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.

Education Cities™

Harbormaster-led Systems

System	Demographics	Plan highlights	Partners
CityBridge Foundation (Washington, D.C.)	• 217 schools • 82,958 students • 76% FRL	• 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	• 2Revolutions
Colorado Education Initiative (CO)	• 112 schools • 55K students • 40-80% FRL	• 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	• Adams County School District • Colorado Department of Education • Colorado Springs School District 11 • Thompson School District
LEAP Innovations (Chicago)	• 658 schools • 400K students • 85% FRL	• 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.	• Chicago Public Education Fund • Chicago Public Schools
New England Secondary Schools Consortium	• 75 schools • 57K students • 48% FRL	• 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	• 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
New Schools for New Orleans	• 90 schools • 43K students • 77% FRL	• 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	• 4.0 Schools • Educate Now! • Orleans Parish School Board • Recovery School District
Rogers Family Foundation	• 124 schools • 49K students • 71% FRL	• 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	• Oakland USD and the Oakland Public Education Fund

"Oakland is uniquely positioned to build on promising blended pilots and technology infrastructure investments to dramatically accelerate learning for all students, and create new opportunities for teacher leadership, development, and sustainability in both the traditional and public charter systems."

DISTRICT SNAPSHOT
(2013-14)

- Type...Urban
- Size
  —K-12 schools................................124
  —Students..............................49,300
  —OUSD Teachers.......................1,911
- Demographics
  —White...10%
  —African-American..................28%
  —Latino/Hispanic......................43%
  —Asian/Pacific Islander...........15%
  —Multiracial/other........................4%
- Free/reduced lunch eligibility.....71%
- Graduation rate..........................63%
- Per-pupil spend..................$11,050

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NEXT GENERATION
LEARNING CHALLENGES

Rogers Family Foundation

VISION
The Rogers Family Foundation believes that students must put themselves at the center of their own educational experiences and drive their own learning toward college and career. The Foundation and its partners support the innovative use of technology to dramatically rethink teaching and learning within the Oakland educational system.

CALL TO ACTION: The Rogers Family Foundation (RFF) seeks to create high-quality learning opportunities for all students in Oakland. Although Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and charter partners have generated significant improvements over the past decade, too many students continue to face significant challenges and persistent achievement gaps. According to 2013 outcomes on California Standards Tests, OUSD ranks nearly last among all large school districts in performance level among low-income families and students of color. Graduation rates hover around 60%, and only half of Oakland graduates were deemed college-ready in school year 2011-12.

RFF believes the city has a moral imperative to improve outcomes for all students, and views personalized learning as a key strategy in this effort. By implementing a series of blended learning pilots over the last two years, RFF has stepped forward as a local leader in this field, and has become a strong partner to both the traditional and public charter systems. Through targeted support to schools, sharing of best practices, and collaboration with community organizations, the Foundation will continue to build momentum for personalized learning throughout Oakland.

DESIRED OUTCOMES: All Oakland students will graduate college-, career-, and community-ready. RFF is committed to ensuring that all students in Oakland have the opportunity to attend a high-quality school. Given the crucial importance of early childhood development, RFF has also set the goal that, by 2020, 85% of students will read at grade level by the end of third grade. In addition, RFF believes that achievement gaps by socioeconomic status must be eliminated for the city's educational system to truly achieve transformative change. Once launched, local Next Generation schools will create annual learning growth of at least 1.5 years in Math and English Language Arts.

In addition, OUSD has committed to using a range of metrics to evaluate the success of personalized learning within its schools:

- Learning growth, as measured by standardized test scores, with at least 1.5 years of growth in Math and English Language Arts
- College readiness, as measured by students' performance on the state's Early Assessment Program, completion of the A-G course sequence (required by the University of California system), and PSAT and SAT scores
- Student agency and learning experience (e.g., the percent of students who agree with the statement "In each academic subject, I know the standards and areas where I am proficient and not yet proficient")

STRATEGY: Over the last two school years, RFF, OUSD, and partner foundations have invested in eight Oakland schools—serving approximately 3,500 students—piloting blended learning models. Through this experience, RFF developed a cohesive vision of how to fundamentally change the learning experience for students. In addition, the Foundation has a deep understanding

of the project management, financial needs, tech infrastructure and support, and data integration necessary to bring schools' personalized learning visions to life.

As personalized learning scales in Oakland, school will feel different for parents, students, teachers, and administrators. Students will have more opportunities to develop higher-order thinking skills, and teachers will receive training and support to engage students in rich learning experiences. Personalized learning in Oakland will empower students through six core design principles:

Students college, career, and community ready

Social Emotional Learning
Explicit building of strong relationships with teachers and peers in a supportive school climate

Learning Profiles
Use of "learner profiles" that are informed by and accessible to students, teachers, parents and district-wide stakeholders

Competency-Based Progression
Differentiated instruction that grounds progression in competency rather than in only time, and meets each student in his/her ZPD

Personalized Learning Paths
Personalized learning paths informed by students and teachers that enable student agency and ownership of their learning

Flexible Learning Environment
A flexible learning environment that offers multiple learning modalities, and extends learning beyond schools

Contextualized Learning
Learning that helps students connect academic knowledge with real-world applications, building collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity

Empowering students to own their learning and take risks.

With lessons learned from its earlier work in blended learning, RFF is well-positioned to support the scale of personalized learning in Oakland. To ensure future success with OUSD and its other partners, RFF will need to invest in:

● *Strategic partnerships:* As a private foundation operating its own initiatives, RFF is well-positioned to build strategic partnerships with other organizations committed to improving educational outcomes in Oakland. The Foundation anticipates partnering with NewSchools Venture Fund, the Silicon Schools Fund, and other local funders and nonprofits to select schools that will receive planning grants for personalized learning initiatives. These partners' networks and resources will support RFF in making smart and thoughtful decisions around how to best allocate its financial investments.

● *Evaluation of effective practices:* To most effectively serve Oakland students, RFF and its partners must continue building the evidence on effective practices in personalized learning. In recognition of the importance of accountability, RFF will plan a series of School Study Tours to learn from on-the-ground educators and students trailblazing personalized learning. RFF will continue to study what works and what does not—and to share these lessons learned with the broader community so that it can ramp up support for its work.

● *Technology and wireless infrastructure:* Across OUSD, schools have struggled for years with lack of high-quality hardware and unreliable wireless connectivity. RFF will need to support the district as it continues to make headway on its student device strategy and improvements to schools' network infrastructure. RFF and OUSD have partnered with EducationSuperHighway to assess the quality of connectivity in schools across the district.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: The Rogers Family Foundation will begin a multistep process to guide the design, development, and delivery of three to four breakthrough schools for Oakland kids and families.

Beginning in mid-2014, RFF will initiative a deep discovery phase, during which school leaders and other stakeholders will participate in learning events and professional development sessions. RFF will host visits to schools that are performing well on different aspects of personalized learning so that participants can learn from the city's and region's most innovative teachers and principals. In addition, the Foundation will draw upon the best of the national library of resources, from Digital Learning Now's Implementation Guide, to The Learning Accelerator's defining video on blended learning, to Christensen Institute's white papers, to Aspire's Blended Learning Handbook, to their own case studies and reports.

After participating in this learning phase, schools in Oakland will apply for planning grants in early 2015. RFF expects to partner with NewSchools Venture Fund, Silicon Schools Fund, and others to assess applications and make final grant decisions. RFF anticipates awarding $600,000 in planning grants to up to ten school sites; based on the strength of their application, schools may receive anywhere from $20,000 to $100,000. Among these ten grantees, schools that are relatively far along in the planning process may choose to launch their initiatives in Fall 2015. The Foundation, however, expects most grantees to kick off their initiatives in January 2016. RFF will select three or four additional grantees in January 2016 to implement their plans beginning in Fall 2016.

Throughout this process, RFF will continue to hone its expertise in the design and implementation of personalized learning. With successful proof points in place, RFF, OUSD, and public charter partners will be able to identify the most effective strategies and continue scaling up their efforts to provide innovative, impactful learning experiences for all students in Oakland.