

Personalized Learning at Scale

Case Studies of Leading Cities

Leaders of urban school systems are faced with a daunting fact: some individual schools are achieving incredible results for students from low-income communities, but no urban school systems are achieving those results for all—or even most—children in an entire city. For generations, students in urban America have been underserved, with few achieving basic proficiency in reading and math, and even fewer completing college. At the same time, technology has been transforming industry after industry, changing the way we consume media, go shopping, and do business. With 21st century tools available, why should our students be stuck in a 19th century designed school system? We tell the story of ten cities in the case studies below, with a focus on how technology and great teaching, with the right system-level conditions, can personalize learning for all students and drive sustained achievement growth.

In our context, personalized learning means that students’ experiences—what they learn, and how, when, and where they learn it—are tailored to their individual needs, skills, and interests, and enable them to take ownership of their education. Early personalized learning work has generated significant interest and promising proof points in district, charter, and private schools alike. However, there has yet to be high-quality implementation at scale—across an entire system of schools or an entire city.

Why is scale important? The benefits of personalized learning are amplified when a system—a school district or a broader city ecosystem—creates the conditions for personalized learning to thrive system-wide, instead of in one-off pilots or individual schools. However, to take high-quality personalized learning to scale, systems will need to address thorny issues in public policy, educator practice, staffing structures, accountability, technology infrastructure, and funding.

To accelerate the pace of innovation at scale, ten medium to large public school systems received funding to develop a system-wide personalized learning strategy. To reach this ambitious goal, systems were challenged to design, launch, and replicate schools that implement personalized learning in a holistic manner, and to overhaul supporting district and city functions (e.g., human capital and facilities) so that they fully support the redesigned schools. Ongoing support for some of these sites is being provided by CEE-Trust and Next Generation Learning Challenges (www.nextgenlearning.org).

We have drafted profiles of these leading cities, telling the stories of how they have dealt with their thorny issues, and where they are having successes and setbacks. We hope that these profiles help urban school system leaders around the country better understand how they, too, could approach system-wide innovation of personalized learning.

COMPONENTS OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING

High Expectations for College Readiness

Adults believe in the enormous potential of all students and support them in achieving at the highest levels, with a focus on:

- **Learning Growth:** Meeting students where they are at and supporting their growth from that point. As a result, students master academic content and skills at accelerated rates. This includes at least 1.5 years of growth in Math and ELA each year
- **College Readiness:** At least 80% of students will meet or exceed college readiness benchmarks by age 18

Personalized Learning for All Students

Learning experiences for all students are tailored to their individual developmental needs, skills and interest. Personalized learning includes the following elements:

- **Learner profiles,** capturing multi-faceted inputs (skills, interests, aspirations) about each student
- **Personal learning paths,** enabling students to tailor experiences to their own needs and goals
- Individual mastery, assessing progress against standards and goals and advancing students at their own pace
- **Flexible learning environments,** offering multiple instructional delivery approaches

Optimized for Scale

The model is replicable and financially viable on public funding, which requires:

- **Financial Sustainability:** The school can fund 100% of operating expenses on public per-pupil revenue within four years of launch
- **Scalable:** The school model can be replicated at scale if it demonstrates impact

We are eager to share the work of these trailblazing districts with you. We invite you to learn more, to celebrate the successful efforts already underway, and to support the challenging work still ahead.



Harbormaster-led Systems

<i>System</i>	<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Plan highlights</i>	<i>Partners</i>
<i>CityBridge Foundation (Washington, D.C.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 217 schools ● 82,958 students ● 76% FRL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pilot funding for district and charter schools launching innovative models that embrace technology ● Design workshops, summer institute, and tailored support for school applicants ● Seven design principles for breakthrough schools, including mastery-based credit and scalability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2Revolutions
<i>Colorado Education Initiative (CO)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 112 schools ● 55K students ● 40-80% FRL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participating districts' different personalized learning approaches become proof points for other Colorado districts ● State-level policy environment supportive of personalized learning (enabled by the Colorado DOE) ● Cross-district learning to more rapidly achieve district- and state-wide scale of next gen models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adams County School District ● Colorado Department of Education ● Colorado Springs School District 11 ● Thompson School District
<i>LEAP Innovations (Chicago)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 658 schools ● 400K students ● 85% FRL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to the Collaboratory—a space designed to bring educators, entrepreneurs, tech companies, researchers and students together to share ideas, co-develop solutions, and get training. ● Summer Design Program for school teams that includes workshops, one-on-one consultations, site visits, apprenticeships, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities ● Freely available personalized learning resources, including design roadmaps, design workshop materials, and design readings and videos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chicago Public Education Fund ● Chicago Public Schools
<i>New England Secondary Schools Consortium</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 75 schools ● 57K students ● 48% FRL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on policy and practice across the five-state region: competency-based learning models and graduation requirements supported by state DOEs ● Alignment with international best practices for secondary learning as a proxy for readiness ● Intensive personalized supports for schools through Great Schools Partnership' on-site coaching model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Great Schools Partnership ● Connecticut Department of Education ● Maine Department of Education ● New Hampshire Department of Education ● Rhode Island Department of Education ● Vermont Agency of Education ● Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents ● Nellie Mae Education Foundation
<i>New Schools for New Orleans</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 90 schools ● 43K students ● 77% FRL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaboration of school districts and school support organizations, led by reform leader NSNO ● Focus on the local ecosystem: communities of practice, human capital systems, data systems ● Transition local CMOs to personalized learning and launch new schools by supporting entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4.0 Schools ● Educate Now! ● Orleans Parish School Board ● Recovery School District
<i>Rogers Family Foundation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 124 schools ● 49K students ● 71% FRL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategic partnership with Oakland USD, local CMOs, nonprofits, and other funders committed to education reform in Oakland ● Access to talent, experience, and lessons learned from local blended pilots ● Deep discovery phase open to all schools, personalizing their own learning about NextGen schooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oakland USD and the Oakland Public Education Fund



CityBridge Foundation

“Washington, D.C. can be the first large American city where poverty is not destiny: All our children, regardless of background, will achieve academically at high levels. Great schools can eliminate educational inequity and open a world of opportunity for every District child.”

VISION

CityBridge Foundation works to build a citywide system of high-performing schools in Washington, D.C. Using a best practices research model, CityBridge finds, incubates, and invests in the most promising practices in public education, looking to assemble the critical mass of transformative public schools—traditional and charter—needed for all children in the District to succeed. Currently, CityBridge’s three portfolios of work include replication of existing high-performing schools, turnaround of chronically low-performing schools, and innovative use of personalized instruction and technology in schools. To ensure lasting impact for its work, CityBridge offers a suite of engagement opportunities for local leaders in business, philanthropy, and the community. CityBridge’s goal is to equip these stewards for education with the knowledge and support they need to be advocates for continued, sustained progress in the city’s schools.

DISTRICT SNAPSHOT (2013-14)

- Type..... Urban
- Size
 - K-12 schools.....217
 - Students..... 82,958
- Demographics
 - White.....8.4%
 - African-American.....72.2%
 - Latino/Hispanic.....16.2%
 - Asian/Pacific Islander.....1.5%
 - Multiracial/other.....1.5%
- Free/reduced lunch eligibility....76%
- Graduation rate.....62%
- Per-pupil spend..... \$17,468

CALL TO ACTION: Public schools in Washington, D.C. have made significant progress in raising student performance in recent years. The number of students scoring proficient or advanced on the state exam has increased by more than 20 percentage points since 2006. In 2013, D.C. showed the highest level of growth—compared to any other state in the nation—on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for students in Grades 4 and 8. But despite laudable progress, there remains a persistent achievement gap between low-income students and their higher-income peers in the nation’s capital. CityBridge Foundation is committed to building and sustaining great public schools in D.C. to dramatically increase educational outcomes for all students. As an independent foundation, CityBridge identifies and invests in organizations that are dedicated to improving public schools in the District. In addition, the foundation acts as a partner to DC Public Schools and the DC Public Charter School Board, allowing CityBridge to build deep relationships with both district and charter schools.

For the last two years, CityBridge has actively supported personalized learning as a key pillar in its vision for creating a system of transformational schools. CityBridge launched its Education Innovation Fellowship in 2013, supporting educators from district and charter schools who want to develop and pilot new models in the classroom. With the support of a \$1 million grant from Microsoft, CityBridge will expand the Fellowship in 2014 and 2015. In 2014, CityBridge announced its inaugural cohort of six school grantees in its Breakthrough Schools: D.C. competition, a regional competition modeled after the national Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) competition. CityBridge will continue to support the scaling of personalized learning with two additional rounds of the Breakthrough Schools: D.C. grant competition. Between 2014 and 2017, CityBridge expects Breakthrough Schools: D.C. to distribute \$6 million in support of the opening or redesign of 18 public schools, with each round of the competition providing a pool of up to \$2 million for winning teams.

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DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- Grow a talent pipeline: The foundation will foster a community of leaders in D.C. schools who are committed to the improvement process needed to design and launch breakthrough models. CityBridge aims to reach 75 school design teams, serving roughly 25,000 students, between 2013 and 2016. While not all of these 75 schools will become Breakthrough grantees, they will all receive exposure to key principles in personalized learning.
- Develop “proof points” of breakthrough schools: Through CityBridge’s grant competition, the foundation will act as a catalyst for the development of next generation school models. By 2018, 18 schools in the District will have innovative, personalized learning models in place and act as proof points for other schools that want to design and launch their own models. CityBridge expects these schools to provide quantitative data on their success in improving student performance through the use of personalized learning.
- Establish D.C. as a hub of education innovation: CityBridge will work with its partners to ensure that D.C. is a national center for personalized learning and breakthrough school design. Leaders in D.C. will build

deep expertise in personalized learning by cultivating relationships with organizations and practitioners across the country working to improve student outcomes in innovative ways.

CityBridge has adopted NGLC’s set of standard goals for all breakthrough schools and the students they serve. Although Breakthrough Schools: D.C. planning and launch grants are designed to cover initial startup costs for personalized learning that might otherwise be prohibitive, schools must launch models that will eventually become sustainable with public funding. CityBridge is also committed to ensuring that students in breakthrough schools:

- At least 1.5 years annual growth on Common Core standards
- 4-year graduation rate of 90% for high schools
- Postsecondary matriculation rate of 80%

STRATEGY: CityBridge Foundation has adopted NGLC’s seven design principles of breakthrough schools based on lessons learned from emerging models, existing research on personalized learning, and a review of other sectors embracing technology.

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THE SEVEN DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF BREAKTHROUGH SCHOOLS

Drawing from lessons learned from emerging models, existing research, and a review of other sectors that have embraced technology, the following design principles for personalized learning drive the Breakthrough Schools: D.C. competition.



STUDENT-CENTERED

Designed to meet the diverse learning needs of each student every day



HIGH-EXPECTATIONS

Committed to ensuring that all students will meet clearly defined, rigorous standards that will prepare them for success in college and career



SELF PACING & MASTERY-BASED CREDIT

Enables students to move at their own optimal pace and receive credit when they can demonstrate mastery of the material



BLENDED INSTRUCTION

Optimizes teacher and technology-driven instruction in group and individual work



STUDENT-OWNERSHIP

Empowers students with skills, information, and tools they need to manage their own learning



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable on public per-pupil revenue within four years



SCALABLE

Designed to serve many more students if it demonstrates impact

To ensure continued success through its Breakthrough Schools: D.C. competition, CityBridge Foundation will need to invest in two critical areas:

- Appropriate support for diverse applicants: CityBridge seeks to fund a diverse group of grantees so that it can meet the needs of all communities in D.C. Given that the capacity of schools will vary based on past experience in personalized learning and financial ability, CityBridge continues to refine its strategy to find and support applicants to develop compelling proposals. Some lower-capacity schools may struggle with the relatively short design timeline unless CityBridge can provide adequate support.
- Fruitful external partnerships: 2Revolutions, an education design lab, acts as a key partner to CityBridge by providing design support and consulting services. For instance, 2Revolutions leads workshops for Breakthrough applicants so that they can build their understanding of how schools can create educational experiences that are catered to a student's skill level, needs, and interests. CityBridge will need to continue sourcing and investing in such high-quality partnerships to ensure the continued success of Breakthrough.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: Under the Breakthrough Schools: D.C. competition, CityBridge supports school design teams throughout the planning and launch process. In April 2014 the foundation announced its first round of six winners, including both district and charter schools. As of Summer 2014, the foundation was in the process of both supporting this first round of winners through the planning phase and launching its second application cycle.

The second group of school design applicants will develop their proposals through a series of workshops and a summer design institute hosted by CityBridge. These programming events are designed to expose school stakeholders to key principles in blended learning and to coach them through the school design planning process. In December 2014, CityBridge will announce the second cohort of Breakthrough Schools: D.C. grantees. A third and final application cycle will then take place in 2015.

For all rounds of the Breakthrough Schools: D.C. competition, grantees will receive funding in two stages. After the initial announcement, all grantees will receive a \$100,000 planning grant to develop and refine the school's design plan. CityBridge anticipates the planning phase to take anywhere from three to twelve months, depending on a school's readiness and capacity. After successfully completing this phase, a school will then receive another wave of funding—between \$100,000 and \$300,000 in additional funds—to launch its new model. In total, CityBridge expects to distribute up to \$6 million in funding to 18 schools, which will serve roughly 10 percent of students in the city. These schools will act as proof points for the rest of the District and encourage the continued scaling of innovative and transformative learning models.