EDUCATION PROGRAM

STRATEGIC PLAN

THE WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION

OCTOBER 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE HEWLETT FOUNDATION HAS BEEN MAKING GRANTS to improve education since 1967. Since 2002, the Foundation's Education Program has invested in projects and organizations dedicated to improving the conditions for education policy reform in California, supporting the spread of high-quality Open Educational Resources (OER) around the world, and improving student achievement through a series of innovative national grants. Now the program is broadening its strategy to include supporting an education system that gives every student in the United States a mastery of the knowledge and skills that education experts and business leaders agree are essential to success in the twenty-first century.

The program has adopted the term ***deeper learning*** to describe this additional area of interest. Deeper learning brings together five key elements that work in concert: mastering core academic content, critical thinking and problem solving, effective communication, working in collaboration, and learning how to monitor and direct one's own learning.

A new strategic plan, approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors in March 2010, aims to equalize education for all students by working simultaneously toward goals in each of three major components that make up the Foundation's Education Program:

- **Deeper Learning:** Increase economic opportunity and civic engagement through deeper learning, e.g., improving what students learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate their knowledge.

- **Open Educational Resources:** Equalize student and teacher access to high-quality, openly licensed educational materials that offer opportunity for people everywhere to share, use, and reuse knowledge.

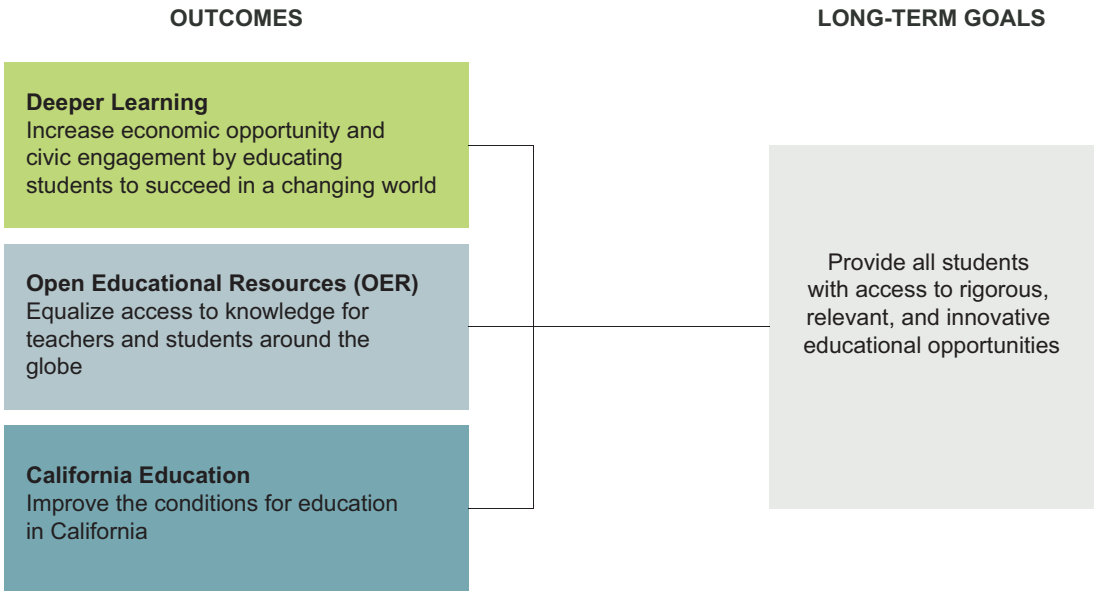
- **California Education:** Improve the overall quality of California's education system, especially by closing racial and economic achievement gaps so that all students can learn at the same high levels.

The Education Program pursues these goals by investing in projects and organizations that develop and advocate for innovation in ideas, practices, and tools, as well as those that participate in the public policy debate on these issues.

The deeper learning component reflects increased concern about the ability of U.S. schools to prepare a new generation of students for the economic, technological, environmental, and societal challenges of the future. It is the culmination of months of research and analysis, including more than 100

interviews with top thinkers in the fields of education, business, and public policy. Throughout its investigation, the Education Program found widespread agreement that America's schools must shift course in order to prepare students for the complex world they will inherit. We recognize that educators have long acknowledged the importance of this type of learning. Growing evidence suggests to us that this is an opportune time to make real progress toward these goals.

Hewlett Foundation Education Program



1 COMPONENT: DEEPER LEARNING

GOAL: Increase economic opportunity and civic engagement by educating students to succeed in a changing world.

Students in the United States face a world that is changing at a pace that would have been unimaginable just decades ago. Commerce, politics, and technology are defined in international terms. Competition comes from all corners of the world. Pressing societal issues, from growing income disparities to climate change, threaten the health and prosperity of future generations.

As designed today, U.S. schools inadequately prepare students in core subjects such as reading, math, science, and writing. In an attempt to incorporate wide-ranging state standards into a short academic year, they are forced to sacrifice depth of learning for breadth. They can pay only scant attention to cultivating skills within each core subject area that students will need to thrive as adults, such as complex problem solving and effective communication. Moreover, our education system disproportionately fails to prepare low-income students on all fronts. It's clear the nation's K-12 and higher education systems require a major overhaul if they are to meet the challenges ahead.

DEEPER LEARNING

The abilities students will need to thrive

Abilities	Examples *(understanding ecosystems)*
Master core academic content	Learn about water, oxygen and nitrogen cycles, food webs, and similar topics.
Think critically and solve complex problems	Re-create a natural ecosystem in a terrarium. Collect data to understand the interdependence of physical and biological elements.
Work collaboratively	Work in a team to design, build, and monitor the terrarium.
Communicate effectively	Present data and conclusions in writing and to an audience.
Learn how to learn independently	Use teacher feedback, test results, and reflection to guide future learning and improve study habits.

The Hewlett Foundation envisions schools and community colleges designed to give the next generation of students—especially those from high-poverty communities—the knowledge and skills required to succeed in this new environment. These schools would harness the deeper learning skills of critical thinking and problem solving, effective communication,

collaboration, and learning how to learn, to help students develop a strong mastery of core academic subjects.

Students need this preparation to succeed in college, find satisfying work in a fiercely competitive global job market, and tackle increasingly complex environmental and social problems. Although this approach to education is still evolving rapidly, it is encouraging to note that scholars nationwide have found preliminary evidence of positive links between deeper learning, economic success, and civic engagement.

The Education Program's goals are ambitious. The first goal is that by 2017, 15 percent of the students nationwide will be assessed on a basis that emphasizes rigorous deeper learning. By 2025, as deeper learning becomes institutionalized through policies and practices nationwide, our goal is for 80 percent of U.S. students to be able to benefit from this form of instruction.

In practice, this means that these students would emerge from their schooling with the ability to:

- *Master core academic content:* Students will develop a baseline set of disciplinary knowledge. This includes facts and theories in a variety of domains—and the language and skills needed to acquire and understand this content.

- *Think critically and solve complex problems:* Students will know how and when to apply core knowledge by employing statistical reasoning and scientific inquiry to formulate accurate hypotheses, offer coherent explanations, and make well-reasoned arguments, along with other skills. It also includes creativity in analyzing and solving problems.

- *Work collaboratively:* Students will cooperate to identify or create solutions to societal, vocational, and personal challenges. This includes the ability to organize people, knowledge, and resources toward a goal, and to understand and accept multiple points of view.

- *Communicate effectively:* Students will be able to understand and transfer knowledge, meaning, and intention. This involves the ability to express important concepts, present data and conclusions in writing and to an audience, and listen attentively.

- *Learn how to learn:* Students will know how to monitor and direct their own work and learning.

Focus

Although the goal is to ensure deeper learning for every student, the program's work over the next seven years will focus on a narrower age and geographic range, and possibly specific subject areas. Initially, it is expected to concentrate on:

- *Low-income students:* The program plans to make investments in supporting demonstration projects, policy, and practice in high-poverty schools and community colleges with persistent achievement gaps.

- *Middle school through community college:* The program will likely emphasize work with students in middle school and higher, a key set of years when students develop the critical attitudes and habits that follow them throughout their lives. Explicitly investing in community colleges also will help ensure that deeper learning is closely tied to college and career readiness and success.

- *Key states:* Through support for organizations focused on policy work and demonstration projects in key states, the program expects to build up to nationwide impact. Further research and analysis will point to states where the policy environment is conducive to innovation and collaboration with government and where there is high potential for successful investments that benefit many students.

- *Common Core subjects:* A balanced educational approach requires improvement in all fields of knowledge, but the program is considering English/language arts and math, which are included in the Common Core State Standards, and science, which is under development. The Common Core State Standards are a state-led effort to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare students for college and the workforce.

Scope

The program will invest in organizations that:

- Promote *policies or strategies* that create incentives for schools to focus on deeper learning—particularly improved assessments used to measure a student's academic growth.

- Build educational systems' *capacity and practice*, both online and in the classroom, to reach large numbers of students with deeper learning.

- Support *proof points*, including model K-12 schools and community colleges, and fund research that documents how deeper learning is an attainable and necessary goal for all students.

As the program's strategy evolves, it also will remain *flexible* to unanticipated funding opportunities that might help achieve its goals more quickly or *effectively*. This could include the development of new, innovative models to increase access for all students and to improve deeper learning.

SUPPORTIVE POLICY

These investments support organizations that promote state and federal policies that will steer the education system toward broad implementation of deeper learning across the United States by 2017. The primary objectives

are to incorporate high-quality, affordable assessments of deeper learning into K-12 accountability systems nationwide; prompt the re-direction of federal, state, and local funding and support to focus on deeper learning at both the K-12 and community college levels; and remove policy barriers that could inhibit the spread and impact of deeper learning.

For the K-12 system, the program sees the new Common Core Standards as an important driver for states and schools to revisit assessment, curriculum, and instruction. Already adopted by thirty-six states and the District of Columbia, these K-12 system standards are: anchored in college and career readiness, internationally benchmarked, evidence-based, and focused on a reduced number of learning outcomes to allow development of deeper learning competencies. For higher education, the program will take advantage of the growing interest by state leaders to improve their college completion rate, which in turn will generate institutional demands and pressures for new approaches.

Policies affecting assessments, incentives, and system capacity

Too many state-standardized tests, with their reliance on multiple-choice questions, currently measure a limited range of knowledge and skills, signaling to teachers that more complicated tasks like communications and problem solving aren't valued or essential. In contrast, greater use of high quality performance-based assessments would help support rigorous deeper learning in classrooms.

The program will provide support as follows:

- In its first phase, the program plans to support organizations working at the K-12 level to ensure that valid, reliable, and affordable comprehensive, summative assessments of deeper learning skills are supported by state and federal policy. It also will work to ensure that these assessments are aligned with formative assessments that are integrated into the curriculum, which allow teachers to evaluate student learning in ways that improve their teaching practice.

- In addition to supporting efforts to incorporate these assessments into state accountability systems, the program will support organizations working on alignment of state policies for curriculum adoption and professional development to enhance the best practices of deeper learning. It also will support grantees working to address policy barriers to innovation that may block access to high-quality Open Educational Resources content.

Ultimately, as momentum on deeper learning reforms accelerates in some key states, the program anticipates that the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), in 2011 or 2012 and again in 2017 or 2018, will offer unprecedented opportunities for policymakers to revise the federal accountability and incentive system to measure and support deeper learning nationwide.

While its efforts to encourage supportive deeper learning policies will be weighted toward the K-12 system, the program also will work strategically on complementary innovations at the community college level. The program's grantees will document and highlight successful accelerated degree and developmental education programs and support efforts to align postsecondary expectations with K-12 college-readiness standards—steps that nest with the growing national momentum to improve college completion rates. Research suggests that basic skills education focused on deeper learning principles is more successful at helping students succeed in higher education than the status quo.

PRACTICE

The program's investments in systemwide practice and capacity will support innovation and the creation of assessments, curricula, tools, and teacher-training activities that increase achievement by transforming the classroom experience. These investments will be the key to ensuring that systemwide assessment and accountability policies have a direct impact on instructional practice and student achievement. At the same time, they could help secure support for needed policy reforms by reassuring educators, policymakers, and the public that tools will be available to support an increased focus on rigorous deeper learning.

Developing systemwide and classroom assessments

Ensuring the availability of valid, reliable, and affordable assessments of deeper learning is critical to implementing the program's strategy. This work will focus on K-12 classroom and systemwide assessments, especially (but not exclusively) working to take advantage of the federal government's $350 million Race to the Top assessment grant program.

- For K-12 systemwide, comprehensive tests—or *summative assessments*—the program will focus on grantees who are demonstrating and improving the reliability, validity, and affordability of existing deeper learning assessments and developing new ones that are aligned to the Common Core Standards.

- The program will invest in the creation of classroom tests—or *formative assessments*—that are embedded within curricula and tied to state assessments and aligned to the Common Core Standards.

Providing curricula, tools, and other resources

Developing, distributing, and encouraging the use of effective curricula, tools, and other resources is essential to guarantee that deeper learning can take root in all classrooms. The program's strategy to make these materials and tools available involves three stages that complement its policy investments.

- First, the program will survey the marketplace to determine what products and supports currently exist, provide external validation tools regarding

the quality of product alignment to deeper learning, and identify where gaps exists and how limited private dollars could make the greatest impact.

- Second, we will support the improvement, collection, and distribution of existing deeper learning tools and curricula.

- Third, for the K-12 system, we will invest in the alignment and distribution of innovative deeper learning materials correlated to the Common Core Standards and in improving those that already exist. For the higher education system—which is decentralized and for which no national assessment consortia exist to drive comparable changes—the program will work with existing distribution networks to promote voluntary integration of deeper learning assessments, standards, instructional tools, and professional development. In all of these investments, the program will seek to support open-source technology-enabled tools, online environments, and Open Educational Resources that facilitate deeper learning.

As deeper learning practices and tools are developed, the program also will invest in evaluations of model programs to determine and document their impact on student learning.

Providing professional development, training, and support tools

To achieve its overall goal, the program also must work to ensure that all teachers and school leaders receive the support they will need to teach for deeper learning.

- The program currently expects to focus its investments on in-service professional development models and supports to enable teachers and school leaders to succeed as they pursue deeper learning. Demand for teacher development for deeper learning is likely to increase as assessment and incentive policies for deeper learning are adopted.

- We also will consider support for innovative teacher preparation models.

PROOF POINTS

The program will support model schools, colleges, networks, and impact studies to attract the attention of policymakers and the public, and help make the case for supporting and investing in deeper learning. Not every pilot will be successful and not every hypothesis will find strong support in the evidence. Yet, we believe that learning what doesn't work will also provide critical lessons for the emerging field of deeper learning and will improve the success of the Hewlett Foundation's goals and strategies.

Developing and supporting models

Some schools, districts, and community colleges already are achieving deeper learning quite effectively with disadvantaged students. The program hopes to

multiply the impact of these models by supporting them to organize as a field of deeper-learning practitioners. The field would foster the exchange of best practices, share new tools, engage in careful evaluation and data collection, advocate for a shared reform agenda, and attract national recognition.

The program will provide support for models in three ways:

- *Creating national networks of charter school operators, traditional public schools and districts, and community colleges that successfully deliver deeper learning* in order to strengthen the identity of the field. Support might include sponsoring annual conferences, and the development and use of common deeper learning assessments, technology tools, communications work, and evaluation.

- *Identifying and documenting new flexible funding models* to provide schools with the capacity to implement deeper learning within a constrained fiscal environment.

- *Supporting alternative models* to deliver deeper learning. These models could include innovations such as online games, simulations, virtual worlds, and peer-to-peer and other learning environments.

"Proof point schools" would:

- *Serve* large numbers of low-income students.

- *Identify* a set of deeper-learning skills on which all students are regularly assessed. These skills would be explicitly stated in the colleges' and schools' missions or guiding principles.

- *Use* a pilot common or comparable assessment of deeper learning.

- *Employ* innovative instructional methods, such as project-based learning, student exhibitions, and accelerated remedial courses to help students achieve deeper learning.

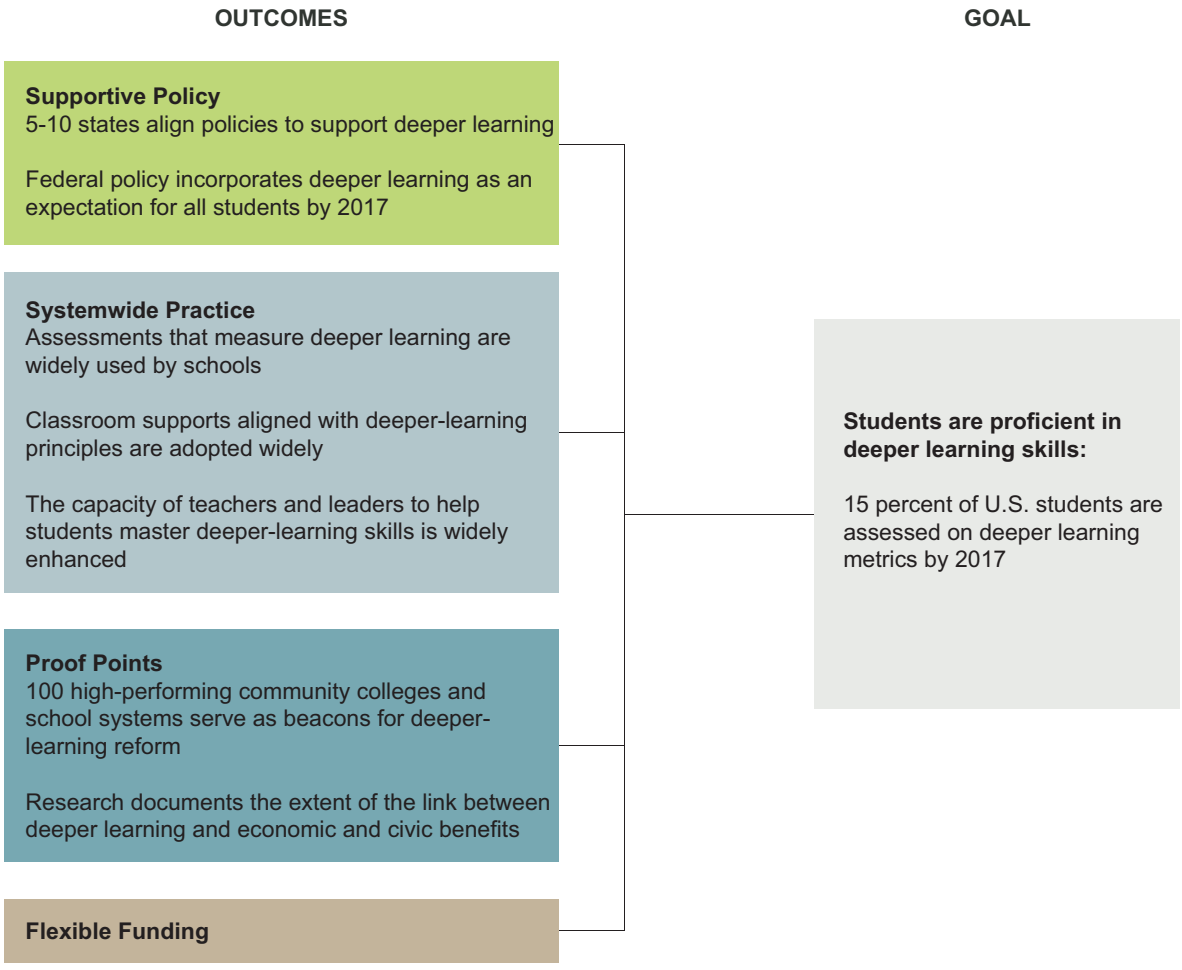
- *Outperform* peer/comparison schools on the state standardized tests currently used for accountability. The deeper-learning movement is not intended to water down accountability for basic skills, but rather to maintain and expand accountability to include a more rigorous set of student learning outcomes.

Research and communication

Creating and communicating research results that demonstrate the power of deeper learning—and improve understanding of how to implement it—will be important to cement the policy and practice changes described above. The program will pursue two sets of activities. It will support research to produce high-profile reports that document the importance of deeper learning for economic success and civic engagement. In addition, it will support research and evaluation on effective instructional practices that demonstrably improve student outcomes.

Deeper Learning

Increase economic opportunity and civic engagement by educating students to succeed in a changing world



2 COMPONENT: OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

GOAL: To equalize access to knowledge for teachers and students around the globe through Open Educational Resources.

In 2002, the Hewlett Foundation launched a bold initiative to make high-quality educational materials openly available anywhere in the world. With this goal in mind, the Open Educational Resources (OER) initiative developed a field-building strategy that focused on the creation of core agencies and networks. It took both a strategic and an opportunistic approach to the funding of demonstration and technology projects in this nascent field. To date, the Education Program has invested more than $110 million in OER, which itself has blossomed into a worldwide movement.

As the field matures, the program recognizes the importance of continuing support for building and maintaining a robust OER infrastructure, which is essential to the evolution of the field and eventual integration into mainstream education. Nearly 60 percent of the program's OER investments have supported infrastructure projects to date, with the balance supporting the field through targeted demonstration projects.

The program will continue to support the core infrastructure undergirding OER while pushing the field to become more self-sustaining by bringing in additional funders to diversify its resources. Simultaneously, the program will direct demonstration grants to projects that promote the goals of deeper learning.

GROWING AND STRENGTHENING OER INFRASTRUCTURE

The program remains committed to Open Educational Resources and to supporting the key organizations that contribute to its development as a sustainably funded and continuously growing, adaptive ecosystem. The scope of this work is global and extends from kindergarten through lifelong learning.

The program will continue to invest in organizations that serve as flagship agencies, expanding and strengthening the reach of OER. Ultimately, this

infrastructure will evolve into a network of organizations and institutions that support and promote the creation, use, and impact of OER around the world. It will provide capacity to build OER, develop distribution models, and collect feedback on the impact of OER use on learners.

The infrastructure portfolio will be guided by the following objectives:

- *Invest in organizations that share the program's long-standing goals of access to education for all in addition to improved teaching and learning.* The program works with grantees to improve education globally by making high-quality academic materials for teaching, learning, and research available to all, mainly on the Internet. These materials are either in the public domain or licensed with Creative Commons licenses.

- *Support the expansion of OER principles and practices through flagship agencies and interconnected networks.* Flagship agencies that provide large-scale capacity to develop, disseminate, and provide research and evaluation support for OER are critical to this infrastructure. They generally have secure funding from multiple sources, identify openness as a core part of their mission, and act as thought leaders in the movement. Also essential are network organizations that spread and amplify OER principles to as many teachers and learners as possible either by building communities of practice or by supporting policy initiatives.

- *Establish and oversee guidelines and tools that promote OER principles, provide coherence, and improve efficiency in the field.* The program supports organizations that encourage OER technology platforms to work together and support intellectual property guidelines. The program also supports the development of technology and tools that remove technological barriers and accelerate innovation in OER. Such development must fill a clear void, show significant evidence of demand and potential adoption, and influence behavior of the education system.

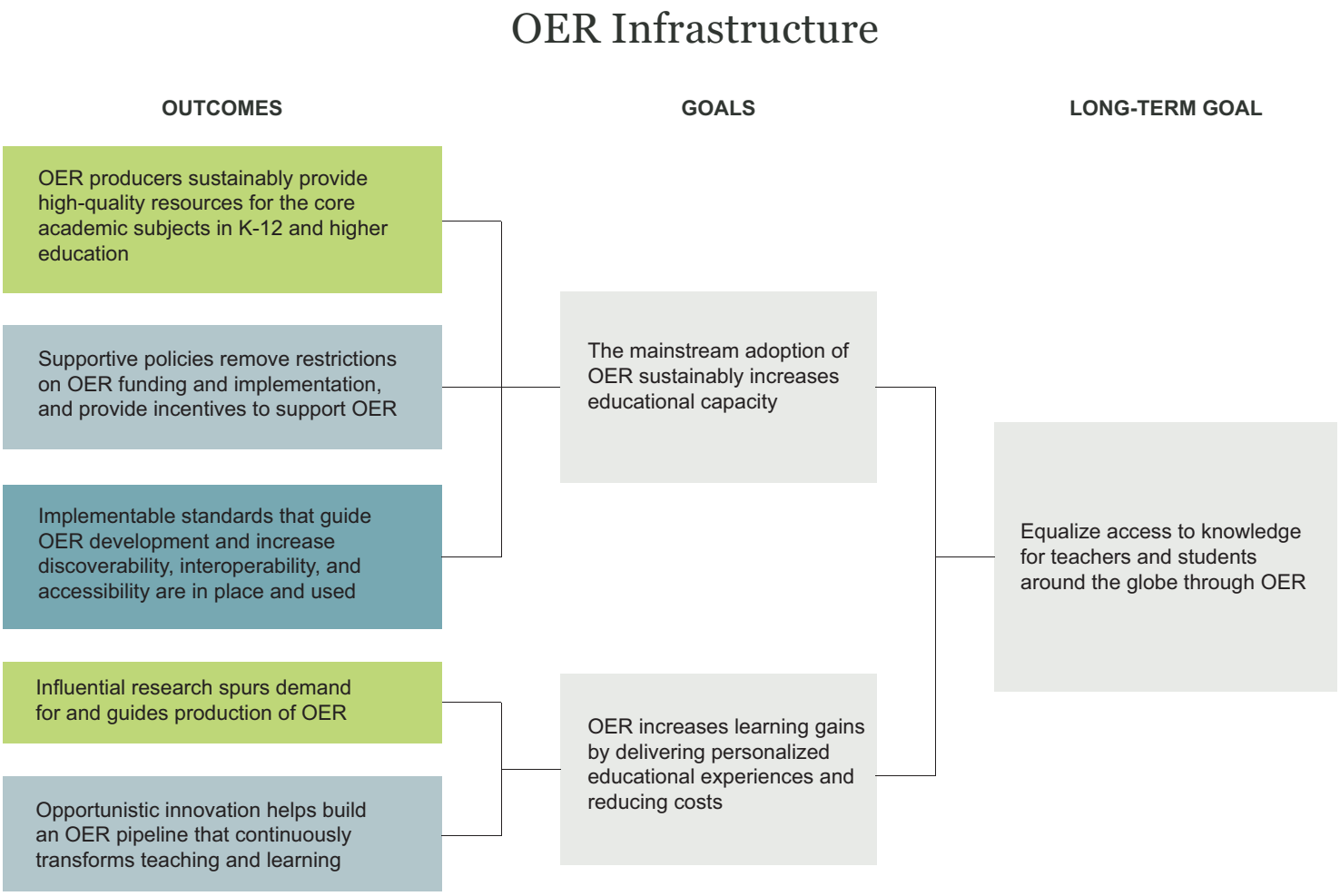
- *Document and interpret the use and impact of OER on teachers, learners, and institutions through research and evaluation.* Support for research and evaluation is absolutely necessary in order to understand the impact of OER on teaching and learning practices. The program supports institutions with strong and respected research capacity that use a mix of research methodologies and are able to publicize influential research.

- *Support policies that promote and support the creation, use, and impact of OER through advocacy and communications.* One of the most important OER activities in the coming years will be to ensure that OER is well represented in the next generation learning platforms currently being built. To help educate entrepreneurs, policymakers, key decision-makers, and the public, advocacy and communications organizations must be able to bring together constituents and develop and deliver messages that impact the policy debate at federal, state, and district levels and to key educational entrepreneurs.

- *Encourage and support innovation in the field by supporting experimental models that break traditional molds and could significantly increase the impact or efficiency of the OER ecosystem.* Although funding for this category is generally small, the program is open to ideas that show potential for developing new ways of creating, distributing, or evaluating OER. Such projects should serve either as a clear demonstration or have the potential to be expanded at low cost.

SHIFTING TO DEEPER LEARNING

Beginning in 2011, funding for all OER demonstration projects will focus on deeper learning. The scope for this portfolio is students from middle school through community college in the United States. The program views OER as a catalyst for removing barriers so that deeper learning can reach scale, building communities of practice to improve teaching and learning, and facilitating continuous improvement for deeper learning.



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COMPONENT: CALIFORNIA EDUCATION

GOAL: Support infrastructure for effective policymaking.

California's education problems are complex. The state's public schools rank near the bottom nationally in test scores and graduation rates. Yet significant education reform has been difficult to achieve in light of the fiscal and governance challenges plaguing the state. Although the program plans to change the way it invests in California in 2011 and beyond, it remains committed to supporting education in the state and to supporting the key organizations that strengthen state education policy.

The ultimate goals for California investments remain unchanged:

- *Improving the overall quality of California's education system* as measured by student test scores, high school graduation rates, college readiness, and community college completion and transfer rates.

- *Closing the persistent achievement gap* (on all measures listed above) that limits opportunities for the state's neediest students.

The program will continue to invest in organizations that provide research and analysis, communication, advocacy, community organizing, and technical assistance designed to improve the conditions for state policymaking that better supports student achievement. It also intends to invest in deeper learning and OER tools, projects, and models in California whenever possible.

To reach its goals, the program is investigating a new grantmaking approach that it is calling the "California Education Policy Infrastructure" portfolio.

CALIFORNIA EDUCATION POLICY INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO

The new California portfolio will be guided by three objectives:

- *Invest in organizations that share the program's long-standing goals for education improvement.* Although it has tackled education issues in different ways

and with different strategies, the program's ultimate goals have remained consistent. The new California policy portfolio will support organizations whose missions are tightly aligned with these values.

- *Support leadership and maintain capacity.* As it looks to new opportunities to deploy its resources, the program remains committed to maintaining the bench of talented education policy analysts and advocates in California that it has supported and helped to expand in recent years—especially in a period of economic crisis. The new California policy portfolio will help ensure that the most effective organizations remain robust and vital and have the resources they need to continue their success.

- *Prevent "policy slippage" and make further gains.* By keeping core policy organizations strong, the program can help ensure that policy advances won't lose ground and that nimble champions exist to take advantage of new opportunities. Organizations in the new California policy infrastructure portfolio will help key sector leaders continue to defend, identify, and advance solutions to the problems facing the state's education system.

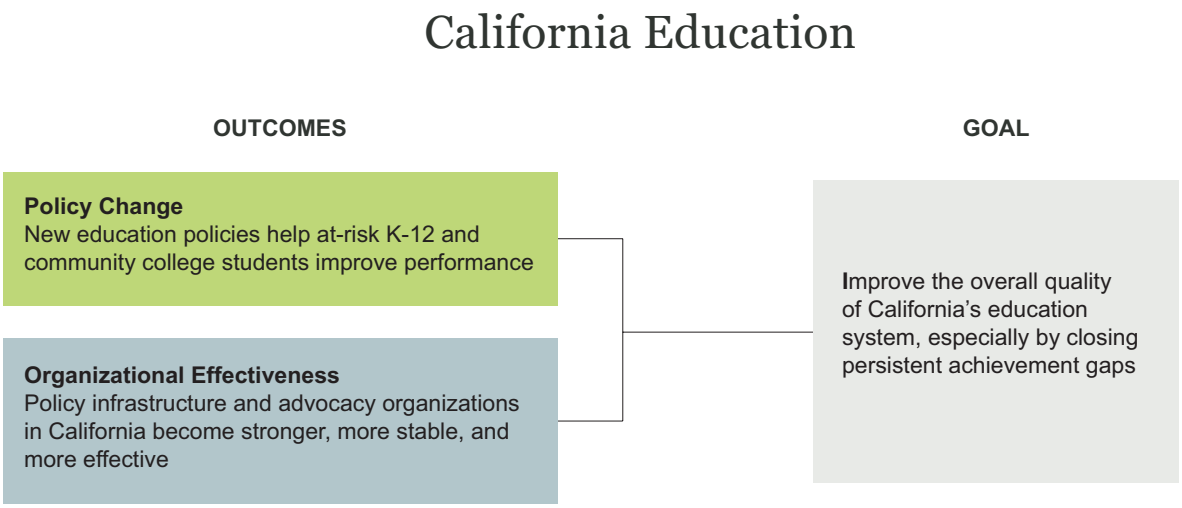
While this portfolio is still being developed, the program is exploring an investment strategy based on:

- *Multiyear grants* for organizations working most effectively toward our goals. Grants will be made for a three-year period, with grant sizes ranging from $300,000 to $750,000 ($100,000 per year to $250,000 per year).

- *A primary focus on more flexible general operating support grants,* rather than project grants. The program will no longer require that grantees focus on the three specific areas of policy reform on which it has focused in the past—education finance, data systems, and college readiness. The program will continue to support organizations that focus on these issues, but will also consider organizations working on other policy issues that have a direct and significant impact on our ultimate outcomes.

- *A competitive application process,* with grants awarded to organizations whose proposals meet the Foundation's grantmaking guidelines, will have a significant impact on achieving identified goals and demonstrate the capacity to follow through.

- *A smaller number of organizations* than have been supported in the past, due to limited resources.

- *Support for organizations working on K-12 and community college policy issues.* Roughly two-thirds of the funding will be allocated to organizations working on K-12 issues and one-third to those working on California community college issues, reflecting the program's historical budget emphasis on these areas.

- *A balanced mix of aggressive advocacy organizations and unbiased research/ analysis* organizations working to improve the conditions for education policymaking.