



BENCHMARKING

TRENDS IN EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY

2012

grantmakers^{for}education

Grantmakers for Education builds philanthropy's knowledge, networks and effectiveness for achieving results in education. Our mission is to strengthen philanthropy's capacity to improve educational outcomes and expand opportunities for all learners by:

- Sharing successful grantmaking strategies, best practices and lessons learned that exemplify responsive and responsible grantmaking in education.
- Creating venues for funders to collaborate on projects, share knowledge, develop leadership, advocate for change and debate strategies with other education grantmakers.
- Interpreting data, illustrating trends and conducting research to improve the effectiveness of education grantmaking and to highlight innovative educational approaches.

Our efforts are informed by eight Principles for Effective Education Grantmaking, which are designed both to guide funders in increasing their impact and to ensure that GFE's services and programs help funders accomplish their goals for change.

BENCHMARKING 2012

TRENDS IN EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY

CONTENTS

- page 03. Foreword**
- page 04. SECTION 1: The Evolving Craft of Education Grantmaking**
- page 15. SECTION 2: Emerging Trends in Education Grantmaking**
- page 21. SECTION 3: Funding Priorities**
- page 25. SECTION 4: Looking Ahead: A Call for Our Field**
- page 28. SECTION 5: The Education Grantmaking Landscape**

FOREWORD

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of Grantmakers for Education, I am delighted to present *Benchmarking 2012: Trends in Education Philanthropy*. As the nation's largest and most diverse network of education funders, we are dedicated to deepening the collective knowledge and impact of education philanthropy. Our annual *Benchmarking* series advances this goal by helping funders understand how the field is evolving, where and how funders are working, and what we are learning from this work.

As in previous years, the report draws from a survey of GFE's membership that provides a snapshot of giving patterns as well as grantmakers' qualitative impressions of lessons and insights from their work. This year, to mark the report's fifth anniversary, we also look back to provide a historical perspective on themes and

patterns we have observed over the five years of this series. We dedicate a section to review how the craft of education grantmaking has evolved since we first introduced the *Benchmarking* survey in 2008, examining three themes that have consistently risen to the top among funders: engagement with public policy, collaboration, and education systems alignment.

The report would not be complete without us drawing attention to funders' current funding priorities and emerging trends in the field. We take a look at 28 funding priorities—from addressing vulnerable populations to improving education delivery systems—and synthesize funders' responses to illuminate the field's top funding priorities. Finally, we examine emerging trends—such as Common Core implementation and the impact of changing demographics, continued fiscal distress and technological advances—to understand their implications for education philanthropy and the education ecosystem as a whole.

The field of education philanthropy plays a unique role in helping shape the learning environment to improve outcomes and expand opportunities for all learners. We hope that through our efforts in gathering this benchmarking data, we help each other better understand the bigger picture, reflect on our practice and continuously

strengthen the impact of education philanthropy. GFE is grateful to the many members who have contributed to this effort by sharing their perspectives through the *Benchmarking* survey and especially to the members who served as advance reviewers, providing valuable feedback that shaped the report.

I look forward to hearing how you use the insights in this report to inform your organization's work and define your long-term priorities.

Warmest regards,



Chris Tebben, *Executive Director*

SECTION 1

THE EVOLVING CRAFT OF EDUCATION GRANTMAKING

Grantmakers for Education's (GFE) mission is to improve the effectiveness of education philanthropy. One way we strive to do this is by engaging our network of funders: to learn from each other and leverage each other's efforts to improve education outcomes.

In this spirit and to foster greater awareness, GFE introduced its annual *Benchmarking* survey in 2008 to gauge the state of education philanthropy and to learn from its members how the field was evolving. Every year since 2008, we have offered a snapshot of trends, emerging issues and challenges funders saw on the horizon.

We are pleased to once again present the annual survey results. And to mark the fifth year of the *Benchmarking* report, we will also take a look back and examine how education grantmaking has evolved over the years. What has remained constant and what has changed? Which education issues continue to rise to the top? How are funders approaching their work and thinking about the role of philanthropy? We will explore these and other themes as we synthesize key takeaways and considerations based on five-year's worth of data.

"You have to collect a number of small wins to move a larger agenda, fund with the long term in mind and fund policies for a system as a whole."

—Maura Banta, IBM Corporation

The ebb and flow of funding public policy

Once an uncommon philanthropic strategy, many funders now engage in the public policy arena as part of their work. In the words of one respondent, "Policy grantmaking is the way for us to have the greatest impact with our limited dollars." Over the five-year history of the *Benchmarking* series, the majority of funders have indicated that they make grants to influence public policy or build public will, peaking in 2010 when 70 percent of respondents cited this strategy.

We were surprised to note that 2012 represented the lowest rate of policy grantmaking in the history of this survey, but for reasons noted in the methodology section, the difference was not statistically significant, and a deeper year-to-year analysis comparing responses for individual organizations did not suggest a broader pullback from policy grantmaking (See figure 1).

We did, however, observe a greater level of uncertainty among grantmakers about their emphasis on policy moving forward. While 28 percent of funders expect their policy grantmaking to increase over the next two years and 48 percent projected it to remain flat, another 27 percent were unsure how their emphasis on policy would change in the next few years. This uncertainty may reflect the unknowns of

how election outcomes (at the time of the survey) and budget reductions will alter the policy agenda, and the expectation that many education policy issues will shift from federal to state and local arenas for many education policy issues.

While funders' engagement in policy has remained high in recent years, the nature of their policy investments has shifted. We see a much greater interest in supporting advocacy: 77 percent of grantmakers who fund policy report that they are funding advocacy in 2012, up from 58 percent in 2008 (See figure 2).

At the same time, funding for public will campaigns has fallen dramatically: only 34 percent of grantmakers who fund policy in 2012 are funding public will campaigns, down from 70 percent of policy grantmakers in 2010. Relatively few funders invest in policy implementation (37 percent in 2012 and 38 percent in 2010). Funders' relatively

"We've learned that we ultimately have greater impact as a relatively agnostic convener than we would as an advocate for specific policies."

—Caroline Maillard, *The Seattle Foundation*

Methodology

GFE's *Benchmarking* survey draws from an unduplicated sample of education grantmakers, with a response rate of approximately two-thirds of GFE's network of grantmakers. Because a different subset of funders elects to respond to the survey each year, the survey is neither exhaustive nor scientific. And while this report does not draw year-to-year data comparisons, it does call out significant changes over time as a means to explore changes in trends or themes within the field of education grantmaking.

low level of investment in implementation is especially striking given how the enactment of new policies—such as the rollout of the Common Core State Standards and related assessments—will demand a much stronger emphasis from states and districts over the next several years at a time of ever-deepening budget challenges.

Respondents this year suggested that the focal point of funders' policy efforts is shifting increasingly from federal policy to the state and local level. Given the high proportion of place-based funders in GFE's membership, it is not surprising that funders are far more likely to focus their policy investments at the state and

FIGURE 1

Fund grants to influence public policy or to build public will

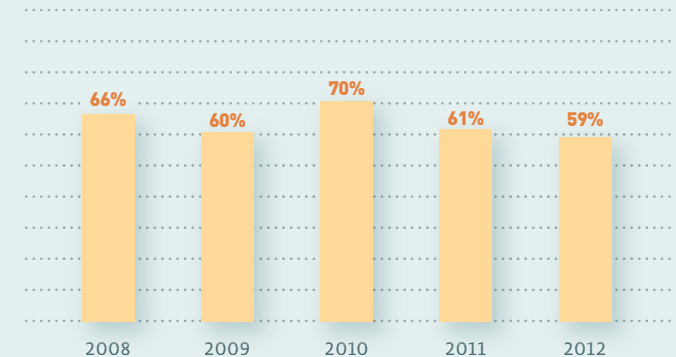


FIGURE 2

Fund grants to influence public policy or to build public will



local level (80 percent and 73 percent respectively, compared with 43 percent investing at the federal level). As the competitive federal funding streams that were launched under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) wind down, it is also not surprising that grantmakers expect their policy efforts will be even more locally focused in the future: two years from now, 85 percent of funders expect to focus on state policy efforts and 80 percent will focus on district-level policies, compared with only 40 percent who expect to target federal efforts in the future.

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

Funders make policy investments to impact a wide variety of educational issues. To better understand funders' investment priorities, we asked funders to identify where they are focusing their policy investments. Three issues rose to the top:

- **Early childhood education.** Improving access to and quality of early education programs was cited as a top policy investment priority among respondents. Responses included a focus on expanded funding, quality enhancements and birth-8 systems building.
- **School finance and funding.** Education funding has been a recurring concern

for funders since the first *Benchmarking* survey was released in 2008. In their comments to the 2012 survey, many respondents cited the ongoing need to address the drop in public funding across the education continuum, with particular attention to K-12 school finance equity, postsecondary affordability and a growing focus on funding adequacy.

- **College and career readiness.** Preparing students to successfully transition from high school to college or career was the third most common area of policy investment by funders. This included success in two- and four-year institutions, implementation of the Common Core and determining best practices for measuring college and career readiness.

“Administrations come and go. Funding strategies must take the long view and adapt in order to prevail through shifting political and ideological tides.”

—Terri Shuck, *National Public Education Support Fund*

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

In this year's survey, we asked funders to describe the best roles for grantmakers in the policy process. Not surprisingly, 74 percent of respondents cited the role of convening stakeholders. Coalition building and providing targeted support to policy organizations were rated second and third respectively. Few respondents believed that grantmakers' best role was through direct engagement in the policy process (See figure 3).

We also asked funders to share lessons learned through their policy grantmaking over the years. The key takeaway was that policy change is neither quick nor easy, and funders must be prepared to take the long view if they want to achieve policy outcomes. Policy is a non-linear process: staying with an issue over time is a key driver of success. As one funder summarized, "change takes a long time, so we need to commit to supporting the work over the long haul." Another added, "This is steady work. Term limits mean that there is relatively little institutional memory." At the same time, funders note that the policy process is fluid, and that after long periods of moving slowly, an unexpected shift in the policy environment will require a rapid response. Grantmakers must manage the balance between persistence

"Strong coalitions are key, and policy organizations need unrestricted support in order to stay nimble and react quickly to a fast-changing policy environment."

—Caroline Altman Smith, *Kresge Foundation*

and agility in order to be successful in the policy arena.

Many funders stated the importance of finding and supporting good intermediaries and advocacy organizations. "As a small family foundation, we need a credible, experienced grantee to work on moving the needle. It is not something we are positioned to do," remarked one funder. Another counseled: "Select excellent organizations that can advocate without lobbying and be responsive to nuances in the complexities of education reform. It is a highly fluid environment and there are a limited number of people with the skills/capacity to navigate the dynamics." In recent years, several watchdog organizations have criticized grantmakers for failing to provide sufficient general support to advocacy groups to allow them to be

FIGURE 3

Best role for grantmakers in public policy



nimble in responding to policy opportunities. Instead, grantmakers tend to fund groups to advocate around specific issues without supporting their broader organizational capacity. The survey findings reinforce this point. Despite funders' emphasis on the important role that intermediaries play, just 44 percent of funders felt that providing general operating support to policy organizations was an effective role.

In addition to supporting strong intermediaries, many grantmakers see coalition building as a key strategy both for securing and sustaining policy wins. "We found that building coalitions across districts, foundations and professional organizations yielded clearer outcomes and a better policy development process," summarized one respondent. Coalition building can play to funders' strength as a neutral convener. Funders underscored the value of engaging diverse stakeholders early and sustaining

"Unless there is a commitment to implementation, all the policy changes in the world will be for naught."

—Dori Jacobson, *Rodel Foundation of Delaware*

"We can and should support organizations that have proven they can balance being bold with being non-partisan and non-polarizing."

—Jim Pitofsky, *Arizona Community Foundation*

their involvement. By bringing multiple stakeholders to the table at the outset, funders can help everyone gain broader perspectives, allowing them to find common ground and build a joint plan. One grantmaker concluded, "One of our most successful advocacy campaigns resulted from bringing different voices to the policy process. Legislators noted that having voices other than the traditional interest groups at the table was powerful."

A growing number of funders recognize the importance of policy implementation—although this is still an issue funders tend to overlook. Several funders spoke to the large gaps between policies and on-the-ground practice, noting that funders must see their policy investments through far beyond policy enactment if they want to ensure that they translate successfully to practice. As one respondent summarized,

"In many ways, developing thoughtful policies is the easy part. The true challenge comes in implementing changed policies effectively in schools."

Working better together: The art of collaboration

Education grantmakers value collaboration deeply. Since our first *Benchmarking* survey in 2008, we have consistently found that 90 percent or more of our members collaborate with other funders, and each year since 2009, more than half of respondents have said they expect to increase their level of collaboration in the near future (*See figure 21 on page 31*). Perhaps this is not surprising: in a period marked by declining public resources, grantmakers have found greater leverage by funding together with others, especially because many respondents have relatively small education budgets. We have traced many aspects of the funder collaboration process through our surveys over the years, and the consistent

"Cross-sector partnerships have helped us focus and refine our priorities."

—Ryan Blitstein, *SCE*

finding is that despite its challenges, this has become a deeply entrenched behavior and one that is enshrined as good practice for most grantmakers.

As funder collaboration has become the norm over the years, grantmakers have also placed greater emphasis on how they can partner with other types of stakeholders. In recent years, we have observed a growing number of GFE members participating in cross-sector partnerships, perhaps most famously illustrated by the Strive collaborative, that typically bring together public agencies, nonprofits, grantmakers, business groups and other stakeholders to achieve broader community goals. Additionally, we noticed a rising emphasis on public-private partnerships at all levels of government, including the federal Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund. To better

“Foundations can catalyze an issue, but larger funds from the public sector are required to carry out major transformation in an area like education.”

—Carr Thompson, *Burroughs Wellcome Fund*

“Cross-sector partnerships have created opportunities for us to make the issues community issues, versus just government or foundation issues.”

—Kerry Diaz, *Quantum Foundation*

understand these shifts, we added new questions this year to explore funders’ engagement in cross-sector and public-private partnerships.

We were surprised to note that 62 percent of funders are currently engaging in cross-sector partnerships. An even greater number of funders—71 percent—are engaging in public-private partnerships. Despite the prevalence of these other partnerships, the majority of funders declared that collaborations with other funders were the most valuable form of partnership (See figure 4).

CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Funders have engaged in cross-sector partnerships for many years, but this approach took off much more widely in recent years as more funders learned about initiatives like Strive or Living Cities. A seminal 2011 article

FIGURE 4

Most valued collaborations

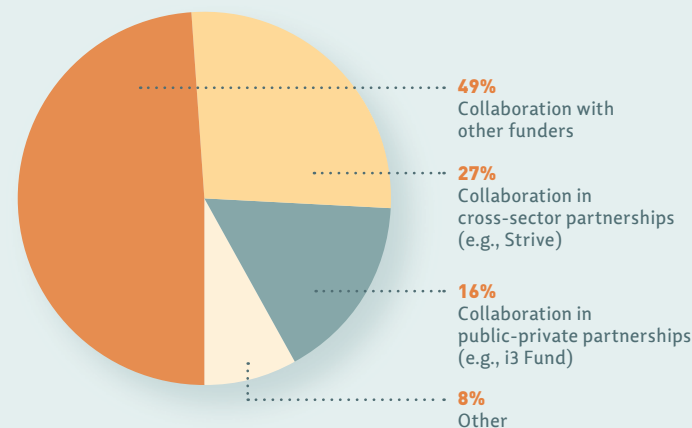


FIGURE 5

Roles funders play in cross-sector partnerships



in the Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR) introduced the term *collective impact*, to refer to efforts to effect large-scale social change through cross-sector coordination. This notion posits that no one organization, no matter how innovative or powerful, can accomplish large-scale change alone, and that organizations with common goals should therefore work together to impact an entire system, rather than working independently and focusing on only one component.

Cross-sector partnerships frequently require funders to play a wider range of roles beyond simply awarding grant dollars (See figure 5).

While the most frequently cited role was providing funding to support the planning process (74 percent), an equally large number played a strong convening role (73 percent). Many funders have also played a key role in facilitating the planning process (64 percent). “This is hard work,” noted one funder, “It requires much greater engagement than traditional grantmaking.” Another funder commented that this mode of working required a significant increase in both human and fiscal capital investment. Several funders questioned whether the benefits of the work outweighed the costs.

However, most funders believe these collaborations are beneficial. When asked to describe the implications cross-sector

“Our investment in Strive has changed our perspective on the true unit of change in this sector, which we now believe is the community rather than the school.”

—Meredith Meyer, KnowledgeWorks

partnerships have had for their organizations, respondents overwhelmingly cited the ways these partnerships have deepened their knowledge, broadened their perspectives and sharpened their strategies. “This has helped us hone our grant-making strategies. We’ve become more data driven and ultimately more selective about which organizations we fund,” explained one respondent. “This brought order to a complex system,” noted another. Another respondent said, “It helped us better understand the challenges of getting dramatic results for children.” Yet another funder observed, “We’ve learned more as a result and grounded our work to align more closely with community priorities.” Other funders noted that these partnerships have provided context, relevance and connections to their work.

Respondents agreed that these partnerships allowed them to tap into additional resources and expertise and develop more targeted grantmaking approaches. Many funders cited the powerful leverage these partnerships afforded by pulling together limited dollars for greater community impact and systemic problem solving. “It has enabled our foundation to leverage both our financial resources across sectors as well as the community leaders of the organizations we support. For example, we now have a community development corporation implementing education programs and advocating for a college ready agenda,” summarized a funder.

“This work has been both beneficial and challenging. It’s ideal that everyone is working towards similar goals and in alignment of priorities, but the process is SLOW and inconsistent with how we usually work. That can pose challenges in working with our board.”

—Catherine Brozowski, *Orfalea Foundation*

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

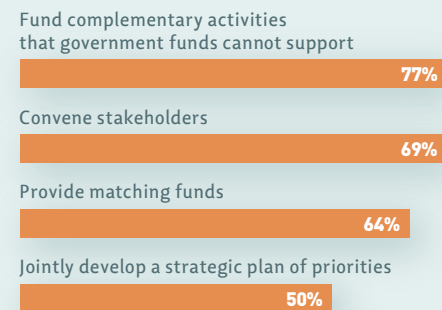
A large percentage of funders (71 percent) participate in public-private partnerships at all levels of government. These partnerships gained greater attention in 2009 when the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act introduced the \$650 million Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund, requiring significant levels of private sector matching funds. Three years later, we asked grantmakers to describe the roles they have played in these partnerships as well as the lessons they’ve learned from this work.

The two most cited roles were funding complementary activities that government funds cannot support, such as communications or evaluation initiatives, and convening stakeholders to support these partnerships (See figure 6).

As early as 2010, funders have shared mixed opinions about these partnerships. Some funders celebrated them, while others worried about the potential risk to philanthropic independence. One key question has centered on the role of philanthropic dollars in a time of public cuts, as one funder noted: “Private funders need to be mindful not to supplant government funds, but rather to identify strategic uses for private dollars to improve the likelihood of sustainable public implementation and support.”

FIGURE 6

Roles funders play in public-private partnerships



In our 2012 survey, a large majority of respondents spoke to the challenges of engaging in these partnerships and the amount of work it requires to make them successful. Although seen as valuable, many respondents agreed they take considerable time and work. “Like cross-sector collaborations, these are challenging and require long-term stewardship and investment,” advised one funder. “They are long in developing and require ongoing support and attention,” mentioned another. A key to their success is the ability to involve all stakeholders from the start, identify the role public and private funds can play and keep decision makers involved as strategies are rolled out.

Leadership emerged as one key condition for successful public-private partnerships. “Without strong, stable leadership at public agencies, partnerships cannot succeed. If that leadership isn’t there, then funders have to take a step back and consider professional development or other capacity-building strategies to lay the groundwork for long-term change,” suggested a funder. “Get agreement at the highest possible level—ideally the governor,” notes another.

The issue of sharing or ceding credit arose frequently in public-private partnerships. One funder summed it up by saying,

“This is the primary mode in which we operate. Although there are many challenges to these relationships, we believe they are the only route to systemic change.”

—Wendy Hawkins, *Intel*

“You often have to give the win to the public players.” Another respondent noted, “It requires more than providing dollars. Our foundation also provides cover for others who might otherwise be reticent to join in.”

Public-private partnerships are often challenged by deep differences in organizational culture and different operating procedures. “Partners on the front end should learn and understand how the different partners function and operate in order for the aligned funding discussions to flow more smoothly,” suggested one grantmaker. This requires both entities to meet in the middle. As one respondent noted, “Our timeline as funders (wanting funds to be cleanly and neatly used within a 1-2 year timeframe) is secondary to the competing priorities public agencies have. Being flexible and open, but steadfast in expectations

is a delicate balancing act.” Grantmakers suggested that facilitating the work of building effective partnerships requires establishing clear expectations and communication from the outset. One respondent also suggested that funders pay for partnership management to increase the likelihood of success.

Change takes time in large systems and the pace of work may be frustrating. Many respondents cited the importance of patience when dealing with public agencies and the bureaucracy that ensues, but also the long-term gains of staying the course. “Patience: the government has its own processes and budget cycles,

“The politics can be dicey in public-private partnerships. Much thought has to be devoted to this kind of work up front so that all parties feel as though they are making respectable contributions and receiving due recognition for their efforts.”

—Stanley Thompson, *The Heinz Endowments*

but the payoff is a greater likelihood of long-term sustainability,” responded one funder. Notes another, “This takes more time than anticipated; you need to have staying power. Changes in administration or leadership can impact the work positively or negatively.”

Even as many respondents shared the challenges of participating in public-private partnerships, many agreed that these were worthwhile. “This is good work for us and helps us build our knowledge and relationship base,” responded one funder. Another added, “There is great value in having the public and private sectors at the same table. It facilitates cross learning and opportunities to leverage public and private investments toward shared goals.” For those who embark into these partnerships, a member offered this advice, “Be prepared to learn, expect changes, learn from mistakes and keep moving forward.”

Aligning education systems from cradle to career

Over the five years of *Benchmarking* surveys, a consistent theme has emerged around the need for funders to shift from making silo investments to supporting more systemic solutions. During this time, funders have expressed growing concern about the leaky education pipeline, noting that too many

students are lost at important transition points, a problem exacerbated by our nation’s fragmented education systems. Today, nearly 60 percent of funders cite alignment of the education pipeline as an important or very important organizational goal. While many funders continue to develop strategies that focus on particular areas of the pipeline, such as early learning, K-12, or college and career readiness, this year we asked grantmakers to share specific steps they were taking to ensure their grantmaking was supporting systemic change across the pipeline.

Many of the grantmakers working to align the education pipeline do so by playing the role of convener, leveraging partnerships and collaborations within their

“We have made targeted grants to support transitions from early childhood programs to school-aged programs, from middle to high school, and from high school to college.”

—Shawn Morehead, *New York Community Trust*

“Our most impactful grantmaking has involved processes that cause K-12 and higher education to come together in regional partnerships. Once the high school-postsecondary alignment is understood, districts then understand how to work backwards within their own system to improve alignment at other major transition points.”

—Wynn Rosser, *Greater Texas Foundation*

communities and beyond. “We have done extensive convening across segments of the pipeline to achieve a shared understanding of goals and roles. By understanding the full set of assets each segment brings to the table we have helped foster authentic collaboration and engagement of each in creating new solutions together,” described one grantmaker. A second funder explained, “We have convened stakeholders at all levels of education and have identified particular elementary, middle and high

FIGURE 7

Aligning and strengthening connections among different education systems

Strengthening connections between high school and postsecondary

57%

Aligning in-school learning with out-of-school learning

43%

Improving transitions from middle school to high school

42%

Aligning early learning with K-12

41%

Strengthening school to career pathways

40%

Improving transitions from 2-year to 4-year colleges

20%

schools in an area of the county to begin aligning systems, as well as making a grant to a local college to seek alignment from high school to college.” Several funders mentioned that their systems alignment work happens primarily through *collective impact* initiatives, a strategy we discussed earlier in this section.

The most common point of focus along the pipeline was at the transition from high school to postsecondary education (See figure 7). One funder noted, “We are supporting K-16 councils and collaborations between high school and community college districts as well as transcript analysis research.” Another funder focusing on the high school to postsecondary end of the pipeline supported efforts to bring stakeholders together for faculty exchanges, and to align curriculum, transfer and articulation policies. Even for funders focusing on earlier points in the pipeline, a growing number cited focus on increasing degree and credential attainment, aligning supports and earlier interventions that can lead students toward that ultimate goal, such as this grantmaker, “Our foundation has made a significant shift and is focusing very clearly on the goal of degree and credential attainment, with a recognition that this begins long before high school.”

Another common focal point was aligning early childhood education with K-12. Several funders mentioned specific investments tailored to align preK through 3rd education, such as a funder investing in “funding for preK through third grade alignment in an urban district, including professional development and mentoring/coaching embedded in the schools. We are working with teachers across and within grade levels, and we are also developing a network of preK through third grade teachers across the city.” Others spoke of expanding their focus from birth through five.

Many grantmakers admit that systemic change has been difficult to achieve and agree there is no simple answer. One funder observed, “Despite all the rhetoric about systemic change and policy, very few foundations support it.” We drew a slightly different conclusion: a growing number of funders are engaging in this work, but so far the work is happening primarily at the community and institutional level, rather than through a statewide policy lens. Will the introduction of common educational standards catalyze more systems alignment work at the state or national policy level in the years ahead?

SECTION 2

EMERGING TRENDS IN EDUCATION GRANTMAKING

Each year, we ask respondents to identify the most significant emerging trends they see in education grantmaking. In this section, we examine the four most significant trends mentioned this year.

Implementing the Common Core

Funders overwhelmingly cited the Common Core State Standards as the most significant trend impacting education—and by extension, education philanthropy. Many respondents believed the new standards represent a unique opportunity for transforming education. They praised the standards' emphasis on college and career readiness and felt they raised the bar for deeper learning around 21st century skills and can serve as a lever for transforming instructional practice. They noted that the new standards will require both districts and states to implement comprehensive change at a time of reduced budgets and saw an important supporting role for philanthropy. They also spoke to how the *common* nature of the standards provided a unique opportunity for funder collaboration and for identifying and sharing effective models and practices across states and districts. “We have the opportunity to achieve genuine alignment with the Common Core State Standards,” declared one enthusiastic funder. Another funder stated, “Adoption of the Common Core potentially will open up the market to more entrepreneurial activity than we’ve ever seen in the field of education.”

Despite the widespread recognition among funders that the Common Core will

“Common Core implementation is a very heavy lift for districts. How can we support them to get ready?”

—Anne Stanton, *The James Irvine Foundation*

have a significant impact on education, a smaller number are responding through their philanthropy. We found that only 24 percent are either currently making or planning to make grants for implementation of the Common Core, and a significant majority (58 percent) stated they have no plans to fund implementation of the standards (*See figure 8*).

This represents a substantial increase from last year's *Benchmarking* survey, with the percentage of funders who fund or are planning to fund Common Core implementation nearly doubling (from 13 percent in 2011), but the percentage of those with no plans to fund Common Core efforts stayed relatively constant (58 percent in 2012 versus 59 percent in 2011).

Despite a perception that national funders are more likely to support Common Core implementation, our survey found that most of the funders making grants around the

FIGURE 8
Funding Common Core implementation

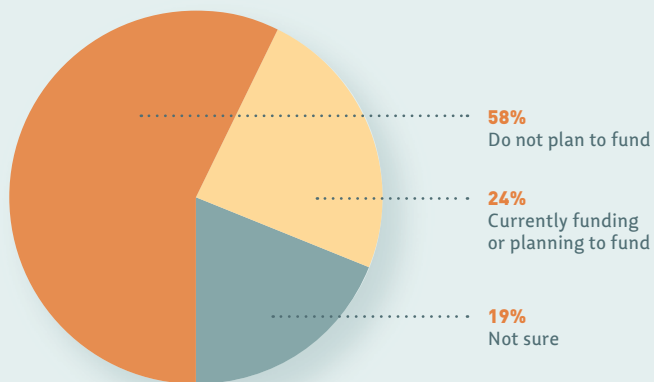
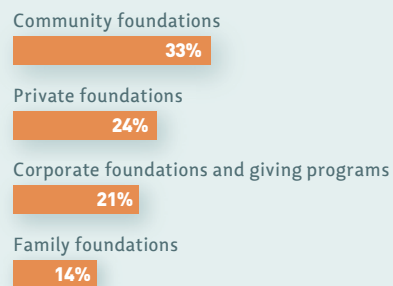


FIGURE 9
Who is funding Common Core implementation



Common Core are place-based funders. Community foundations are more than twice as likely as family foundations to support Common Core implementation and also far more likely than corporate funders (See figure 9).

More than half of the grantmakers supporting Common Core implementation are local funders (55 percent), funding either locally or within one or two states, and an additional seven percent are regional funders. Only 38 percent of the Common Core funders are national funders.

Of those funders currently supporting or planning to support implementation of the Common Core, 74 percent are making grants to support professional development for teachers and principals; 49 percent were investing in public awareness and communications initiatives; and 44 percent were supporting the creation of new curriculum and instructional materials. Very few funders are investing in student supports or in efforts to

align the new standards with higher education systems (See figure 10).

Transforming the delivery of education through technology

Many grantmakers believe that technology is driving a new wave of innovation in education, noting that “the increasingly sophisticated use of technology will transform instruction from traditional schools to virtual ones.” As a result, more funders anticipate increasing their attention and investments in this area, regardless of their funding domains, whether it is early education, K-12 or higher education. “We will likely invest in more technology delivery systems for education and have begun investing in neighborhoods of color,” explained one funder. Some noted that they are “exploring how to use technology to engage disconnected youth,” and others are focusing on technology “to assist disadvantaged students.” Another respondent added, “We are interested in exploring the role of technology in early education, where the use of computers has traditionally been ignored.” Funders are also seeing a growing demand from schools and districts to fund technology initiatives. “We are seeing an increased number of requests for 1:1 computing projects. In our last grant cycle, half of the requests we received were

“We will make certain that alignment with the Common Core is the central DNA of all our strategies.”

—Bob Reid, *J. F. Maddox Foundation*

for iPads to implement these projects,” affirmed a respondent.

We observed two different themes in grantmakers’ comments about the role of technology. One group of funders focused on ways that technology could alter the delivery of education to promote better student outcomes. These respondents spoke to the emergence of personalized and student-centered education enabled by new uses of technology. When accompanied by new models of teaching and learning, technology can allow students to pursue anywhere, anytime learning that allows students to develop mastery at their own pace. “We see more efforts to use technology to restructure students’ time both in and out of school,” noted one funder. Grantmakers are also identifying ways that technology can expand access to education through the use of online platforms—noting new developments such as the newly

“Education will be transformed through the integration of technology, personalization of learning, and a focus on 21st century skills and content.”

—Scott Thompson, *Panasonic Foundation*

“Education funding has tended to support the following areas: Common Core implementation, implementation of teacher effectiveness systems, post-secondary completion, and early childhood education. Funding is now being tied more regularly to reporting on outcomes, as particularly evidenced by funders’ greater emphasis on teacher effectiveness, growth, and support.”

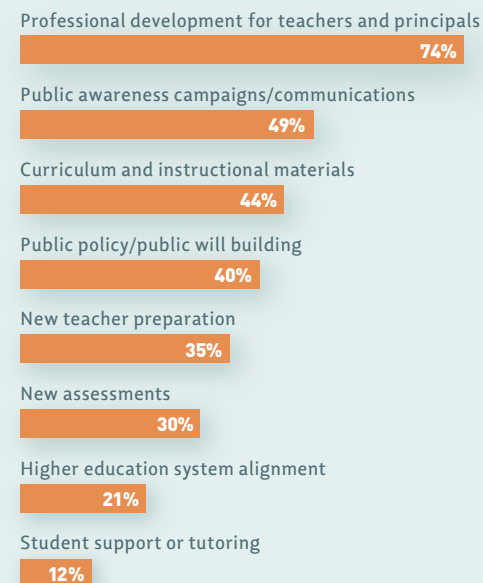
—Lauren Marra, *Arabella Advisors*

expanded role of MOOCs (multiple online open courses) in providing access to free open higher education content.

A second theme about technology focused on its role in reducing costs and increasing the productivity of education. As one respondent observed, “We will look to use technology to improve instruction and lower costs, if possible.” This was a particularly strong focus among higher education funders who are seeking ways

FIGURE 10

What kinds of implementation activities are funders supporting? (percentages of Common Core funders supporting each activity)



to leverage technology to address spiraling college costs. In the K-12 domain there has been more concern that a technology strategy driven around cost reduction will compromise the quality of the teacher-learner relationship.

While some observed that philanthropy has been slow to see and invest in some of the more transformational applications of technology in education, others urged caution about jumping on the technology bandwagon. One respondent cautioned funders to treat “technology as a strategy, not simply a tool,” and resist technology investments that were not accompanied by sound strategies that support teacher capacity to use technology or clear ties to improved learning outcomes. In a similar vein, another funder saw a trend of “jumping on technology as a solution, when it’s a

“The key trends are an emphasis on bringing all students to the Common Core, strengthening human capital/talent in schools, and digital support for learning.”

—Michele Cahill, *Carnegie Corporation of New York*

good tool, but not a solution in itself.”

To this end, funders were far more likely to express interest in blended learning models rather than fully virtual schools.

Improving teaching effectiveness

For each year of the *Benchmarking* series, efforts to improve teaching effectiveness have been among the top trends in education philanthropy. During this time, we’ve seen a shift in the strategies that are at the center of these efforts. A few years ago, alternative routes to teaching were at the forefront. Focus then shifted to efforts to define and characterize effective teaching. Most recently, the dominant trend has been a concentration on teacher performance management and evaluation systems, which has been incorporated into many states’ policies over the last two years. We see some signs that the next wave of focus will shift to providing supports for effective teaching in conjunction with evaluation systems.

Teacher evaluation and tenure reform were noted as a leading trend by many grantmakers. Many respondents noted the emergence of new teacher evaluation strategies and frameworks. “We need to explore authentic ways of evaluating teachers and then plan appropriate professional development activities,” suggested one funder. Another added, “Teacher evaluation

“There is growing attention to finding authentic ways of evaluating good teachers and planning appropriate professional development activities.”

—Jim DeNova, *Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation*

and value added measures will continue to emerge as an important topic for funders.” Many funders spoke about teacher evaluation in an accountability framework, although some felt the frame was shifting to professional growth, such as the funder who noted, “More positive attention is given to the professional growth and development of teachers and perhaps less attention to rewards and punishments for performance.” A few funders noted a growing trend toward human capital management systems and saw greater investment in creation of tools and systems for improving school and district talent management.

Respondents expressed overwhelming support for the teaching profession and declared that more positive attention should be devoted to the professional

growth and development of teachers. Funders recognize the need to invest in a teaching profession that is changing and will look different in the future. Several cited the need for a stronger teacher pipeline, starting with teacher preparation programs that prepare educators to teach 21st century skills, customize teaching to student learning styles, and gain strong content knowledge around STEM or the Common Core standards. Others noted the importance of “identifying effective teaching models and practices and making professional development more relevant to the demands of new models of learning.”

Several respondents noted that funders are not paying enough attention to principal

“There is continued focus on outcomes and metrics, and some willingness to place greater value on evidence-based programs. The higher expectations of the Common Core are a galvanizing force. And there is growing focus on collective impact.”

—Ilene Berman, *Annie E. Casey Foundation*

leadership and the role of principals in defining school leadership. Many suggested that “principals need training on how to evaluate teachers, provide feedback and tie it back to meaningful professional development opportunities.” Others recommended that more attention be directed to addressing leadership issues at the district and board levels. “We need to focus on capacity building for the next generation of leadership: to help build skills, shared vision and understanding among people working in different segments of the pipeline,” recommended one funder.

Emergent too was the growing agreement among funders on the need to listen and support teacher voice. Several funders spoke to the need to enlist teachers as partners and advisors in shaping strategies to enhance the teaching profession. “We need to engage teacher voices to accelerate change at the grassroots level,” suggested one respondent, “to ensure teacher motivation, effort, satisfaction and retention in the reform environment.”

Implementing evidence-based practices

The trend toward evidence-based practices and greater accountability, for both education systems and education philanthropy, was first noted in our 2011 *Benchmarking*

“There is an unfortunate tendency toward looking at short-term outputs and outcomes rather than organizations’ long term impact.”

—Mike Petrilli, *Thomas B. Fordham Foundation*

survey. In 2012, there is a continued focus on measurable outcomes and more funders are using data as a guide to identify areas of funding and focus. One respondent explained, “We are moving more toward performance-based grantmaking, with a focus on achieving results, not just promises of future activities.”

Education grantmaking is becoming more data driven, with growing interest in supporting only those projects that are based on measurable evidence and are producing measurable results. Grantmakers are more focused on using data for improvement and also as a guide to identify funding priorities. One respondent noted, “We need to be more disciplined about asking the big evaluation and sustainability questions up front and asking ourselves and our partners whether we’re really committed to fundamental

change in how we deliver our programs or spend our money.”

Respondents cited the growing reliance on research and evaluation of innovative practices to inform their funding decisions. They spoke to an increased focus on rigorous research to demonstrate effectiveness and proven programs that continue to build the field of evidence-based programs. Respondents noted that the sector is working to build its knowledge base and share lessons in an effort to better understand how programs and projects impact educational and community systems. A better understanding of effective practices will lay the groundwork for scaling and replication.

While there is a growing focus on evidence-based practices, there is also a concern that funders are not maximizing the benefits of research or leveraging available knowledge to impact sustained change. One respondent suggested that

“We are using data for improvement and as a guide to identify areas of funding to leverage sustainable change.”

—Susan Heegaard, *Bush Foundation*

“We don’t share challenges, failures or successes enough.” Others are concerned that funders are not looking to research to “understand what’s working and what’s not” and encouraging their colleagues to “differentiate quality research from self-promotional self-evaluation.” Yet another respondent commented that sometimes funders “ignore important research that doesn’t comport with dominant views.” Some are concerned that the emphasis on quantitative results minimizes the impact of programs that are more qualitative in nature, including those that provide wrap-around support to low-income students and families.

Many of these challenges may represent growing pains as the field gains more experience using performance grantmaking models. The challenge for funders will be to strike a balance between an appropriate focus on evidence and outcomes while recognizing that some important strategies will not produce immediately quantifiable results. It will also require the field to strengthen its ability to discern and interpret high-quality research and data analysis.

“Grantmakers today are more cautious and want evidence of good practice before funding. A stronger case must be made prior to funding riskier projects among smaller foundation boards.”

—Jennifer Manise, *Longview Foundation*

SECTION 3

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Every year, we ask education funders to review priority topics and indicate their funding priorities. Today, our *Benchmarking* survey tracks 28 funding priorities across the field. In 2008, we tracked 15.

The steady growth in the number of funding priorities speaks to the dramatic changes in the education landscape over the years, as well as the growing nuances of education reform strategies and grantmakers' responses to the complex challenges in the evolving field of education. Below, we briefly describe the top funding priorities that grantmakers are currently supporting, as well as provide data on the full range of funding priorities measured in the survey.

Closing the achievement gap

This funding priority was first added to the *Benchmarking* survey in 2010 and immediately rose to become the most common funding priority among education grantmakers. In 2010, 87 percent of funders indicated closing the achievement gap was a funding priority. In 2011, the percentage reached 90 percent and in 2012, nearly all funders—92 percent—were investing in this area, with nearly 65 percent committing major investments. This investment priority overlaps with a number of different priorities—such as investing in family and community supports, dropout prevention, college success, English language learners and others—but shows a widespread common focus on improving outcomes for marginalized and vulnerable learners.

Improving teaching quality

Improving teaching quality has consistently ranked among grantmakers' highest funding priorities. Investments in teacher professional development rank particularly high; funding of teacher professional development initiatives hit its highest ranking in 2012, with 80 percent of funders investing in improving teaching quality and performance, 34 percent of who cited this as a major investment. According to 2012 responses, family and private foundations were most likely to support teacher professional development initiatives, at 66 percent and 59 percent, respectively.

Ensuring college and career readiness

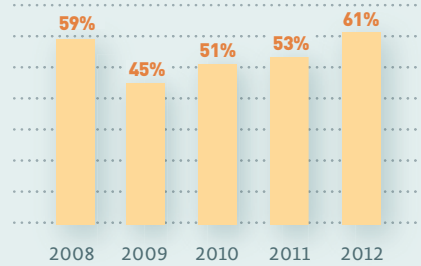
Reforming high school education and preparing students for college and career has consistently ranked high as a funding priority among education funders. During the last four years, on average, 66 percent of funders reported this as a funding priority. In 2012, the percentage jumped to 74 percent, most likely driven by the heightened emphasis on college and career readiness in policy circles.

Corporate funders and community foundations place the most emphasis on the funding priority, with 83 percent of these funders reporting investment in

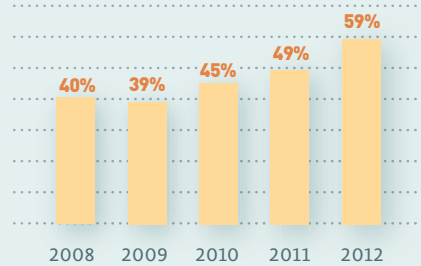
FIGURE 11

Funding college career readiness

POSTSECONDARY ACCESS



POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS



STEM

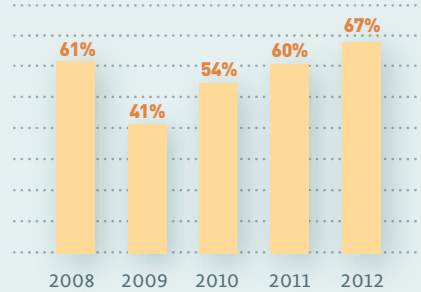
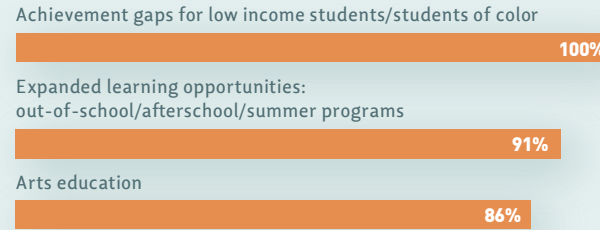


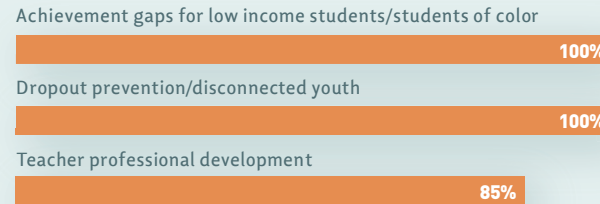
FIGURE 12

Top funding priorities by foundation type: Who is funding what?

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS



CORPORATE FOUNDATIONS AND GIVING PROGRAMS



FAMILY FOUNDATIONS



PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

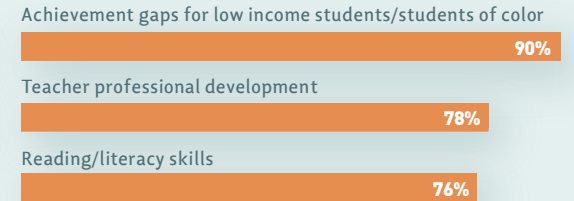
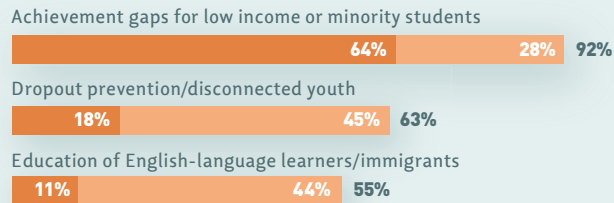


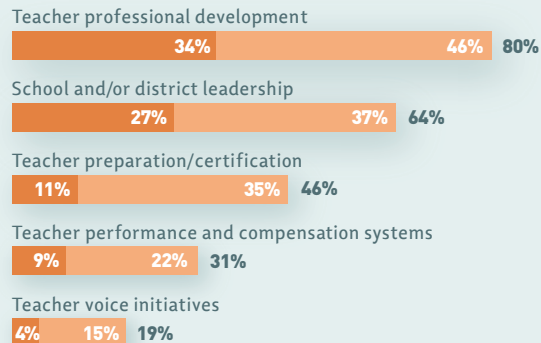
FIGURE 13

Current grantmaking priorities

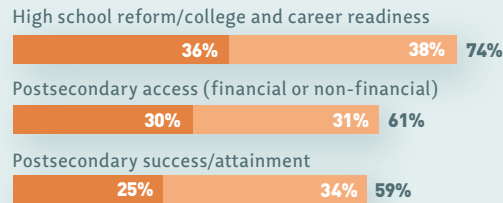
VULNERABLE POPULATIONS



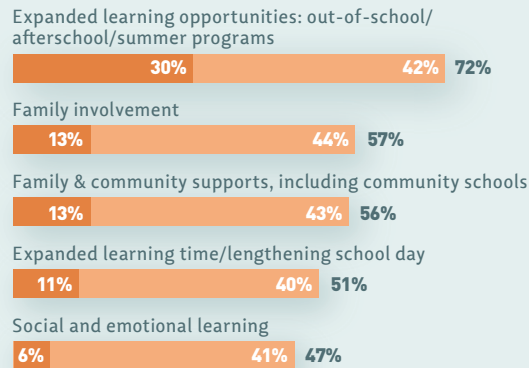
HUMAN CAPITAL



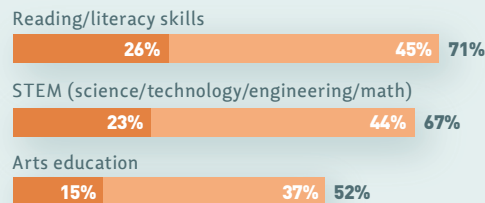
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS



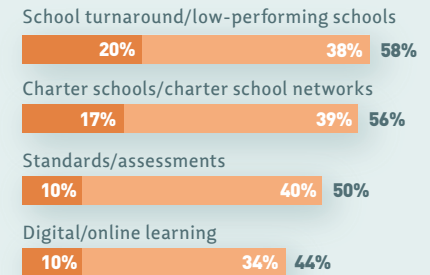
EXPANDING THE AVENUES FOR LEARNING



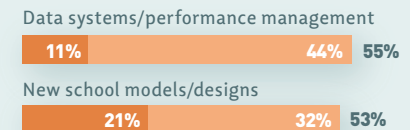
SUBJECT FOCUS



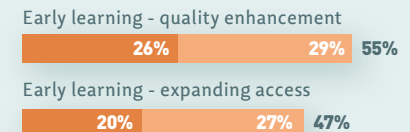
EDUCATION DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND DESIGNS



ACCOUNTABILITY



EARLY LEARNING



KEY: % Major investment
 % Some investment
 % Total investment

high school reform and college/career readiness, compared with private foundations (73 percent) and family foundations (68 percent).

Other closely related topics, such as postsecondary access and success, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) have also seen an increase in funder investments over the years (See figure 11).

Expanded learning opportunities

Education grantmakers continue to emphasize the importance of funding expanded learning opportunities, such as out-of-school, after school or summer programs. Since 2008, on average, the percentage of funders who cited expanded learning opportunities as an important priority investment has held at 70 percent.

Other closely related investments include expanded learning time (51 percent) and community schools or other models that blend family, community and social support (57 percent) according to 2012 responses.

Reading and literacy skills

Reading and literacy skills have rounded out the priority list each year. According to this year's survey, 71 percent of funders make either major or some investments in improving reading and literacy skills and

this percentage has held steady over the years. Recently, many of these investments have been made in early learning, with a focus on helping children reaching the third grade benchmarks.

SECTION 4

LOOKING AHEAD: A CALL FOR OUR FIELD

As society's independent sector, our field has a unique role to play in improving outcomes and expanding opportunities for our nation's learners. We have a unique vantage point. By sitting outside of the education systems and programs that serve young people, we are able to see the whole—to look at the connections between programs and efforts and consider how they can add up to something larger. We have a high degree of freedom.

Our independence means we are not constrained by opinion polls or electoral cycles, and so we can take the long view and set our sights beyond what is merely expedient. We have flexible resources. We are able to think big, take big risks and invest in the long shots that have potential to bring about transformative results.

Are we living up to that potential? At the same time we hold these aspirations for ourselves, we must also confront the reality that we often don't live up to them. At times philanthropy can be myopic, focused on our own strategies and agendas and losing sight of the broader picture. As one funder asked, "Do we know what happens outside our strategic plans and what happens to students after they leave the programs we support?" As our field has grown more strategic, at times we've been prisoners of our strategies, opting not to be a part of a bigger solution because it is "off strategy." At times our increased focus on accountability and measurable results has driven us to think smaller, focusing on what can be measured, rather than aim for larger systemic solutions that might take longer to accomplish with results that are less tangible and more difficult to prove. And rarely do we truly make the kinds of long-term investments we know deep-down are needed to achieve results. In a field that is still dominated by the three-year (or

less) grant cycle, we may settle for solutions that are under-matched to the giant problems that challenge our education systems.

So where do we go from here?

Take the long view

As we continue to focus on the challenges and opportunities of today, we must also look much further down the road. A confluence of trends—demographic, fiscal and technological—is developing that will change the face of our nation's learners, and the systems that serve them. We will have more students with higher needs—English learners and children raised in poverty—attending systems with greatly reduced resources. At the same time, technological developments may unlock new opportunities

"It is our role to educate policy makers and the public about how the funding crisis is not taking into account student growth or the fact that the majority of these students are low income and ELL."

—Jennifer Esterline, *KDK-Harman Foundation*

for anytime, anywhere learning that allows deeper, more personalized learning. Alternately, we face the risk of using technology simply as a cost reduction strategy to provide a least-common denominator education without harnessing its potential for enhancing student learning and addressing equity gaps in our education systems.

Grantmakers are keenly attuned to the fiscal environment in which we are working. For the last five years, survey respondents have spoken strongly about the fiscal crisis, and funders have worked hard to identify appropriate strategies by which they can preserve the most essential programs and lessen the impact on society's most vulnerable. Yet while many of our efforts have focused on responding to the immediate needs, a more troubling narrative is developing with longer term consequences—and it has drawn far less attention. The cuts in public funding for education at all levels threaten to be compounded in future years as health care costs skyrocket and displace other state funding priorities and are further compounded by deficit reduction efforts and mounting state pension crises.

Postsecondary education has been the canary in the coal mine. States have made dramatic reductions in support for higher education that go far beyond the cuts to

K-12 or early childhood. The burden of paying for higher education has shifted significantly from public systems to individuals while funders and policymakers are striving to help a much larger and broader generation of students attain postsecondary credentials. As grantmakers help more low-income and vulnerable students who seek a college education, we must also keep a close eye on the broader economic narrative to ensure we continue to have public systems of higher education that can serve low-income students at a reasonable cost. And we must anticipate that this narrative will also unfold in K-12 and early learning.

In short, we need to identify today's problems and anticipate tomorrow's bigger challenges. And we must respond with solutions that are matched to both.

Big problems require big solutions

As we rise to meet the urgent challenge of educating all of our children to much higher standards that will prepare them to succeed in college, career and civic life, we must take stock of what that will require. We must think big and design big solutions, from addressing the deep structural issues of race and poverty to tackling the underlying resource models that cripple our education systems. We can't get the outcomes we seek through programs alone.

“Historically, philanthropy has stepped into the gap when political leadership failed. Philanthropy has a higher calling than that of any political institution. We have the opportunity to focus on what is right, not just what is politically or economically feasible. So if the American Dream is fading, it's on us.”

—John Jackson, *The Schott Foundation for Public Education*

And even as GFE's members invest several billion dollars in improving education annually, we must recognize philanthropy's investment is simply not enough to move our complex systems toward high-impact solutions. We must look to how philanthropy's resources can catalyze and enhance the much greater investments of public funds in our education systems. As educators face tremendous challenges, such as large-scale implementation of new standards and assessments in 45 states, we must consider how our unique resources

can play a catalytic role in leveraging the much larger public investments in professional development, curriculum acquisition and other areas to achieve the bold results all are seeking. We must engage with others—whether through advocacy, intermediaries, partnerships or strategic investments—if we are to design systems that deliver on their promises.

Philanthropy must organize itself better to meet the challenges and opportunities that confront us. Large-scale change will require our field to work more effectively and collaboratively toward a common goal. Although our fiscal climate is constrained, we still have vast resources at our disposal compared with most other countries. We must learn from other high-performing countries that have achieved powerful results, often with fewer resources. And we must bring a systemic focus that makes

“Systems need ‘both/and’ solutions, not the steady diet of ‘either/or’ solutions that currently dominate public discourse and philanthropy.”

—Kent McGuire, *Southern Education Foundation*

every investment count by ensuring it is well aligned with the other parts of the system to build a coherent set of supports.

Play to our strengths

We have a formidable toolbox to bring to this work. As an industry whose inventory is money, we bring much-needed capital that has more value than ever in a time of shrinking public funding. As a field we’ve deepened our experience and sophistication substantially over recent years in how best to use our more limited investments to leverage greater impact. We must continue to share our successes and our failures widely so we continue to grow in our effectiveness as society’s virtuous investors.

But our resources stretch well beyond the capital investment. Over the years, many funders have told us that some of their greatest accomplishments required relatively little funding. Often these successes occurred when grantmakers played to their strengths as neutral conveners. By setting the table for collaboration and strategizing across different systems and sectors, by bringing together unlikely partners and ensuring all voices are heard, and by working to move past the ideological divides, grantmakers have helped to support some extraordinary efforts to build a stronger educational pipeline. We must recognize that

“In its attempts to affect innovation in teaching and learning, philanthropy is too often tinkering around the edges, which continues to deliver low outcomes.”

—John Mullaney, *The Nord Family Foundation*

the role of convener requires as much art, care and talent as the role of investor, and bring the same level of intentionality to that work as we do to our more traditional roles.

Finally, we must constantly remind ourselves of the core purpose and vision that animates our work. We must be merciless in driving ourselves—and our education systems—to better outcomes. We must preserve the hope, apply the heat, and provide the help to get there. While it is essential to make incremental wins in service of a bigger goal, we must never confuse those with the end results we are seeking: to ensure that we provide every child in America the education we would want for our own children, and that we build a delivery system that prepares every learner for success in their education, their career and their civic life.

SECTION 5

THE EDUCATION GRANTMAKING LANDSCAPE

GFE members reflect the diverse field of education philanthropy. This section offers a snapshot of the basic characteristics of the 198 grantmaking organizations that responded to the survey. We asked respondents to tell us who they are and where they fund. We also sought to better understand how much they grant to education annually and how they distribute those funds along the education pipeline.

Benchmarking 2012 respondents:

- **Represent varied foundation types.**

Family and private foundations make up the largest majority of grantmakers (34 percent and 32 percent, respectively), with community foundations at 12 percent and corporate funders (both corporate foundations and giving programs) at eight percent (*See figure 14*).

- **Work across the range of geographic focus.**

A large majority of respondents fund in their local communities (44 percent), while 27 percent fund in one or two states and 18 percent fund nationally (*See figure 15*). Most funders fund in urban communities, with nearly 76 percent funding in large urban areas and 66 percent in small to medium ones. Nearly 42 percent fund in rural communities.

- **Have varied grantmaking budgets and make grants of all sizes and duration.**

The majority of respondents (68 percent) have education grantmaking budgets of \$5 million or less; only 18 percent have budgets exceeding \$10 million (*See figure 16*). The largest group of respondents (31 percent) makes grants that average \$50,000 or less; split evenly (50 percent) between those making grants under \$100,000 and those making grants over \$100,000 (*See figure 17*). Fifty percent of

respondents typically make two- to three-year commitments when funding grants, and only 16 percent commit to grants beyond four years (*See figure 18*). Nearly two-thirds of respondents (61 percent) expect their education grantmaking budgets to remain about the same; about 24 percent anticipated an increase. Fourteen percent expected a decrease (*See figure 19*).

- **Invest across all levels of the education pipeline.**

Survey respondents fund every level of education, from early learning to college and career readiness, often providing support for better alignment at key transition points across the system. Even as a majority of respondents (90 percent) fund K-12 education, only eight percent fund exclusively in this area. Nearly half fund birth-5 (49 percent) and postsecondary education (48 percent), but only one percent and four percent fund exclusively in these areas, respectively (*See figure 20*).

- **Fund multiple strategies to leverage grantmaking impact.**

While the majority of funders collaborate with other funders to achieve their goals (90 percent), almost as many collaborate with non-funders as well (84 percent). Many expect to increase their collaborative efforts in the next two years (*See figure 21*).

FIGURE 14
Type of grantmaking organization

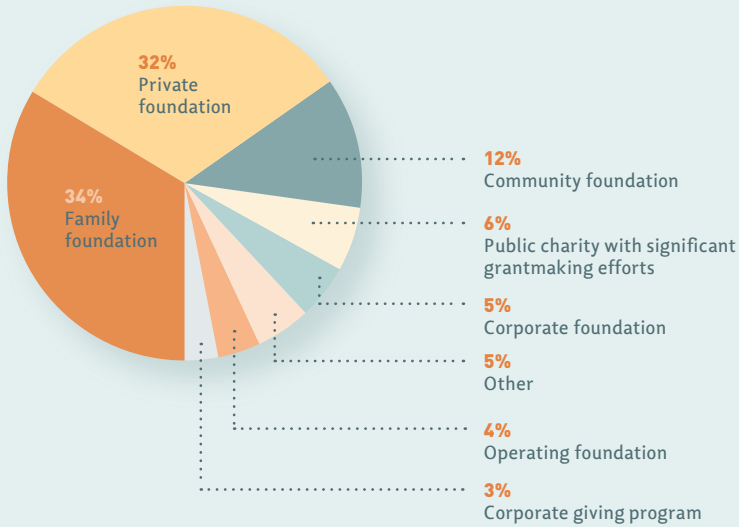


FIGURE 15
Geographic scope of education grantmaking

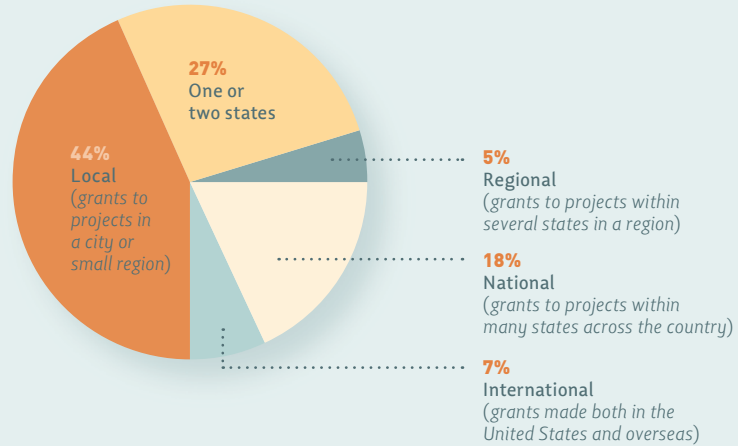


FIGURE 16
Annual education grants budget

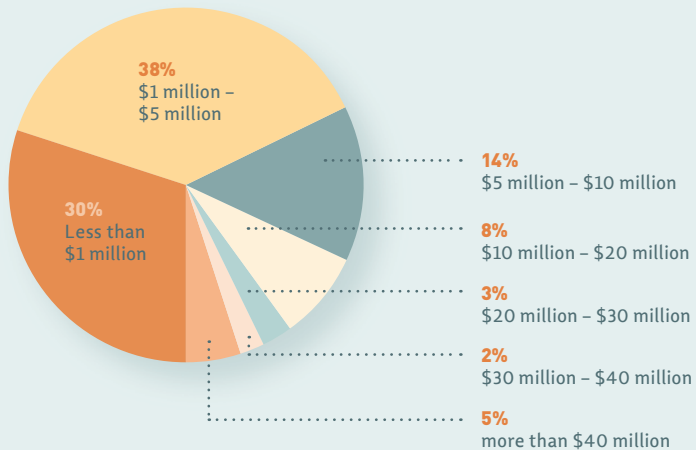
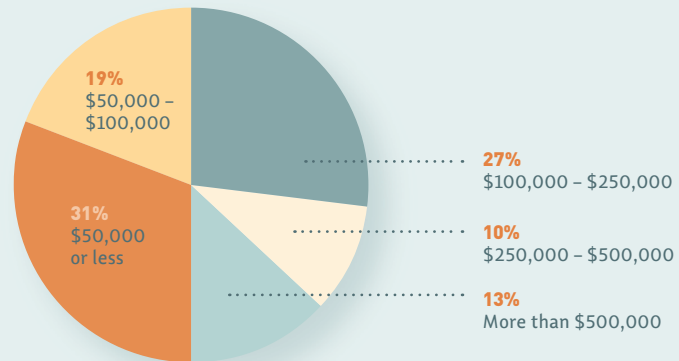


FIGURE 17
Average education grant size



Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

FIGURE 18

Typical education grant duration

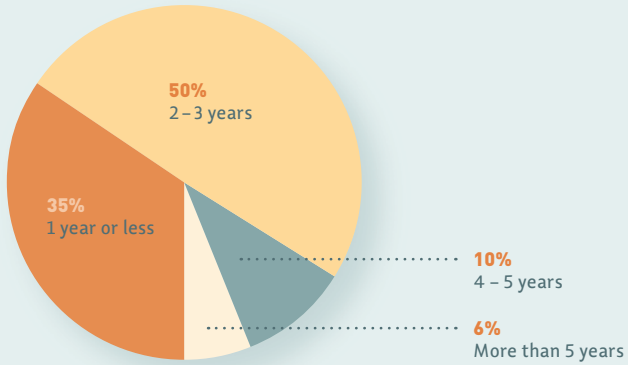
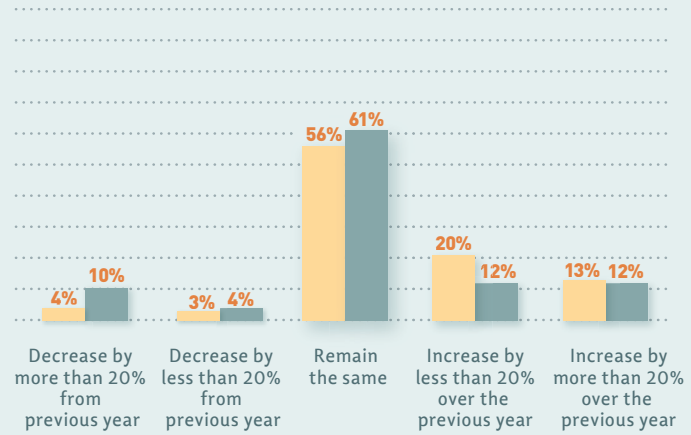


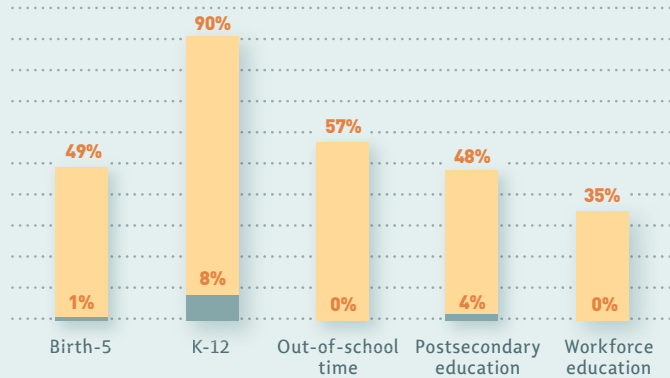
FIGURE 19

Anticipated change to education grantmaking budgets in 2011 and 2012



KEY: 2011 2012

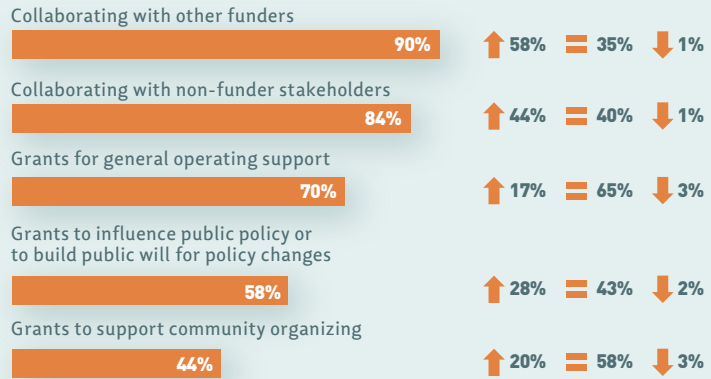
FIGURE 20
Education grantmaking content areas



KEY:

- Grantmakers with some funding in this area
- Grantmakers funding exclusively in this area

FIGURE 21
Strategies for leveraging grantmaking impact



KEY:

- ↑ Anticipate increasing funding
- = Anticipate maintaining funding
- ↓ Anticipate decreasing funding

PRINCIPLES FOR 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 strengthens philanthropy to improve outcomes and expand opportunities for all learners. As a national network of more than 280 private and public grantmaking organizations supporting education from early learning through postsecondary education, GFE provides research, programs and resources to increase funders' ability to be strategic and capable in their education grantmaking. For more information or to learn about membership, please contact us.

information@edfunders.org | 503.595.2100 | www.edfunders.org



We appreciate the generous support provided by Target for the preparation of this report.