

# president's note

## Transforming Teacher Education

One of the greatest achievements of philanthropy in modern times is the growth of multiple charter-school networks where low-income children excel. Private funders now have a similar opportunity to transform the training of K-12 teachers.

Education schools are “an industry of mediocrity,” according to the National Council on Teacher Quality. They attract incoming students with the lowest GPAs and test scores of any university program. A major study led by Arthur Levine, then-dean of Columbia University Teachers College, called instruction in education schools “inadequate to appalling.” Its chapter titles included “The Pursuit of Irrelevance,” “A Curriculum in Disarray,” and “A Disconnected Faculty.” Perhaps most damning, the study found that nine out of every ten principals consider education-school graduates unprepared for the classroom.

The good news is this field is poised for dramatic breakthroughs. In many ways it resembles the landscape of charter schools 15 years ago. Thanks to private funders, we are seeing an explosion of promising innovations and experiments, both inside and outside traditional university settings. Over the next decade, smart philanthropists can take these achievements to the next level, supporting a diversity of new entrepreneurial ventures, and expanding and replicating what works. Here are some advances donors can build on:

Begun at the University of Texas, Austin, with initial funding from the O'Donnell Foundation, UTeach enables undergraduates to major in STEM subjects and to earn teaching credentials, all in four years. Pedagogic instruction focuses on content knowledge and inquiry-based learning, not the standard courses of education schools. UTeach has expanded to 46 universities in 21 states; over 3,000 students have graduated, and enrollment exceeds 7,000.

Building on earlier work at Arizona State University, Dean Scott Ridley has given the Texas Tech College of Education a new focus: competency in classroom teaching, guided by rigorous data analysis, video evaluation, and intensive mentoring. A \$7 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is helping build US PREP, a network of school district-university partnerships based on these principles. Six universities are already participating, with a new Kauffman Foundation-funded partnership in the works in Kansas City.

Inspired by the model of medical residency, growing numbers of teacher-training programs are incorporating yearlong apprenticeships with master teachers into their curricula. The

National Center for Teacher Residencies is codifying best practices in its work with over 20 residency programs.

Several innovative charter schools have set up their own teacher certification and/or degree programs, including High Tech High in San Diego with a strong emphasis on project-based learning and Match in Boston with its focus on individualized tutoring. In partnership with the Great Hearts charter network, the University of Dallas has launched a master's in humanities program for classical-education teachers.

The Relay Graduate School of Education, founded in New York by the Uncommon Schools, Achievement First, and KIPP charter networks, combines pedagogic theory with content knowledge and practice-based skills in classroom management, awarding degrees only to classroom teachers who achieve measurable performance improvements among their students. Donors have brought Relay to ten states and Washington, D.C., where they are driving further innovation. Relay Delaware has a partnership with the state's Teach For America chapter, enabling corps members to pursue their master's degree and certification. Relay San Antonio hosts a content-intensive master's degree for current teachers in the school district. In addition to a residency and one-year alternate certification programs, Relay Philadelphia-Camden offers a one-year certification program in special education.

Marian University in Indianapolis closed its undergraduate education school in order to reimagine how best to prepare teachers and leaders for the twenty-first century. Its new Fred S. Klipsch Educators College opened in Fall 2017 with support from the Walton Family Foundation, the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, and \$12 million from Fred Klipsch, a Philanthropy Roundtable board member. With an emphasis on residency programs with master teachers, content knowledge specialization, and data-driven performance evaluation, the Klipsch College is taking a page from football and basketball coaches and aggressively recruiting high-school students with high GPAs, test scores, and the passion to be outstanding teachers. And since Indiana is a national leader in education reform—with its strong charter sector, charter-like Innovation Schools in the Indianapolis school system, and one of the country's largest voucher programs—Klipsch College graduates will likely find multiple opportunities to build careers in schools that value high-quality teaching.

Would you like to develop philanthropic strategies to strengthen teacher training in your community or across the nation? Katherine Haley, the Roundtable's senior director of K-12 programs (KHaley@PhilanthropyRoundtable.org), is at your service.



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