

STRATEGIC BUSINESS PHILANTHROPY TO ADVANCE EDUCATION REFORM: More Change, Less Charity

No matter how small or large your company's charitable giving program, you can direct the donations to strategic efforts that can boost education performance by focusing on philanthropy, rather than charity. First and foremost, philanthropy is about aligning donations with strategic goals and objectives. Philanthropy is a commitment to partnering with nonprofit organizations, schools, districts and other grantees to work toward mutual goals, share knowledge and resources and get results.

Corporate giving programs and corporate foundations that transcend charity and become philanthropy are more likely to get results and produce effective education partnerships. Amgen Foundation, for example, aligns its education giving with local and national organizations to produce the next generation of talented scientists and researchers. The foundation established a national partnership with Teach for America, for example, to support Amgen Fellows in the Teach for America teaching corps who excel in math and science.

Applied Materials is another example of a company revamping its corporate giving program to make more strategic education investments. Starting in 2002, the company completely changed from a reactive style of corporate charitable giving to a proactive, data-driven and results-driven approach that identifies and leverages education approaches with the most potential to affect students' lives positively. As a result, Applied Materials chose to partner with the San Jose School District in a comprehensive series of initiatives to reach its new goal of increasing the number of students who graduate from high school eligible - and prepared - for college admission.

Checklist of Education Philanthropy Strategies for Companies

Companies with charitable giving programs in education should demand results of the education system and of themselves. They can:

- ✓ Develop a clear and specific "theory of change" that sets priorities for corporate giving efforts in education and align all grants and sponsorships with this theory of change
- ✓ Focus on results, not inputs: Help educators and nonprofit groups achieve improved student learning outcomes, rather than just execute nice programs
- ✓ Define what will be accomplished and how new resources will help
- ✓ Examine achievement and outcomes data when determining whether to fund or continue funding a student, school, district or nonprofit education partner
- ✓ Communicate with grantees regularly about whether grantees are accomplishing strategic goals, priorities and milestones aligned with your corporate giving program's theory of change, rather than merely executing activities and events
- ✓ Fund evaluations in order to fine-tune corporate giving programs and to measure the company's success in achieving the goals and metrics in the theory of change

Companies should engage in strategic grantmaking. They can:

- ✓ Focus on groups of low-performing schools, entire school districts and state-level organizations as the unit of change, rather than individual schools
- ✓ Fund sponsorships and provide pro bono support not just to raise visibility, but also to advance the company's education theory of change
- ✓ Fund advocacy, research and evaluation efforts that may have a longer time horizon for results or may appear to be less tangible than school- or system-based programs
- ✓ Build coalitions of like-minded corporate and private funders who share similar goals to pool resources and accomplish common priorities
- ✓ Send consistent messages to education grantees about priorities
- ✓ Understand the changing context in which schools and nonprofits sit and make grants that are sensitive to political and education realities
- ✓ Take risks to fund promising practices or experiments that need more testing



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- ✓ Rigorously evaluate education programs to ensure that there is continuous, targeted improvement that meets company objectives
- ✓ Consider issues of sustainability and what will happen to programs after funding runs out
- ✓ Be transparent: Share what you learn from charitable giving within your company and externally
- ✓ Be persistent and stick with education grantmaking for the long haul, as the most important problems in education are often the most intractable