

***What we value. What we will do. How we will do it.***

**Why us:** For over two decades, the Foundation has invested in adolescent learning and development through a variety of grantmaking strategies, including youth development, college and career pathways in high school, and college access and success for transition-age foster youth.

**Why now:** First, research over the past decade on the science of learning and the brain reveals that the prime time to develop higher-order thinking is when students are in high school. Studies confirm what educators have long known: learning deepens and accelerates when students feel safe and supported at school, and are able to relate what they've learned to their real lives. Second, the current policy environment is conducive to systemic change. Increased investment to integrate academic and career technical education, recent efforts to revitalize civic learning, and the adoption of a new multiple-measure school accountability system present a window of opportunity to bring California's high schools into the 21st century.

**GOAL:** To increase the number and effectiveness of high schools that prepare students for college, career, and civic life.

**How:** In service of this goal, we will focus our investments in promising approaches and models, and codifying and communicating progress and results to practitioners and policy makers.

## **A. Performance assessment systems**

1. We will support innovations in, and the utilization of, performance assessments such as portfolios and senior capstone projects, to guide and evaluate high school students' learning, as well as inform college and university admissions and placement processes.

## **B. Positive school structures and climate**

1. We will advance the use of high school models and approaches that address both structural and cultural elements to facilitate more rigorous, hands-on, work-based learning situated in a safe and supportive environment.

## **C. Learning for democracy**

1. We will support models and approaches, inside and outside of school, that amplify students' voices to effect and lead positive change on issues that they care about in their communities.
2. We will build the capacity of educators to provide high-quality civic learning opportunities to students.