factor in the size of the school district."

A CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY STUDENT DESCRIBES INEQUALITY

In June 2018, students participated in "Community Conversations" to capture their thoughts and perspectives on K-12 education. One student commented: "Some barriers I see people go through in school is inequality in general. I came from predominantly white schools, and the education I had there compared to education I have here is totally different. I had racist moments that I didn't realize were racist until I came here. And the curriculum, I don't know how to say this but there is racism when it comes to the curriculum. We're underestimated in general. Our curriculum is slowed down because we're seen as a slower race. It's sad, but that's an educational barrier. They don't expect you to be good at math, they don't expect you to be good at this or that. That's why we get third grade level work. And I would like people to start looking at us like we can be at the top too."

Four Conclusions About Deeper Learning Led to Change

These conclusions about the Deeper Learning strategy laid the groundwork for changes in the K-12 Teaching and Learning approach.

- Standards and assessments incentivized schools to teach to different outcomes but did not guarantee changes to teaching.
- Deeper Learning assumed that new standards and assessments would apply to all students. That approach failed to account for factors like race, income, language and learning differences in ensuring deeper learning.
- Research and proof points demonstrated the potential of the Deeper Learning strategy but did not provide sufficient insight into how to get a large number of schools and school systems to embrace deeper learning.
- Many technical aspects of Deeper Learning, such as aligned assessments and instructional materials provided essential tools for education systems. But that left room to more deeply address sociocultural matters, negative stereotypes about education, educators and students and the role of family and community voice in decision making.

Four Areas of Focus Informed the New Strategy

The analysis of the Deeper Learning strategy resulted in four essential shifts as the Education team modified their work.

- Focus more explicitly on what teachers do in the classroom, help teachers acquire the skills and knowledge to improve their craft and help them use those tools in more classrooms and schools.
- Focus on helping schools and school systems embrace deeper learning and embed that in their approach to education broadly.
- Focus on influencing policy at state, local, community and district levels to encourage and strengthen approaches to deeper learning.
- Focus more directly on students (and their families) furthest from opportunity, those students who depend on their schools and who the nation's schools have struggled the most to meaningfully educate.

K-12 Teaching and Learning Strategy

Goal

Empower and equip every young person to become an engaged and thriving participant in society.

Five-Year Outcomes

- New exemplars of teacher practice.
- New knowledge about transforming education systems.
- New voices in our discourse about public education.
- New conversations about teaching and learning.

By looking for districts with student populations in a more moderate 15,000 - 50,000 range, the team felt like they could work on transformation while still establishing lessons and strategies that could apply to many other districts in the country. Engaging districts that were too small or too large might prove problematic when considering how to scale promising approaches for change.

The team also decided on a range of other selection criteria. They wanted to find districts with some elements of deeper learning in place, leadership stability, particularly at the superintendent level, and those with good labor management relations. And they decided to invite grantees to make recommendations. Two key elements of the selection criteria supported a more intentional focus on racial equity: Forty percent of students in selected districts needed to be students of color and a majority of students needed to be Title I low-income students, with English language learners and foster youth represented.

“That took us to 13 states and nearly 120 districts, with 77 districts in California,” Mercer said. “So, we started in California. In other states we found the districts and talked with people in our network to get to those districts. We didn’t want districts to expend resources trying to apply for funds from us.”

“This approach brought a clear racial equity lens to the work,” Rivera said. “It was important to intentionally focus on public schools serving students of color. We also wanted to elevate the youth voice, the student voice, particularly because of the social context in the present day.”

The process of selecting districts and beginning to formulate grants entailed connecting with other funders to discuss potential funding cuts to existing schools and districts. Mercer and Rivera initiated a parallel process to collaborate with funder colleagues about what a funding mix might look like.

“We knew we needed to make some cuts to existing grantees, and we didn’t want that process to be too sudden,” Mercer said. “We also wanted to avoid having our grantees go to our colleagues at other foundations without everyone being on the same page. We wanted the process to be transparent, so we sought their input and worked together on how best to do that.”

Sophie Fanelli, president of the Stuart Foundation, talked about the Hewlett Foundation’s decision to be open about their process with funder and grantee partners. “Transparency is essential so that people don’t think decisions are being made behind closed doors.”

“We had grantees in common with Hewlett and we knew some cuts to grants in the Deeper Learning portfolio would have to be made,” Fanelli said. “We had many discussions and spent time with other funders and grantees. It was a learning journey, and no one was cut without time to prepare and without a transition grant of some kind.”

“Whenever you shift gears,” Fanelli continued, “there is a lot of anxiety among grantees. The Hewlett team did a good job of explaining how the previous strategy had been anchored in context and why the shifts were being made. They honored what had been learned, what the building blocks were and where they wanted to go next.”

In the conversations among funder and grantee partners, people recognized that collaboration was essential for making transformative change within the education ecosystem.

“K-12 foundations tend to shy away from the complexity of working on systemic change,” Fanelli said. “That kind of change is really difficult if you are working on your own. It’s possible if you are working in partnership with others.”

Rivera stressed that understanding the makeup of philanthropic support for potential districts was an essential piece of their approach. “We needed to know if the local funder community had put their arms around the district. We don’t want to be the only funder. And if we saw foundations also supporting deeper learning in a district then that made it even easier for us to enter.”

As 2020 began, conversations with districts in California, Ohio, Rhode Island, Mississippi and Maryland continued. But by March, with the onset of a global pandemic, the flexibility of the new funding strategy would be challenged in a completely unexpected way.

AGILITY AMID DISRUPTION

Few things can prepare a foundation and a funding strategy for a global pandemic such as COVID-19. However, an organization and a team that embraces flexibility and continuous learning in its strategic planning and processes and values strong relationships, transparency and listening is more likely to be poised to handle a large-scale disruption.

COVID-19 provided that disruption and was more significant than anyone anticipated. The seismic shift to typical ways of operating, socially and economically, immediately influenced conversations about what impactful teaching and learning should be and how to engage students, something the K-12 Teaching and Learning strategy had been concerned with from inception. Soon after the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools in March 2020, the nation was left reeling from multiple instances of police violence, followed by nationwide protests, reinvigorating calls to address racism in all its forms.

“One challenge of being a program officer is that it takes time to figure out the rhythm,” Mercer said. In early 2020, the Education team had just started engaging their selected districts to look at funding options. In March, COVID-19 forced an abrupt change.

“We use a set of annual implementation markers,” Mercer said. “At least one of those is what’s called a trip wire, which means that a certain kind of event will force you to come back and figure out what you need to do differently. One of our trip wires was that a major event would shift the national education discourse. It was tripped in March, and double tripped in May with the killing of George Floyd and the protests against police brutality and for racial justice.”

The team paused and considered: what would make the most sense in the moment? Some of the assumptions and strategic components outlined in 2018 no longer held true.

Rivera said that at that point they had only made grants to one district to help them ideate and iterate what their deeper learning work in schools might look like. “We didn’t want to put anyone in a weird predicament with expectations that no longer matched the current environment,” Rivera said. This flexibility was at the core of Hewlett’s new grantmaking strategy, which established at the outset that local contexts are the most important factor in creating lasting change.

PHILADELPHIA PARENT AND FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

In June 2018, parents participated in “Community Conversations” to capture their thoughts and perspectives on K-12 education. One parent commented: “I went to a phenomenal high school and I went to an extremely privileged junior high school and privileged elementary school. I did not know that the rest of America was not having my experience. We had teachers who loved us. Our teachers believed in us. There was nothing we did not have in our high school and I grew up very poor. There’s no reason that children today should not have the experience that I had. It’s a lack of willpower. Shame on us, America. Because I don’t care where a child lives, I do know that education can work if the right people are put in places of leadership to ensure that every child in America has an adequate education and has the opportunity for endless possibilities.”

Key elements of the K-12 Teaching and Learning strategy helped position the Education team to be responsive to events in 2020, primarily a focus on the importance of local context, racial equity, providing flexible general operating support and positioning grantees as leaders on the path to change.

The COVID-19 pandemic also exacerbated and highlighted systemic inequities in public schools. Because the K-12 Teaching and Learning strategy was built on understanding those inequities and developing strategies to help address them, the team felt positioned to be responsive to and supportive of their grantees moving forward.

“It felt like a partnership, it felt honest and bidirectional and it felt like they were cheerleaders of our work beyond just the philanthropic relationship.”

Carlos Moreno

Carlos Moreno is the co-executive director at Big Picture Learning, a long-time grantee of the Hewlett Foundation that works to transform schools across the country and internationally. He commented that the national events presented a tremendous leadership and operational challenge. “We are very high touch in our delivery,” Moreno said, “and when schools closed many of our contracts started shutting down, revenue was down. All of our philanthropic partners offered flexibility in how our existing grants can and should be used. Hewlett was no exception and their flexibility allowed us to pivot to avoid cuts in personnel.”

Moreno described feeling well connected to the foundation amid the disruption. “The relationship with Kent, Charmaine and the team had evolved. It felt like a partnership, it felt honest and bidirectional and it felt like they were cheerleaders of our work beyond just the philanthropic relationship. The communications that came from Hewlett stood out in terms of the frequency and how humane they were. They felt in touch, relevant and authentic.”

“It’s also important to note that as a grantee and leader of color, leading an organization that serves predominantly students of color, seeing a significant shift in the leadership at a major foundation like Hewlett communicates something very important,” Moreno said. “As we know, representation matters. Their work around diversity, equity and inclusion — for which I am wildly appreciative — really helped set the stage for what happened in this country in 2020.”

SEIZING THE MOMENT: A BOLD COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY

In May 2020, the killing of George Floyd, alongside the recent killings of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, generated a wave of protests against racism and police violence across the U.S. and around the world. The Hewlett Foundation recognized¹² that systemic racism, institutionalized violence and daily acts of discrimination directed toward Black people and communities were foundational pieces of widespread racial injustice. Further, the foundation understood that systemic racism was a visible and corruptive force in every American institution, from education and health to politics and philanthropy.

Mercer reflected on how things shifted internally at the foundation after the racial justice protests of spring 2020 had begun. “Larry (the Hewlett Foundation’s president) asked teams to review our strategies and see what might need to change,” Mercer said. Aside from adjusting reporting requirements and restrictions on

how grantees could spend their funds, those conversations helped lay the groundwork for significant new investments by the foundation.

In July 2020, Kramer announced two new investments established to combat racial injustice in the U.S. and in the foundation's work. An immediate infusion of \$18 million in 2020 was dedicated to organizations working on systemic racism, recognizing that many were chronically underfunded and rapid support could help catalyze and strengthen their efforts in the current context. The foundation also committed to a new 10-year, \$150 million racial justice initiative that would provide structure and sustained support for organizations working to address systemic racism and its pervasive and damaging effects.

Additionally, recognizing that systemic racism affects all of the fields in which the foundation operates, program teams were asked to reexamine how their strategies addressed racial justice. Kramer also sought to¹³ “investigate how systemic racism shows up in the context of our existing goals, and to look for ways we can address it in our grantmaking.”

With luck and foresight, the Education team's newly revised strategy already sat on a strong foundation of racial equity goals.

“The reason for the focus on racial equity specifically in the Education Program,” Kramer said, “is because that's where the largest issues lie. In addressing those, we will also learn how to achieve the ultimate goal which is to transform the whole education system.” With luck and foresight, the Education team's newly revised strategy already sat on a strong foundation of racial equity goals.

With luck and foresight, the Education team's newly revised strategy already sat on a strong foundation of racial equity goals.

“There is no question in my mind that our strategy is well built for the recent awakening about race in this country,” McGuire said, “and we are even more emboldened to pursue this work and seize this moment. That's because a core assumption we made was that we needed to disrupt these long-standing patterns of bias and structural racism that help, in our view, explain the disparities and learning outcomes we were seeing.”

The focus on racial justice is most evident in the Education and Performing Arts program strategies at the Hewlett Foundation, a reflection of an evolving approach to the work within the organization. And while the foundation is wrestling with how to substantively respond in the current moment, it recognizes that its guiding principles and approach to grantmaking codified in OFP will help ground its work on racial justice.

PARENTS AND STUDENTS EXPRESSED THOUGHTS ON INEQUALITY

Participants in “Community Conversations” focus groups held in June 2018 responded to the question: Why don't we have these schools? “Participants spoke passionately about the overall impact of racism and poverty in their communities which often do not have grocery stores, parks or community centers. They were clear that what is going on in schools currently is the result of intentional decisions centered around profit making with a complete disregard of the impact that poverty has on communities. But it was also clear that achieving the participants' vision of great schools is only hindered by lack of resources, structural racism, implicit bias and bureaucracies that are resistant to change.”

“We value playing the long game, standing with our grantees over time, and we rely heavily on research, data and evidence,” McGuire said. “And these values don’t conflict with agility and responsiveness. In fact, Hewlett is responding to this moment by creating a 10-year initiative specifically focused on racial justice.”

Because the decision came from a sense of justice, from the heart, it did not take long to make.

LESSONS LEARNED

A new strategy or approach in grantmaking often comes with a sense of risk. In developing the K-12 Teaching and Learning strategy, the Education team, and the Hewlett Foundation more broadly, was not sure that the approach would be powerful enough to yield results. But they felt confident that the work they put into understanding the former Deeper Learning strategy, capturing a broad range of input about their thinking and approach during the refresh process and engaging in place with a commitment to equity provided a solid foundation from which to launch.

In this context, persistence was essential. The Education team spent time delving into their thinking and core assumptions about Deeper Learning and what they hoped to achieve through the K-12 Teaching and Learning strategy. They also worked diligently to create shared understanding about their approach with many stakeholders, including grantees and potential grantees, philanthropic partners and colleagues at the Hewlett Foundation. They captured perspectives and thoughts from a broad range of partners — including students, families and teachers — and incorporated that input into the development of the strategy. Grounding that approach with a commitment to listening and learning also grounded the work in the social context of the time, one shaped by unprecedented events impacting the entire nation.

Mercer said that some key elements in the process made a big difference, “Our ability to listen and incorporate feedback into our thinking, our focus on equity and racial equity in particular, our work as a team that embraced Hewlett’s values and guiding principles, and the sense of humility we brought to the work.”

Fanelli described what it was like to see the Hewlett Foundation embrace a broad range of perspectives during the strategy refresh. “When you apply a learning and adaptive lens you have to use stories and qualitative data as part of your approach,” she said. “When you see a national foundation like Hewlett, known to be rigorous with high expectations, value stories and narratives as part of their approach, it is really important for the field to see that.”

The hope is that those stories and narratives will help drive transformational change in the nation’s public schools. That goal is substantial and requires a long-term commitment rooted in strategy and collaboration. Kramer said, “This is one phase of the work, not something that will be completed just with this team. Nor is it something you can accomplish working alone.” On setting goals and reasonable outcomes, Kramer added, “If you try to do everything all at once, you may end up doing nothing.”

“When you apply a learning and adaptive lens you have to use stories and qualitative data as part of your approach.”
Sophie Fanelli

Working with that kind of long-term perspective also means recognizing there isn't a silver bullet solution to address complex conditions for kids, families and communities. "Generally speaking," McGuire said, "we need to relax the idea that there is some bold agenda around transformation and instructional improvement that we, as a foundation, can bring to the field. We need to continue to invite partners and communities to explore with us how this is done."

By exploring with partners and communities, local context will have a more significant impact on grantmaking decisions. And by engaging with public school systems, the Education team hopes deeper learning will be adopted more broadly by school systems across the U.S.

Mercer reflected on her role as a program officer and the work of her team. "People do make a difference in how a funding strategy unfolds. Backgrounds, perspectives, and identities matter." And while the Education team brought a new set of perspectives to the Hewlett Foundation, the team was also supported by an organizational culture that embraced learning. Bringing the right people into the foundation at the right time created synergy and momentum. At the same time, the foundation's board and leadership did not change. This reflects an internal responsiveness to new ideas and an ability to learn from history while still maintaining a long-term perspective.

Building on and learning from the past, developing strong relationships and working in collaboration are all essential elements when seeking change. Fanelli commented, "Change happens at the speed of trust and trust comes from vulnerability. Foundations tend not to be like that, but if we don't put our cards on the table, we shouldn't expect folks to trust us."

A key question remains: can the Hewlett Foundation leverage what they've learned, and what they will continue to learn with their new approach, to influence education grantmaking nationally?

McGuire acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic created some unknowns. "It's not obvious to me that, given the challenges the public education system is just beginning to confront and is likely to face over the coming months, including the fear among teachers, the confusion and anxiety among students, the layoffs and budget challenges, that our public school system will be able to respond appropriately because it was not designed to educate people outside of classrooms."

Reflecting on the moment, he continued, "I am emboldened on the one hand to prove that our public education system can change — that it can effectively educate today's diverse learners. I am at the same time anxious about whether the claims we made with the board and the public are realistic given COVID-19."

In the spirit of learning, continuous improvement and healthy debate about what change entails, McGuire recognizes what is happening in the current moment and is optimistic about the foundation's role in shaping the discussion. "We are at the cusp of a thousand natural experiments as communities try to sort out what this shift in education entails, from virtual and blended approaches to how class time is used or altered. Our opportunity is to get in the middle of all of this and engage on how these experiments unfold, both to help shape them and to learn from them."

STUDY QUESTIONS

- In what ways did the national context and landscape influence Hewlett’s grantmaking strategies over time?
- What did the Education team learn about the Deeper Learning strategy that helped them pivot to the K-12 Teaching and Learning strategy? How might you describe the difference between the two?
- What can be learned from Hewlett’s approach to using term limits for its program officers and directors? What are the pros and cons of term limits?
- What is the importance of understanding how the broader public understands a grantmaking strategy? What role might a structured communications strategy play in helping funders and communities connect in meaningful ways?
- Why did the Education team choose to capture a broad selection of input during the refresh strategy? Who did they feel the need to engage with more and what impact did that have?
- What was learned in the process of engaging stakeholders, recognizing the power dynamics and receiving feedback when holding a position of power?
- In what ways did the backgrounds, perspectives and identities of the Education team influence or shape their grantmaking strategies?
- How did the foundation’s commitment to continuous improvement and learning manifest throughout the strategy refresh process and into the current moment?
- What obstacles might be encountered when working to influence the discourse on public education and the role of education as a public good that strengthens U.S. democracy?
- What tradeoffs might there be when a funding strategy shifts from a focus on policy to engaging in place? What should be considered when deciding whether to pivot a funding strategy versus staying with a strategy for the long haul?
- Given the approach of the K-12 Teaching and Learning strategy and the efforts of the Hewlett Foundation to focus on racial justice, what might success look like?

ENDNOTES

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Effective Education Grantmaking

- principle
no. 1

Discipline and Focus

In education, where public dollars dwarf private investments, a funder has greater impact when grantmaking is carefully planned and targeted.
- principle
no. 2

Knowledge

Information, ideas and advice from diverse sources, as well as openness to criticism and feedback, can help a funder make wise choices.
- principle
no. 3

Resources Linked to Results

A logic-driven “theory of change” helps a grantmaker think clearly about how specific actions will lead to desired outcomes, thus linking resources with results.
- principle
no. 4

Effective Grantees

A grantmaker is effective only when its grantees are effective. Especially in education, schools and systems lack capacity and grantees (both inside and outside the system) may require deeper support.
- principle
no. 5

Engaged Partners

A funder succeeds by actively engaging its partners – the individuals, institutions and communities connected with an issue – to ensure “ownership” of education problems and their solutions.
- principle
no. 6

Leverage, Influence and Collaboration

The depth and range of problems in education make it difficult to achieve meaningful change in isolation or by funding programs without changing public policies or opinions. A grantmaker is more effective when working with others to mobilize and deploy as many resources as possible in order to advance solutions.
- principle
no. 7

Persistence

The most important problems in education are often the most complex and intractable, and will take time to solve.
- principle
no. 8

Innovation and Constant Learning

Even while acting on the best available information – as in Principle #2 – a grantmaker can create new knowledge about ways to promote educational success. Tracking outcomes, understanding costs and identifying what works—and what doesn’t—are essential to helping grantmakers and their partners achieve results.

Grantmakers for Education is a national network of hundreds of education philanthropies, united by a passion and commitment to improve public education and learning for all learners of all ages, cradle to career. Grantmakers for Education is a force multiplier, harnessing the collective power of education grantmakers to increase momentum, impact and outcomes for this nation's learners. We are proud to promote a culture of learning among education funders and provide a forum for interaction and engagement that builds upon and deepens the impact of our member's individual investments. Grantmakers for Education and its members believe in the power of what we can all achieve when we work together and learn from each other's successes and challenges.

