

newschools
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2010
S U M M I T

**Answering the Administration's Call:
Stepping Up and Scaling Impact**

**A Report on the Annual NewSchools Summit
and Community of Practice Event**

May 11 and 12, 2010

Empowering Entrepreneurs to Transform Public Education



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INTRODUCTION

“You have been unambiguous about your goals. You have been clear about the process. And you have staggered the world in terms of the results that you have achieved for kids.”

— Ted Mitchell,
NewSchools Venture Fund

A decade ago, innovation and entrepreneurship were nascent ideas in public education, carried forward by a small cadre of people who believed in the urgency of improving educational opportunities for students in underserved communities—and that they could do something about it.

What a difference a decade makes: at the NewSchools Venture Fund Summit 2010 in May, before a crowd of more than 600 participants, federal policy leaders came together with education entrepreneurs whose organizations have become household names. Together, they described what is now possible in public education, and confronted the political and operational challenges ahead.

The Summit—NewSchools’ eleventh annual event of the kind—offered a singular opportunity to reflect and trade views on a remarkable intersection of entrepreneurial work and policy change. Education entrepreneurs and their supporters heard a call from the Administration to prove its big “bet” on the capacity of social entrepreneurs to drive innovation in underserved American communities. “We live in a different time, a time of great opportunity, but a time in which we have to step up,” NewSchools CEO Ted Mitchell reminded the audience. “You have been unambiguous about your goals. You have been clear about the process. And you have staggered the world in terms of the results that you have achieved for kids.”

Throughout the day, keynote speakers and panelists reflected on the progress that entrepreneurs have made—and rallied them to step up even further. The morning opened with remarks by Walter Isaacson, CEO of the Aspen Institute (see page 6), who pushed the audience not to leave innovation to the government, but to instead offer it



NewSchools CEO Ted Mitchell addresses attendees at Summit 2010.

tough competition, and urged entrepreneurs to embrace “storytelling” so others can learn directly from their work. A short while later, Stand for Children’s Lindsay Neil broke the news of groundbreaking legislation in Colorado that will allow school systems to judge teachers based on the performance of their students (see page 7). One of the most talked-about sessions brought together two of the most important decision-makers on the next iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—Education Secretary Arne Duncan and House Education and Labor Chairman George Miller—for a conversation about the future

of federal education policy (see page 13). Duncan and Miller traded views on the prospects for changing that law, and Duncan urged the crowd to rally as a badly-needed constituency for innovation in education. In breakout sessions later in the day, smaller groups examined topics like navigating the tough politics of education reform and communicating in a world crowded with public messages. The day closed with a rousing intergenerational panel of leaders who explored how the lessons of the civil rights movement apply to tackling what many consider today’s most important social justice issue: closing the achievement gaps that persist in public education (see page 16).

In order to achieve this ambitious goal, education entrepreneurs will need to diversify and strengthen their ranks and reach out to the communities they seek to serve. Accordingly, NewSchools tapped a wide range of organizations that helped increase the number of leaders of color at this year's event—including the Black Alliance for Educational Options, the Next Generation Network of the Executive Leadership Council, Sponsors for Educational Opportunity, and Partners for Developing Futures to identify emerging African-American and Latino leaders. To nurture the next wave of education entrepreneurs, NewSchools also partnered with Education Pioneers, Harvard University's Social Entrepreneurship Initiative, New Leaders for New Schools, and Teach For America to invite their most promising future leaders and innovators. Due in part to this outreach—and the growing momentum of the entrepreneurial education movement—there were more than 150 “first-timers” at this year's event. NewSchools hosted a breakfast designed to introduce them to the event and to bring them together with veteran participants.

In conjunction with the main Summit event, NewSchools also gathered two important groups for a closer look at some key topics. The day before the Summit, NewSchools brought together foundation leaders, researchers, and entrepreneurs to tackle the role of evidence in public education policy and practice. NewSchools' Mitchell led a conversation with Harvard social scientist Lisbeth Schorr, researcher Thomas Kane of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Bill &



Melinda Gates Foundation, and others about developing smart, collaborative approaches to help meet the growing demand for rigorous evidence of effectiveness and simply understanding and supporting more of what works, but without impeding the pace of innovation. That same day, NewSchools also convened portfolio ventures and select practitioners for the latest in a series of Community of Practice gatherings that allow entrepreneurs to investigate common challenges and share effective practices. This year's Community of Practice event focused on the use of technology as a tool for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public education. In a series of full group sessions and smaller “Solutions Village” conversations, entrepreneurs shared emerging approaches, services, and products. For the first time, we have included highlights from the Community of Practice gathering in this report (see page 29).

Together, these events served as an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments, reflect on challenges, and plan for the future—a future where all children have access to a quality education and the opportunities that brings, regardless of the color of their skin or their ZIP code.

Summit 2010 attendees network between sessions.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Speakers:

Walter Isaacson

President and Chief Executive Officer, The Aspen Institute

Kevin Chavous

Distinguished Fellow, Center for Education Reform

Lindsay Neil

Colorado Executive Director, Stand for Children

Education entrepreneurs' innovative ideas and urgent action over the past decade and a half have yielded promising results, demonstrating how fresh thinking and fierce dedication can change the lives of children from underserved communities. With this progress has come new attention from policymakers and the media—and from those who are skeptical about entrepreneurial change—and a shifting landscape of opportunities and challenges. To set the stage for the day, NewSchools invited three thought leaders to share stories about the ways education entrepreneurs need to act differently in this new environment.

Shifting forces and storytellers

In post-Katrina New Orleans, New Orleans native Walter Isaacson has worked alongside parents, policymakers, community and business leaders, and organizations like New Schools for New Orleans to envision a school system for New Orleans built upon a new paradigm of equality and excellence. “We took the worst schools system in America, one of the worst, and tried something totally different,” he told the crowd. Today, more than 60% of the students in New Orleans are enrolled in charter schools, making New Orleans the only city in the U.S. where a majority of families are able to choose their public school. The city’s newspapers publish an annual school guide for students and their parents, “just like they do for restaurants—[parents] get to decide which of the schools is right for their kid,” noted Isaacson.

Replicating the promising work being done in Louisiana will require entrepreneurs to constantly reappraise the environment in which they work, noted Isaacson. He sees changes in federal policy as just one aspect of the broader changes impacting education entrepreneurs. The financial crisis of 2008 was a powerfully disruptive force and meant significant changes in the way the public perceives financial institutions—one that has occurred concurrent with the increasing prestige of education reform. “It used to be that if you were hanging around a top university and people had gotten an offer for Goldman Sachs, they’d sort of puff around like a peacock and be proud of it,”

said Isaacson. “Now they’re slightly ashamed or embarrassed to have to say they’re going to go to a place like Goldman Sachs. The real pride comes from having gotten accepted into Teach For America or being part of the school reform movement.” This year, 12% of all Ivy League seniors applied to Teach For America, demonstrating that these students now think, “this is something I can be proud of doing, not something that I would just waste my career doing,” he added.

Still, even as education reform gains visibility, there are still many myths and misconceptions that entrepreneurs can and must address by telling their story in compelling ways, Isaacson told the audience. “What we need are a few more

storytellers,” he said. “Tell the story about how you touched and changed lives. Those stories can really be the inspiration to keep this movement going.”



Kevin Chavous, Center for Education Reform

Political pressure points

Kevin Chavous also called for entrepreneurs to play an active role in telling the story of their impact, especially through advocacy on behalf of low-income students, Chavous

told the audience a story about how outspoken advocates protected Washington D.C.'s charter school facilities allotment. In the late 1990s, Chavous, then chairman of the D.C. Council's Education Committee, led the Committee to pass a charter school law which changed the funding model for D.C. charter schools to make it similar to the funding provided to district schools, including per-pupil funding allotment for school facilities.

The District faced a budget shortfall and almost immediately the Committee's law came under threat. Without a strong advocate from the charter community, the future of the allotment was uncertain. "We were blessed not only to have a great charter school bill and great community support, but we also had aggressive charter school founders who understood that they had to get their hands dirty," Chavous told the audience. One of those who understood that need was Donald Hense of Friendship Public Charter School, one of NewSchools' grantees in Washington, D.C.

Hense began a vocal campaign to protect the allotment, which Friendship felt was necessary to continue its work with low-income students throughout the District. "[Hense] wore me and my staff out," remembered Chavous. "I'll never forget when my young staff attorney and committee clerk, a young man named Adrian Fenty, who is now mayor of [Washington D.C.], poked his head in my office and told me, 'Boss, Donald Hense is waiting to see you.' I said, 'Well, Donald isn't on the schedule. What does he want, Adrian?' And responding in his usual deadpan manner, our future mayor said to me, 'You know, he just wants to yell at you some more, boss.'"

Though he knew Chavous was a friend to the charter school community, Hense was determined to keep pressure on the committeeman until all challenges to the facilities allotment had been defeated. He organized parents and pulled together data to take to the Council staff. Collectively, the charter school community was able to halt the Mayor's budget proposal to end the allotment by being outspoken about the impact being made by charters. "The lesson learned is when it comes to our children, please adopt this model: No more Mister Nice Guy," Chavous told the audience.

Coordinating and coalition-building for change

Stand for Children's Colorado executive director, Lindsay Neil, took to the stage to announce that earlier that morning, the Colorado Legislature had passed landmark legislation in the form of Senate Bill 191, also known as "The Great Teachers and Leaders Bill." The Colorado bill restructures teacher tenure so that it will be earned and kept based on effectiveness, while allowing Colorado school districts to use effectiveness and not just seniority in layoff decisions, and ends the practice of direct or forced teacher placement—the so-called "Dance of the Lemons."

Neil made it clear that Senate Bill 191 would not have passed without Stand for Children's efforts on behalf of the bill. In response to opposition from the state teachers union, Stand for Children launched a sophisticated advocacy campaign, gathering support from politicians, business leaders, parents, and teachers. They coordinated supportive Denver Post editorials, thousands of phone calls and emails to state senators, and attracted more than 150 positive news stories across the state. As a result of their hard work, the landmark legislation passed. "Colleagues, as a great educator once told me, this is not about teaching kids. This is about saving lives. Through your important work, you're saving lives every day," said Neil. "By coming together as an education community and embracing the policy and the politics ... you can save so many more."

"When it comes to our children,
please adopt this model:
No more Mister Nice Guy."

— Kevin Chavous,
Center for Education Reform

"This is not about teaching kids.
This is about saving lives."

— Lindsay Neil,
Stand for Children

SCALING IMPACT: ANSWERING THE ADMINISTRATION'S CALL — OPENING

Opening Presenter:

Susan Colby,
Partner, The Bridgespan Group

Following the inspirational opening remarks, Aspire Public Schools CEO James Willcox took the stage to tee up the next session. Willcox pointed out that the federal government is “providing an unprecedented amount of resources to harness the creativity in this room” and suggested that as a result, “we have an opportunity to change the life opportunities for kids in ways that are just amazing.” To address this progress and the opportunity ahead, Willcox introduced speaker Susan Colby, who used data to reflect back on the accomplishments of the entrepreneurial education movement and to look toward the future.

In introducing the session, Colby read from a poem written by Gaspar, a student at Camino Nuevo Charter Academy in Los Angeles, a school made up nearly entirely of students from economically disadvantaged families. “I am from the little light that goes through the dark room that will one day be bright / So bright, no one can make that room dark anymore,” wrote Gaspar. “Gaspar’s light shines and we all find his energy to do more, to make sure that all Americans, all of our children, have access to a great education,” said Colby.

Sharing results from two successful entrepreneurial organizations, Mastery Charter Schools and YES Prep Public Schools, Colby emphasized that “the achievement gap is not destiny” for low-income students. Mastery has turned around previously failing schools and closed the achievement gap that existed between these schools’ students and their wealthier peers in Pennsylvania, while every graduate of YES Prep’s high schools has been accepted into four-year colleges. “Despite this amazing growth and success, there are too many kids who need a better education and who aren’t getting it,” Colby noted, pushing the audience to continue expanding upon these results.

In the audience sat more than 600 people, though many more clamored for a spot by adding their names to a wait list. “Look to your left and look to your right,” said Colby. “It’s the people in this room who have started and led organizations, taught in our classrooms, and changed the lives of countless children and families.” But despite the

growth of the event from its first incarnation in 1999—where “when you spoke, you could see the entire audience all the way to the back”—Colby suggested that it is more critical than ever to continue focusing on the pipeline of new people into the movement and into our schools, including strong new teachers and leaders to replace those who are slated to retire or leave, and new entrepreneurs and policymakers who can pave the way for future changes.



Susan Colby, The Bridgespan Group

In order for public education to be sustainable for these teachers and leaders, Colby argued that policy change will be vital. She also highlighted state reforms happening as a result of Race to the Top and significant district change efforts underway across the country. “We’re seeing new approaches and government structures to get the hard work of teaching and learning to happen in all of our classrooms,” she said. “Leaders from this movement are at every level of the policy debate—locally, in districts, in states, and at the federal level.”

Colby brought her talk back around to the idea that the education reform must continue to reach more students, even while continuing to raise the bar so that success in college—and in life—is the end goal. Widening and amplifying these efforts will take real innovation and new solutions, she argued. “We cannot continue to do things the way we have done them in the past, and just hope for better results,” said Colby. “We’re already spending money on things that don’t have evidence of success. In the past two years, California has spent \$2.5 billion on class size reduction. That’s four times what the federal government is spending on innovation. Does that make sense to you?”

In conclusion, Colby encouraged the audience to embrace more diversity and to reach out to parents and communities directly to engage them as supporters, as advocates, and as reformers. “We need to bring more people—particularly people of color and from low-income backgrounds—into the leadership of this work at a much higher level than we’ve ever been able to do in the past,” she noted, wondering, “How will this Summit look in ten years? Will there be more of us? Different faces? Different backgrounds?” Ultimately, Colby suggested, “We must keep our incredible sense of purpose, while making ourselves humble so that others can lead.”

“We must keep our incredible sense of purpose, while making ourselves humble so that others can lead.”

— Susan Colby,
The Bridgespan Group

SCALING IMPACT: ANSWERING THE ADMINISTRATION'S CALL

Moderator:

Stig Leschly,
Partner, Newark Charter
School Fund

Speakers:

Larry Berger,
Chief Executive Officer and
Co-Founder, Wireless Generation

Alexandra Bernadotte,
Founder and Chief Executive
Officer, Beyond 12

Eva Moskowitz,
Chief Executive Officer, Success
Charter Network

Jon Schnur,
Chief Executive Officer and
Co-Founder, New Leaders for
New Schools

Closing Speaker:

Michelle Rhee,
Chancellor, District of Columbia
Public Schools

This last year has been unprecedented for education entrepreneurs, with the federal government increasing funding available to innovative nonprofits, engaging social innovators in the development of policy, and highlighting the work of entrepreneurs as proof points to be emulated. The Obama Administration's willingness to join education entrepreneurs in challenging entrenched ideas about the nation's schools has placed responsibility on them to prove those ideas can be brought to scale. This session explored what entrepreneurs must do differently as they find themselves and their work at center stage.

Innovation through entrepreneurship in any sector requires a clear understanding of the challenges an industry is facing, the drive and wherewithal to pursue an idea no one else has attempted, and—crucially—the financial resources necessary to turn that idea into a reality. Moderator Stig Leschly began the discussion by asking panelists to imagine that they held the key to bringing great entrepreneurial ideas into reality. “Imagine you are billionaires,” he said “what would you fund in our movement?”

A host of small and often unseen variables make up the formula for a successful school, noted Eva Moskowitz, who would invest in solutions that make great schools easier to develop and run. For example, she shared how challenging it was to simply order textbooks at the appropriate reading level for students in her new charter schools. “We don't have those systems in place to think through something as basic as ordering instructional supplies,” she said, citing one of the “tons of very granular things that take super-human effort.” At the same time, she also urged a focus on influencing policy, with a belief that investing in things like changing funding formulas for charter school entrepreneurs can have a return on investment that reaches far beyond a single organization. “You change that funding formula, and you've had a major impact on who can go into the marketplace in terms of opening up schools, and who can stay in the marketplace, and who can scale,” she noted.

To connect the everyday concerns with the high-level impact on policy, Alex Bernadotte suggested that she would focus financial resources on tools for collecting and analyzing data. “Without access to the data, then you don't know whether the work that we're doing is effective or not,” said Bernadotte, emphasizing that data must connect the work of K-12 education with the workings of the higher education system, given the goal of college success for all students. In order for these proof points to affect broader change in the education system, Jon Schnur suggested that he would invest his money in comprehensive entrepreneurial change efforts in a handful of strategic locations, and then support that work with investments in strong leaders who could manage that work, policy advocacy to support it, and collecting data on its effectiveness. “I would invest heavily in really good blends of evaluation around evidence creation, to examine really rigorously what's working and really create much more compelling evidence . . . of what we're going to need to get to the next level of change,” he said.

This approach to collecting evidence of what works—and acting on that evidence when it shows what isn't working—must apply to the charter school sector, Schnur and Moskowitz agreed. “We have to be honest and shut down charter schools that aren't working just like we've got to shut down district schools that aren't working,” said Schnur. Moskowitz noted that the focus on failing charter schools was not surprising and does not mean that the charter model has failed. “Charters are not inherently good,” she said. “They give you the freedom to get it right.” Schnur agreed, noting that “the great success of the charter school movement so far is the examples demonstrating that all kids can achieve when we adults do our job right.”

Panelists agreed that the Obama Administration's philosophy of education reform, evidenced in the Race to the Top grant competition, will mean many opportunities for entrepreneurs. States seeking money through the program are looking for organizations that can help

them meet the standards and practices outlined in the federal grant, which Berger argued is something that many of the organizations represented in the audience were qualified to do. Berger and Schnur both characterized the influx of federal dollars as a significant opportunity to bring the promising ideas of education entrepreneurs to scale and create significant change. However, Berger also emphasized that entrepreneurs help illustrate the impact that this innovation funding has on the way education functions—and the results it brings. “The policy needs our help or else it will disappear into budget dust,” said Berger.

Many entrepreneurs also worry that the Administration's guidelines necessitate a trade-off between innovation and expanding what works, noted Bernadotte. They worry that strict evidence requirements in federal grant applications might mitigate the impact of innovative ideas. Bernadotte expressed concern that the high bar the Administration set for eligibility of federal funds based on demonstrated results shuts out small entrepreneurial organizations like her own—organizations “who have really great ideas that are based on solid foundations and solid research, but who may not necessarily have this demonstrated track record.” She suggested the creation of a smaller innovation fund that could support brand-new ideas and organizations. Berger believes the existing programs have created sufficient momentum that will trickle down to have an impact even on smaller organizations like Bernadotte's that may not qualify for direct federal investment. “State commissioners and governors have an unusual pot of discretionary resources to try to do the things the folks in this room are trying to get done,” he said. “I think that the big changes in the states, and then the likely way in which that will influence reauthorization, creates a pretty steady stream for even the new guys to get in.”



Jon Schnur of New Leaders for New Schools discusses the opportunities created by this year's federal funding initiatives.

“State commissioners and governors have an unusual pot of discretionary resources to try to do the things the folks in this room are trying to get done.”

— Larry Berger,
Wireless Generation

Closing Speaker

At the end of the session, DC Public Schools chancellor Michelle Rhee took the stage to address the audience and offer her hopes for the day. In doing so, Rhee weighed in on the collaboration/competition debate. “We cannot compromise when it comes to the education of our nation’s children,” she said. “If you would never do that for your own kids, then there’s no way that you can accept that for other people’s children.”

Rhee then encouraged the audience to use the day as an opportunity to get inspired again about their work. “My message to you is to forge ahead aggressively, because that is the way that things get done,” she said. “Go hard or go home.”

These incentives place entrepreneurs in a relatively new position as potential partners with districts and states, a shift from external advocates to internal collaborators with the education system. Leschly asked panelists to consider what changes partnering with state and district school boards will bring, and whether entrepreneurs should act as collaborators or competitors with traditional public school systems. Moskowitz argued that collaboration would mean more of the same for the nation’s children. “Everybody is nice to one another, and meanwhile the monopoly of public education screws kids on a very profound scale,” she said. “I think there’s too little speaking up, even with our friends, about the inadequacy of the pace of change.” She believes that it is imperative that entrepreneurs keep district leaders on the hook for significant change, and that they mobilize parents in support of that change.

Other panelists defended the collaborative approach. For example, Berger and Bernadotte both run organizations that develop tools for adoption by both entrepreneurial organizations and traditional school systems. “We almost have to be on the collaboration side, because there aren’t enough of you charter schools,” said Berger. Schnur agreed, relating a story about then President-Elect Barack Obama’s approach to this question in early meetings to discuss the shape of the 2008 federal stimulus package, which included competitive funds for education. Schnur says that at one point, Obama stopped the debate and told everyone at the table, “Number one, let’s stop all the discussion about adult interests. Let’s start with the discussion of what’s in the kids’ interests, and we’ll get much better results for kids. Secondly, let’s then figure out how to be savvy about how to enlist adults’ support for that ... and third is, let’s not poke anybody in the eye along the way.”

THE SECRETARY AND THE CHAIRMAN: A CONVERSATION WITH ARNE DUNCAN AND GEORGE MILLER

With federal policies like Race to the Top, the Investing in Innovation (i3) fund, and the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) changing the ways education entrepreneurs interact with the public sector, the stakes are higher than ever for them to produce breakthrough results. Moreover, entrepreneurs and others are anticipating the forthcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (or ESEA, whose current version is better known as No Child Left Behind), and wondering how competitive federal policies might drive the next iteration of this broader federal education policy. In a highly unusual joint appearance, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and U.S. Representative George Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor (which will initiate ESEA reauthorization) sat down with NewSchools CEO Ted Mitchell to discuss these federal initiatives and the role of education entrepreneurs and other innovators.

Secretary Duncan and Representative Miller were introduced by I-Sha Davis, class of 2010 president and valedictorian at Friendship Collegiate Academy, a high-performing school operated by NewSchools grantee Friendship Public Charter School. She urged the crowd to continue investing their time and energy in closing the achievement gap and preparing more students like her for success in college. “With the help of people like you, our public school system can create these opportunities for the millions of students just like me,” said Davis, who then turned the stage over to Sec. Duncan and Rep. Miller as the crowd exploded in applause.

Already, Sec. Duncan and Rep. Miller have advocated for results-oriented reform and transformed the national conversation on public education. By requiring states to adopt rigorous standards, focus on the country’s lowest-performing schools, and rethink how teachers are prepared and evaluated, Race to the Top completely altered the education reform landscape, Rep. Miller told the audience. “It blew all of the doors off of old, long-held positions and skirmishes that have tormented the advance of education reform for decades,” he said. Education entrepreneurs have a major role to play in this new environment, added Sec. Duncan, but first they must prove they can bring to scale successful, innovative strategies to close the achievement gap. “We cannot be satisfied



with just having a small percent of children having a chance to get a world-class education,” he told the rapt audience. “We have to get to every child absolutely as fast as we can.”

Friendship Collegiate Academy valedictorian I-Sha Davis introduces Secretary Duncan and Representative Miller.

Introduction:

I-Sha Davis,
Student, Friendship Collegiate
Academy (Class of 2010)

Moderator:

Ted Mitchell,
Chief Executive Officer,
NewSchools Venture Fund

Speakers:

Arne Duncan,
U.S. Secretary of Education

George Miller,
Chairman, Committee on
Education and Labor,
U.S. House of Representatives

Closing Remarks:

Michael Bennet,
Member, U.S. Senate

Jared Polis,
Member, U.S. House of
Representatives

“We cannot be satisfied with just having a small percent of children having a chance to get a world-class education. We have to get to every child absolutely as fast as we can.”

— Arne Duncan,
U.S. Secretary of Education

Many in the room had their mind on the Department of Education’s other funding initiative, the \$650 million Investing in Innovation (i3) fund, for which applications were due that very afternoon. Duncan, who is currently working to convince Congress to extend i3 funding into fiscal year 2011, surprised many in the audience by actually asking those with unsuccessful applications to help him. “We need losers to demand the next round of funding,” he told them. “If folks walk away and say they cheated me or they didn’t listen to me, then we don’t have that political ground.”

These policies focusing on laying the groundwork for innovation in education have set the stage for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The Act, which was originally passed in 1965, has not been reauthorized since 2001’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which Rep. Miller co-authored. Rep. Miller credits NCLB with shining a light on the achievement gap by making it possible to analyze the progress of student subgroups within schools. In March of this year, the Obama administration released a blueprint for ESEA reauthorization, much of which focuses on the importance of common standards and assessments, as well as a data infrastructure to support that. “We are going to have to have a very serious reliance on robust data systems so that we can start to help administrators and teachers and parents and students understand where they are, where they need to go and what it takes to achieve the high standards,” Rep. Miller said. He cautioned that this should not be viewed as a punitive measure against teachers, but rather a tool to help them in their work. “Data in fact is a friend to teachers,” said Rep. Miller. “Data is a friend to an administrator, to a principal that’s trying to figure out what’s going on.” “The fact that this continues to be a bipartisan, bicameral product in outcome and process is hugely, hugely important,” added Sec. Duncan, crediting Rep. Miller with working across the aisle with both Democrats and Republicans to drive change forward.



Secretary Duncan and Representative Miller take questions from the Summit audience.

While the role of teachers in improving student achievement has always been recognized as crucial, the recent publication by The New Teacher Project of *The Widget Effect* has changed the conversation about teacher training and certification. The report showed that many schools fail to take seriously the need to measure teachers’ skills and impact on student learning, and still fewer actually use that information to recruit teachers, inform professional development, placement, or other decisions. Sec. Duncan and Rep. Miller agreed that addressing this issue could have a significant impact on all facets of reform. “If we do this well and recruit the

next generation of phenomenal talent—and do a better job of retaining that great talent, which is even harder—I think we can change public education for 25 or 30 years,” said Sec. Duncan. He noted that the current model of teacher preparation is outdated and must be rethought, and that even teachers themselves complain to him about the lack of practical, hands-on experience and having too little preparation for effectively using data to improve their instruction. He praised Louisiana—whose schools of education have begun making real-time changes in curriculum based upon the results of their alumni’s impact on student achievement results—as an example of the direction states should be looking toward. “Louisiana doesn’t have some magical technology that’s been patented,”

he added. “They just simply had the culture and the courage to have these conversations.” Rep. Miller noted that many states and districts are engaged in fierce debates about layoff decisions, with some maintaining that “last-hired” teachers should be first to go, while others argue that more experienced teachers and those with tenure should make room for newer teachers. “The fact of the matter is, in most districts we don’t know,” said Rep. Miller, emphasizing that more work on teacher evaluation will be crucial to this issue in the years ahead.

The session concluded with the voices of two other policymakers at the forefront of reform efforts: Senator Michael Bennet and Representative Jared Polis, both of Colorado. Earlier that morning, Lindsay Neil announced the passing of Colorado’s Senate Bill 191, which tied teacher effectiveness to student achievement and allows school leaders to use that information in decision making. Sen. Bennet called upon the audience to continue creating opportunities like that for the nation’s poorest children. “It is time for the burden of proof to shift from the people that want to change the system to the people that want to keep it the same,” said Sen. Bennet. He urged the audience to enlist parents and communities to agitate for change, quoting Franklin Roosevelt, who once said to his supporters, “I agree with you, I want to do it, now make me do it.”

In spite of the challenges of educating policymakers and overcoming opposition from the forces of the status quo, Rep. Polis urged the audience to push forward. “We can win and we must win,” he said. “We know that we occupy the high moral ground and are working on behalf of those who need a voice in the corridors of Washington, and those upon whom the future of our nation rests.”

“It is time for the burden of proof to shift from the people that want to change the system to the people that want to keep it the same.”

– Senator Michael Bennet

CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS: THE CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE OF THE NEXT DECADE

Moderator:

Byron Auguste,
Worldwide Managing Partner, Social Sector, McKinsey & Company

Speakers:

Mike Feinberg,
Co-Founder, KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) Foundation and Superintendent, KIPP Houston

Howard Fuller,
Founder and Director, Institute for the Transformation of Learning at Marquette University

Kati Haycock,
President, The Education Trust

Rebeca Nieves Huffman,
Vice President, The Fund for Authorizing Excellence, National Association of Charter School Authorizers

Remington Wiley,
Student, Spelman College and Corps Member, Teach For America (Class of 2010)

The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s aimed to end the institutional racism which segregated, disfranchised, and exploited men and women based on the color of their skin. Courageous men and women like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., James Farmer, Jr., and Dorothy Height led Americans to oppose the injustices perpetrated against African-Americans by filing lawsuits, organizing demonstrations, and calling for acts of civil disobedience in order to reform the system of racial apartheid that stunted the lives of millions of Americans.

Five decades later, Americans face a new civil rights battle for equality. Despite heroic efforts and significant achievements across the country, America's education system continues to fail poor and minority students. Session moderator Byron Auguste said the system "leaves millions of our young people doomed to an economic and social apartheid," making its reform "the paramount moral issue of our time." In introducing the session, NewSchools partner Deborah McGriff asked the panelists to inspire the audience "to demand fuller, faster, deeper and smarter innovations, so that the children and youth that we serve cannot only sit down at the lunch counter, but read the menu, pay their bills, and own their own entrepreneurial organization."

Civil rights leaders had a very clear understanding of the changes they sought. They sought an end to the state-sanctioned racial segregation of restaurants, schools, and hospitals; to the laws that prevented them from voting; and to the violence against them which police and courts regularly ignored. Howard Fuller said that the goal of the education reform movement is equally as clear and well-defined: "Success is simple: There will be no achievement gap." Rebeca Nieves Huffman agreed and said that achieving that goal meant "every parent, regardless of their socioeconomic status, their political clout in their communities, would have access and the ability to send their child to a high-quality school." While high-performing charter schools offer that opportunity to many parents and students from low-income communities, political resistance to charter schools and figuring out how to replicate successful schools present major challenges to accomplishing this goal. "We need lots more work on the ground," agreed Kati Haycock, adding that more proof points are needed to encourage parents and students to demand more and better schools.

Fuller argued that the education reform movement may have to embrace controversy and take on opponents head-to-head. Movements, he said, "survive on passion; they survive on the moral commitment that you have to end the oppression of our children." He asked the audience to consider "where we would be in America if [Dr. Martin Luther] King had been polite?" He then urged education reformers to redouble their actions in addressing the inequities in education that remain unresolved and to take aggressive action to confront those who defend the inequitable status quo. "Instead of standing in front of the door keeping kids out," he said, "They're standing in front of the door keeping kids in, not letting them out of these terrible schools that are destroying their lives."

The civil rights movement was energized by the involvement of Americans of all ages and races, who joined the fight for equality after seeing fellow Americans suffer on television and in their communities. Huffman argued that the same would be necessary in the fight for equal opportunity in the American education system. “You have to educate people, let them know what is going on, so that they can be invested in making some type of change,” she said. Student Remington Wiley, a graduate of KIPP: Houston who plans to work there this fall as a Teach For America corps member, added that students who have benefited from high-quality public schools should return to their communities and share their success with others. “I’m going to go back and make the same change that somebody made for me,” she said.



Howard Fuller of the Black Alliance for Educational Options passionately calls for attendees to work to end the achievement gap.

In looking forward into the education reform movement’s future, Haycock underscored the necessity to pursue broad and ambitious goals. “You don’t stop at quality opportunities for kids, you don’t stop at equal quality teachers, you don’t stop at extra time, you don’t stop at fabulous facilities,” said Haycock. “You don’t stop until, when you look at the data, you don’t see any differences by race or by class, pre-K through college, period.” Panelists agreed that a high-quality education all the way through the university level is crucial to ensuring all students can achieve at high levels and be prepared for success in the 21st century.

In closing, Feinberg urged audience members to work together to achieve the goals of equity and excellence in our education system. “We are all small pieces of a much greater effort,” he said. “We should be much more focused on helping each other, celebrating each other’s successes, coming to the aid of one another.” McGriff reminded those in the audience of Dr. King’s lament about the struggle to end institutional racism. “History,” said King, “will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.” McGriff asked those in the audience who were ready to end the educational double standard to stand with her. More than 600 people jumped to their feet.

“You don’t stop at quality opportunities for kids, you don’t stop at equal quality teachers, you don’t stop at extra time, you don’t stop at fabulous facilities, you don’t stop until, when you look at the data, you don’t see any differences by race or by class, pre-K through college, period.”

— Kati Haycock,
The Education Trust

AWARDS: ENTREPRENEURIAL HEROES OF THE YEAR

Each year, NewSchools formally recognizes individuals and organizations that, through their embodiment of the spirit of entrepreneurship, have had a significant impact on the lives of children over the previous year. While honorees come from different parts of the field, they are all passionate visionaries who act with a sense of urgency. They are tenacious and keenly focused on producing outcomes for students—and they're willing to take risks to get there.

This year's award winners were:



2010 Entrepreneurial Heroes of the Year

Entrepreneurs of the Year

Kristen Richmond and Kirsten Tobey, Revolution Foods

Kristen Richmond and Kirsten Tobey co-founded Revolution Foods in 2006 upon the belief that every child's education, regardless of their income level, should include healthy eating and learning about nutritious food. "Through their work, Kristen and Kirsten have helped to redefine food quality standards in schools," noted NewSchools partner Julie Mikuta in presenting the award. "Beyond this, however, these women have shown that it is possible to build a thriving, entrepreneurial enterprise that can remain deeply connected to its social mission and seek to make a profit."

Bill Kurtz, Denver School of Science and Technology

Bill Kurtz is the founding school director of the Denver School of Science and Technology, an open-enrollment, college-preparatory charter high school with a science and technology focus. To expand the impact and the reach of this approach, Kurtz has created DSST Public Schools, a new charter school management organization (CMO) that will replicate the success of the original campus. "Through his work as the leader of DSST, Bill has created an exemplary model that balances liberal arts education, STEM, and 1:1 technology with traditional and project-based learning," said NewSchools partner Deborah McGriff, as she handed Kurtz his award.

Organization of the Year

The New Teacher Project

Founded in 1997, The New Teacher Project partners with school districts and states to help them address their most acute teacher quality challenges. “But TNTTP’s work hasn’t been limited to simply being a premier partner to districts in recruiting and training excellent teachers,” noted NewSchools’ Mikuta, who presented this award. “The organization has also made a sustained, purposeful investment in research and advocacy work, helping to identify the root causes of the challenges confronting urban and high-poverty school districts as they strive to attract, train, hire and keep outstanding teachers, as well as to provide actionable recommendations and effective tools that make reform feasible.”

Change Agent of the Year

Paul Herdman, The Rodel Organization

Paul Herdman, the president and CEO of the Rodel Foundation of Delaware, was honored as an individual who has played a critical role in creating the conditions necessary to dramatically improve public education. Under his leadership, the Rodel Foundation helped to craft and implement a new educational plan, called Vision 2015, for making Delaware one of the finest school systems in the nation. This work helped to position Delaware as a leader and one of only two states to win a grant in the first round of Race to the Top. “Such initiatives are rarely successful without a committed leader who positions themselves to take on the grunt work, and Paul has been this leader,” noted NewSchools’ McGriff, who has also been involved in the initiative. “In doing so, he is lowering obstacles, confronting the technical and policy challenges of reform head on. He is setting the stage for incredible gains in the future.”

2010 Career Achievement Award

Nelson Smith

As the president and CEO of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Nelson Smith has been a tireless advocate for choice and for quality public education opportunities. As one of the charter school movement’s key leaders, he has emphasized charter school quality as the path to greater growth, including creating a movement-led task force on quality and accountability, encouraging state charter associations to adopt quality standards, and developing a new model state charter school law with strong accountability provisions. “Even if you have not had the opportunity to work with Nelson directly, it is likely that you’ve felt the impact of his work,” said NewSchools’ McGriff. “Although Nelson is stepping down from his role as CEO at the Alliance and will serve as an advisor for the next year, his shoes as the charter sector’s chief advocate will be hard to fill.”

For more information about this year’s award recipients, read the full press release at <http://www.newschools.org/about/news/press-releases/summit-2010-awards>

BREAKOUT SESSION: DISTRICT AND STATE PARTNERSHIP — BOON OR DETRIMENT FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

Moderator:

Mashea Ashton,
Chief Executive Officer, Newark
Charter School Fund

Speakers:

Tom Boasberg,
Superintendent, Denver
Public Schools

Chris Gabrieli,
Co-Founder and Chairman,
Massachusetts 2020 Foundation

Rick Hess,
Director of Education Policy Studies,
American Enterprise Institute

John King,
Senior Deputy Commissioner for
P-12 Education, New York State
Department of Education

Ellen Moir,
Founder and Chief Executive Officer,
New Teacher Center

Education entrepreneurs have long focused on inventing new approaches and organizations unencumbered by the rules and constraints of the current system. Some have taken this “outsider” status to heart by competing head-to-head with traditional school systems, while others have embraced more collaborative tactics. As entrepreneurs face new opportunities to grow their work and embed it in federal innovation efforts, the longstanding question is raised anew: are partnerships with districts and states necessary for the success of entrepreneurial education organizations and ideas? Are these partnerships critical for the system-wide advancement of entrepreneurial innovation, or do they hamper innovation?

In this breakout session, panelists gathered to debate the proposition “**Entrepreneurs and school systems must partner in order to achieve widespread improvement.**” Fittingly, this discussion was moderated by Mashea Ashton, who has worked inside the system (heading the charter school office of the New York City Department of Education) as well as in several entrepreneurial organizations (including KIPP, New Leaders for New Schools and now the Newark Charter School Fund). Ashton facilitated a lively Oxford-style debate in which panelists are given the opportunity to argue for or against a proposition and then respond to one another’s arguments during a question-and-answer period. Arguing for the proposition: former Uncommon Schools managing director John King, who now works for the New York State Department of Education, and Chris Gabrieli, a venture capital investor who has also co-founded an education organization focused on extended learning time. Arguing against the proposition: policy analyst Rick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute, and Ellen Moir, who runs the New Teacher Center. Denver superintendent Tom Boasberg was invited to respond to the arguments of each side at the end of the debate.

The debaters embraced the contentious format in order to explore the opportunities and possible consequences of engagement with the traditional school system. Both sides agreed that the issue was nuanced, and acknowledged that partnership with a large, bureaucratic system had the potential to slow or stifle the work of a smaller, more nimble organization.

Panelists in favor of the proposition argued that the logistical challenge of bringing innovative ideas to significant scale would require some form of partnership with states and districts. King emphasized the difficulty education entrepreneurs faced in serving large numbers of students quickly. “In our state of New York, charters are having an important impact on the education policy conversation, but still constitute only about 3% of the students in the state,” said King. “If ‘all students’ means all, then we have an obligation to seek universality and that means that we’ve got to leverage change in the system.”

Beyond the challenge of bringing reform throughout the education system quickly, panelists in favor of the proposition also argued that many entrepreneurial organizations’ business models required them to build strong partnerships with district offices and state agencies. “The notion that all of us as entrepreneurs should simply abandon the system would eliminate 90% of where [Teach For America] teachers go, and I think they’re about as entrepreneurial an organization as one might like,” said Gabrieli, adding that organizations that design data systems for use in schools are also designed to effect change directly within states and districts.

Arguing against the proposition, Hess and Moir argued that the structure of district and state education systems prevent them from successfully executing innovative strategies, and are in fact designed to maintain stability and the status quo. Further, they argued, because they are based in specific geographic locations, they argued, they have too many constituents with competing interests. “The more constituencies you got to bring to the table, the more you’ve got to kind of water down what you’re trying to do,” said Hess. Education entrepreneurs seeking to partner with these systems often find they must build a solution that appeals to the lowest common denominator in order to gain buy-in from these various stakeholders, requiring them to “make nice rather than drive change,” in Hess’s words.

Hess pointed out that despite the unwillingness of school systems to change significantly, they do adopt reforms frequently—but fail to follow through on them. When writing his first book, *Spinning Wheels*, Hess examined 57 urban districts and learned that on average, each district had attempted 13 major reform efforts in a three-year window and all met with little success. “When you’re rolling out a major reform every 13 weeks, it doesn’t matter if they’re good or bad, they aren’t going to work.” Gabrieli conceded school systems’ approach to improvement hadn’t had a significant impact. “It’s a system that stinks,” he said. “The question is, what’s our best tactic as entrepreneurs to change results for kids, not whether we like and admire the system.”

Moir challenged Gabrieli and King to identify partnerships between districts or states and entrepreneurial organizations that had impacted the lives of children in a positive way. “Schools look exactly the same way that they did in our grandparents’ day and age,” Moir argued. “Why would I want to rely on a system for its inputs and its outputs when the system has no track record of ever bringing in talent, growing talent, getting rid of people, and ultimately improving student achievement?” King pointed to Chancellor Michelle Rhee’s accomplishments with the Washington Teachers Union contract in the District of Columbia Public Schools (based on her learning from The New Teacher Project, which she founded prior to running DC’s public school system) and the way New York City schools chancellor Joel Klein had invited outside organizations to help create small high schools that have demonstrated gains in student achievement. Hess questioned whether the Michelle Rhee example constituted a real partnership. “That strikes me more as having individuals go in and do a wholesale takeover, of which I’m in favor,” he maintained.

In wrapping up the session, Denver superintendent Tom Boasberg urged entrepreneurs to work within and in partnership with districts and states. “When we abandon the political field to those who are against the kinds of changes that I think are extraordinarily necessary, I think that creates a lot of the stagnation and the perpetuation of the status quo that we have here,” he said.



Panelists discuss whether entrepreneurs should pursue state and district partnerships.

“It’s a system that stinks. The question is: what’s our best tactic as entrepreneurs to change results for kids, not whether we like and admire the system.”

– Chris Gabrieli,
Massachusetts 2020 Foundation

BREAKOUT SESSION: MESSAGES, MEDIA AND MINDSHARE

Moderator:

Alan Arkatov,
President, Changing.edu and
former Chief Strategy Officer,
The Rogers Group

Speakers:

Tim Daly,
President, The New Teacher Project

Ariela Rozman,
CEO, The New Teacher Project

Steve Mancini,
Director of Communications,
Doris & Donald Fisher Fund

Education entrepreneurs have come a long way over the last decade—from a small group of out-of-the-box thinkers to a serious movement with significant accomplishments, positive results. Alongside this progress has come increased media attention, as well as a vital need by policymakers to understand what the Obama Administration’s emphasis on social entrepreneurs and innovation in education really looks like, and whether the significant new investments in this arena will be worth the cost. As a result, these organizations must invest more time and energy than ever before in telling their story to the media and to policymakers as well as to the communities and families they serve directly. As the Aspen Institute’s Walter Isaacson pointed out in his opening remarks (see page 6), the entrepreneurial movement needs more storytellers and fewer preachers; as such, this session sought to help education entrepreneurs understand what it takes to effectively communicate about their work and their impact.

The session was moderated by Alan Arkatov, a longtime public relations strategist and current education technology executive who has also worked extensively in business and in politics—sectors in which it’s well-understood that the success of an organization (or candidate) often hinges on developing clear messages, anchored in compelling data and stories, and delivering them thoughtfully to specific audiences. A quick survey of the room found that attendees had a wide range of audiences they needed to communicate effectively with, including the media and policymakers but also the general public, foundations, districts, teachers, parents, and their organization’s own internal staff. On hand to discuss their strategies were Steve Mancini, who handles public relations for two of the most well-respected organizations in education reform (KIPP and Teach For America) from his post at the Doris & Donald Fisher Foundation, and The New Teacher Project’s Ariela Rozman and Tim Daly, who have helped steer the organization’s efforts to change the policy conversation about teacher effectiveness by harnessing data.

The session’s speakers agreed that the first rule of thumb was quite simply, in Arkatov’s words, to “be proactive and use every tool at your disposal to get the word out.” TNTP’s Ariela Rozman noted that effective communications requires some dedicated time, attention, and resources from senior staff in the organization. Rozman called TNTP’s communications chief the team’s “most indispensable member” but also noted that he and others put energy and effort into a regularly updated “message library” so its entire team can carry a clear, consistent and compelling story forward in their work and in their communications with various external audiences. TNTP is such a big believer in the importance of good communication that its team occasionally advises TNTP’s district partners on communications strategy that can help them achieve their long-term goals, and sometimes even helps them gather data to illustrate the impact of TNTP’s work in their community.

These messages must be clear and simple, even if the work is complicated and nuanced, noted Steve Mancini. “You have to pass the Grandma Test in your communication,” he told the audience. “If what you are saying doesn’t make sense to your grandma or grandfather, you need to start over.” Mancini shared two tips related to framing a clear message and proactively telling a story: “show, not sell” and “fill the cup.” First, he urged organizations to point to specific things they do to change the trajectory of young people’s lives, rather than trying to “sell” anyone—journalists or others—a story. To illustrate, Mancini told the audience about how he managed to secure coverage for *Teaching as Leadership*, a book by Teach For America’s Steven Farr, by sending *ABC World*

News with Diane Sawyer video clips of three teachers who are featured in the book, rather than sending the book itself. The video clips vividly demonstrated the principles of highly effective teaching described in Farr’s book using actual teachers, rather than touting bullet points or Teach For America itself. “It served as a virtual casting call,” said Mancini, noting that because it illustrated the work of great teachers in the classroom, the final feature story was far more compelling and memorable than even a brief feature on the book’s release would have been.

With “fill the cup,” Mancini urged the audience to build strong relationships with the media by remembering that reporters have to deal with strict deadlines and impatient editors, and need someone to provide them with good information, good interviews, and interesting anecdotes. “You have to fill the cup for the reporter,” said Mancini. “There are things that reporters don’t understand. I’m sorry, but they don’t all know your theory of change. And you need to get over it.” Taking the time to educate reporters is time worth spending, agreed TNTP president Tim Daly, explaining that his organization communicates regularly and openly with reporters in order to foster strong relationships with them. “When we do want to communicate something to [journalists], not only do they know who we are, but they generally find us credible because they’ve had a lot of conversations with us where we hopefully have been useful to them,” says Daly. He also stressed the importance of trying to share new insights with them in each conversation, rather than reciting the same mantra or talking point as other like-minded organizations. This has positioned TNTP as a source of new ideas, data, and insights—precisely the position they seek to occupy in the conversation about teacher effectiveness.

The speakers also emphasized that a great deal of effective communications has to do with being flexible and responsive when it comes to engaging with the media and others. Mancini offered two tips on this front: “frame or be framed” and “lemons into lemonade.” “Frame or be framed” is Mancini’s reminder that even a controversial or sensitive topic can present a great opportunity to frame your story. For example, he recounted an instance in which Teach For America faced strong union opposition related to their planned expansion into Wilmington, Delaware. In order to head off this opposition and turn attention in favor of the move, Teach For America officials invited two U.S. Senators, the city’s mayor, major foundations, and current Teach For America corps members to join them for an announcement event. What’s more, Mancini adds, “we also invited the reporter an hour early: he got to talk to the Senators, they got to talk to the good-looking corps members, and we ended up being a front page story. Like the *ABC World News* example, Teach For America managed to get “authentic advocates speaking on behalf of the organization.” Likewise, Mancini also helped KIPP turn “lemons into lemonade” when he used a critical editorial in Austin, Texas into an opportunity to get the facts straight about its schools and land an op-ed in the local paper after years of trying. The same day as the editorial appeared alleging that KIPP burnt out its teachers with long hours and made it impossible for them to commit to a teaching career long-term, Mancini had worked with KIPP: Austin’s local executive director to pen



Steve Mancini, Doris & Donald Fisher Fund

a compelling response that was published the next day. He emphasized that it's important to leave room in your schedule to respond to these types of urgent requests, to have relevant data and research at your fingertips, and to be ready to take the time to educate reporters, many of whom are struggling to understand an issue on deadline and greatly appreciate efforts to put the work in context.

TNTP's Rozman echoed the importance of remaining flexible and nimble with communications, and being willing to drive a story or a report in a different direction than originally envisioned. "One of the things that really guides us in our messages is the data" she said, "We set out to write a report [now known as *The Widget Effect*] about why no tenured teachers get dismissed. ... The data told a very different story, which is that the problem is not on the back end. The reason that no tenured teachers get dismissed is a symptom of the problem on the front end, which is there is no differentiation among teachers." The organization also moved quickly to release the report far earlier than it had planned, so that it could inform the timely conversations that were taking place around the role of teacher effectiveness in *Race to the Top*. "A couple of years ago, if you heard of The New Teacher Project, you would have thought of us as an organization that recruits teachers," she added. "But now, as a result of *The Widget Effect*, we get a ton of phone calls from people saying, 'help us think through this' ... because they can see our thought process and how we tie this all together and how we bring it back to teacher effectiveness and look at it holistically. We're able to add a lot of value to many different stories."

Speakers noted that the good news for entrepreneurial education organizations is that the work they are doing is having a real impact and is changing the lives of students and families in tangible ways. Talking openly about that work and its results is a comparatively easier task, but is crucial in informing and shaping the public conversation about improving education. "We need proof points," emphasized Rozman. "When we have proof points, we need to be able to get those out and say, 'this is how it worked, this is where it's helpful, this is how it can be replicated, and this is how it best scales.'"

"You have to pass the Grandma
Test in your communication.
If what you are saying doesn't
make sense to your grandma
or grandfather, you need to
start over."

— Steve Mancini,
Doris & Donald Fisher Fund

BREAKOUT SESSION: POLITICAL SAVVY: GUIDEBOOK FOR A NEW LANDSCAPE

For many entrepreneurs, a singular focus on achieving excellent results has been a successful—and sufficient—strategy politically. But with increased visibility and scale comes an increased need to confront the politics of this work head-on. In this lively breakout session, moderator Dan Katzir led a panel of entrepreneurs, funders, and education reform advocates in a discussion about why and how education entrepreneurs should be engaged politically.

For nearly two decades, education entrepreneurs have largely relied on their successes to convince policymakers and the public to support their work. “It’s hard enough to do the work in an excellent way, driving impact and results, and grow, as we all know, without getting involved in this mess called politics and policy,” Katzir told the audience. “Because so many of us have been focused on scaling our own operation and our own organization, that we’ve not yet thought about how to scale in different ways—scaling through technology, scaling through media, and, most importantly, scaling through public policy and politics.” Andy Rotherham agreed, noting, “In some ways, the hardest work is done because the knowledge is out there, the people are out there, and it sounds like the will is out there. ... The groundwork has been laid in a really positive way.”

However, engaging politically is becoming increasingly necessary as reform opponents intensify their own advocacy efforts and pour millions of dollars into efforts to restrict public charter schools and hinder new measures of teacher effectiveness. “Right now, we’re asking politicians to sort of walk the plank—[saying] it’s for the kids, it’s in the general interest, but knowing what that means for them in a lot of states politically,” explained Rotherham. “And we just simply have to put in place the counterweight if you’re going to have a more healthy ecosystem here.”

Speakers acknowledged that becoming more politically engaged takes precious resources away from the organization’s primary work, and can mean risking the organization’s reputation. “When you enter that fray, you hang a target on yourself, and you have to be careful about what that means in terms of overall mission,” said Rotherham. “It’s not in every nonprofit’s best interests to rush into the legislature.”

Yet when they choose to engage, education entrepreneurs can have a meaningful impact on public policy, Alice Johnson Cain told the audience. She recalled a breakfast meeting that Representative George Miller held with a small group of education entrepreneurs back in 2006, as he began focusing attention on the reauthorization of ESEA. Miller wanted this group of entrepreneurs, who had achieved impressive results by trying innovative ideas, to think outside of the box about what should be included in the reauthorized bill. The result of that conversation, said Cain, became the framework for the Investing in Innovation (i3) fund. “I don’t think i3 would actually exist today were it not for that conversation and were it not for the work the entrepreneurs had done and the opportunity to raise that suggestion,” Cain explained. She emphasized that even small efforts can have big impacts. While working for the late Illinois Senator Paul Simon, Cain observed him ask his staff each week for a report on how many phone calls had come in on particular issues. “There were times, literally, we got seven phone calls on an issue and he said, ‘I’ve got to do something about that,’” Cain explained.

Moderator:

Dan Katzir,
Managing Director,
The Broad Foundation

Speakers:

Steve Barr,
Founder, Green Dot Public Schools

Jonah Edelman,
Chief Executive Officer,
Stand for Children

Alice Johnson Cain,
Education Director,
Hope Street Group

Andy Rotherham,
Co-Founder and Partner, Bellwether
Education Partners

Joe Williams,
Executive Director, Democrats for
Education Reform

However, in order for entrepreneurs to be effective advocates for their issues, they must first understand the politics involved and the incentives that drive policymakers. “There are only two things a politician really responds to: money, or something money can’t



Alice Johnson Cain of Hope Street Group argues that entrepreneurs have had a lasting impact on federal education policy.

buy—the well-organized mom,” Steve Barr told the audience, reflecting on his experiences organizing parents to rally for change in Los Angeles. Edelman agreed, noting that “It all comes down to incentives and what drives decisions.” For example, in the fight to pass Colorado’s “Great Teachers and Leaders Bill,” which ultimately gained Democratic and union support to restructure teacher tenure, (see page 7) Colorado Democrats were concerned that any perceived unwillingness to cooperate might be used against them by their Republican counterparts during mid-term elections. In this case, explained Edelman, they weren’t concerned about contributions, but about being seen as responsible

for Colorado not winning a Race to the Top grant. “A lot of politics, I think, is really not so much trying to get people to do things they don’t want to do, it’s about helping champions do what it is they want to do by giving them political cover to lead.”

When entrepreneurs do choose to take up advocacy, they need to ensure they stay within the federal guidelines designed to limit lobbying by tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations. Rotherham said it is possible for organizations to use a portion of their budgets for advocacy without breaking the law, with limits based on the organization’s size. He noted that there is a huge gap between what’s possible and what organizations are currently doing, noting that it is possible “to influence public officials in ways that don’t constitute lobbying and don’t cross the line of organizations to be in trouble, but that do get you into that fray and that battle of ideas,” said Rotherham. “There’s a lot of stuff you can do as a 501(c)(3) organization to fund advocacy,” added Joe Williams of Democrats for Education Reform (DFER).

Some have looked to outside advocacy organizations like DFER to carry the burden of influencing policy on behalf of entrepreneurial organizations. However, Williams told the audience that his organization desperately needs the support and engagement of education entrepreneurs. “We want them to start thinking about advocacy as part of the cost of doing business and building it into their budgets,” he told the audience. “The closer you are to the people that are doing advocacy work, the more likely it is that the details are going to merge in a way that works for you.”

Ultimately, panelists reminded entrepreneurs that if they don’t engage politically and fight for what they believe in, they may lose hard-fought ground. Katzir reminded his audience of a quote by early literacy scholar Phyllis Hunter: “If you are not at the table, you could be on the menu!”

“Start thinking about advocacy as part of the cost of doing business”

— Joe Williams,
Democrats for Education Reform

BREAKOUT SESSION: SCHOOLS HIT THE BIG SCREEN: INFLUENCING THE PUBLIC MINDSET

Some have called 2010 “the year of the education documentary,” with Sundance Film Festival favorite *Waiting For “Superman”* eagerly anticipated in theatres this fall, and smaller films like *The Lottery*, *Teached*, *A Right Denied* and *A Race to Nowhere* also generating conversation and attention. In this session, panelists discussed how big-screen treatment of public education and its reform efforts might influence the national conversation about this issue.

Session moderator Kira Orange Jones—a documentary filmmaker herself—said she believes film can have a visceral effect on movie-goers and communicate stories in ways that statistics are unable to do. Panelists agreed. Seeing a parent from a different background fighting for their child’s future “blows away this myth that the parents are not involved,” said Kelly Amis, whose film *Teached* focuses on how teacher quality contributes to the achievement gap. “When I talk to people about what I know about education reform it always seems to resonate. But you cannot get to every single person and give them that one-on-one. With film, the idea is you can really reach so many more people.” The depth and breadth of film’s reach was echoed by Eric Adler of the SEED Foundation, whose students appear in *Waiting For “Superman.”* “There is no way to walk out of the theater without going, ‘Oh my god, I really care about these kids now,’” he said. “The incredible power [of these movies] is that it makes you care about other people’s children.”

Many in the education reform community have high hopes that these films will raise awareness of the troubling state of America’s public schools and will spur the public to demand change. John Schreiber, whose firm Participant Media produced *Waiting For “Superman”*, believes that “movies are a powerful medium for change.” As an indicator of the potential of film to effect change, he pointed to the impact that *An Inconvenient Truth*—also directed by *Waiting For “Superman”* director Davis Guggenheim—had on public awareness of climate change. “Before [*An Inconvenient Truth*], 33% of Americans believed global warming was real,” Schreiber told the audience. “After the movie, 85% of Americans, when they were polled, believed that global warming was real.” Audience member Whitney Tilson, who is involved in another new education film called *A Right Denied: The Critical Need for Genuine Education Reform*, believes that even educating the public about the challenges of the public education system is a noteworthy goal. “I find that even the best-informed, best-educated people think, ‘Well, the problem is obviously just not enough money and we just need to spend more money to reduce class size,’ and that is completely wrong,” Tilson noted.



Moderator:

Kira Orange Jones,
Executive Director, Teach For
America – Greater New Orleans

Speakers:

Eric Adler,
Co-Founder and Managing Director,
The SEED Foundation

Kelly Amis,
Founder, Loudspeaker Films

John Schreiber,
Executive Vice President,
Social Action & Advocacy,
Participant Media

Kira Orange Jones of Teach For
America speaks about the power
of film to educate and motivate.

“There is no way to walk out of the theater without going, ‘Oh my god, I really care about these kids now.’ The incredible power [of these movies] is that it makes you care about other people’s children.”

– Eric Adler,
The SEED Foundation

However, Schreiber explained that changing public education is in some ways a more complex issue than climate change, and less amenable to direct individual action. The social action campaign surrounding *An Inconvenient Truth* could give audiences concrete steps they could take to minimize their personal carbon footprint, for example, noted Schreiber. “One of the challenges and opportunities we have with the movie is to have parents understand that they can engage themselves in their own school districts and at their own schools, and that they have an opportunity to take actions that will improve the situation not only for their children but for other people’s children,” he explained. For example, he believes viewers may be more inclined to hold governors accountable for implementing efforts like common state standards. “There are 37 governorships that are up for grabs this election and we think that we can ... make a difference there,” he told the audience.

Education reformers hope these films will be a catalyst for bringing the achievement gap to national attention, and building support for bold actions to address it.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE EVENT: SUPERCHARGING ACHIEVEMENT: LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO ACCOMPLISH AMBITIOUS GOALS

About the Community of Practice Event

Each year, on the day before the Summit, NewSchools convenes its portfolio ventures and select practitioners for a Community of Practice gathering. These gatherings allow entrepreneurs to investigate common challenges and share effective practices with one another.

The theme of this year's event was "Supercharging Achievement: Leveraging Technology to Accomplish Ambitious Goals." For years, technology has been touted as a tool for improving efficiency and effectiveness in education, but despite the proliferation of such efforts, technology has rarely had the impact it promises on schools and classrooms. However, that is beginning to change, as education entrepreneurs and other practitioners are beginning to take advantage of technological progress in new ways. Nearly 200 participants gathered to explore a wide range of technology-enabled solutions for dramatically improving student achievement, through a series of full-group sessions (described in the following pages) and in smaller "Solutions Village" conversations that highlighted new products and services.

Speakers:

Milton Chen,
Senior Fellow, The George Lucas
Educational Foundation

Gary Knell,
President and Chief Executive
Officer, Sesame Workshop

Joel Rose,
Chief Executive Officer,
School of One

Katie Salen,
Executive Director, Institute of Play

Using Technology to Achieve Ambitious Goals

Although technology has been touted as a tool for improving efficiency and effectiveness in education, it has rarely had the impact it promises on schools and classrooms. For students, technology is the way that they interact with, learn about, and communicate with the world. Educational technology expert Marc Prensky says, "Our students today are all 'native speakers' of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet." Education entrepreneurs are taking advantage of technological progress in new ways. In this session, four speakers doing different but complementary and innovative work with teachers and students of all ages shared their insights and experiences. Gary Knell, Katie Salen, Joel Rose, and Milton Chen discussed how their organizations are thinking about learning in the 21st century.

Technology's ubiquity is changing the way that parents and teachers view its relationship to learning, said Knell. Utilizing Sesame's well-known and loved Muppets, Knell and his team engage young learners and their parents, increasingly using technology as a tool. "After 40 years, we think we've built a trusted voice not just with kids obviously... but with teachers most of whom grew up with the show themselves and don't have that anti-technology bias that maybe some of their teachers had," said Knell. Sesame Street, which first aired in 1969, has begun expanding beyond television to reach pre-K children. In 2006, they launched a program that streamed video content via smartphones to parents of three-year olds in several California cities: the "Learning Letters with Elmo" program delivered literacy learning tips to parents along with Sesame Street clips focused on learning letters of the alphabet. Parents reported that because they always had their mobile phones with them, it was extremely easy to fit literacy learning activities into their daily routines. Sesame Workshop has also applied for an Investing in Innovation (i3) federal grant with the University of Michigan for a project to test Sesame Street-embedded content in preschools in three cities. Lessons will incorporate segments of video from the show's well-known characters, which teachers will use to reinforce

learning goals. “You can have Cookie Monster teaching a rectangle, triangle, and quadrangle as a way that a child will have that reinforced and really never forget those kinds of lessons” he said.

Understanding that children today are more technologically savvy than their parents (and many of their teachers), Katie Salen and her organization Institute of Play sought to rethink how a school could be structured. Quest to Learn, which opened its doors in 2009, seeks to more fully integrate the technology most students are familiar in their daily lives with their formal education. “We’re trying to not think about school as an isolated moment in a kid’s life for learning,” Salen said. Quest to Learn uses a social networking platform, similar to Facebook, called Being Me, which students use to share

information about their lives inside and outside of school with their teachers and fellow classmates. Quest to Learn has a one-to-one laptop program and wireless networks in all classrooms. However, Salen—whose background is in video game design—insists the real advancement is in how lessons are delivered, with standards and goals framed as “missions.” Students follow story lines that require them to crack codes and solve mysteries in a fictional universe not unlike the video games they are used to playing at home. In these games, however, students must master required math and science skills in order to advance. Recognizing that many children learn visually or through participating in hands-on activities, Salen and her colleagues also created a special learning lab where students interact with a virtual whiteboard using motion capture technology. “We see kids do stuff with math in this space that we don’t see them doing even on a computer screen or in the classroom,” Salen said.

However, Salen noted that technology should be implemented in a way that is purposeful to lesson content and planning, not as an afterthought. “The goal is to constantly differentiate that technology in the use of digital media so that it meets the needs of those kids,” she said.” Some days Quest to Learn students do not use their laptops at all, instead focusing on traditional pen and paper work where that is most appropriate to that day’s lesson.



Gary Knell discusses Sesame Workshop's innovative pre-K education programs.

Joel Rose’s School of One also examined students’ different learning pathways in devising its program, which is being piloted in New York City Schools. Instead of one teacher and 25-30 students in a classroom, each student at School of One learns content in a variety of ways, including traditional teacher-led instruction but also one-on-one tutoring, independent learning, and work with virtual tutors. A single classroom can contain a wide variety of student skills and learning styles, Rose told the audience, and it is misguided to expect that teachers alone can meet the myriad needs of every student. “We need to use teachers and technologies to begin to connect students with the types of learning that are going to be most effective to them,” said Rose.

School of One chose to test their re-imagined classroom format with a middle school during the summer. Rose’s team created a “learning progression” which identified 77 math skills the 7th grade class would need to master in order to meet state proficiency tests. They used assessments to gauge students’ incoming knowledge and skills, and surveyed students but also their parents and teachers to learn about their interests and learning styles. Using this information, they began to work with existing content providers to create more than 2,500 personalized math lessons. Moreover, School of One is working on a “learning algorithm” that incorporates all the information on student interests and skill level to create lesson plans or “playlists” that are unique to each student. These playlists are refined at the end of each day based on an online assessment—and that information is also used to provide feedback to the content providers. “Over time, we want to create a model that rewards content providers, big and small, for how effective their content is,” Rose said.

Beyond tailoring individual lessons to a student’s own learning needs, School of One’s use of technology has also optimized use of time in the classroom. “The great waste in school comes from the inability to utilize the experiences the child gets outside the school within the school,” agreed Milton Chen, who explained that schools of the 20th century were meant to prepare large portions of the population for jobs in manufacturing, where critical thinking was hardly needed—and in many cases detrimental—to be successful. Meanwhile, today’s globalized economy requires graduates to master not only basic skills but also advanced science, math, and critical thinking skills. He played a video that highlighted the work of Walter Payton College Prep in Chicago, which uses Web conferencing technology to connect its students with other students and scholars across the globe and integrates a strong focus on science and technology with language and humanities, including a four-year foreign language requirement. “If kids could bring more of what they know outside of the classroom into that learning experience, if they could use what they learn in a classroom in their real lives, we’ve gone a long way towards breaking down the isolation of the storm in the classroom and giving kids authentic learning experiences,” Chen emphasized.

“We need to use teachers and technologies to begin to connect students with the types of learning that are going to be most effective to them.”

– Joel Rose,
School of One

***Teaching As Leadership* Meets *Teach Like a Champion* – Exploring Synergies Between What Teach For America and Uncommon Schools Have Learned about Highly Effective Teaching.**

Moderator:

Julie Mikuta,
Partner, NewSchools Venture Fund

Speakers:

Steven Farr,
Chief Knowledge Officer,
Teach For America

Doug Lemov,
Managing Director,
Uncommon Schools

Regardless of how advanced the technology innovation, the demand for high-quality teachers remains strong. Great teaching doesn't happen by chance, nor does it happen at scale without a strong strategy and structure underlying it. This discussion featured the authors of two new books that are influencing the national conversation about how teaching leads to student achievement: Steven Farr of *Teaching as Leadership: The Highly Effective Teacher's Guide to Closing the Achievement Gap* and Doug Lemov of *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques that Put Students on the Path to College*.

Today, fewer people than ever believe that low-income and minority students are inherently less capable than other children, said Farr, who credits famed East Los Angeles teacher Jaime Escalante with challenging and disproving this belief. Escalante, who recently passed away, rose to national attention after 18 of his low-income students passed the Advanced Placement Calculus exam, which was so surprising to test administrators that they investigated Escalante for cheating. As Farr and Lemov see it, the next barrier to overcome is the notion that great teachers are simply "born to teach," with success in the classroom a mysterious anomaly. "We just have to get past this notion that this is somehow magical," said Farr.

Farr and Lemov have spent the last decade independently investigating great teachers and their practice with the intent of demystifying their work so others could learn from it to inform both practice and policy. They spoke with teachers who helped their students make as many as four years of academic gain in a single school year, and sat in on their classes to identify what made their success possible. What they found is that great teaching results from specific, teachable techniques and practices that often lead to academic growth. According to Farr, great teachers do what all great leaders do when they face insurmountable odds: they set big goals, work hard to reach those ambitious goals, plan purposefully, execute effectively, measure their effectiveness to continuously refine their practice and increase their effectiveness, and work relentlessly to meet their objective. His organization, Teach For America (TFA), has placed 25,000 teachers across

the country, most of them in urban areas where the vast majority of students come from low-income families. TFA measures its corps members' effectiveness by their impact on student achievement, and the *Teaching as Leadership* rubric he has developed identifies specific actions teachers can take, based on the strategies Farr observed in high-performing teachers' classrooms. For example, teachers attempting to invest their students with a can-do attitude are advised to "Make progress transparent with charts and graphs." TFA put the rubric online and began seeding the site (<http://www.teachingasleadership.org>) with checklists, case studies, and videos of teachers successfully performing those actions.

Steven Farr of Teach For America discusses what he has learned about highly effective teaching.



Similarly, Doug Lemov sought to demystify great teaching by identifying and codifying concrete actions he observed great teachers using in their classrooms. This approach, he said, resulted from the frustration he experienced as a young teacher trying to implement advice he received at teaching workshops—advice like “Teach kids, not content” and “Have high expectations.” “I would leave these workshops walking on air because it got me in touch with all of the reasons why I wanted to become a teacher ... and I would get in class the next morning and have no idea what to say or do differently,” said Lemov. He began with an analysis of schools in New Jersey that were “outliers,” with a greater percentage of students living in poverty that achieved proficiency on state assessments. In *Teach Like a Champion*, Lemov identifies 49 techniques used by great teachers in those exceptional schools, ranging from Cold Calling—calling on students regardless of whether they have raised their hands in order to make engaged participation the expectation—to No Opt Out—where teachers return to a student who was unable to answer a question after that question has been answered by another student. Like Farr, Lemov has also built a video library of these techniques in action, and used video to create the taxonomy of effective teaching techniques (<http://www.uncommonschools.org/usi/aboutUs/taxonomy.php>). “Proof is incredibly powerful,” said Lemov. “Sometimes you just need to see that it’s possible to believe it, to do it.”

Despite their belief in the power of video to transmit these lessons about effective teaching, both authors expressed caution about seeing technology as a “silver bullet” to close the achievement gap. “Technology can make a very good teacher much better and a weak teacher much worse,” said Farr. “What you are buying is people’s time. So the key to winning the game is really about managing and developing people,” said Lemov.

“Proof is incredibly powerful.
Sometimes you just need to see
that it’s possible to believe it,
to do it.”

– Doug Lemov,
Uncommon Schools

Making Innovation Happen

Moderator:

Kim Smith,
Chief Executive Officer, Bellwether
Education Partners and Co-Founder,
NewSchools Venture Fund

Speakers:

Alexandra Bernadotte,
Founder and Chief Executive Officer,
Beyond 12

Milton Chen,
Senior Fellow, The George Lucas
Education Foundation

John Danner,
Chief Executive Officer,
Rocketship Education

Lillian Lowery,
Secretary of Education, Delaware

Even though there is a newly increased openness to innovative ideas in education, fostering a culture supportive of innovative ideas in the public education system requires more than education entrepreneurs alone can achieve. “Innovation generally does not emerge from a visionary individual holed up in a laboratory,” wrote NewSchools co-founder Kim Smith in a recent paper on the topic. “A wide variety of stakeholders need to play a role and be effectively interconnected in an innovation ecosystem or cycle.” In the final session of the day, Smith led a conversation about how a culture and system that supports innovation can be created in public education.

Often, the driving force for innovation in education doesn't even come from inside of education, noted Lillian Lowery. In her state of Delaware, demand for innovative ideas in the public schools came from the business community, where there was recognition of the critical link between strong schools and the state's economy. “If we are going to bring jobs to our state, then we need to make sure that we have constituents who could certainly be creative and innovative for any new businesses that come and to also make sure that our public schools are places that would be attractive to people who are looking to relocate,” business leaders told Lowery. In response, Delaware took tactics like overhauling its teacher evaluation practices to link teacher effectiveness with student achievement and also allowed districts more flexibility in the way they paid teachers. Earlier this year, the state became one of the first two to earn competitive Race to the Top federal grants for these reforms and others.

Milton Chen agreed that economic development can be a powerful motivator for stakeholders to push innovation in education. “We need to prepare our students for a whole new kind of workplace, and jobs that we do not even know exist today,” he told the audience. Chen pointed to the Maine Learning Technology Initiative as an example

of how bringing the business community on board could create the opportunity for innovation. The initiative's main proponent was former Governor Angus Young, who had difficulty finding support for the project until he explained how the program would benefit Maine's economy. “It was not until he positioned it as a jobs and economic development program that he finally got traction,” Chen told the audience.

The panelists agreed that a major barrier to innovation in education is the structural arrangement of the public education system, where each of the 50 states has a different set of standards and corresponding assessments make it that much harder for innovations to take

hold in a widespread way. The Common Core standards, which have since been adopted by a majority of states, were seen by panelists as a promising first step toward addressing this barrier. “You have to be able to build schools and systems that are going to be interoperable, that are going to allow us to extract data and to import data in very similar



Panelists offer ideas about how to create an innovation ecosystem in education.

ways,” said Alexandra Bernadotte, whose organization Beyond 12 is developing solutions for tracking progress from high school through college. “Those who are building and creating these tools are going to have to get to the point where we are talking a common language and our systems are speaking a common language, therefore enabling broad-based adoption and enabling innovation.”

Even while operating in a context where outcomes and metrics are clearer, it can be difficult to reconcile those standards with the need to encourage radical new ideas and approaches, noted Smith. Education entrepreneurs are under extreme pressure to exhibit outstanding results to funders, policymakers, and the public, said John Danner, who says they often ask themselves, “Can I basically keep my funders from killing me for trying to do something?” Danner, who runs the highly successful Rocketship Education charter schools in San Jose, believes the best way to drive innovation forward is by creating proof points that districts—and funders—can’t ignore. “This district is doing their level best to figure out what is it that they can do to offer an education similar to the one Rocketship offers,” Danner told the audience. “I really do think when you are talking about human behavior change you have just got to pound away on the results over and over until it is really hard to figure out what the argument against it is anymore,” agreed Chen.

That may also mean shifting the way funders choose which organizations to support. In the nonprofit sector, philanthropic donors often look for “need-based pitches” where the organization needs the money, rather than looking for the “opportunity-based pitch” as a venture capitalist might. “What most venture capitalists would tell you is, ‘you fund things, you see if they work, and if they do not work, you stop funding them,’” emphasized Danner. In order for innovation to take hold and flourish in public education, panelists agreed, funders and others need to focus on the maximizing the potential upside rather than reining in the potential downside of innovation.

“What most venture capitalists would tell you is, ‘you fund things, you see if they work, and if they do not work, you stop funding them.’”

— John Danner,
Rocketship Education

ABOUT NEWSCHOOLS VENTURE FUND

NewSchools Venture Fund seeks to transform public education through powerful ideas and passionate entrepreneurs so that all children—especially those in underserved communities—have the opportunity to succeed. As a national nonprofit venture philanthropy firm, NewSchools supports education entrepreneurs, a special breed of innovators who create new nonprofit and for-profit organizations that redefine our sense of what is possible in public education.

Founded in 1998, NewSchools has invested in more than 35 nonprofit and for-profit organizations and raised nearly \$175 million. We take an active role with each venture in our portfolio to help them create sustainable organizations that generate breakthrough results at scale for the students they serve. In addition to the direct support we provide those entrepreneurs, NewSchools also connects their work to the broader public education reform movement to catalyze systems change.

For more information, please visit <http://www.newschools.org>.

ABOUT THE NEWSCHOOLS SUMMIT

The NewSchools Summit is an invitation-only gathering of education, business, nonprofit, government and philanthropic leaders who are passionate about the power of entrepreneurs to transform public education for underserved children. NewSchools believes that creating dramatic change in K-12 public education requires a creative combination of expertise and resources from across education's many and varied stakeholders. The NewSchools Summit brings a select group of leaders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors together to share ideas, resources and connections.

For more information, please visit <http://summit.newschools.org>.

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