

# Mapping Foundation Funding for Elementary/Secondary Education to the Department of Education's Reform Goals

## INTRODUCTION

To determine the extent of U.S. foundation involvement in funding for purposes related to the Department of Education's (DOE) reform goals, the Foundation Center worked with an advisory committee consisting of leading education funders to map its annual grants sample data to the DOE priorities. The Center's grants sample data includes all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a set of over 1,000 of the country's largest foundations and accounts for approximately half of grant dollars awarded each year by the universe of more than 75,000 U.S. grantmaking foundations.

The Foundation Center first filtered these data to include only domestically focused grants awarded to local, state, national, or tribal governments or to nonprofit organizations with a primary or secondary purpose of elementary/secondary education and reform, literacy, educational testing, educational services that specify "college," or that were awarded to or for the benefit of charter schools. The Center made every effort to exclude grants made to religiously affiliated institutions and to "private" schools, which are generally chartered as nonprofit entities. (However, a few grants to the latter institutions may have been included.)

The Foundation Center then worked with a team of its senior grants indexers to map the descriptions of the reform goals included in the [4/24/09 DOE memo, "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: Using ARRA Funds to Drive School Reform and Improvement"](#) to actual foundation grants.

The following sections include the reform goal definitions provided in the 4/24/09 memo and the criteria that the Foundation Center used to approximate these descriptions. Based on feedback from project advisors, the Center did not attempt to restrict the grants included to only those precisely matching the DOE definition. Rather, the Center focused on identifying

criteria that would capture grantmaking *related* to the DOE priorities, so as to identify the broadest possible pool of foundations that may be interested in funding around to the reform goals.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

### Establishing data systems and using data for improvement

**Department of Education Description:** "At the heart of improving schools and school districts are systems to gather and analyze data and provide feedback to educators, students, families, and the community in order to improve student and teacher performance continuously. Examples of investments in data systems and effective use of data include efforts to:

- Develop or enhance existing data systems to provide teachers access to (1) student data in such areas as attendance, grades, course schedules, and disability or English language learner status, and (2) data that show academic performance and growth, how those compare to statewide averages for similar students and schools, and whether students are on track to meet standards and graduate from high school.
- Train principals, teachers, guidance counselors, and other staff to use data to identify the specific help students need to succeed, to adjust classroom instruction to better address student strengths and weaknesses, and to target professional development and other resources on student and teacher needs.
- Track the number and percentage of students by school who graduate high school and go on to complete at least one year's worth of college credit. Use the information to

strengthen high school programs and increase the percentage of students going on to college.

- Link districts' multiple data systems (including student, financial, and personnel) and use resulting information for analyses and reports that enable community, district, and school leaders to better understand the educational and cost effectiveness of district programs and strategies and allocate resources accordingly.
- Launch an easy-to-use online Individualized Education Program (IEP) system for students with disabilities that is aligned with state academic standards and can be used by educators to create content-rich IEPs that are aligned with the general education curriculum."

**Foundation Center Criteria:** This category includes all domestic public elementary/secondary education grants with a primary or secondary purpose of management/ technical assistance, research, or information services, or key terms such as "data," "analysis," and "accountability."

## **COLLEGE AND CAREER PREPARATION** **Strengthening preparation for college and careers**

**Department of Education Description:** "Align a district preschool program with state early learning guidelines and K-3 standards and support credentialing and intensive training for staff working with high poverty children and families. Provide comprehensive screenings to identify at-risk children and connect with vision, health, and other services. Expand the availability and range of inclusive placement options for preschoolers with disabilities by developing the capacity of public and private preschool programs to serve these children. If there is a plan for sustainability, expand high-quality preschool programs to provide access for larger numbers of young children."

Note: The DOE plans to release a more detailed description of their funding priorities in this area.

**Foundation Center Criteria:** This category includes all domestic public elementary/secondary education grants with a primary or secondary purpose of employment services, counseling, or training, types of support coding for internships, or key terms such as "college," "postsecondary," "drop out."

## **EARLY LEARNING** **Strengthening early learning**

**Department of Education Description:** "Offer dual enrollment courses and student internships and train school staff to help students understand college and career options, provide effective guidance, and create a college-going culture. For students with disabilities, employ transition coaches for two years to identify work-study, community service, internship, college, and career opportunities and to establish community partnerships that can endure after two years."

Note: The DOE plans to release a more detailed description of their funding priorities in this area.

**Foundation Center Criteria:** This category includes all domestic public elementary/secondary education grants with a primary or secondary purpose of early childhood education or child development.

## **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS** **Adopting rigorous standards and high-quality assessments**

**Department of Education Description:** "World-class education systems are built upon college- and career-ready standards, rich and engaging curricula based on the standards, and high-quality, aligned assessments to measure student learning. While many states are actively revising their standards and assessments to increase rigor and improve alignment, districts and schools can concurrently take steps to promote rigorous standards, effective

assessment systems, and strong curriculum. Some examples would be to:

- Increase student participation in rigorous advanced courses such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and dual enrollment in postsecondary credit-bearing courses and provide professional development for teachers and counselors to make the expansion possible.
- Develop or adopt formative and interim assessments that are valid and reliable for all students, especially students with disabilities and English language learners, and that provide timely data to help educators track and improve student progress. If assessments are technology based, train teachers in how to use this technology.
- Purchase or adapt a high-quality curriculum aligned with standards with embedded assessments. Include instructional materials appropriate for English language learners and students with disabilities. For two years of *ARRA* funding, intensively train all teachers in effectively using the curriculum with their students.”

**Foundation Center Criteria:** This category includes all domestic public elementary/secondary education grants with a primary or secondary purpose of public policy or for reform of bilingual, gifted, and special education programs, types of support coding for research or program evaluation, or key terms such as “student testing” and “academic performance.”

## **TEACHER QUALITY AND LEADERSHIP** **Increasing teacher effectiveness and improving school leadership**

### ***Department of Education Description:***

“Teacher effectiveness is a major influence on students’ academic success. Districts and school leaders can improve teacher effectiveness and address inequitable teacher distribution through how they recruit, hire, induct, develop, evaluate, advance, and compensate teachers. Moreover, they can create the school conditions that foster teacher effectiveness and retention such as excellent school leadership, time for collaboration, and a culture of continuous improvement. Examples of strategies to improve teacher effectiveness and address inequitable distribution of highly qualified teachers between low- and high-poverty schools include to:

- Establish and implement a fair and reliable teacher evaluation system that provides ongoing feedback to teachers about their performance based on objective measures of student achievement outcomes and multiple classroom observations, that gives guidance for improving instructional practices, and that is used to inform teacher professional development and advancement.
- Attract effective teachers into high-poverty schools and hard-to-staff subject areas by restructuring personnel operations to increase the pool of high-quality applicants, make timely hiring decisions, place teachers appropriately, and provide feedback to teacher preparation programs on the success of their graduates. Fill shortage areas by supporting teachers in obtaining dual certification in special education or English language acquisition.
- Redesign teacher professional development and school schedules to ensure that teacher learning opportunities are sustained, job-embedded, collaborative, data-driven, and focused on student instructional needs. Help teachers master relevant content knowledge,

especially for middle and high school teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas, such as math and science. Provide intense professional development over two years and additional training to highly effective teachers who will be able to serve as expert instructional leaders and coaches in the future.

- Support new teachers in their first two years on the job through induction programs that include structured mentoring, teacher networks, and extensive professional development.
- Provide professional development for special education and general education teachers on evidence-based school-wide strategies in reading, math, writing, science, and other subject areas, and positive behavioral supports to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Train school staff to partner with families to improve student learning, including helping staff clearly communicate about school programs and individual student progress and fostering involvement in school activities and decision making. Support home visits, family nights, and parent training that help families make informed decisions about their children's academic program, request needed services, assist with homework, and support learning in other ways.
- Upgrade school leader recruitment efforts and create a two-year program of professional development and coaching, with special attention to new principals, to increase principal effectiveness in raising school performance.
- Redesign teacher and principal compensation systems to reward factors related to contribution and effectiveness. Increase pay to attract and retain effective math and science teachers.”

**Foundation Center Criteria:** This category includes all domestic public elementary/secondary education grants with a primary or secondary purpose of leadership development, type of support coding for faculty/staff development, or key terms such as “teacher,” “principal,” and “leader.”

## **LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS** **Turning around the lowest-performing schools**

**Department of Education Description:** “Turning around persistently low-performing schools is likely to require a significant overhaul of school staff, leadership, instructional program and calendar, and for the most distressed schools, school closing or consolidation. In the context of taking such forceful action, examples of strategies that can contribute to school improvement include to:

- Aggressively restructure or close a district's persistently lowest performing schools and reopen with new leadership and staff, a new research-based instructional model, longer school day and year, and intensive job-embedded professional development for teachers.
- Support community schools that offer art, reading clubs, and other academic enrichment while also engaging community, social service, and health organizations to better serve students and their families.
- Provide incentives, including bonuses, to teams of highly effective teachers and leaders to move to low-performing schools and to take on instructional leadership roles.
- Add time to the school day and year and redesign the school schedule to increase time for core academics, enrichment, and staff collaboration.
- Create 9th grade academies staffed with highly effective teachers to help students transition successfully to high school, and create summer

programs that prepare struggling students to be successful in gateway courses, such as algebra, and in college-preparatory Advanced Placement classes.

- Launch a comprehensive literacy program. In an elementary school, purchase a new reading curriculum that focuses on improving students' oral language competence and academic vocabulary so as to improve comprehension and address the fourth-grade reading drop off. Provide an intensive two-year training program for all teachers and the principal. In a secondary school, train staff and purchase materials for a literacy program that identifies students' needs, supports literacy development across content areas, and provides interventions for struggling students.
- Create intensive summer institutes and ongoing support for teams of principals, teachers, and counselors from low-performing schools to analyze data and develop specific action plans for improving student results.
- Develop a data-driven approach to understanding school performance and the causes of low performance; closely monitoring results of restructured schools; providing results to school staff, families and communities; and then using this information to modify approaches and expand successful approaches."

**Foundation Center Criteria:** This category includes all domestic public elementary/secondary education grants with a primary or secondary purpose of school reform, or key terms such as "low-performing" or "underperforming."

## **OTHER PRIORITIES**

### **Funding for purposes outside of the Department of Education's Reform Goals**

**Foundation Center Criteria:** This category includes all grantmaking for domestic public elementary/secondary education that is not captured by the definitions developed for the reform goals, in addition to all grant awarded directly to or for purposes related to charter schools. Examples include grants to support out-of-school/extended learning, community schools, and capital projects at elementary/secondary schools.