

From: Media [Media@gatesfoundation.org]

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To: Media

Subject: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Commits \$335 Million to Promote Effective Teaching and Raise Student Achievement

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Phone: +1.206.709.3400

Email: media@gatesfoundation.org

**Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Commits \$335 Million to Promote
Effective Teaching and Raise Student Achievement**

Foundation Approves \$290 Million in Grants to Support Intensive Partnerships for Effective Teaching; Also Announces \$45 Million for Measures of Effective Teaching Research Project

SEATTLE—The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation today announced that it will invest \$335 million to support effective teaching as a means to ensure all students receive the education they need to succeed in high school and beyond. Today's announcement includes \$290 million in grants to support four Intensive Partnership for Effective Teaching sites that have developed groundbreaking plans to improve teacher effectiveness. Another \$45 million will go toward the Measures of Effective Teaching project, a research initiative that seeks to define effective teaching and identify fairer and more reliable evaluative measures.

The Intensive Partnership grants will support the effective teaching plans of Hillsborough County (Fla.) Public Schools, Memphis (Tenn.) City Schools, Pittsburgh (Pa.) Public Schools, and The College-Ready Promise, a coalition of five public charter school management organizations in Los Angeles: Alliance College-Ready Public Schools, Aspire Public Schools, Green Dot Public Schools, ICEF Public Schools, and Partnerships to Uplift Communities.

"We are convinced that in order to dramatically improve education in America, we must first ensure that every student has an effective teacher in every subject, every school year," said Melinda French Gates, co-chair of the foundation. "These communities have shown extraordinary commitment to tackling one of the most important educational issues of our time. We must do everything we can to understand what makes teachers effective and cultivate those qualities across the profession, in every school and classroom, so that *all* students can benefit."

The foundation announced a year ago that investments in effective teaching would be a critical component of its education strategy, a decision based on a well-established body of evidence that shows teachers are the most important school-based factor in student achievement. Researchers have noted only half as much variation in student achievement *between* schools as *across* classrooms within the same school, underscoring the impact of teachers on student learning.

"Decades of research and our own grant making provide clear evidence that supports the growing consensus among policymakers and parents alike that teachers matter most when it comes to student achievement," said Vicki L. Phillips, Director of Education, College-Ready, at the foundation. "Today's investments will help these districts and school networks—and in time, all districts—develop better systems to identify and reward great teachers, make sure the highest-need students have access to the most effective teachers every year, and give all teachers the support they need to improve."

The announcement of the Intensive Partnership grants culminated a yearlong competitive application process that brought together school district, school board, and local teacher union leadership to develop comprehensive and innovative reform plans. Each of the selected communities demonstrated a broad-based commitment to raising student achievement, with an emphasis on reforming how teachers are recruited, evaluated, supported, retained, and rewarded. They also represent a mix of large and mid-size urban school systems with diverse populations.

Totaling \$290 million, the Intensive Partnership grants will be awarded as follows:[\[1\]](#)

Hillsborough County Public Schools: \$100 million

- Memphis City Schools: \$90 million
- Pittsburgh Public Schools: \$40 million
- The College-Ready Promise: \$60 million

Each of these partners will develop and implement new approaches, strategies, and policies, including adopting better measures of teacher effectiveness that include growth in student achievement and college readiness; using those measures to boost teacher development, training, and support; tying tenure decisions more closely to teacher effectiveness measures and rewarding highly effective teachers through new career and compensation opportunities that keep them in the classroom; strengthening school leadership; and providing incentives for the most effective teachers to work in the highest-need schools and classrooms.

Important partners in this effort are the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA) and their affiliates in the participating communities.

"This process has been a thoughtful, deliberative, collaborative way to understand—and then design and implement—systems that improve teaching and learning. These districts, working with their unions and parents, were willing to think out of the box, and were awarded millions of dollars to create transparent, fair, and sustainable teacher effectiveness models," said Randi Weingarten, President of the AFT.

"Collaboration and multilevel integration are important when it comes to transforming the teaching profession," said NEA President Dennis Van Roekel. "These grants will go far in providing resources to help raise student achievement and improve teacher effectiveness. Our local NEA affiliates are working daily to help improve the practice of teaching," added Dennis Van Roekel, President of the NEA.

The foundation will work with the Intensive Partnership sites to ensure that their successes, challenges, and lessons learned are shared widely with school districts and policymakers around the country. Progress will be tracked through common indicators and communicated regularly.

"The work of courageous educators in our country's urban areas helps spur statewide reforms and ultimately bring to scale—even national scale—what we know works. These grants are an unprecedented opportunity to follow the example of a bold group of district leaders and teachers, and work together to ensure that all students are taught by effective teachers, in our cities and beyond," said Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

The foundation also announced today that as part of its plan to promote and support effective teaching it is investing \$45 million in research to better understand what makes a teacher effective and how such effectiveness can be measured. The Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project, which will be implemented over the next two academic years, seeks to develop an array of measures that will be viewed by teachers, unions, administrators, and policymakers as reliable and credible indicators of a teacher's impact on student achievement.

The MET project will enroll 3,700 teachers from a number of school districts around the country and will gather a variety of data, including videotaped teacher observations, student surveys, teacher surveys, and supplemental student assessments. As with the Intensive Partnerships, the MET project represents a real opportunity for teachers to inform the national discussion on education reform. Teachers in the following school districts will be participating: Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C.; Denver, Colo.; Hillsborough County, Fla.; Memphis, Tenn.; New York City; and Pittsburgh. Other sites will be added as grants are approved.

The Intensive Partnership and MET grants are part of the foundation's efforts to ensure that all young people in America have the opportunity to earn a degree beyond high school that has real value in today's job market. John Deasy and Thomas Kane, Deputy Directors of Education, College-Ready at the foundation, will oversee the Intensive Partnership and MET work, respectively.

For information on the investments announced today, please visit: <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/education>.

For supplemental materials and information about the foundation's work, please visit:

<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/press-room/Pages/news-market.aspx>.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

[\[1\]](#) Actual payment amounts and dates may vary based on each district’s completion of project deliverables and meaningful progress toward approved milestones for their projects.