Finding Our Way Back to First:
Reclaiming World Leadership by Educating All America’s Children

2012

Edited By: T. Beth Glenn, Director, Education
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American Institutes for Research (AIR) was commissioned to provide the research-based evidence to support the NAACP’s four pillars for education reform (prekindergarten literacy, effective teaching, more time for more learning, and resource allocation). The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of AIR, a non-partisan, objective, research institution.
Our Challenge

In the last century, our nation expanded access to school for poor and minority children. The NAACP’s leadership and advocacy around the *Brown v. Board of Education* case opened the possibilities for a more equitable, exemplary education system for all. We were able to lead by educating about one in four of our students well enough for them to attend—if not finish—college. In a knowledge-based economy, however, excluding three fourths of our students from higher education is no longer acceptable. The time for tinkering and small-scale experimentation is over.

President Obama has challenged America to lead the world in the number of college graduates we prepare, just as we used to lead the world in the number of high school graduates we prepared. To foster such widespread achievement for the majority of our children will require rapidly accelerating learning among the same students for whom we just recently won access to mainstream education. We can achieve our goal only if we make real for all students the opportunities we have historically offered to just a few.

In *Finding Our Way Back to First*, the research-informed prescriptions for investing in the untapped portion of our student potential are a roadmap to accelerated achievement. To meet the 21st century’s challenges, we must create and provide for students who have been left behind the conditions that all students need for success. That effort means making sure that all students have a strong foundation before kindergarten, are taught by effective teachers and leaders, have access to more time for more learning, and benefit from wisely targeted resources.

The time for doing for just a few kids what we know is right for all kids is over. Finding our way back to first will mean aggressively extending these achievement-boosting reforms to every student and school in the nation.

Our Charge

The NAACP earned its reputation in education by removing obstacles “standing in the schoolhouse door” that blocked children from education. We will always fight to preserve the gains we have made in curbing segregation, discriminatory discipline, and the disempowerment of parents and communities. This report is about the vision for the future and the reforms we will fight to establish that accelerate achievement for our neediest students.

Our struggle to open schools for all students with *Brown v. Board of Education* built a launching pad for our journey into the 21st century, but somewhere along the way, we sputtered and lost our way. To make the promise of *Brown* real, we must refuel with the strongest evidence to support student learning and achievement, and we must lift off—determined to help every child reach his or her full potential and thereby ensure that we, as a nation, lead and serve globally.

To meet the educational challenges of NAACP’s second century and help our nation find its way back to first, the NAACP is asking its 1,200 active units to advocate for the following large-scale, research-informed, proactive education reforms:

- **Prekindergarten Prep for Achievement**—high quality, universal prekindergarten that supports kindergarten readiness and strong literacy and language skills
- **Effective Teaching**—a prepared, supported, and effective teacher in every classroom
- **More Time for More Learning**—longer school days and more years of education to extend learning opportunities
- **Targeted Spending for Widespread Success**—smart investments supporting the neediest students

*Finding Our Way Back to First: Reclaiming World Leadership by Educating All America’s Children*
Our Recommendation: Replacing Cycles of Failure with Cycles of Success

Too many students are trapped in cycles of failure because they lack access to the reforms. To find our way back to first, we must create the conditions of success for the vast majority of students who have been left behind, replacing the cycle of failed policies that trap them with a cycle of reforms that support achievement for all. Figure 1 shows the reform steps needed.

In each chapter, *Finding Our Way Back to First* identifies challenges that keep students from learning and suggests promising practices that can help accelerate student achievement. Each chapter summarizes its recommendations with a set of figures illustrating the cycle of challenges and the proposed solutions our advocacy is designed to put in place. The following tables summarize each chapter’s key challenges and promising policy solutions.

### Chapter 1: Prekindergarten Prep for Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Challenges</th>
<th>Promising Solutions</th>
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| **School readiness gaps** are evident in kindergarten between disadvantaged and well-supported children. These gaps persist through the upper grades, indicating that early childhood experiences leave disadvantaged children less prepared for formal schooling. | **Quality early learning environments.** Support early childhood community-based organizations and providers, such as religious institutions and homecare businesses, to adopt quality factors that promote language and literacy development. **Seamless transitions.** Encourage local school officials to make connections between elementary schools and early childhood programs that serve the same neighborhoods. **Support quality literacy and language development.** Support state and federal efforts that focus on:  
  - Expanding the reach of high quality programs.  
  - Increasing the quality of existing childcare programs.  
  - Providing funding for professional development for teachers. |
**Vocabulary exposure gaps.** By the time they reach the age of 3, children from higher income families have said 30 million more words than children from lower income families.

**Language-rich-environments.** Bring awareness to parents, caregivers, childcare workers, preschool teachers, and early elementary teachers about the value and components of rich, daily conversations with children.

**Reading readiness exposure gaps.** Low-income families tend to have fewer books in their homes, less access to good libraries, and less access to computer and Internet resources.

**Coherent support for literacy and language development.** Coordinate literacy activities among early childhood education, local community institutions (such as churches, libraries, and community centers) and elementary schools to ensure alignment with the kindergarten material children need to be prepared for and to facilitate a smooth transition into formal schooling.

## Chapter 2: Effective Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Challenges</th>
<th>Promising Solutions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uneven access to high-quality collaborative teacher learning opportunities.</td>
<td>Support collaborative learning and teaching among teachers in struggling schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ineffective teacher and teaching evaluation systems.</td>
<td>Demand improved performance-based assessments at key decision points along a teacher's career path.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disconnects between teacher preparation programs and K–12 schools.</td>
<td>Pay focused attention to developing the pipeline that generates future educators.</td>
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<td>Lack of diversity in the teaching workforce.</td>
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## Chapter 3: More Time for More Learning

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key Challenges</th>
<th>Promising Solutions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of access to quality opportunities for disadvantaged students and students of color.</td>
<td>Advocate for broad-based, coordinated, student-centered enrichment that extends beyond the regular school day, year, and curriculum. Increase access, enhance quality, and reduce costs associated with expanded learning options.</td>
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<td>Lack of coordination among community institutions.</td>
<td>Identify agencies and organizations within the community that are providing needed services, prepare an “asset map” of the community, and establish school-community-district partnerships to provide any other critical services not currently available or accessible. Advocate for community-school models with wraparound services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of alignment with school curricula and essential skills for success.</td>
<td>Formalize expanded learning within the school. Revise school and district improvement plans. Include workforce and leadership development skills.</td>
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Chapter 4: Targeted Spending for Widespread Success

<table>
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<th>Key Challenges</th>
<th>Promising Solutions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Overreliance on property taxes.</td>
<td>Use federal rules, funds, and incentives to identify and compensate for how well states balance inequities among wealthy and poor districts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of targeted spending to the neediest states, districts, and students.</td>
<td>At the state level, target additional resources to districts with high concentrations of low-income students and tie additional dollars to accountability.</td>
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<td>Inadequate funding to meet students’ needs.</td>
<td>Require that funding align with student need.</td>
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<td>Underinvestment in areas that catalyze effective change: preschool, teachers and school leaders, diversity.</td>
<td>Invest in early childhood education programs.</td>
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<td>Incorporate policies that promote the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers and principals in high-need schools.</td>
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<td>Coordinate education, health, and social services to ensure the most effective use of resources.</td>
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<td>Aggressively and simultaneously pursue school desegregation efforts focusing on both race and socioeconomic status.</td>
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Our Journey

The NAACP, with our strong community network, is uniquely positioned to lead our country’s efforts in finding our way back to first. Beginning at the earliest point in a child’s learning process and continuing throughout each learner’s lifetime—in school and out of school—the NAACP is committed to realizing the promise of Brown v. Board of Education and helping the nation achieve greatness by developing the potential of all students.

Our struggle to open schools for all built a launching pad for our journey into the 21st century, but we have not completed our journey. To make the promise of Brown real for all students, we must refuel with the strongest evidence to support student learning and achievement, and we must lift off—determined to help every child reach his or her full potential, thereby ensuring that we, as a nation, lead and serve globally.
Action Plan for the School Quality Activist

By 2020, we want every parent in America to be able to say the following:

Prekindergarten Prep for Achievement

1. My community works together to encourage adults to talk to preschoolers and help them develop strong language skills.

2. My community works together to make sure all preschools and daycares encourage the development of literacy and language skills.

3. Elementary schools, preschools, and daycares in struggling neighborhoods are linked together.

4. In my state, any parent who wants access to a high-quality prekindergarten learning institution has it.

5. Enough quality support programs and policies are in place to increase the skills of prekindergarten teachers.

6. Prekindergarten providers partner with community institutions on literacy activities to get kids ready for kindergarten and make sure they transition smoothly between prekindergarten and elementary school.

Effective Teaching

1. Teachers at my child’s school have a system where they spend time planning and working together to help each child learn.

2. New and veteran teachers in our schools have opportunities to demonstrate their teaching skills in the classroom, coaches to help them perfect their lessons, and several weekly activities that help them become better teachers.

3. My child’s school has several ways of evaluating teachers and helping them improve, including observations of their teaching methods and the work that students produce.

4. Schools and universities in my community help identify and prepare high school students who want to be teachers for the challenges they will experience in college and the classroom.

5. Schools and universities in my community provide college students who want to be teachers at least a year of practice teaching experience linked to their coursework.

6. Schools in my community provide mentors and continuous help for new teachers.

7. Schools in my community have a plan to recruit parents, teachers’ aides, and other community members into teacher training and support them in their local schools.
Introduction

_Brown v. Board of Education_ built a launching pad for America’s triumphant journey into the 21st century. Somewhere along the way, however, America lost ground. Now President Obama has challenged the nation to lead the world by 2020 in the percentage of adults with college degrees, noting that, in just a generation, America has fallen from second to 11th place in the percentage of students completing college. Once first, the United States is now 21st among industrialized nations in its high school graduation rate.¹ On the nation’s report card, nearly 70 percent of all eighth graders (87 percent of African-American and 84 percent of Latino eighth-graders)² perform below proficient in reading.

For America to find its way back to first in the world status, it must make the promise of _Brown_ real for those children left behind by America’s education system. The goals of increasing reading scores and increasing the percentage of adults with college degrees are inextricably bound; whether we educate all children to high standards determines whether America returns to its pinnacle of achievement. In the chapters that follow, we offer a set of evidence-based prescriptions to help every child reach his or her full potential and thereby better ensure that we, as a nation, lead and serve globally.

How to use this report

Each chapter contains a summary of the research on a given issue, a discussion of the issue’s importance for students of color, recommendations for advocates to bring these reforms to their communities and some examples of best practices currently on display around the country.

Because each local community will need to tailor its activities to local strengths, needs and contexts, education committees should take the goals in the Action Plan for the School Quality Activist and plot a strategy for achieving the most relevant ones, based on the organizing training available throughout our annual structure.
Vision statement

Learning from competitors to lead the world in equitably distributed excellence

For a brief period in the wake of school desegregation efforts, the United States led the world in high school graduation rates and the number of young adults with the equivalent of two-year degrees. Nationally, our high school graduation rates peaked in the 1970s and the nation enjoyed a brief period of parity in 1975 of college-going rates between black and white students. As we widened opportunity and increased equity at home we were able to achieve more excellence when compared to our counterparts abroad. To reclaim our world-leading status in education, we must set ourselves again on these dual paths.

We in communities of color have been raising this alarm and pushing America toward more broadly shared educational opportunity for decades. But other nations have outstripped our progress in the wide distribution of educational equity. They are educating more of their population to higher levels than ever before, and a far greater proportion of their disadvantaged students than the United States.

It is increasingly the case that some education after high school is a prerequisite for a comfortable middle income lifestyle in the US. Yet a study released this fall by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development found that if a young American’s parents failed to finish high school (which is highly correlated with low income), there is just a 29% chance that he or she will attend college, the third worst odds among the countries OECD studied. More distressing, the U.S. has a greater proportion of high school dropouts who will face – and pass on – these extremely challenging odds of achieving academic success and career success. The 23% dropout rate as calculated by the OECD places America sixth from the bottom among nations studied.

With our domestic economy firmly tied to the global one, our nation can no longer hide or support its old inequitable habit of rationing quality education to just a few. As we discovered in World War II, if we are to achieve victory in competition abroad, we must also defeat the foes of racism and discrimination here at home. We expanded our pool of talent for the war by desegregating the armed forces and expanding opportunities for returning veterans. We expanded our educational talent pool when we desegregated schools and expanded access to college. To lead the world again, we must now expand the proportion of students educated sufficiently for the global economy and broaden their horizons on the domestic front as well.

When the National Center on Education and the Economy asked which school practices our country would adopt if decisions “were based on the policies and practices of the countries that now lead the world in student performance,” the result was a bracing 2011 study covering 20 years of research and showing how far out of step American educational policy has fallen. It said:

“We conclude that the strategies driving the best performing systems are rarely found in the United States, and, conversely, that the education strategies now most popular in the United States are conspicuous by their absence in the countries with the most successful education systems. - Marc S. Tucker, Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: An American Agenda for Education Reform, p. 2

“The idea of grade-by-grade national testing has no takers in the top-performing countries” (p. 8).

The report went on to commend high performing nations such as Canada, Finland, Japan and Singapore, for helping more students to learn to higher levels despite their social status or background. Whereas nearly twenty percent of the gap between high and low performing American students is due to socioeconomic status, class explains less than 10 percent in countries like Finland, Canada and Japan that lead in international rankings.
When researchers looked at how they achieved their success, they pointed to a list that includes the reform elements we’ve identified in this report:

- Additional time and resources for struggling students and the schools that serve them:

  “In a system in which almost all students are expected to perform at high levels, the standard is fixed and the support varies to the extent needed to make sure that all students get to the finish line… this means that financial resources are allocated so that students who need more help are allocated more financial resources so they can get that help… It is also the case in Singapore that the students who need help get more time, meaning time after school and on weekends and during the summer.”

- A coherent system that stretches from cradle to college or career and expands learning beyond the traditional school settings:

  “[In the U.S.] there is no direct connection between being well-educated and earning a good living. Students need to make an effective transition from school to work and that process is more complicated than it might at first appear…. Some countries have effective systems to effectuate such transitions and many do not. The United States is among the latter.”

- Well-trained and supported teachers:

  “The careful attention to the development of skills in diagnosis and prescription, in the development of effective lessons, in the adjustment of instruction to the actual needs of students, under the extended and intensive guidance of master teachers, has no counterpart in the American experience… Once graduated from teachers colleges and hired by their first school district, they are typically put in a sink or swim situation, with little or no support from experienced teachers or supervisors, often in the most demanding classroom situations. Once again, the contrast with the experience of their Shanghai and Finnish colleagues could not be more stark.”
The political will to organize schools this way comes from a conscious decision to educate all students well and it will mean turning away from the ranking and sorting by standardized test scores (of students and teachers) that has dominated and diminished our system for the past 30 years. The sea change in successful nations was motivated by the realization that excellence and equity do not have to be in conflict: “Perhaps the most important discovery is that other countries have not only figured out how to get greater quality and far more equity, but they have figured out how to do that while spending substantially less than we do…They have done it by adopting a very different way to organize the work of schooling.”

“This is a new idea in the world, the idea that all must have an education formerly reserved only for elites. It leads to abandonment of education systems designed to reach their goals by sorting students, by giving only some students intellectually demanding curricula, by recruiting only a few teachers who are themselves educated to high levels, and by directing funding toward the easiest to educate and denying it to those hardest to educate.” – p. 3

For the innovations highlighted in this report to succeed, they must be grounded in strong community engagement. From South Carolina’s Freedman’s Schools to Chicago’s parent councils, we’ve seen that organized communities produce better academic outcomes for disadvantaged students. A prerequisite for engagement in communities of color is a sense that the deck is not stacked against them before they arrive, which has translated into a demand for the equitable application of school rules. Though not an explicit part of this report, the NAACP remains committed to student assignment policies that expose students to diverse peers, experiences and resources. Similarly, our commitment remains unwavering to the fair and reasoned application of student discipline rules. We realize these issues must be fought side-by-side with the innovations recommended here if we are to preserve and expand upon the gains for minority and disadvantaged students won by communities thus far.

As a 21st Century civil and human rights organization urging this nation to fulfill its promise of greatness, the NAACP must advocate for us to learn well the lessons of our competitors. That means working for reforms that result in success for the vast majority of the country’s young people, rather than a fortunate few. It’s the only way we’ll find ourselves worthy and capable of assuming global leadership. It is this path that can allow us to find our way back to first.
One of the most important steps we can take to improve the life opportunities for children is to ensure that they have language- and literacy-rich early care environments. Children who are immersed in such environments have the fundamentals to support reading and to transition well to formal elementary schooling. Such skills can lay the foundation for a lifetime of academic and personal benefits.

Timing matters. In the first five years of life, when substantial brain development occurs, everyday experiences have a significant impact on children’s development and provide a sound foundation for later success. The earlier that children learn language and literacy skills, the better it is for their development. In those early years, children’s brains are still developing rapidly and are shaped easily. As a result, children more readily embrace language and literacy. Developing language and literacy skills is much more difficult later in life. Children who enter kindergarten delayed in their reading abilities tend to lag behind throughout their school experiences.

All Skills Are Not Equal

All language and literacy skills are not equal. It is important to know which early literacy skills are essential for later success in reading. It is equally important to communicate and reinforce those skills in the curriculum and in teaching practices among early elementary school teachers and prekindergarten teachers. This strategy can be important to ensure students just starting out on their formal school journeys receive seamless and enhancing learning experiences in their home, caregiver, early learning, and formal school contexts (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Replacing Cycles of Failure with Cycles of Success In Early Learning

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CYCLE OF FAILURE</th>
<th>CYCLE OF SUCCESS</th>
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<td>Gaps in:</td>
<td>Quality early learning environments</td>
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<td>School readiness</td>
<td>Seamless transitions</td>
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<td>Vocabulary exposure</td>
<td>Language-rich environments</td>
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<td>Reading readiness</td>
<td>Coherent support for literacy and language development</td>
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**Essential Skills**

Research on early childhood literacy identifies the following skills as critical for reading success in school:

- **Vocabulary:** Knowing words and what they mean in spoken and written language.

- **Oral language:** Knowing the rules for putting sentences together, being familiar with the sounds of the language, knowing word meanings and being able to use words, and understanding people when they talk.

- **Phonological awareness:** Knowing that words are made up of smaller sound units and being able to identify the smaller parts (e.g., *bulldozer* = *bull* + *doz* + *er*).

- **Memory:** Being able to remember teacher instructions or parts of a story.

- **Alphabet knowledge:** Knowing the names and sounds of the letters.

- **Quick naming:** Being able to quickly name a series of letters, numbers, colors, or things.

- **Writing:** Knowing how to write letters of the alphabet or words (like their own names).

- **Print concepts:** Knowing how English language books work—reading print from left to right and top to bottom, reading books from the front cover to the back cover.

- **Visual recognition:** Being able to recognize letters and words in one’s surroundings (like street signs) and the similarities/differences between capital and lowercase letters.

- **Social and emotional skills:** Knowing how to control one’s behavior, to get along with peers, and to ask for and receive help.

Acquiring these skills enables young children to negotiate the transition to kindergarten and its new demands, new teachers, and new peers. It provides a framework for school success.

**What Is the Reality for Many Children of Color?**

Unfortunately, many children of color, particularly those who are poor and of color, miss out on a language-rich environment in their formative years. Much of the research discussed in this report refers to children living in low-income families rather than to race directly. While the issues are not one and the same, children of color are much more likely to be in low-income families than are white children. According to data from the National Center for Children in Poverty, 32 percent of white children who are 6 years of age or younger live in low-income families, compared to 66 percent of black children, 65 percent of Hispanic children, and 73 percent of Native-American children. For them, the achievement gap with their white and more affluent peers shows up early and often. The 2002 *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Kindergarten Class* (ECLS-K) found that white kindergarteners already outperformed black kindergarteners in reading by 21 percent. Furthermore, the children at the highest socioeconomic level outperformed the children in the lowest socioeconomic level by 60 percent (with 34 percent of black children in the lowest group). Low-income families tend to have fewer books in their homes, less access to good libraries, and less access to computer and Internet resources. Also, by age 3, higher income families have said 30 million more words to their children than lower income families (as shown in Figure 3).

**What Should We Do?**

This question is the most important one we can answer, but to answer it successfully, we need to begin with the end in mind. Imagine an early childhood education environment (such as preschool, prekindergarten childcare, or family childcare) that is rich in language and literacy opportunities. Such an environment has a distinctive look, feel, and sound. Positive interactions and learning are promoted within all the learning space areas. These areas are differentiated with labels, flooring, wall colors,
lighting, play items, and furniture to support small-group social interaction, learning, and play.

Upon entering the education environment, children have a dedicated place for their belongings, clearly labeled with their names. Then, further into the space, dedicated areas focused on promoting language and literacy development are also labeled. For instance, there is a dedicated writing area, where children can practice writing letters and words. There is also a reading section, with stocked bookshelves, that provides a cozy space to sit. Nearby is an area for letter blocks, alphabet magnets, and other materials that help children learn with their hands. There is also an art area, where children can express, create, and integrate their learning. In all these areas, children can practice learning their letters, playing sounding games, rhyming words, and singing songs—all activities that help expand vocabulary and help build the foundation for literacy. These areas are also places where children can talk. They can talk with each other in small groups and with teachers and caregivers. These discussions help them learn social and emotional skills such as cooperation, creativity and teamwork, and focus that will prepare them later to learn in more formal settings. The activities that take place in the various areas of the room are designed around opportunities for conversation. To build early language and literacy
skills, children must engage in and hear lots of talking.

We need to act to make this vision a reality. Providing access and opportunity for children to participate in language- and literacy-rich environments is one of the most important steps we can take to help improve the reading abilities of children of color. Parents, caregivers, childcare workers, preschool teachers, program directors, and policy leaders can all be involved by using strategies like asking open-ended questions, having extended conversations, and reading to children daily. Training can also be provided to help early childhood educators adopt literacy curricula and instructional activities that will enhance the richness of the linguistic environment in their classrooms. Preschools can develop and implement programs to target the development of children’s complex language skills. Effort can be placed to help programs align literacy activities and curriculum with kindergarten materials. This alignment will help foster smooth transitions from early childhood education programs to formal schooling. Finally, we can support advocacy efforts aimed at increasing funding for high-quality early childhood programs.

Decades of Evidence: Spotlight on the High/Scope Educational

DEFINITION

A language- and literacy-rich early childhood education environment is one where children have opportunities every day to:

- Talk with each other and their caregivers in extended, informal conversations.
- Practice the sounds of the alphabet.
- Hear new words from caregivers.
- Listen to books and stories, and talk with caregivers about them.
- Sing songs/rhymes and share stories.
- Learn how to write letters/words.

IMPORTANT TERMS

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Programs and activities that use educational approaches for children from birth to age eight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Abilities</td>
<td>Producing and understanding spoken words and sentences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Literacy Skills</td>
<td>The abilities needed for learning to read fluently and write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoding</td>
<td>Recognizing and making sense of written words or sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>The ability to read, write, and use different types of printed material</td>
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Research Foundation and the Perry Preschool Program

As early as the 1960s, we have had a model for how to design and deliver a high-quality early childhood language- and literacy-rich context for at-risk black children. The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation’s longitudinal study of the Perry Preschool model suggests that when children are in early learning and care environments that help their language development, they are less
likely to require remediation and more likely to succeed academically. The Perry Preschool program was implemented in Ypsilanti, Michigan, from 1962 to 1967 and included regular, effective training and support for teachers. A major purpose of the program was to provide at-risk 3- and 4-year-old black children living in poverty with high-quality early language and literacy experiences. Strong, lasting improvement was found in language development and reading achievement among Perry Preschool graduates.\textsuperscript{18}

The Perry program emphasized active learning through child-directed activities. Adults used rich, complex language with their students and employed instructional strategies to encourage children to:

- Talk about experiences that held personal meaning for the children.
- Describe objects, events, and the relationships between things.
- Have fun with language by listening to and making up stories, poems, and rhymes.
- Read storybooks, signs, and symbols.
- Write, draw, scribble, and try to write letters.
- Dictate stories that the teacher wrote down.\textsuperscript{19}

Family involvement and integration into children’s education was another important component of the Perry program. Teachers conducted weekly home visits.\textsuperscript{20} These visits promoted parent-child relationships and helped strengthen positive parenting skills.\textsuperscript{21} Furthermore, teachers encouraged parents to use some of their classroom strategies in their homes. Because parental involvement is critical for children’s academic success, the increased role of Perry program parents in the education of their children was likely to have been a factor in the positive outcomes found in the study.

In all, the Perry Preschool program helped prepare children for school, and these effects lasted for many years. Children who participated in the Perry program performed better on language tests up to age 7 and on school achievement tests at ages 9, 10, and 14 than comparable children who had not participated. They were more likely to graduate from high school, and they performed better on reading tests at ages 19 and 27. At age 40, Perry graduates were more likely than non-Perry graduates to have jobs, earn more money, own cars, have stable housing, and have clean noncriminal records.\textsuperscript{22}

### Key Action Steps

#### Action Steps for Parents and Caregivers

- Talk with your child as much as possible. For example, mealtimes are a great opportunity for having conversations, extending vocabulary, and practicing rhyming.
  - Use language that includes rich, new, interesting words.
- Have extended, rich conversations with your child using new and interesting words.
  - Respond back and forth several times, keeping the conversation going.
  - Ask open-ended questions that begin with why or how to encourage your child to think and talk.
  - Expand on what your child says: repeat his/her utterances and then add descriptive words and longer sentences.
- Tell stories and ask your child to tell stories, either made-up or real.
  - Act out stories, reusing words from books you have read.
  - Write down stories dictated to you by your children.
- Play alphabet games, sing songs, and rhyme; these activities will help your child practice sounds.
- Limit television, video games, and other gaming technologies; spend time talking
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with each other instead.

- Read books together and talk about them as you read.
  - Ask your child what is happening and what he or she thinks will happen next.
  - Connect conversations to themes and use them throughout the day or week. Themes may emerge from books you have read, art projects you have done, and so forth. Making connections can help children understand and remember new vocabulary.

**Action Steps for Teachers and Childcare Providers**

- Involve all children in individual and small-group conversations every day.
  - Repeat and expand on children’s ideas. Add descriptive words and make longer sentences.
  - Ask questions that encourage children to think, analyze, predict, imagine, and/or explain something. Model how to ask questions that begin with *why* or *how*.

- Connect your conversations to themes and use them throughout the day or week in your classroom. Themes may be based on books you have read, art projects you have done, and so forth. Making connections can help children understand and remember new vocabulary.

- Tell stories and ask children to tell stories.
  - Write down stories dictated to you by the children.
  - Act out stories with the children, reusing words from books you have read.

- Read books with the whole class and with small groups every day.
  - Choose alphabet books, storybooks, and other books that help develop alphabet knowledge, sound repetition, and rich vocabulary.
  - Talk about the books with the children while you read. Ask the children to explain what they think is happening in the book or what will happen next in the story. Make sure the children can see the print and use your finger as you read so the children can learn that English books are read from left to right, top to bottom.

- Help children learn the alphabet.
  - Teach the letters of the alphabet by teaching the name of each letter, what sound(s) it makes, and the similarities and differences between the capital and lowercase version of each letter.
  - Play letter games such as alphabet bingo.
  - Use letter flash cards, asking children to name the letters as quickly as they can.
  - Sing songs and rhymes about the alphabet.
  - Help children learn to write the letters of the alphabet and form simple words, especially words that mean a lot to them (such as their own names).

- Help children develop phonological awareness.
  - Read alphabet books that have words and pictures to demonstrate the sounds associated with letters on the page. This activity can help children link sounds with written letters (like *B for bear*).
  - Teach songs or poems that have repetitive sounds at the beginnings and ends of words.
  - Combine sounds to make words (like *tooth* + *brush* = *toothbrush*).
  - Teach rhymes that can be sung or chanted.

- Give multiple-step instructions to the children so they can practice remembering them.

- In classrooms with students from multiple cultures, try to use teaching strategies that incorporate culturally relevant content. This connection will hold more meaning for the children, and they will learn the material more easily.
  - Choose books that are meaningful for
students by having content that is culturally relevant to their lives.

- Conduct letter games based on home or community events that are relevant to your particular students.
- Act out stories based on the children’s family or ethnic traditions.

**Action Steps for Childcare Centers, Preschool Programs, and Churches**

- Provide sustained (more than just a few days) targeted professional development and/or on-the-job training focused on preparing teachers and caregivers to contribute to children’s language and early literacy development.
- Help teachers and caregivers understand that children’s language and early literacy skills and their later successes in reading achievement are related.
- Train teachers and caregivers to provide children with frequent models of advanced language during center time, shared reading activities, and mealtimes.
- Make sure that the language curriculum is assessed through observation.
- Adopt a research-based, age-appropriate literacy curriculum aimed at developing print-related skills like decoding, phonological awareness, and alphabet knowledge.

**Action Steps for Local School Officials**

- Make connections to early childhood programs that feed students into elementary schools, particularly low-performing schools.
- Coordinate literacy activities between early childhood education, local community institutions (such as churches, libraries, and community centers), and elementary schools to ensure alignment with the material children need in order to be prepared in kindergarten and to facilitate a smooth transition into formal schooling.

**Action Steps for State- and Federal-Level Advocates**

- Support state and federal efforts that focus on:
  - Expanding the reach of high-quality programs serving children from birth to age 5.
  - Increasing the quality of existing childcare programs.
  - Providing funding for professional training around literacy and language development for teachers, particularly in early elementary grades (PK–Grade 3).
- Such state and federal supports mandate that we do the following:
  - Protect early childhood in state budgets.
  - Encourage counties to match state funds creatively.
  - Encourage partnerships with health practitioners to include literacy and language development as a facet of healthy child development initiatives.
- Examples of federal initiatives that can have important state and local policy impacts include the following:
  - *The LEARN Act*: Provides funding for implementing and upgrading preschool literacy programs.
  - *Head Start*: Expands Head Start so that it can serve many more 3-year-olds.
  - *Early Learning Challenge Grant*: Provides funding for states to promote high-quality early learning environments.
  - *The Child Care and Development Fund*: Supports childcare services and quality.
  - *Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program*: Assists states in developing comprehensive literacy plans and in creating literacy teams with expertise in literacy development and education.
Conclusion

Research points to the overwhelming benefits of a quality, prekindergarten learning experience on a child’s reading ability and school success. Children entering school equipped with the skills to learn are ready to adapt to formal schooling. Regrettably, for many low-income children of color, introduction to formal schooling is a traumatic experience. These children often enter school with gaps in three areas: school readiness, vocabulary exposure, and reading readiness exposure. Together, these gaps...

EDUCARE

Young children from low-income, distressed environments start school far behind their more advantaged peers. These at-risk children typically have smaller vocabularies, are less likely to know their letters and numbers, and consistently score below their higher-income peers in early learning and math. Educare was designed as a response to these challenges by targeting high-risk students before they fall behind in formal schooling. Educare centers are designed to meet the needs of families transitioning from welfare to work and are recipients of a mix of Head Start, childcare, and preschool services. Each Educare Center serves 140–200 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers growing up in low-income families. In addition, each Educare Center serves as a catalyst for programmatic and policy change throughout its community and state.

Educare is a state-of-the-art school, open all day and all year, serving at-risk children from birth to 5 years old, where infants and toddlers comprise roughly a third of the enrollment. “Educare is open 11 hours a day, five days a week, all year round. Children get good food, regular exercise and those with special needs receive additional supports in small groups.” Each classroom provides a teacher with a B.A. degree and an infant-toddler certification, an assistant teacher with an A.A. degree, and an aide from the community. All classrooms are supervised by teachers with master’s degrees in early childhood. In addition, each Educare center employs family support staff to ensure that every family’s comprehensive needs are addressed. The centers focus strongly on appropriately developing language and social-emotional skills.

Educare spends between $18,000 and $20,000 per year on each of its pupils, which is substantially more than most preschool programs, but it is only about two thirds of the average cost to house a prisoner. This comparison is relevant because more than two thirds of the inmates in prison never finish high school, and the vocabulary gaps at preschool parallel the gaps in third-grade reading achievement scores that many states use to forecast the number of future prison beds.

Early data from Educare programs in six cities—Chicago, Denver, Milwaukee, Omaha, Seattle, and Tulsa—reveal promising results in preparing children for later academic achievement. A study that measured literacy skills and emotional development found that students who attended Educare for five years entered kindergarten as ready as their middle-class peers. Evaluation data show that more years of Educare attendance are associated with better school readiness and vocabulary skills. Kindergarten-bound children who joined Educare between birth and age 2 exceeded the national average by 5 points. This pattern persists even after controlling for risk factors such as maternal education, race, and teen parent status.
represent a triple threat to children’s short-and long-term achievement.

The good news is there is clear evidence on the ways to improve students’ readiness to succeed and decades of data to demonstrate that it works. First, we must begin early—birth to 5 years old—to provide children with language- and literacy-rich environments that also build social and emotional skills. Parents, caregivers, preschools, and community- and church-based institutions should operate from a clear blueprint of the essential skills and conditions that foster language- and literacy-rich environments. Second, early childhood providers, local community institutions, and elementary schools should work hand-in-hand to support the flow of quality literacy information and training. In this way, every child in the community will have routine access to a literacy-stimulating environment and enter kindergarten with the skills needed to succeed. Finally, we must support those state and federal efforts that increase access to and strengthen the quality of early childhood programs, as well as improve training for early childcare providers and early elementary teachers. In so doing, we help prepare the launching pad for children’s school, college, and career success.
Effective teaching is based in part on individual teachers—how they use their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to produce student learning—but it also depends on the context for learning. School leadership, the time teachers have to plan lessons and analyze student learning, the opportunities they have for ongoing professional improvement and to observe other teachers’ practice, the quality of the curriculum, the size of their workloads, and the effectiveness of their colleagues are just some of the factors that make up the context for learning.

Focusing on teacher effectiveness, however, can cause one to lose sight of a more influential goal: effectiveness in teaching. The distinction is subtle but important. Effective teaching is defined as instruction that enables all students to meet or exceed high goals for student learning. Effective teaching is based in part on individual teachers—how they use their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to produce student learning—but it also depends on the context for learning. School leadership, the time teachers have to plan lessons and analyze student learning, the opportunities they have for ongoing professional improvement and to observe other teachers’ practice, the quality of the curriculum, the size of their workloads, and the effectiveness of their colleagues are just some of the factors that make up the context for learning.

A focus on teaching also acknowledges that students learn from many teachers—not only in team or coteaching situations, but the learning skills and habits that students acquire from one teacher can help or hinder the effectiveness of the next (see Figure 6).
Unfortunately, a constant stream of student achievement test results has offered convincing evidence that not enough students of color have access to effective teaching. Achievement gaps have been persistent and tenacious, in large part because African-American and Latino students are systematically assigned to less effective teachers who work in less effective teaching contexts.

What’s needed at all levels of leadership (local, state, and federal) is an understanding of the challenges and research-based solutions that bring more students, and particularly students of color, in constant contact with effective teaching (see Figure 7).

**Figure 6. Defining Teaching Effectiveness**

**IMPORTANT TERMS**

**Certification:** Refers to an individual’s formal qualifications to practice teaching.

**Classroom Practice:** The act of teaching, which includes instructional planning, instructional implementation, and instructional assessment. Classroom practice can also refer to the skills teachers use to facilitate learning, such as asking open-ended questions, grouping students well by strengths, and changing instruction for different student needs.

**Induction:** A career stage that comes after initial preparation and before being considered a fully-fledged professional, usually lasting about three years. Induction is also a comprehensive process of orientation and support for beginning teachers.

**Licensure:** The required legal permission granted by states that allows individuals to practice classroom teaching.

**National Board Certification:** Optional process for advanced certification, based on demonstrations of teaching knowledge and skills; developed by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

**Professional Development:** Opportunities for teachers to enhance their classroom practice through professional learning activities as well as to grow in their profession.

**Tenure:** Enhanced due process job protections that come once a teacher has been evaluated favorably for the first years of his or her career.

**Value Added:** A statistical measure of change in student test scores explained by a particular teacher.
Figure 7. Improving Teaching Effectiveness

- **Ongoing, job-embedded professional learning opportunities including instructional coaching**
- **Licensure, tenure, promotion, dismissal and pay policies**
- **Grow-your-own recruitment, teacher residencies, and preparation programs**
- **Individual teachers’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions**
- **Individual teacher evaluation**
- **Access to high-functioning professional learning communities and instructional coaching**
- **High-quality curriculum, materials, and aligned assessments**
- **Tight connections between teacher preparation programs and PK-12 schools**
- **Time to plan, collaborate, learn, analyze student learning, etc.**
- **Teachers’ classroom and school contexts**
- **Other classroom and school conditions**
**Challenges.** Disconnects to effective teaching permeate the education system:

- Current teacher performance evaluation practices fail to assess effectiveness in ways that would ensure the support of effective teaching for all students.
- Teacher preparation programs fail to reflect the K–12 schools where their graduates will teach.
- Teachers themselves have uneven access to effective teacher and learning opportunities, including high-quality instructional coaching and professional learning communities.
- There is a lack of diversity in the teaching workforce—16.5 percent of teachers are teachers of color, while 45 percent of students are of color. Research suggests, albeit somewhat weakly, that this has negative implications for the effective teaching of students of color.

**Solution options.** Fortunately, there are several promising approaches to begin to address these problems:

- Improve the performance assessments—at key decision points along a teacher’s career path, such as at the time of initial licensure, certification, and tenure—of teachers and teaching to inform and enhance classroom practice. (The terms teacher licensure and teacher certification are often used interchangeably, referring to an individual’s formal qualifications to practice teaching. Licensure, however, can be granted only by state governments and is a legal requirement for entry to the profession, whereas certification can be granted by professional organizations, such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Tenure, under state law, is granted to teachers after some number of years of successful teaching. It guarantees the holder the right to due process when threatened with dismissal or nonrenewal of contract for cause. See the Important Terms box for more discussion.)

- Ensure all teachers have access to collaborative professional learning opportunities to implement a coherent, evidence-based approach to instruction throughout the career continuum (including participation in professional learning communities facilitated by skilled instructional coaches and better partnerships with higher education).

- Strengthen the teacher preparation pipeline through the promotion of comprehensive grow-your-own programs to diversify the teaching workforce and enhance the knowledge, skills, and practices of teachers working with students of color.

Following are descriptions of the research behind these challenges and promising solutions. A few examples of these ideas in practice are also described.

**Key Challenges to the Support of Teacher and Teaching Effectiveness for Students of Color**

**Ineffective Teacher and Teaching Evaluation Systems**

In the past decade, research has repeatedly shown that individual teachers seem to have a more profound effect on student learning than any other school factor—meaning that the teacher to which a student is assigned is more important than the school a student attends in terms of test score gains. Unfortunately, high-poverty schools appear to have weaker teachers than the weakest teachers in lower poverty schools, in terms of their contributions to test score gains. This conclusion is not to suggest that high-poverty schools only have weak teachers. They also have very strong teachers, but the weakest teachers appear to be clustered in high-poverty schools. This variability in teacher effectiveness is wider in high-poverty schools, although it exists across all schools. Such variability strongly suggests that there is a structural problem in the way that both teachers and teaching are managed and supported in schools.
Unfortunately, this variability among teachers is difficult to address when focusing on individual teacher effectiveness because the measures we currently have are too imprecise to accurately and reliably judge individual effectiveness. Without robust measures, making well-warranted decisions about a given teacher—such as what professional development she should receive, whether her contract should be renewed, whether she should be granted full certification, or which students she should teach the next term—becomes very difficult. The field is currently developing more promising measures but challenges remain (see sidebar for more information).

**THE TROUBLE WITH “VALUE-ADDED” CALCULATIONS OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS**

Sophisticated statistical techniques called *value-added models* attempt to measure the difference that individual teachers make to student achievement scores, apart from the contributions of other teachers, parents, tutors, other adults, conditions, or fellow students. These measures can act as signals of whether an individual teacher is very weak or strong, but they cannot distinguish among the many teachers in the middle and, for a variety of reasons, cannot be relied upon as sole measures to judge a teacher’s effectiveness. Value-added proponents argue that value-added measurement is a reasonably reliable signal of teacher effectiveness and is better than the alternatives. Most systems that use value-added techniques supplement evaluations with other measures such as classroom observations or portfolio assessments, however. Historically, these supplemental measures have been idiosyncratic from principal to principal, based on unclear performance expectations, and do not reliably distinguish highly effective teachers from among those less effective. These measures are improving with rigorous standards-based tools with clear, differentiated criteria and improved evaluator training. Unfortunately, they can be time consuming and expensive and remain subject to imprecision and errors of attribution—that is, a teacher’s observation rating may be mistakenly attributed to the enduring personal characteristics of the teacher but instead may be due actually to the teacher’s classroom and school context.

Even when the data have been collected and managed properly, an individual teacher’s value-added score may change significantly from year to year or even from test to test. Too keen a focus on individual teachers may be blinding policymakers and others to the flaws in the system that produced such variability among teachers and teaching in the first place. For example, as Kennedy asks, do all teachers have access to high-quality curricular resources including up-to-date textbooks, teachers’ manuals that support instruction, time to learn the curriculum and anticipate student misunderstandings, reasonable student loads, supportive administrators, competent colleagues they can trust to ask questions and whose practice they can learn from, the opportunity to team teach with other effective teachers and support providers? Which teachers are working with high concentrations of special needs students, including emotionally disabled children, who can alter teachers’ instruction? These things can all affect teaching effectiveness but are not generally assessed to understand how to support teaching effectiveness.

In sum, the emergent evaluation systems using multiple methods are likely to one day be a powerful tool in addressing the inequities relating to teacher and teaching effectiveness. Only, that is, as long as they are designed to provide information not just on whether individual teachers are effective and are equitably placed, but also information on the context in which their instruction takes place. Evaluation systems are currently not up to the critically important task of supporting effective teaching.
Weakly Aligned Teacher Preparation Programs and K–12 Schools

Surveys of administrators and new teachers have found that teachers too often feel underprepared to meet the needs of diverse classrooms. Critics contend that this feeling is in part due to the lack of close relationships or connections between schools of education and the K–12 schools they serve. In many preparation programs, higher education faculty rarely visit real classrooms, do not carefully select the schools and experienced teachers with whom they place candidates, and do not actively seek to understand or respond to the workforce needs of the district schools they serve. When preparation programs do seek to establish close partnerships with local schools, they often encounter barriers such as misaligned cultures and schedules. These disconnects represent a real loss of expertise among educators on both sides of the PK–12/higher education divide and to the profession as a whole and contribute to ineffective teaching contexts. These disconnects are especially problematic in high-poverty urban schools because of their higher than average teacher turnover—such schools are more likely to rely on newly prepared teachers to fill their teaching ranks.

Uneven Access to High-Quality Collaborative Teacher Learning Opportunities

Teachers are often very dissatisfied with their mandated professional development. A survey conducted for the Teaching Commission in 2004 found that 42 percent of teachers indicated that their opportunities for professional development either “leaves something to be desired” or “is a waste of my time.” Only 18 percent said that the professional development courses offered by their districts or schools were significant in helping them become good teachers. There is evidence that this situation may be getting worse. For instance, research shows that one indicator of quality professional development is that it is “sustained,” for eight hours or longer. On that measure, a comprehensive analysis of the nationally representative Schools and Staffing Survey showed that teachers’ opportunities for sustained and ongoing professional development decreased between 2004 and 2008. Just as disturbing, a report by the same group found that teachers’ opportunities for high-quality professional development (of the kind that produces change in teaching practice and student outcomes) are much more limited in the United States than in most high-achieving nations abroad. A recent workgroup comparing the careers of Chinese and American teachers showed stark contrasts between the opportunities to learn among Chinese teachers and their American counterparts.

Emerging research indicates that teachers learn most powerfully in ongoing interaction with other teachers as they actively work to analyze their students’ learning and observe one another’s teaching. Overall student learning is higher when teachers report high levels of collaboration at their school. Researchers have also found that teachers who have more effective colleagues tend to be more effective themselves, suggesting that peer learning is a powerful lever to improve teaching.

Unfortunately, too many teachers have daily schedules that preclude time for common planning or group inquiry to look at student learning data. Although it is changing, teaching practice in the United States is still largely isolated and private—teachers rarely have the opportunity to observe and learn from their colleagues. This situation leads almost inevitably to wide differences in teaching effectiveness between teachers even in the same school.

Only a little more than half of teachers (53.8 percent) who teach in schools serving high percentages of minority students report that their professional development often involved...
participating in professional development activities together with most or all of the teachers in their department or grade level\textsuperscript{52} and only roughly one in five teachers (19.7 percent) in high-minority schools report that they agree or strongly agree with the statement that “there is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members.”\textsuperscript{53} More promisingly, nearly three in five teachers (58 percent) in such schools reported that they exchanged feedback with other teachers based on classroom observations at least once or twice a month.\textsuperscript{54} Unfortunately, what is not known from these surveys is the quality of the experiences that teachers have in these learning activities.

### Lack of Diversity in the Teaching Workforce

High percentages of students of color do not have teachers who grew up in the same communities as the students nor have the racial or ethnic backgrounds they do. This is not necessarily detrimental; however, there is emerging evidence that shows that teachers of color are more effective with students of color than their white counterparts.\textsuperscript{55} Although the exact mechanisms are currently not clear, research suggests that these differences in effectiveness may be due to five particular practices and dispositions that teachers of color are more likely to apply in their classrooms:

- Hold abiding high expectations of students of color.
- Implement culturally relevant pedagogy. (Culturally relevant pedagogy is teaching that “empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.”\textsuperscript{56} Culturally relevant teaching uses the backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences of children to build bridges between students’ home and school learning.)
- Develop caring and trusting relationships with students.
- Confront issues of racism through teaching.
- Serve as advocates for students of color.

Teachers of color may also serve as role models (or, “exemplars of possibility”\textsuperscript{57}) for students of color; however, there is no empirical research that explicitly tests the effects of teachers as role models, nor how the role models function in real classrooms.\textsuperscript{58}

Teachers of color are more likely to serve students of color and are less likely to move to more affluent schools with fewer minorities.\textsuperscript{59} Unfortunately, teacher preparation programs have difficulty recruiting teachers of color for a number of reasons. For example, young people of color do not often see the teaching profession as attractive because it does not pay as well as other jobs, they often have negative experiences from their own PK–12 schooling, they lack ongoing support to be successful in college/university, and they may have difficulties with English.\textsuperscript{60} In a vicious cycle, the lack of teacher role models that look like these students and the lack of inspiring teachers who are well prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners also play an important role in the disinterest among nonwhites to enter teaching.

Nevertheless, merely increasing teacher diversity through better recruitment and hiring practices will have limited impact. As Villegas and Davis\textsuperscript{61} point out, although teachers of color have “insider experiences” and unique knowledge and insight about the lives of their students, they often need to be taught to draw on that knowledge in order to build bridges for their students to learning. Such skills are not a given, and teachers of all backgrounds need ongoing support to ensure that they are able to implement effective teaching for all students.

### Enhancing Preparation and Development with Continued Performance-Based Measurement

Figure 7 depicts some of the ways that teaching effectiveness can be improved and supported for all students, but the experts we spoke to agree that there is no such thing as a silver bullet in the support of teachers and teaching effectiveness. Better performance measures that assess teachers,
teaching, and student learning outcomes at key points in a teacher’s career path will help the field better understand what changes to each aspect of the system need to be made to advance teaching and learning. Studies at the state, district, school, and individual level, for example, have found that teachers’ academic backgrounds, preparation for teaching, certification status, and experience significantly impact students’ achievement. The teachers best able to effectively close achievement gaps along racial and class lines were the strong teachers in most of the areas identified earlier. That is, those teachers entered the profession fully prepared, had taught more than two years, had a strong academic record and were certified by their state or the prestigious National Board process.\(^6^2\)

As a community-based advocacy organization, the NAACP believes it is best equipped to influence the preparation and licensing, early career training, continuing development, and certification that teachers receive, ensuring a strong focus on improving classroom practice at every point.

Currently, state and district leaders, researchers, and consultants are working to build comprehensive teacher performance measures for evaluating teachers’ effectiveness. An exciting first step is to base assessment more on actual teaching performance rather than tests of disconnected content or simulations. These teacher performance assessments (see “Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium” sidebar) measure actual teaching skill in the content areas. In states that have already used them, these assessments have been strong levers for improving preparation and mentoring and for determining teachers’ competence. They have been found not only to measure features of teaching associated with effectiveness but actually to help develop effectiveness at the same time, not only for the participants but also for those involved in mentoring and assessing these performances.\(^6^3\)

An improved ability to identify effective and ineffective teaching practices could go a long way toward ensuring that students of color have the best opportunities to learn, particularly when such measures can be used to provide individual teachers with meaningful and useful feedback on their practices and student learning. When such informed feedback is integrated into teacher licensure, certification and evaluation, and tenure processes, educators can continue to expand, refine, and develop their teaching skills. Moreover, having such a system accepted across multiple states could help bring excellent teaching into hard-to-staff schools and neighborhoods. Value-added calculations as well as classroom observations, student and parent surveys, and the like, are all useful building blocks for understanding the knowledge, skills, and practices that make teachers effective. Such tools, can also be used to understand other components of the system that affect teachers’ knowledge, skills, and practices—the quality of the preparation teachers have as well as the ongoing learning opportunities in which they participate.
TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT CONSORTIUM (TPAC)  

Efforts are currently underway to achieve a system of reliable, valid, and nationally available performance assessments from a teacher’s point of entry through the development of accomplished teaching. Twenty states have joined the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Stanford University to create the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA), a common initial licensing assessment that can be used nationwide to make preparation and licensing performance-based.

This consortium, consisting of teams made up of representatives from state education agencies and more than 70 teacher preparation institutions, has launched a three-year pilot program, beginning in 2011 with the goal of full implementation as early as School Year (SY) 2012–13 in five states. Other states will decide about adopting the program after the pilot test period, when they have had some experience with the assessment. The consortium has completed the design of the assessments in the initial licensing areas. This design will be piloted during the completion of the design of the remaining licensing areas that will be field-tested along with the first group of assessments next year. The performance measures will be validated using value-added analyses, observations, interviews with candidates completing the assessment and the first year of teaching, and interviews with faculty and program administrators on the use of assessment data.

Research has shown that rigorous, validated, standards-based performance measures can be a powerful tool for capturing how teaching actually happens in a complex context as well as providing feedback for continuous improvement. The TPA is based upon successful portfolio assessments such as California’s Performance Assessment for California Teachers for initial licensure and Connecticut’s Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) for professional certification. Over the last two decades, validity studies have shown that well-designed teacher performance measures can distinguish between effective and ineffective teachers and significantly predict their students’ value-added achievement on state tests. For example, studies found that a one-unit increase in the BEST portfolio scores was associated with a 50 percent increase in students’ gains on Connecticut’s reading tests during the course of a school year. In addition to serving accountability purposes, these highly structured measures have demonstrated an immediate impact on teachers’ instructional practice, and program improvement.

U.S. States Involved in TPAC

- California
- Colorado
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Tennessee
- Virginia
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin
- Idaho
- Wyoming

Rarely are such measures used in this way, however. As has been mentioned, a focus on teaching effectiveness requires that performance measures be broadened to include measures of the context of teaching as well—for example, the time that teachers have to learn and plan, the number and duration of interruptions to their instruction with which they must contend, the quality of the school and district leadership they have access to, the coherence of the curriculum,
and so forth. Thus, other measures, such as school climate observation and surveys, need to be developed and refined to understand the performance of teachers’ classroom and school contexts in order to make well-warranted decisions about how to improve teaching effectiveness. Incorporating the emerging research about measures of effective teaching into the processes by which teachers are trained, certified, evaluated, and supported can help develop a system of continuous teacher improvement resulting in greater student success. Advocates should demand that processes where teachers are evaluated be performance based and utilize all available tools to help assess and improve their classroom practice.

**Continuously Improving Teaching with Instructional Coaching and Enhanced Professional Collaboration**

Another promising approach to supporting teaching effectiveness is instructional coaching. Through coaching, teachers at all levels of their careers can receive professional development that meets their individual needs. Ideally, coaches work side by side with teachers, observing their teaching, providing meaningful feedback and models of effective teaching, and putting teachers in touch with resources that can help them implement effective classroom practices. Coaches stay with schools over time, helping teachers meet new challenges as they arise. Coaches have also found that they have more impact working with groups of teachers rather than with one teacher at a time.

Unfortunately, the ideal is not always born out in practice, which has likely weakened the impact coaching has on teacher learning and, in turn, student learning. For example, coaches are often asked to tutor struggling students or step in as substitute teachers. They are often selected based on seniority or qualifications that are weakly associated with their ability to work with adults. They themselves do not have access to ongoing professional learning opportunities that would help them become and remain effective instructional coaches. When coaching is supported by the district and school administration in providing time and resources, when coaches have the requisite knowledge and skills, and when coaching is implemented in schools that already have collaborative, instructionally focused cultures, however, coaching is likely to be a powerful approach to supporting teaching effectiveness.

This result is because high-quality instructional coaching is aligned with the tenets of high-quality professional learning (i.e., that it is explicitly and closely tied to teachers’ work with students, is sustained, content specific, and targeted to individual teachers’ strengths and weaknesses).

Coaches can also facilitate professional learning communities (or PLCs) in which teachers work together to analyze the effectiveness of the teaching they are providing to students using various forms of student learning data and learn how to adapt their instruction in light of the data. As members of the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) wrote, “Teachers develop expertise not as isolated individuals but through job-embedded professional development, and as members of collaborative, interdisciplinary teams with common goals for student learning.” PLCs, when implemented well, can ameliorate teacher isolation, create shared teacher responsibility for all students, slow teacher turnover and burnout, and expose teachers to instructional strategies or knowledge they did not have access to previously, all of which ultimately have the potential to increase student learning.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that while coaching is theoretically sound and there exists anecdotal evidence of its power, the scientific evidence of its effectiveness is mixed. For example, two recent well-designed large-scale studies of professional development involving coaching found very weak effects of these particular interventions on teacher knowledge and teaching practice, and so far no effects on student learning. Thus, while most experts agree that coaching is a promising practice, further experimentation and study is necessary to determine how and in what contexts coaching can be successful.
Strengthening the Pipeline for Teachers with Grow-Your-Own Programs and Teacher Residencies

Other promising approaches to addressing the lack of teachers of color, effective teachers in high-needs schools, and teachers who are ill prepared to work with students of color is to create and implement comprehensive recruitment, or “grow-your-own,” programs and teacher residencies. Successful grow-your-own programs recruit nontraditional teacher candidates who may be more likely to teach in the communities that traditional candidates do not find attractive. For example, paraprofessionals already working in high-need schools, interested parents or community members, or current teachers wishing to become certified in another area may be effective teachers-in-the-making. Many of these people may need scholarships or loan forgiveness and other supports to complete coursework to become certified. Successful grow-your-own programs require strong partnerships between higher education partners and the schools for which candidates are being prepared. They are particularly well-suited to include historically black colleges and universities, many of which have the preparation of a strong, diverse teaching force as a central tenet of their public mission.

Other, newer, grow-your-own programs seek out promising middle school or high school students of color and provide them with college visits, experience working with children, college-level coursework in high school, scholarships, and coaching and other supports to be successful in...
college. For example, one model in Denver engages high school students with a teacher preparation program that is part of a career and college-readiness concentration. Students exploring an interest in teaching can preview college courses that address teaching special needs students and teaching reading skills. They can also enroll in courses taught on college campuses and fulfill their service requirement working alongside early education teachers at an onsite childcare center. Because the schools in the Denver program serve more than 90 percent of students of color and more than 80 percent who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, participating students are prime candidates for diversifying the teaching workforce and returning to teach in the local neighborhoods and school districts where their families and friends live. These multiyear programs have yet to accumulate demonstrated evidence of their effectiveness; however, they may help convert the vicious cycle described earlier by helping more young students of color construct a vision for themselves as teachers or, at the very least, as college-goers.

One promising example of a comprehensive recruitment and retention program that has been successful in bringing more students of color into teaching is the Montclair Teacher Education Advocacy Center (TEAC) based at Montclair State University. Montclair’s teacher preparation program prepares teachers to work in urban districts like Newark, Elizabeth, and Jersey City, New Jersey; the developers realized early on that more teachers of color were needed to serve those school populations well. Montclair and TEAC faculty have worked hard to establish close relationships with these districts, working with them when their policies and practices did not align. In TEAC, two full-time counselor/advisors and an assistant conduct varied off-campus recruitment activities including facilitating Future Educator of America clubs in more than a dozen middle school and high schools and arranging on-campus visits and workshops on college preparation for African-American and Latino students interested in a career in teaching. TEAC counselor/advisors also work individually and in groups with Montclair freshmen and sophomores to assist candidates with the transition to college.

Teacher residency programs extend the grow-your-own recruitment practices and emphasis on learning to teach in a neighborhood context to the undergraduate experience. Whereas most teacher preparation programs offer only a few weeks to a semester of training in a school, residencies are intensive, extended one-year preparation programs modeled after medical residency training models. The details of each program vary, but generally prospective teachers, or residents, are placed in partner schools with rigorously selected and trained mentor teachers. Their university coursework is also tailored to complement their residency experiences, and schools benefit from the support of university faculty. Residents gradually take on more and more teaching responsibility as they progress in their knowledge and skills. Usually, residents are organized into cohorts so that they can form professional learning communities and receive ongoing support after they are hired as full-time teachers of record. The number and types of residency programs are growing rapidly. Residency programs are usually created in partnership with school districts so teacher education programs can more directly understand and serve the needs of the PK–12 schools. Most programs have as part of their mission the recruitment and preparation of teachers of color.

The Boston Teacher Residency Program (BTR) exemplifies this approach to teacher recruitment and preparation. Residents spend four days a week in classrooms, working closely with mentor teachers. They also take courses that are designed and led by Boston educators on Fridays, after school, and during two summers. Residents commit to teach in Boston for three years, and BTR supports its graduates over that period as they develop from novice teachers to teacher-leaders. Although the effects of the program are still being sorted out, BTR leaders report that 48 percent of the 238 BTR graduates currently working in Boston...
Public Schools are teachers of color, with 32 percent of the most recent class fluent in a second language. Eighty-seven percent of BTR’s first three graduating classes have taught for more than three years.

**Conclusion**

Despite the lingering questions that arise from a less than completely solid research base and the present lack of comprehensive performance measures, we know that the ways education policy and practice have been attempting to support teaching effectiveness have not been working for students of color. The approaches outlined in this paper, when developed and implemented thoughtfully and well—high-quality instructional coaching and professional learning communities, enhanced performance measures, and residencies and grow-your-own programs that can start when youth are developing their career aspirations—hold great promise for advancing teaching and learning for all students.

The following are action steps recommended by experts around the country that you can take now to support teaching effectiveness.

- **Support collaborative learning and teaching among teachers in schools.** Ensure that teachers have sufficient time, structures, and expert facilitation to work and learn together to improve teaching effectiveness. Ask local principals and teachers whether they participate regularly in professional learning communities and whether this participation is focused on learning from student learning assessment data and the implementation of rigorous curriculum. Ask for examples of how their teaching has improved through their participation in such communities and whether they have the time and trust in their colleagues to make deep improvements. Take this information to your Board of Education and advocate for needed changes.

- **Demand improved performance-based assessments at key decision points along a teacher’s career path.** Teaching performance should be regularly examined using multiple tools including value-added measures, observations, portfolios, student surveys, and other tools. Teachers should be provided robust feedback keyed to those assessments to make needed changes at each stage of their teaching career.

- **Pay focused attention to developing the pipeline that generates future educators.** Facilitate close collaborations among hiring school districts, schools of education, two-year institutions, and high schools to generate an intentional system that develops effective teachers for high-needs schools and districts. Encourage districts and colleges to incorporate model elements such as early opportunities to earn college credit, nontraditional recruitment strategies, community service in high-need neighborhoods and the promise of jobs to students completing the pipeline program.
Chapter 3: More Time for More Learning

All children and adolescents, regardless of background, need a wide variety of experiences to understand the world and what their place in it could be. Schools cannot provide that range of experiences by themselves, nor should they. Research has established that students who regularly participate in high-quality learning experiences outside of the traditional school day and year (referred to in this chapter as expanded learning opportunities) perform better in school, behave better, and have a stronger sense of their future. Expanded learning opportunities provide that menu of quality offerings beyond the schoolhouse. Examples include, but are not limited to, experiential learning, career internships, job- or arts-oriented apprenticeships, mentoring programs, cross-age or peer tutoring programs, and service learning projects.

Community-based organizations (CBOs) are common and integral partners with schools in providing quality expanded learning initiatives. CBOs provide resources that schools may not have and can offer an additional support system for students, particularly students who need more guidance, structure, and opportunities otherwise not available to them. For example, community-based literacy centers often host afterschool programs that not only support children but their families. For students who need and can benefit from a broader range of supports, the earlier they are exposed to expanded learning opportunities, the better: students who are successful in the younger grades are more likely to stay in school, graduate on time, and enjoy better opportunities for a productive life after high school.

In this chapter, we discuss the elements for good programs and why more time for more learning may be an especially important bridge to success—a linchpin between the home, school, and community contexts—for all children, particularly for children of color and children in low-income schools (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Replacing Cycles of Failure with Cycles of Success in Learning Time and Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CYCLE OF FAILURE</th>
<th>CYCLE OF SUCCESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of:</td>
<td>Broad, coordinated, student-centered enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to quality opportunities</td>
<td>Increased access, quality and lower cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community coordination</td>
<td>Community asset map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment with schools and skills</td>
<td>Community schools models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revised school and district improvement plans</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Workforce and leadership development skills</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What do we mean by “expanded learning?” We use the term expanded learning to cover a wide variety of formal and informal learning experiences outside the traditional school day and year, including before and after school, evenings, weekends, and during the summer months.

Elements of Good Programs

Over the past decade, largely but not exclusively through the influence of the U.S. Department of Education’s $1.1 billion-per-year 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, thousands of communities have begun offering afterschool enrichment activities to their students. Multiple studies\(^8\) have identified a short list of guiding principles for high-quality expanded learning programs. The best programs, they found, are structured to:

- Provide supportive time and space for students to explore interests, expand skills, and develop strong relationships.
- Create a variety of rich, hands-on learning experiences that answer the question, “Why do I need to know this?”
- Build strong partnerships to provide more resources, support, and positive influences for children and their families.

Most successful expanded learning initiatives offer some core academic instruction, including help with homework and individualized or small-group tutoring, but they also make sure to provide substantial time for enrichment activities and nonacademic support for students. They recognize that students thrive when given opportunities to learn new skills that connect to their own interests and passions while expanding their worldviews through exposure to new experiences.

Why Expanded Learning Matters for Children of Color

Access to exemplary expanded learning services is particularly important for youth of color and those who live in economically disadvantaged

Where It Works: The Providence AfterSchool Alliance

To be most effective, schools and partner institutions need to understand how to relate to and support one another. Although no perfect system has been developed, several cities have created expanded learning initiatives to address these issues. One such example is the Providence AfterSchool Alliance (PASA). The PASA vision statement explains how it will take both the public and private sectors to integrate “academic, social, emotional development and physical health opportunities for every child, from first grade through high school, from when they wake up until they go to sleep.” PASA has developed systems for relationship building, leveraging resources and funding, and accountability. It is not a provider of direct services; rather, PASA is an intermediary that coordinates partnerships and resources. For more information, visit [http://www.mypasa.org/](http://www.mypasa.org/)
communities. Access to exemplary expanded learning services is particularly important for youth of color and those who live in economically disadvantaged communities. In a recent Educational Testing Service (ETS) study that focused on the achievement gap between black and white students, a potential reason offered for the achievement gap is that generations of black youth growing up in poverty do not have access to resources (e.g., computers, summer enrichment camp, or even books or magazines at home) that are readily available to their more affluent peers. Expanded learning programs can provide opportunities for students to have experiences they would not be able to have during a typical school day or in their homes and communities. This access to opportunities is particularly important for rural communities, where students are likely to have far less access to resources like libraries, museums, youth centers, and community organizations than their urban and suburban peers. Solutions include developing partnerships with higher education institutions, providing transportation support, and exploring promising strategies for virtual participation in learning and enrichment activities.

Moreover, the accountability pressure that schools—particularly low-performing schools—experience to succeed in getting students to learn “the basics” often means that when activities are provided, they are rote learning experiences using worksheets or test preparation books. Too often, programs provide only space for students to complete their homework without adequate staffing or support. From students’ perspectives, this situation means more of the same: boring subjects that have no relationship to their lives, with rules and expectations to which they do not feel connected. As a result, even where learning opportunities exist, they are often poorly prepared and staffed; in turn, they are poorly attended, and thus, they show little impact for the students.

**Advocate for Better, Not Just More**

More time itself is not the answer. Research on only extending learning time has been inconclusive to date. A better use of time for high-quality learning opportunities can be a strong factor in fostering student academic growth, and families should advocate strongly for this solution. To make access to high-quality expanded learning opportunities a reality for more students, schools need support from districts or alternative support systems (e.g., Charter Management Organizations [CMOs]). Expanded learning can be viewed as a critical component of school reform and turning around low-performing schools. Clearly, we must do a better job of engaging students in the learning process so that they will want to stay in school. Districts and CMOs can help schools to identify and broker relationships with expanded learning programs that align with the needs of their students. These programs should be informed by research about the best ways to enhance youth achievement and development. Staff with expanded-learning expertise should be part of the leadership team to ensure that the intention of the expanded learning program and how it will positively impact student achievement is clearly articulated in the school and the system’s improvement plan.
LEARNING PROGRESSIONS

One promising set of initiatives builds on the idea of individualized education plans (IEPs) for students and finds more time for more learning by using technology to map students’ progress and speed it up. The Rocket Ship schools in California and the School of One in New York use computer-based learning to track each student’s progress against standards in real time; then they tailor the instruction teachers give accordingly. One project expected to be complete in June 2011 charts the skills and concepts students need to master during each school year to be ready for college and career success. These learning progressions will be available online to parents, students, and teachers. The hope is that schools can use such tools to design individual learning maps and link students to customized tutoring, enrichment, and acceleration experiences. Each student’s unique path to meeting standards is based on his or her ability, interests, and needs and allows the student to proceed at his or her own pace. Pilot program participants report results on par with one-on-one tutoring, where students demonstrate about twice the learning in half the time.

Although many teachers can accomplish such individualized learning, these tools can help spread the practices schoolwide. Rocket Ship has discovered that moving routine skills practice to computers can free up teachers for more complex tasks such as tailoring instruction, helping struggling students, stretching those who master concepts quickly, and engaging parents and communities. Their classroom teachers conduct at least one home visit in the first semester, three parent conferences throughout the year, and make formal contacts with each student’s parent twice per month. Parents also work with organizations like People Acting for Community Together (PACT) and Parents for Great Schools (PGS) to advocate for more high-quality school options for their community. Schools adopting such models have the potential to provide individualized classroom experiences for students and create a supportive community within and outside the school.

Finally, schools adopting these individualized and computer-assisted models have found time and money savings that they then invested into improving their learning environments. Once Rocket Ship schools covered their initial start-up costs, they were able to run on less than the statewide per-pupil allocation. School leaders have invested the savings in extended principal training, extra tutoring hours for students, coaches that mentor teachers to help them improve teaching, and higher salaries to attract committed educators.

Demand Rich, Student-Centered Experiences

If an expanded learning program is going to be successful in getting students in the door and keeping them there, it must ensure that the students have high-quality experiences while they are in the program. Research conducted throughout the last decade converges around the need to focus on student interests and to enable students to develop positive relationships with staff. Effective programs should be intentional about their overall goals, actively involve participants, be intentional about their individual goals, and focus on the interactions between youth and staff. Access and sustained participation, quality programming, and strong partnerships can lead to positive academic, social, prevention, and health benefits.
As an example of an emerging model for effective expanded learning, the “Six E” framework (T. Peterson, personal communication, November 22, 2010) uses a conceptual map to keep youth engaged and receiving consistent reinforcement from outside the school.

- **Engaging**: Keep students focused on the activities involved. An example of engaging is high school students accumulating credit while working outside the school in active collaboration with community partners that offer rigorous service learning experiences.

- **Enriching**: Help students develop skills in which they are lacking and continue to promote their strengths and passions.

- **Extra hands and connections**: Find community experts who can work with youth, bring energy to the students, and provide additional staffing assistance.

- **Expectations**: Set high expectations for students. Continue to look at reading and math achievement but also focus on broader issues, such as passing grades, reduced discipline issues, and completing homework.

- **Expertise**: Staff programs with people who have expertise in a wide range of areas and who can relate to young people in the community because they understand their issues.

- **Energy**: Hire energetic staff who want to be there. Young people know when adults are genuine, and that recognition will impact the relationships between the youths and the adults.

Each of these six factors consistently emerges in the research as a critical component of high-quality expanded learning models. Although it is a challenge for schools, parents, and community members to understand, adapt, or replicate these ambitious and comprehensive models, expanded learning programs that incorporate these strategies are the ones that ultimately make the most difference for the participants and the community-at-large.

### Build Partnerships for More Opportunities

Parents and families need to encourage schools to look outside their walls to build support for higher quality programs. Regardless of how services are delivered, it takes a variety of stakeholders and partner organizations to implement successful expanded learning initiatives.

In particular, families can:

- Get involved by advocating with local school boards, charter management organizations (CMOs), and school administrators to support student-centered enrichment programming.

- Provide support for identifying and building on existing community assets.

#### Figure 9. School, Family, and Community Partnerships

- Help build strong partnerships among schools, families, and community organizations (see Figure 9).

### Insist on Broad-Based, Coordinated Student-Centered Programs

1. **Advocate for a strong focus on quality**. Quality expanded learning opportunities involve more than physical places for students to go when they are not in school. Students of color should have access to high-quality activities that will
provide them with enriching learning experiences. This access includes providing professional development and training for staff, particularly on ways to develop positive relationships with students.

2. Demand workforce and leadership development. Provide opportunities for youths to explore their interests and learn about their career options; give them access to experiences that will provide the critical skills they need to become successful. For example, the Citizen Schools’ apprenticeship model that started in Boston has integrated problem solving and entrepreneurship skills into the curriculum. Nicole Pinkard’s work at the University of Chicago uses digital media to bring in young peoples’ interests and allows them to demonstrate their competencies and skills through experiences acquired beyond routine curricular instruction. Young people also need to develop the skills to lead and work in teams, reach consensus decisions and contribute responsibly to their communities. Expanded learning opportunities that teach such skills help students develop into well-rounded members of their workplaces, communities, and families.

3. Focus on high school students earning credit and experience toward graduation and college. Such efforts should span the regular path to graduation for all students and allow students to recover credits so they can get back on track. Initiatives to monitor students’ progress to graduation (see earlier sidebar) will become increasingly important now that the majority of states have adopted common core academic standards, a common list of what students should know and be able to do no matter what state they live in. A variety of enrichment experiences aligned with school standards and curricula—and with appropriate accountability provisions—could count toward graduation credit. Students should also have a variety of ways to demonstrate that work in communities and through technology contributes to their mastery of academic goals.

The National Governors’ Association and the National Conference of State Legislators are exploring ways that states can grant high school credit for qualifying out-of-school activities. Initiatives such as the Early College High School Model partner with community colleges to let students in danger of dropping out earn up to two years of college credit for free while in high school, reestablish the relevance of mandatory high school courses, save students money, and increase their chances of college completion and degree attainment.

4. Make student stipends an allowable use of federal and local funds, especially for older students. Programs such as Chicago’s After School Matters high school program provide stipends to all participating students in their academic, music, and arts apprenticeships. These stipends can resolve the tension that many students in low-income communities face when having to choose between getting a job and pursuing their interests.

5. Formalize expanded learning within the school. School leaders should ensure all students have equitable access to high level coursework that prepares students for college and career-training during and after high school. For instance, courses with a laboratory component can often serve as a gateway to biomedical internships, apprenticeships and college work-study opportunities. Students lacking access to such course experiences during school are denied the opportunity to take advantage of enrichment opportunities outside the school. Administrators must be intentional about expanding access to such gateway preparatory courses, especially for disadvantaged and communities of color.

A plan for broadly meeting the needs of their students should be part of every principal’s job description, and the provision of such student-centered, out-of-school supports should be part of the evaluation criteria for principals and district administrators. The district should
also provide support and training about understanding the potential value and relevancy of constructively using out-of-school time. For instance, the Mayor’s Partnership Schools initiative in Los Angeles is pioneering efforts to make connection to community opportunities part of its administrators’ daily work. The principal evaluation framework includes metrics about what happens after the school day, with administrators receiving more points for the number of different coordinating entities that are affiliated with the school and the number of students who participate.

6. **Focus on key transition periods.** Transitions between 5th and 6th grade and 8th and 9th grade are critical for students’ development.86 School, community, and district partners can craft state or local initiatives around transition times.

### Survey and Build Community Assets

1. **Operate from a community asset model.** What programs are in place that could be expanded or enhanced? Which young people do not have access to services? What services are needed by young people? How can various funding streams be brought together to provide the necessary services to the students? By addressing these questions, a community needs-and-assets assessment can help establish the priorities for the community. School-community partnerships can benefit from identifying a set of community indicators for the range of supports that research indicates young people need. Indicators and metrics need to be developed to measure the impact of an expanded learning initiative on select student outcomes, to make improvements, and to foster accountability in ways that ensure youth access and success. Schools and advocates can bring experts together to develop measures that are appropriate for their communities.

   Next, bring a variety of leaders to the table to develop a framework for moving the initiative forward, for instance, to adopt a community school model. The Center for American Progress87 described the purpose of community schools. The authors write:

   Community schools aim to combat the environmental factors that can pose barriers to student learning by providing support services and academic enrichment to students, their families, and community members within the school. Using already laid brick and mortar, community schools challenge the limits of the physical school building to do more than offer academic instruction.

The Harlem Children’s Zone and other community school models such as those proposed by the President’s Promise Neighborhood model, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, and the Broader, Bolder Approach to Education campaign, for example, demonstrate how schools can be transformed into networks that provide expanded learning opportunities for students. Other sources for extensive information about community schools include The Children’s Aid Society and the Coalition for Community Schools.88

2. **Advocate for broader access: provide access to affordable expanded learning opportunities.** Expanded learning programs should be available to all students, especially those in low-income communities so they have access to the same resources and opportunities as their more affluent peers. Information about these programs needs to be disseminated to families throughout the community so they are aware of the opportunities. Look for opportunities to increase the number of programs in communities using schools, community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, and other public and private entities as potential resources.

For many young people living in economically
disadvantaged communities, the number and quality of opportunities to engage in safe and structured activities during the hours when they are not in school is inconsistent. A recent national survey showed that there are 15.1 million (26 percent) young people who are unsupervised after school. More than a quarter (28 percent) of African-American children have no adult supervision after the school day ends; however, 61 percent of the African-American respondents and 47 percent of the Hispanic and Asian-American parents said they would enroll their students in afterschool programs if they were available. In a study that analyzed African-American parents’ views about expanded learning opportunities, parents identified five barriers to access:

- An unwelcoming atmosphere
- Lack of proximity from the program to the home, school, or both
- Lack of transportation
- Affordability
- Low parental literacy

**Deepen and Expand the Partnership Pool**

1. **Revise school and district improvement plans.** The expanded learning program should become part of the school’s and the district’s formal improvement plans. Staff involved in the expanded learning program and partners should be included as part of any school improvement team. Additionally, the school and expanded learning programs need to intentionally complement one another. Learning opportunities should be aligned with state learning standards and what students are currently learning.

2. **Develop a framework and build capacity.** Create a framework that brings multiple stakeholders to the table to create expanded learning opportunities in communities. The framework should include plans about systems of approaches, evaluation, and delivery that are sustainable, such as the United Way model. The United Way’s Birth-to-21 Continuum requires supportive communities, effective schools, and strong families in order to be successful. Ensure that programs designed to expand learning opportunities develop indicators and metrics to gauge the impact of expanded learning systems for students of color. Communities should push for service providers to include such accountability measures. In addition to organizations, important community leaders, such as city and town mayors should bring leadership and advocacy for expanded learning programs. Examples of cities where this has worked successfully include San Francisco; Charleston, South Carolina; and Newark, New Jersey. The NAACP can act as a convener in communities where the initial conversation focuses on the components and strategies of an exemplary model, such as the United Way model, as a starting point. Going forward, communities will need to carefully analyze the components of current expanded learning initiatives to look for areas that can be replicated locally and to develop strategies to bring the model to scale.

3. **Reinvent the school day.** Propose that every school extend its programming into the morning and evening hours and identify the funding and policy changes needed to make that happen. This proposal might require school, community, and district leaders to:
   - Explore opportunities to leverage state
school improvement plans and federal programs such as the School Improvement Grant, Race to the Top, and 21st CCLC funds to meet community-defined goals for expanding learning opportunities.

- Look to any federal and state funding streams that support partnerships with communities, universities, and other stakeholders for student success.
- Advocate to refashion Title I to commit funding that provides for truly supplemental expanded learning opportunities in low-income, low-performing schools.

Conclusion

A decade of investments in afterschool and summer programs has built a strong evidence base about the academic and developmental benefits of high-quality expanded learning programs. Research suggests that students strongly benefit when they are provided substantially more time to engage in academic enrichment and youth development opportunities, both within and outside the school building. Particularly in high-need communities, well-designed expanded learning programs can have a positive impact on student achievement, attendance and graduation rates, and other desirable student outcomes. Nevertheless, in too many communities, the availability of high-quality and affordable expanded learning opportunities is limited and not widely available to the children who need, or want, those experiences.

Educators, families, and community partners must collaborate to ensure innovation and efficiency in identifying, developing, and delivering a comprehensive range of student-centered learning resources and support services. Working together, community stakeholders can ensure that high-quality teaching, exciting learning, and developmental opportunities become available to all students. In particular, schools and communities must ensure that its highest need students, those who are likely to continue to struggle in the absence of expanded opportunities to learn and grow, will have equal access to the critical supports they need to graduate school and become ready for college or a career.

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program is one of very few federally funded education programs that require school-community group partnerships and allows the community partner to be a grantee. This flexibility appears to be an important factor when serving African-American students. Since 2006, African Americans have comprised approximately a quarter of all 21st CCLC attendees. Additionally, a higher percentage of African-American students participate in 21st CCLC programs at Boys and Girls Clubs, charter schools, and faith-based organizations than Hispanics or whites. The percentage of African Americans at faith-based institutions is exceptionally high (67 percent). Although there are many factors that could contribute to the distribution of students in this fashion, these numbers indicate that communities that serve African-American students have established roots in developing community-based partnerships.

There are almost 35,000 public schools in America in which more than 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (National Center for Education Statistics). Almost 60 percent of African-American students attend these schools, yet because federal funding for the 21st CCLC program has not increased at the pace originally envisioned by Congress, only about 10,000 public schools or their community partners have grants for afterschool learning opportunities with community partners, including faith-based groups. There is a sizeable gap to fill. With additional support from the administration and Congress, the 21st CCLC program could be expanded to serve the full 35,000 public schools with 50 percent or more of their students living in poverty.
Earliest Warning Systems

A plan to expand learning opportunities should also incorporate a system to help more students graduate from high school. Researchers have identified several simple ways to identify students in danger of dropping out as early as middle school. Close attention should be paid to the transition years between 5th and 6th grade and between 8th and 9th grade. These easy-to-track data are kept at the school and district level and include the following factors: frequent absences, low credit accumulation rate, failing grades in reading or math, poor behavior, being overage for a grade, having a low 9th grade grade-point average, failing 9th grade, or having a record of frequent school or district transfers.91

Starting with the 2010–11 school year, states, districts, and schools must report high school graduation rates using a common method based on the percentage of each 9th grade group graduating in four years. The release of graduation rates that are directly comparable across states and districts is likely to draw increased public attention to the dropout issue, particularly because reported dropout rates will be used for federal accountability under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The availability of longitudinal data also means that communities don’t have to wait until senior year to identify dropout problems. Because the new system tracks groups of students entering 9th grade through graduation, communities can build systems that keep track of student progress toward graduation each year.92

Adding to the urgency are disproportionately low graduation rates among low-income and minority students. Recent estimates suggest that only about half of minorities earn high school diplomas.93 Even in the general student population, about half of surveyed dropouts said they opted out because their traditional school did not challenge them. To that end, a mix of relevant and hands-on learning opportunities, such as those provided in a quality expanded learning program, can be a key factor in encouraging dropouts to reenter high school.94

A free tool from the National High School Center (the spreadsheet-based tool and resources are online at http://www.betterhighschools.org/ews.asp) can help communities track which students are at risk and link them to the supports and services they need to succeed. In addition, researchers at Johns Hopkins have developed an on-demand, classroom-level tool that teachers can use to track the signals that students send on a day-to-day basis, quickly get them help, and make necessary adjustments. This early indicator tracking tool has proved so useful that it quickly spread from pilot schools in Philadelphia to other schools throughout the district.

Communities interested in using such tools will need a comprehensive understanding of the local support services that may be available to students identified with particular needs. For instance, communities can create “asset maps” by surveying local agencies and organizations to identify available services that can help students early in the process to overcome the barriers of chronic absenteeism, behavior problems, or academic failure (mental and physical health care, ride sharing to school, tutoring and mentoring programs, child care for younger siblings, and so forth). Then advocates can urge school administrators to adopt a tracking system that matches at-risk students to community-based supports and work to reintegrate students who have dropped out back into the school setting.
In Philadelphia, a group of partners—including the school district, city agencies, nonprofit groups that advocate for children and public education, workforce development organizations, and research universities—has developed a system to help out-of-school youth earn their diplomas. Known as Project U-Turn (www.projectuturn.net) and led by the Philadelphia Youth Network, their plan tailors opportunities for students on the basis of their age, literacy and numeracy levels, and credits earned.

The entire community can get involved in expanding learning opportunities by making sure that the maximum numbers of students graduate and are prepared to succeed in college and life. Focusing early and consistently on the skills students need for college can also help improve rates of college degree completion. A consortium of groups, including the developers of the ACT, has created periodic benchmarking tests to monitor student progress toward college and work-ready graduation. The consortium did so by surveying employers and college professors to identify the skills needed to be successful in the first two years of work or college, then mapping those skills backward to middle school. Used in conjunction with monitoring systems like the systems mentioned earlier, such tools can help communities make learning maximally engaging and useful for students to keep them on track to succeed.
Chapter 4: Targeted Spending for Widespread Success

There is a reason that the subject of targeted spending is the anchor chapter. The chapter highlights the need to invest in quality prekindergarten, how money (or lack of it) impacts hard-to-staff schools’ ability to hire and keep the best teachers, and the importance of bundling funding streams to coordinate supports for students in and out of school.

Targeted spending is also last because it is the most complex of the four topics. We try to pierce through the mystique of resource allocation, but it is difficult. Complexity is built into the system: in federal programs to help disadvantaged students that are only partially funded, in state and local distribution formulas that don’t adjust sufficiently for student needs, in the lack of targeting to the neediest students, in local underinvestment in schools serving poor and minority students, and in ineffective reporting rules that allow districts to hide actual spending. As a result, “at every level of government—federal, state, and local—policymakers give more resources to students who have more resources, and less to those who have less.”

For the average citizen, perhaps the most accessible point of entry is at the local level. Property tax dollars drive most school spending. Almost immediately, then, the deck is stacked to favor children living and attending schools in wealthier communities. On average, African Americans and Latinos earn less and own fewer homes than their white counterparts. Their neighborhoods are often segregated. Consequently, the cities and counties in which students of color live typically have adequate tax bases overall, but the segregated communities of African-American and Latino students receive fewer resources.

Because a school’s resources impact its ability to recruit and retain the most sought-after teachers, schools serving lower income students are often left with less effective teachers to teach students who are struggling the most. This situation results more often in students of color being taught by less experienced teachers (see Figure 10).

The federal and state governments have tried to make up for some of these present resource gaps, but loopholes still exist, and supplements don’t fully fill all the holes.

Figure 10. Replacing Cycles of Failure with Cycles of Success for Targeted Spending

- Overreliance on property taxes
- Underinvestment in needy areas
- Inadequate funding for student needs
- Underinvestment in change catalysts: preschool, leadership, diversity

- Federal rules seek to balance inequities among wealthy and poor states and districts
- States target more resources to poor districts
- Align funding with student needs
- Invest in early childhood and teacher recruitment and development
- Coordinate health and social services with schools
- Pursue racial and socioeconomic balance in schools

Finding Our Way Back to First: Reclaiming World Leadership by Educating All America’s Children
Steps to Improving the Funding System

A critical first step in restructuring federal, state, and local resource allocation systems is setting clear student outcome goals and mapping the resources required to get all students to meet those goals. It is clear that goals and measures for student outcomes should include more than just standardized test scores. A more balanced accountability system should include measures that encompass critical thinking and problem solving, physical and emotional health, social skills and work ethic, citizenship and community responsibility, preparation for skilled work, arts and literature, and the basic academic skills. It is also clear that these comprehensive goals will require a different set of tools.

A second step in restructuring resource allocation is determining the role of accountability. Schools and districts should be held accountable for reaching student outcome goals, but without adequate resources, how can they do it? At the very least, policymakers and public citizens should become more informed so as to answer three essential questions: (1) How are districts and schools spending money they are provided? (2) Are the funds spent as intended? (3) Do the funds support strategies and programs that are likely to improve student outcomes?

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is currently implementing a new set of policies, called Budgeting for Student Success, to encourage four general principles in resource allocation: transparency, support, accountability, and flexibility. Matt Hill, administrative officer in the Office of the Superintendent at LAUSD described the district’s approach to accountability, noting that school principals are given the authority to design programs they think will be most effective for their schools and presenting these plans publicly. If, after implementing these plans, the school does not meet its accountability goals, the district will provide support to reevaluate the plan and improve its programs.

LAUSD also monitors equity of funding distribution among schools in the district. Figure 11 is an analysis by the American Institutes for Research regarding equity of funding distribution in LAUSD elementary schools. The ratio of total per-pupil spending (represented on the chart as a baseline of 1.00) increases as school poverty increases, indicating that more funding is being provided overall to higher poverty schools. Enacting a need-based funding model (NBFM) helps ensure that the non-Title 1 (the general, unrestricted) funds are distributed equitably and transparently across schools.
These types of analyses are helping LAUSD make decisions to monitor and, going forward, to design a weighted student formula to improve equity.

Several factors should be considered to distribute funding to schools using a weighted system like the one being rolled out in LAUSD. These factors include individual student poverty, percentage of children in poverty clustered in a school (e.g., 40 percent to enact Title I schoolwide services), English learner populations, students not making academic progress, and students with disabilities. Regarding race, it is clear that many categories of disadvantage listed earlier correlate closely with a student’s race. Moreover, we know that the African-American experience, incorporating a history of slavery, segregation, and discrimination is different from the experiences of other students of color. By closely examining the correlates of low performance among students of color and targeting resources to give them the appropriate supports, it is possible to improve the achievement of minority students in the aggregate while improving learning for all students. This approach is important because judicial precedent from the 2009 Supreme Court decision prohibiting the use of an individual student’s race in student assignment decisions makes it unclear if resource allocation policies based explicitly or substantially on race would stand. (Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education was decided together with Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District #1.) States should create a framework to support principles of autonomy, accountability, and transparency of resource allocation to build on local efforts like the effort in Los Angeles. Such efforts help districts move toward and tailor their spending to the needs of individual learners.

Recommendations

Building upon these initial steps, research points to seven recommendations to resolve existing inequitable funding distribution.

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**Figure 11. Ratios of Total Per-Pupil Expenditure in LAUSD Elementary Schools Serving Varying Percentages of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (2006–07 to 2008–09)**

- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
Recommendation 1: Require that Funding Align with Student Need

As seen in LAUSD, dollars should be distributed to schools within districts based on pupil needs. Under a need-based funding model, dollars “follow the student,” and students with greater educational needs (e.g., low-income students or English language learners) receive higher per-pupil funding allocations. This allocation results in higher overall per-pupil allocations for schools with greater concentrations of higher needs students. Recognizing that schools and districts are diverse in their student populations and needs, student need-based funding formulas can be adapted and implemented in different ways to suit each district. Oakland and San Francisco Unified School Districts in California implemented need-based funding models in the early part of this past decade, receiving positive feedback from teachers and principals. [NBFMs have been referred to elsewhere in the literature as weighted student formulas (WSFs) or student-based funding (SBF).]101 There are now as many as nine districts around the country that have implemented one form or another of such funding models.102

Need-based funding formulas should be paired with school autonomy in hiring staff and in real-dollar accounting of their salaries. Weighted funding likely will be less effective if schools do not have autonomy to choose teachers who are the best matches for the students and programs in the school. Need-based funding eliminates problems with inequitable teacher salaries between schools (based on unequal distribution of teacher qualifications, as described earlier), giving schools virtually equitable amounts of funding that they can choose to spend based on their needs. With the same funding, then, a school might choose to hire fewer teachers with more experience, more teachers with less experience, or support more intensive professional development, for example. The end goal remains the same, and schools are accountable for results. How they get there is up to them.

Recommendation 2: Target More Resources to Early Childhood Education Programs

Research has shown early childhood education (ECE) programs to be highly effective in narrowing early achievement gaps.103 Programs should be provided at least for children ages 3–4, but many experts believe that starting at birth is critical (see Chapter 1, Prekindergarten Prep for Achievement for a more thorough discussion).


In this two-pronged approach, the federal government should first develop guidelines and metrics to identify and balance the inequities in district spending; metrics for reporting of these inequities is only a threshold request, however. The federal government should also promote rules and incentives that truly result in equitable, needs-based distribution of dollars. Second, the federal government should do more to help compensate for the inequities that states are unable to correct on their own. The federal government already has formulas to account for some inequities among states and districts, but those formulas can be more targeted so that they do not exacerbate inequities that already exist between states and districts.

Inequities between states and between districts are generally larger and more important to correct than inequities among schools within districts. The Education Law Center’s (ELC’s) report Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card104 focuses on cross-state funding inequities and different ways these inequities might be measured. The report measures the fairness of the school finance systems in all 50 states for the purpose of “evaluat[ing] the extent to which state systems ensure equality of educational opportunity for all
children, regardless of background, family income, where they live, or where they attend school” (p.7). Table 1 illustrates per-pupil spending in 2006–07 in schools at different poverty levels in several states and provides the ELC’s resulting grade for that state. For example, per-pupil spending in the average district in Utah with 30 percent student poverty is 51 percent higher than a district with 0 percent student poverty. In Rhode Island, this differential is less than 2 percent. In New Hampshire, per-pupil spending of schools at 0 percent poverty actually exceeds by 56 percent the average spending of schools with 30 percent poverty.

### Table 1. Education Law Center Fairness Measure: Funding Distribution, by Selected States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Mean Actual State and Local Revenue per Pupil</th>
<th>At 0% Poverty</th>
<th>At 10% Poverty</th>
<th>At 20% Poverty</th>
<th>At 30% Poverty</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>$6,586</td>
<td>$5,700</td>
<td>$6,539</td>
<td>$7,503</td>
<td>$8,608</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
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<td>$13,464</td>
<td>$15,060</td>
<td>$16,845</td>
<td>$18,841</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
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<td>$9,391</td>
<td>$10,458</td>
<td>$11,646</td>
<td>$12,968</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>$10,933</td>
<td>$9,054</td>
<td>$9,896</td>
<td>$10,816</td>
<td>$11,821</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
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<td>$7,467</td>
<td>$8,066</td>
<td>$8,712</td>
<td>$9,410</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>$12,880</td>
<td>$13,658</td>
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<td>Oregon</td>
<td>$8,525</td>
<td>$8,175</td>
<td>$8,417</td>
<td>$8,666</td>
<td>$8,922</td>
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<td>Wyoming</td>
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<td>$16,684</td>
<td>$17,126</td>
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<td>$12,159</td>
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<td>$12,285</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>$17,247</td>
<td>$17,012</td>
<td>$15,931</td>
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<td>$13,972</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
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<td>$8,816</td>
<td>$8,105</td>
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<td>$11,304</td>
<td>$9,745</td>
<td>$8,401</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that because federal funds such as Title I are adjusted for existing levels of spending in a state, these dollars tend to worsen the resource inequities that already exist between states. As suggested in a recent report by the Center for American Progress, \(^{105}\) “Improving the match between the intent of Title I, Part A and the formulas driving its grants is technically feasible, but an aura of mystery around the formulas inhibits informed debate and reform.” Advocates from communities hurt by this mismatch should press for federal technical fixes that reverse these inequitable trends and restore the original intent of Title I funds, as an additional support—in addition to state and local spending—for the neediest students.

The ELC’s report\(^{106}\) suggests four metrics of funding equity that should be used across states:

- **Funding Level**: the overall level of state and local revenue provided to school districts, adjusted for regional cost differences and compared to other states.
- **Funding Distribution**: the distribution of funding across local districts within a state, relative to student poverty.
- **Effort**: differences in state spending for education relative to state fiscal capacity.
- **Coverage**: the proportion of school-age children attending the state’s public schools (rather than attending parochial and private schools or being home-schooled).
The federal government should play a role in correcting state funding inequities by formalizing these or other well-thought-out metrics and enforcing funding equity across states. The federal government should also reevaluate current federal resource allocation policies to ensure that these do not continue to make inequities worse. This issue will soon be addressed by the federal Commission on Equity that will analyze funding inequity in the states and recommend appropriate ways in which federal policies can address funding disparities.

**Recommendation 4: At the State Level, Target Additional Resources to High-Poverty Districts**

Exhibit 2 further illustrates stark inequities between districts. Indeed, the greatest funding disparities are often between districts, not between schools in a single district. A report by the UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access describes inequities in spending among districts in California. For example, a largely low-income district, Lynwood, spent only about $6,000 per pupil in 2004, while a very high-income district, Palo Alto, spent more than $10,000 per pupil. States should therefore target additional resources to high-poverty districts. Just as LAUSD built its budget school-by-school from the ground up by looking at student needs and achievement, states should offer districts guidelines, metrics, and discretion to determine how best to use those dollars. In exchange, districts should be held accountable for results.

The recently released federal dashboard of education data shows the difference in each state between the amount invested in education in wealthy districts and the amount invested in poor districts. Ideally, states should be investing more in the districts with the greatest poverty, but more than 30 states actually have the opposite relationship, where the districts with the highest poverty get less funding than their wealthy peers (according to 2007–2008 data, the most recent available for analysis at the time of this report). Advocates can ask decision makers to correct these imbalances without spending additional money by targeting existing resources to districts serving the most needy students.

**Recommendation 5: Incorporate Policies that Promote the Recruitment and Retention of High-Quality Teachers and Principals in High-Need Schools**

Good teachers are not equitably distributed across schools (see Chapter 2: Effective Teaching for a deeper discussion). It seems simple but to get the good, we have to pay for it. One option is to offer bonuses and build in additional supports for teachers who choose to teach (and remain) in high-poverty schools.

Inequities in principal quality are also critical to consider, as their qualifications and skills are distributed unequally among schools. Good principals provide critical instructional leadership and create a team atmosphere in which teachers want to take part. Principals are also often responsible for the recruitment and hiring of teachers, and if a high-poverty school has a principal without the skills to recruit effectively, that school might have fewer effective teachers than other schools, even if policies are in place to encourage a more equal distribution.

**Recommendation 6: Coordinate Education, Health, and Social Services to Ensure the Most Effective Use of Resources**

In order to support the full range of needs students bring with them to school, coordination of social and educational services is critical. In Dryfoos’s evaluation of community schools in which social and health services are provided for families on campus, 46 of 49 schools showed improved outcomes in academic achievement, behavior, and/or parent involvement after implementing a community-schools model. A community school brings together schools and community partners (community-based organizations such as local government, family, health and mental health agencies, higher education institutions, and others)
to support student success. (See Chapter 3: More Time for More Learning for a more complete discussion.) The federal government should create a framework for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Department of Education (ED) funded programs to collaborate at the state and local levels where those departments’ respective programs are delivered. The goal should be to ensure that all students’ needs are met, allowing the students to realize their full learning potential.

**FINANCING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

The Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) in Evansville, Indiana, involves all of the district’s 38 schools in a community-school initiative serving more than 22,000 students. The United Way of Southwestern Indiana helped set the stage for a districtwide community school strategy in 1988. After conducting a community needs assessment, United Way leadership saw a clear need for more school-based prevention programming. They focused on expanding services and supports at four of the community’s highest risk schools—ones that already had well-established afterschool programs. United Way approached Cedar Hall Elementary School, a school with broad-based neighborhood involvement and a fully committed principal to lead the way in developing a full-service school. The community school approach that began at Cedar Hall expanded to become part of the school district’s core mission.

EVSC’s work is focused on expanding school-based services for children and getting parents actively involved in their education. The system thrives due to commitment from district leadership, a school-community council, a supportive network of local community agencies, and the leveraging of federal, state, and local resources to address barriers to learning.

Evansville has blended federal funds, such as Title I, IDEA, EvenStart, and Head Start, with district and state funds to level the playing field for disadvantaged students. For instance, funding from the state comes to the district from a 21st CCLC grant. These funds are blended with district and Title I dollars to provide afterschool and summer enrichment programs. Title I funding is used for academic enrichment, including afterschool and summer programming. Combined with Safe Schools/Healthy Students and 21st CCLC dollars, Title I funding also provides support for parent education, parent involvement, program coordinators, parent coordinators, and family events. Further, EVSC has used Title I funds to hire social workers in their Title I schools and in coordination with EvenStart in the early childhood programs and to cover supplies and operating expenses.

An early intervention grant from the state, the local CAPE Head Start, and support from the Early Childhood Development Coalition (led by the United Way of Southwestern Indiana) supports the district’s early childhood initiative.

Other in-kind resources have been integral to the development of the Evansville community school system. The Center for Family, School, and Community Partnerships is housed in a building donated by Old National Bank. The Center provides office and meeting space for several nonprofit agencies that serve children and families in the community. This one-stop shop provides easy access to services for families, and the dollars saved in overhead costs are reallocated to provide needed programs and services.
An adequate base level of funding is needed to provide support services for students and tailor spending to meet their needs. Almost all states have been involved in lawsuits where disadvantaged communities have challenged their states to define the cost and components of an adequate education. In many of these cases, courts have ordered “costing out studies” where economists have calculated the local cost of excellent teaching, adequate facilities, and curriculum for all students and defined the additional amount needed to educate disadvantaged students to the same levels. A recent national version estimated that providing additional in-school and out-of-school supports for students at risk of school failure from prekindergarten to high school graduation would mean spending about twice the national average, or $20,000 per disadvantaged pupil. Although the actual numbers will vary according to the cost of living and policies in each state, it is worth exploring whether your state spends the equivalent of the national average and whether it targets resources to needy students in the categories shown by research to make a difference. Such categories might include expanded learning opportunities that take place before and after school or during the summer or case management to refer students to social and health services and keep them on track to graduate, prepared for work and college.

**Elements of equitable state funding formulas:**
- An adequate base amount invested in each student
- Additional weights for student needs, such as poverty or English language learner status
- Bonuses for areas with high concentrations of special needs students
- Methods for helping low-wealth districts that can’t raise enough funds on their own
- A system that lets the public see how many real dollars are spent at each school

**Recommendation 7: Aggressively and Simultaneously Pursue School Desegregation Efforts Focusing on Both Race and Socioeconomic Status**

Though targeted resource allocation is an important strategy to better support students of color, another critical challenge is that U.S. schools still remain largely segregated. Research has found negative relationships between segregation and long-term outcomes for African-American children and on the achievement gap. Therefore, the desegregation of schools by both race and socioeconomic status continues to be a central effort. Schwartz found that low-income students perform better when they attend more affluent elementary schools than they do when they attend schools with a majority of low-income students. Studies have also shown that students of all backgrounds do better in more diverse schools. The Schwartz study also suggests that
the NAACP should not look at schools in isolation from other institutions but should consider housing programs such as exclusionary zoning laws and Section 8 scatter-site policies in which low-density housing is scattered throughout diverse, middle-class neighborhoods.

Conclusion

African-American students are disproportionately served in schools that have fewer resources to meet their needs. This situation is due, in large part, to the structural inequities of funding schools with property tax dollars. Schools in segregated neighborhoods—schools with high concentrations of students of color—tend to receive fewer resources. Advocates’ first order of business should be to correct the funding formulas across states and between districts within states before ultimately turning to inequities among schools within districts. This step is because inequities between states and between districts are generally larger than inequities among schools within districts.

At the federal level, advocates should press for greater resource coordination between Education and Health and Human Services departments to address the breadth of disadvantaged students’ needs from birth to early childhood to formal schooling. Clear metrics should be established across states to ensure equality of educational opportunity. Where gaps are identified, the federal government should step in to fill the funding distribution holes between high-wealth and low-wealth states.

At the state and district levels, advocates should promote policies that ensure high-poverty districts receive additional resources to recruit and retain effective teachers and leaders. States and districts should be encouraged to adopt tested needs-based formula models so that students with greater educational needs receive higher per-pupil funding allocations.

At all levels, advocates must incorporate targeted resource allocation in their existing and vital campaign to bring awareness to the damaging effects of housing and school segregation on student outcomes.
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Mary Kennedy, Professor of Education, Michigan State University
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Matt Hill, Administrative Officer, Office of the Superintendent, Los Angeles Unified School District
Richard Rothstein, Research Associate, Economic Policy Institute
David Sciarra, Executive Director, Education Law Center
Chapter 1 Notes


12. Ibid.


**Chapter 2 Notes**


Finding Our Way Back to First: Reclaiming World Leadership by Educating All America’s Children


42. Ibid.


44. Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Harris Interactive, 2004


53. Wei et al. (2009).


56. Ladson-Billings, 1994


64. Adapted from the Alliance for Excellent Education. Transforming high schools: Performance


68. Lockwood et al. (2010); Neufeld & Donaldson (in press).

69. Ibid.


71. Hill et al., p. 10


74. AACTE (2010).


77. Robinson, Paccione, & Rodriguez, 2003

Chapter 3 Notes


80. Ibid.


84. Little, Wimer, & Weiss (2008).

85. Durlak & Weissberg (2007); Little, Wimer, & Weiss (2008); and Vandell et al., 2006.


90. Data are from the Profile and Performance Information Collection System (PPICS), which is available at http://ppics.learningpt.org/ppics/public.asp.


95. Neild et al. (2007).

**Chapter 4 Notes**


119. See, for example, Bhargava, A., Frankenberg, E., & Le, C. Q. (2008). Still looking to the future:


123. Brown et al., 2008; Hamre et al., 2010; and Neufeld & Donaldson (in press).