Request for Information
Transform Learning LA: Whole Learner Initiatives in Los Angeles County K12 Public Schools
The California Community Foundation
Due 5pm PDT on August 2nd

Overview
The California Community Foundation is gathering information about efforts in Los Angeles County K12 schools and systems to develop the whole learner to inform our education grantmaking strategy. This request for information will help to shape our emerging strategy titled “Transform Learning LA,” which will use insights from the science of learning and development to drive the redesign of learning environments with equity at the center. This effort is focused on transforming academic outcomes and student development through the redesign of teaching and learning practices, as well as school designs.

Briefly defined, the “whole learner” concept involves a holistic set of developmental areas representing a student’s personal and academic growth. The central premise grounding our belief in the whole learner is that learning is fundamentally intersectional – learning happens through the interplay between (for instance) cognitive engagement, socioemotional well-being, identity exploration, and other key factors of development. Learning environments that reflect the principles of whole learner succeed at helping young people achieve academically while developing the dispositions necessary to thrive personally, professionally, civically, and in their communities. The essential questions we hope to answer through this request include –

- Where are whole learner initiatives happening in Los Angeles County public schools and systems? How are those initiatives helping to address issues of equity?
- What do those efforts look like in terms of teaching practice, classroom environment, learning design principles, community engagement, and professional learning? What goals and metrics ground them?
- What have educators in LA learned about what it takes to create successful whole learner environments? What can be shared by these educators to enrich other local efforts?

This request for information asks schools, districts, charter management organizations and technical assistance providers1 who work with schools to respond with descriptions of either their (1) existing efforts for the whole learner or (2) aspirations to integrate whole learner approaches in their learning environments.

Pursuing Equity by Transforming Learning in Los Angeles
Los Angeles County is home to an abundance of linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity. We believe that this diversity should be valued in schools because students’ identities are core to their sense of motivation and integral to their learning journeys. Yet many public schools remain relatively industrial in nature – curricula, teaching practices, and classrooms tend to be standardized regardless of student population or individual identity. Industrial models leave little room for customization based on students’ lived experiences and backgrounds. Further, given the depth and breadth of poverty in LA County, many young people experience trauma at high rates. Traumatic experiences also impact learner development given the toll caused by personal hardship.

1Technical assistance providers interested in responding to this request for information should cite the district or network that they currently or have planned to work with in their responses.
Building a sense of resiliency, consciousness, and self-efficacy among our youth calls for reimagining learning environments with the whole learner at the center. With that in mind, one of our aspirations is to learn about how educators have addressed issues of equity with the whole learner in mind and at heart.

**Defining the “Whole Learner”: Key Frameworks and Approaches**

**Whole learner developmental areas**
The whole learner concept includes the following developmental areas: (1) cognitive & academic; (2) socioemotional; and (3) identity. Research conducted by learning scientists has elucidated the importance of integrating each of these areas into formal learning environments. In addition, because learners are a part of both a family and local community, it is essential to think of the ecology of people and places that impact a student’s development along each domain.

**Outcomes and learning principles**
Many in educational research and practice agree that whole learner approaches will accelerate learning in traditional academic areas – such as math, science, civics, and reading – while helping young people develop socio-emotional skills and dispositions related to agency, self-expression, collaboration, self and social awareness, deep problem-solving, self-management, and adaptability. These skills and dispositions can be difficult to measure, yet they are critically important to young people given the nature of 21st Century economic, political, and social realities. We are excited to learn about how educators are thinking about both traditional (math/ELA/graduation) and more holistic metrics related to the whole learner.

**Learning environments and approaches**
Educators and researchers have worked together to employ a variety of approaches to address the multiple facets of learner development and, in so doing, improve academic outcomes and facilitate learning. Below is a brief list of the approaches that are of interest to our request for information. This list is not exhaustive – if you are building environments based on the whole learner in a different way that achieves academic outcomes and transformed learning experiences, please consider responding and sharing about your efforts with us.

- **Project-based learning:** Students apply knowledge by working on a project over an extended period of time – from a week up to a semester – that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question.

- **Socioemotional learning:** The process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

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• **Engaging youth on identity and culture**: Valuing and integrating cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of culturally and linguistically diverse learners as conduits for teaching them more effectively.

• **Youth participatory action research**: A learning tool for increasing youth involvement in social movement organizing that can generate renewed enthusiasm for social change and create new opportunities for youth leadership.

• **Interdisciplinary learning**: Students take on learning tasks that integrate multiple academic disciplines; student voice guides the direction of learning through the multiple fields of study.

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*The use of technology*

21st Century devices and digital services have enabled learners and educators to explore learning in ways wholly unique to our age. We are interested in learning about efforts that make use of technology to expand holistic learner development in LA County. However, we see technology as a tool, and not an end in and of itself. Responses that name devices and/or digital services as a critical element should illustrate how the whole learner outcomes and approaches named above can be accelerated through the use of technology.

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**Request for Information Submission Link**

Below is the list of questions that will allow respondents to detail their past efforts and future aspirations to integrate whole learner into their classroom, school, network, district, or organization. These questions are embedded (in abbreviated form) at the link below. To submit a response to this request, please complete the survey found at this link:

Submission Link: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ML8QBR9](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ML8QBR9)

1. **District/Network Overview**: Please provide an overview of your school, district, network, or organization. Where are you located in LA County? How many students do you serve? What are your student demographics?

2. **Description of Efforts**: What whole learner efforts have you undertaken? Describe the timeline, purpose, and actions taken in support of the whole learner in your school or network. Is this a school specific effort or a district effort? Are your whole learner efforts part of your strategic plan? Have you received district funding or support for your efforts? AND Share what efforts you would like to take, and how/why you have come to prioritize the whole learner concept. Where are you at in your progress towards implementation? Are whole learner efforts part of your strategic plan? Are you receiving district funding or support for your efforts?

3. **Mapping Needs**: What major barriers – related to finance, policy, operational capacity, community support, etc. – might hold you back from pursuing the opportunity you described above? What kind of support would be of greatest use?

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8 From the Center for Collaborative Education: [http://cce.org/thought-leadership/blog/post/educational-equity-culturally-responsive-principles](http://cce.org/thought-leadership/blog/post/educational-equity-culturally-responsive-principles)


(4) **Measurement**: What have you achieved, and what metrics and/or goals have you used to ground your effort? Describe the progress and objectives of your work even if they are difficult to measure at this time. Focus especially on how you have sought to improve learning experiences for low-income youth of color, English Learners, and/or homeless or foster youth in particular.

(5) **Research**: What (if any) frameworks or research have you used to supplement your efforts? Describe books, articles, or media that have been useful to your work.

(6) **Partnership**: What (if any) non-profit service providers or other entities have you worked with to build capacity for your whole learner efforts? Describe your experiences working with these entities, focusing on the actions that they took to develop your readiness to develop learning environments. You may also discuss conferences or convenings that you have attended that have been instrumental to your work. Would you be interested in working with a non-profit service provider to help you accelerate your whole learner implementation efforts?

(7) **Supplemental Documents**: Feel free to attach any supplemental documents that you have written or created to convey your vision for the whole learner, train educators, and/or share insights about your work. (Please select up to 3 supplemental documents)

### Timeline

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<tr>
<td>June 14</td>
<td>RFI Published</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2</td>
<td>Deadline for RFI Responses RFI *All responses should be submitted via our online portal by 5pm on August 2nd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2 – August 23</td>
<td>Submission review</td>
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<td>August 2 – August 23</td>
<td>Respondent engagement *A select number of respondents may be engaged to discuss their responses in greater depth</td>
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### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**When is the RFI due?**

*All responses must be submitted by 5pm PDT on August 2nd via the [online portal linked here](#). Please direct questions to John Garcia, Program Officer of Education at CCF, at jgarcia@calfund.org.*

**Can I respond with collaborating organizations?**

Yes, if you are collaborating with another organization, you may respond to the RFI together. We ask that you provide organizational details for each collaborating organization.

**How does the RFI work?**

*The RFI will help shape the direction of our Transform Learning LA focus. You will not receive specific feedback on your response. We will share what we learned with the field in aggregate. No identifiable information will be shared.*
*Disclaimer: The Request for Information is not a screening process, application for funding or an offer to contract for grant funds. The foundation seeks this information for planning and learning purposes. Individual responses will be acknowledged but will not receive feedback and are not part of a grant-making application. Participation in the RFI is voluntary and is not intended to result in funding. Any potential future RFP application process does not require responding to this RFI.*