



**Students
at the
Center**



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ADVANCING DEEPER LEARNING UNDER ESSA: SEVEN PRIORITIES

By Rafael Heller and Carol Gerwin

In 2014, Jobs for the Future, with support from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, commissioned a series of white papers—the Deeper Learning Research Series—focusing on a pair of critically important topics in American secondary schooling: the growing consensus that the mission of the public schools must be to prepare each and every student for college and careers, and the recognition that success in college and the workforce depends on more than just academic knowledge and technical skills.

To become truly ready for life after high school, the papers argue, young people must also learn to communicate and work effectively in diverse settings, persist in the face of challenges, invent creative solutions to complex problems, regulate and monitor their own learning, and more. That is, and as a wealth of recent research suggests, they must develop the full range of intellectual, interpersonal, and intrapersonal competencies that define “deeper learning.”

In October 2015, with the series of papers nearing completion, Jobs for the Future hosted a two-day national meeting in Boston, “Turning the Corner: Toward a New Policy Agenda for College, Career, & Civic Readiness” that brought together more than a hundred educators, researchers, policymakers, and philanthropists to discuss next steps for the deeper learning movement. What policies and practices, we asked, might help the nation’s secondary schools to shift from a heavily tracked and inequitable

system to one that prepares all students for college and careers, and from a system that measures progress solely in terms of academic performance to one that values personal and social development as well? Further, how should we prepare for the likelihood that Congress will soon replace the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), presumably to rein in the federal government’s power to influence local schools?

In December 2015, just weeks after our meeting, the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, was signed into law, and as we expected, it shifted a great deal of authority back to the states and districts to set their own priorities for K-12 school reform.

Today, though, at the very beginning of the ESSA era, uncertainty abounds. As Barbara Chow, the Education Program Director of the Hewlett Foundation, observed in her opening remarks at Turning the Corner, “There is great promise and great danger in this moment. Breakthrough

innovations could flourish, but inequities could deepen.” To advance deeper learning for all students, then, what should states and districts prioritize?

In the following pages we highlight a number of provocative ideas discussed at Turning the Corner that point toward specific ways in which supporters of deeper learning might take advantage of the present moment in education policy.

In order to identify these key takeaways, we carefully reviewed dozens of pages of notes and transcripts from the meeting and sought follow-up clarification from a number of participants. Please note that the goal of this paper is not to provide an objective account of the proceedings. Nor is it to identify “new” policy options. The purpose of the Turning the Corner meeting and this paper is to define a set of priorities for educational advocacy in this new policy environment.

Over the last two decades, Congress and the U.S. Department of Education have done much to shape the school improvement agenda for the country as a whole.

Under NCLB and, more recently, Race to the Top, presidents and policymakers pushed states to adopt a particular set of policies that focused on educational standards, accountability, testing, teacher evaluation, data collection, school restructuring, and support for charter schools.

But now that NCLB has given way to ESSA, what educational improvement strategies are likely to fall by the wayside, and which seem poised to gain traction? Among educators, policymakers, and school reformers, which arguments appear to have grown stale and which ones are ready to be heard? In short, for those of us who seek to advance the cause of deeper learning for each and every student, what should rise to the top of the policy agenda?

As we describe below, we heard seven priorities emerge from the discussion at Turning the Corner. Of the many and varied paths that advocates of deeper learning could take in the coming years, these seven rang out most forcefully and with the greatest agreement.

1

SEIZE THE MOMENT TO PROMOTE EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEEPER LEARNING

Throughout Turning the Corner, participants pointed to new signs of momentum behind efforts to direct more educational resources to the students who need them most, including youth from low-income backgrounds, English language learners, and individuals with disabilities.

As Pedro Noguera, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Diane Friedlaender (2015) note in their report for the Deeper Learning Research Series, the past dozen years have seen enormous amounts of attention devoted to standards, accountability, and just a handful of other topics in K-12 education. In turn, that has left little space on the policy agenda for other means of promoting equity, such as efforts to create and fund new school and community services in distressed neighborhoods, to reinvest in college

and career counseling, and to ensure that basic skills instruction does not crowd out opportunities to learn higher-order skills and advanced content.

To be sure, NCLB was intended to promote educational equity and close achievement gaps. As noted by Deborah Jewell-Sherman of the Harvard Graduate School of Education in her keynote address at Turning the Corner, whatever the law’s shortcomings, it did assert, “that we have an educational and moral responsibility to reach, teach, support, promote, and believe in the potential of every child under our collective and individual watch.”

That was, and remains, an important message for policymakers to hear. No doubt many students continue to be harmed by what President George W. Bush called “the soft bigotry of low expectations.” However, while teachers’ expectations certainly do influence student outcomes, so too do a host of factors related to children’s material, academic, and health needs that require new policy ideas and public investments.

Gaps in Americans’ income and wealth have only widened in recent years (Duncan & Murnane 2013; Putnam 2015), calling ever more urgent attention to the challenges faced

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by millions of children growing up in poverty. Further, not only did most states cut per-pupil funding during and after the Great Recession (Leachman et al. 2016) but researchers continue to find that in many parts of the country, important educational resources are being distributed inequitably (Sciarra & Hunter 2015), resulting in starkly different learning environments for youth from different neighborhoods and school districts (Ushomirsky & Williams 2015).

Critics of compensatory educational funding have long argued that because increases in spending appear to have little impact on student achievement, it is a weak policy lever. But recent evidence suggests quite the opposite. Using newer statistical techniques, researchers have found that past increases in school funding often did in fact have significant and positive impacts on poor children's academic performance, graduation rates, and other long-term outcomes (Jackson, Johnson, & Persico 2015; Baker 2012).

It is too soon to tell whether California's 2013 enactment of a new Local Control Funding Formula—which assigns greater resources to students living in areas of concentrated poverty—will be a bellwether for the nation. But many participants at Turning the Corner noted that it could signal a broader change in attitudes toward educational spending. Given ongoing fiscal crises in many states and the highly partisan political climate in many statehouses, it won't be smooth sailing for those who propose to fund additional supports and educational programs for children from low-income families. But there does appear to be growing public recognition of just how prevalent childhood poverty has become across the country and how urgent the need is for targeted investments in a wide range of educational and social services.

2 SAY YES TO HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Recent years have seen a surge in public and political opposition to frequent high-stakes testing in the nation's schools. Today, "opt-out" movements are active across the country, and several states have seen significant declines in the number of students showing up for annual standardized exams.

Amidst the uproar over test-based accountability, some promising signs of bipartisan consensus have emerged as well, suggesting that it may be possible to shift the focus toward building new and better assessment systems. In 2014, two groups of prominent education researchers and advocates from what most would consider different ends of the political spectrum issued reports suggesting ways to overhaul existing approaches to accountability and assessment. To everybody's surprise, and though the authors had clashed on these issues in the past, the two sets of recommendations turned out to be quite similar (Darling-Hammond & Hill 2015).

Both groups were represented at Turning the Corner, and both agreed that NCLB had erred by creating incentives for educators to teach to a narrow set of low-level reading and math skills. They agreed that achievement tests ought to feature complex, higher-order tasks across a wider range of content areas. They agreed that it takes a combination of sophisticated assessments, not just a set of multiple-choice tests, to gauge students' college and career readiness. They agreed that accountability systems should create positive incentives for groups of educators to improve their practice, rather than singling out individuals for sanction or rewards. And they agreed on the need for "reciprocal accountability," meaning that if districts and states require schools to meet specific performance standards, they must provide resources sufficient to make those goals attainable.

These points of consensus were reiterated at Turning the Corner, and they have informed ESSA too. The new law extends NCLB's requirement that schools test students annually, disaggregate the results, and report them to the public. It also frees states to redesign just about every other aspect of their accountability systems, including the kinds of assessment tools they use and the ends to which they put them. States can now use low-stakes diagnostic and formative assessments rather than summative tests. They also can assess student learning in multiple ways, going beyond standardized tests to include written work, oral presentations, scientific demonstrations, capstone projects, portfolios, and other locally designed measures. And as David Conley outlines in his 2014 report for the Deeper Learning Research Series, states can look to a combination of old and new assessment tools to gauge students' progress in developing the full range of academic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal capacities that matter to success in college and careers.

Even before ESSA's passage, district-led coalitions in some states, most notably California and New Hampshire, had begun to redesign their assessment and accountability systems along these lines. Policymakers across the country are now watching those states closely to see how their progress might inform their own work.

Nobody expects it will be easy to shift from the overuse of relatively inexpensive multiple-choice tests to more sophisticated systems of assessment. At Turning the Corner, participants raised concerns about the technical challenges involved, the validity and reliability of non-standardized assessment tools, and their affordability. They also questioned the capacity of state education agencies to lead this work, and the capacity of local educators to conduct such assessments, score them, manage the data they generate, and make use of the formative information they provide.

All the same, the shift from NCLB to ESSA provides a golden opportunity for states and districts to rethink how and why they assess student learning. It is a promising sign that experts from across the political spectrum have come to agree on a number of key design principles. Given the early success of initiatives underway in California, New Hampshire, and elsewhere, there is good reason to think that sustainable, high-quality systems can be developed and implemented as long as district administrators and teachers are given the time to work out the inevitable kinks.

In the short term, though, the "opt-out" movement could pose a serious obstacle. The problem isn't that opt-out advocates are wrong, necessarily—in fact, many participants at Turning the Corner voiced sympathy for their criticisms of high-stakes standardized testing. The problem, rather, is that so much energy and attention continues to be directed toward undoing the old system, rather than to what a new system could look like. Moreover, if the opt-out movement morphs into a crusade against testing in any form, it could seriously damage efforts to create the sorts of high-quality performance-based assessments needed to support deeper teaching and learning.

In states that continue to rely on existing testing schemes rather than creating more useful systems of assessment, there may still be reason to opt out. But in much of the country—and in light of the new freedoms that ESSA promises and the growing evidence of the educational value of formative and performance-based assessment—it would be far more productive to explore what kinds of assessment would encourage us to opt in.

3

FOCUS ON BUILDING A PROFESSIONAL TEACHING CULTURE

School systems may have good reason to celebrate their most skilled instructors as well as to identify those who struggle and need more support. But to the extent that teacher recognition programs and evaluation systems are designed to render judgment on individuals, they can also inadvertently reinforce the age-old "egg crate" model of teaching (one teacher per classroom, rarely interacting with peers) in which faculty members bear no shared responsibility for students.

Researchers have found that many times, over many decades, this kind of professional isolation has negative effects on teacher quality, skill development, and job satisfaction. As many participants at Turning the Corner argued, the last thing schools need is another incentive for teachers to distance themselves from one another, or to compete with each other for recognition and rewards. The most promising work in the teacher development field does just the opposite, seizing on opportunities to strengthen teachers' professional communities, both among peers from their subject area and colleagues working in the same building.

That is not to say individual teachers should never be held to account or given merit-based opportunities for professional advancement. Nor is it to say collaboration is always desirable. Researchers have found, for example, that unless professional learning communities are carefully planned and skillfully moderated, they can easily become a waste of time (Horn & Little 2010), and in some cases, teachers may have good reason to skip the "collaborative" faculty meeting and devote their full attention to the students in their own classroom.

Overwhelmingly, though, participants at Turning the Corner urged much more purposeful professional interaction among teachers and less emphasis on the sorts of merit-pay plans and test-based teacher evaluations that many reformers have promoted in recent years. School systems could make it easier for teachers to co-design courses, materials, and assessments; observe one another in the classroom; consult about the needs of individual students; form reading groups to stay current in their fields; serve as mentors to junior colleagues; take on leadership roles

in their departments; and participate in peer-evaluation programs, and so on.

If the goal is to support deeper teaching, i.e., teaching that promotes deeper learning, such professional interactions are more important than ever. As Magdalene Lampert (2015) describes in her paper for the Deeper Learning Research Series, this sort of ambitious instruction involves much more than improving the ability to transmit content knowledge. What it entails is “a set of practices that support students in building a new scholarly identity—one that enables them not only to master core academic content, think critically, and solve problems, but also to communicate and collaborate with intellectual confidence and become active agents in their own learning.”

The challenge, Lampert notes in her paper—and as she shared at Turning the Corner—is that it is hard to teach deeply if one has never learned deeply. Deeper teaching requires experience with the types of intellectual exchange that involve discussion of higher-order concepts, group solving of complex problems, public presentation of ideas and findings, and formative assessment and revision. Such teaching requires interpersonal skills and forms of emotional intelligence that few teacher preparation programs emphasize, and which teachers cannot learn on their own by reading a book or watching a video.

The National Writing Project offers one model for the sort of professional development that Lampert calls for: Teachers come together over the summer to write, talk about their writing, and discuss ways to teach and assess writing more effectively. In short, they enact precisely the kind of deeper learning—engaging in tasks that require higher-order thinking, discussing their own work, and struggling productively to express and revise their views—that they might go on to emphasize in their own teaching.

Perhaps the greater priority, though, is to create a range of high-quality professional opportunities for teachers at the start of their careers. “We need beginning teachers to be in schools with teachers who are modeling the kinds of teaching they are trying to learn,” argued Lampert at Turning the Corner. If they have access to more experienced teachers, stable cohorts of colleagues, and opportunities to plan together and make collective

decisions about school practices, then novice teachers will be more likely to stay in the profession (Ingersoll 2012), creating a virtuous cycle.

That will be a tall order as long as teachers are so overworked and overwhelmed that they can’t find the time to engage in such activities. As Barbara Cervone of What Kids Can Do put it, “Time is such a precious commodity in schools. How can we make time for teachers to work together?” For policymakers, then, the challenge is twofold: Help school systems create more opportunities for teachers to engage in meaningful discussions about instruction, academic content, assessment, course design, and other aspects of their work; and find ways to carve out more time for teachers to take advantage of those opportunities.

4

EMPHASIZE CAPACITY, NOT COMPLIANCE

At Turning the Corner, we heard intense criticism of the idea that top-down policy mandates on their own, in the absence of serious efforts to strengthen educators’ capacity, address their concerns, and secure their support, can do much to drive improvements in teaching and learning. As Jennifer O’Day of the American Institutes for Research explained: “We’re coming out of a period where test-based accountability was the main driver, or seen as the main driver. And we discovered that it doesn’t work that well for really improving classroom instruction.”

Indeed, many participants called for states and the federal government to hold off imposing new mandates and regulations on local schools. This advice was repeated throughout the meeting: For the foreseeable future, it would be more useful for policymakers to identify and remove policies that are barriers to opportunity and to find ways to help educators implement the policies and programs that remain.

Nowhere is that more important than at the district level, as Meredith Honig and Lydia Rainey argue in their paper for the Deeper Learning Research Series (2015). Over the last few decades, school district central offices increasingly have been asked to perform much more than their traditional administrative

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What Kids Can Do

duties in payroll, transportation, record keeping, and so on. They are tasked to deliver professional development to teachers and principals, oversee the implementation of reform initiatives, choose classroom materials and tools, and provide other kinds of leadership on matters of educational substance.

The vast majority of the nation's 15,000 school districts are too small to have the resources or expertise needed to play those roles effectively. In short, they are in a bind: By demanding large-scale improvements in student learning, graduation rates, and other indicators, state and federal policymakers have put tremendous pressure on districts to influence teaching and learning in local schools. But they haven't given districts the resources and time they need to translate such mandates into coherent, viable plans for system-wide school change.

As several Turning the Corner participants argued, what is most urgently needed now is for state officials to avoid generating more policy churn and instead to create stable, supportive environments in which to operate. District staff and local educators could use a chance to catch their breath, identify realistic goals, and take concrete steps toward them.

"One of the very first things districts have to do," Rainey said, "is really carefully, in a community-based way, define the type of teaching and the type of principal leadership they're trying to support across schools. It doesn't need to be a mandate; it just needs to be a vision."

5 DON'T LET IMAGINARY BARRIERS GET IN THE WAY OF GOOD IDEAS

While many at Turning the Corner cautioned against burdening educators with new top-down mandates, many also raised concern that local teachers and administrators sometimes complain about rules and policy requirements that do not actually exist. A culture of fear and compliance has taken root within many schools and districts, and this culture needs to change.

As Eileen Harrity of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation put it, "I work with district leaders who are trying to get schools to change. Often, the schools will come to them and say, 'Well, we can't make that change because this district policy prevents us from doing that,' and the district leader will tell them, 'Look, I'm the one in charge of that policy, and I'm telling you that's not a barrier. You have the authority to make that change.'"

Added David Conley, "In the early 1990s, the districts in my state objected to all the regulations that they were under, so the state board told them they could request a waiver from any rule that they found problematic. But when they went ahead and sent in waiver requests—and I know this because I was involved in reviewing them—it turned out that most were asking for permission to do things that they were already free to do."

Given the amount of policy change that has occurred in states and districts over the last 20 to 30 years, and given how much pressure educators have been under to comply with regulations, it is no surprise that people are confused about what they are and are not permitted to do. But it does point to the acute need for states and districts to provide much clearer information about the ground rules, and to demonstrate to educators that local innovations will be welcomed, not squelched.

The transition from NCLB to ESSA provides a potent opportunity to do just that (*Education Week* 2016). State leaders would be well advised to take stock of the current policy landscape and make sure local educators understand precisely what they are required to do, what problems they are expected to solve locally, and exactly how much flexibility they have to create and pursue strategies that promise to result in deeper learning.

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6

GET SERIOUS ABOUT CAREER READINESS

Among school reformers in recent years, calls to promote “college and career readiness” have become ubiquitous. But it is not always clear what people mean by that phrase. At Turning the Corner, participants wrestled with the question of whether high school students are supposed to achieve a single kind of readiness (which applies to both college and careers) or to achieve two kinds (both “college readiness” and “career readiness,” treated as distinct goals).

In either case, some reformers treat the “career readiness” side of the equation as an afterthought, as though it were something to delay until students complete a college-prep curriculum. Over the last decade in particular, high-profile initiatives such as the American Diploma Project and the Common Core State Standards have focused attention on increasing the academic rigor of the K-12 curriculum so that students can make a smooth transition to higher education. Once there, they can choose to pursue a one-, two-, or four-year program that might enable them to find a decent, family-supporting job. Presumably, though, they must complete a certificate or degree before they get started on their careers. In other words, education comes first, and work comes later.

As Nancy Hoffman argues in her paper for the Deeper Learning Research Series (2015), this college-centric view of education completely misses the critically important role that employment and career aspirations often play in young people’s lives. It also ignores the ways in which work itself contributes to education. “In fact,” she writes, “work provides powerful opportunities to learn, and the workplace is where many young people are most receptive to applying academic skills and content as well as using critical interpersonal and intrapersonal capacities.”

At Turning the Corner we heard considerable enthusiasm for the idea that internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based experiences can and should be seen as powerful means of learning deeply. As Christina Brown of TNP, formerly with the Center for Collaborative Education, noted, “If you go back around to the origins of career and technical education [CTE], you see references to some of the same goals that the deeper learning movement is trying to promote.”

Moreover, work-based learning is enjoying a renaissance in much of the U.S., and its current form appears to be entirely complementary with efforts to teach high-level cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills in regular academic classes. “Looking through my own lens—my work on building career pathways spanning grades 9 through 14—I see states’ interest growing,” Hoffman, of Jobs for the Future, said at Turning the Corner. “And I see serious attempts to broaden CTE nationally, so that it’s not only traditional training in the trades but high-quality experiences in career areas like tech, health care, and engineering. And several states have really jumpstarted that work, with California being the boldest, putting up \$500 million, then another \$900 million, to support these programs.”

In short, career-related learning opportunities are gaining traction across the country, with strong support not only from the business community but also from the federal government and many governors, both Democratic and Republican. Advocates for deeper learning ought to recognize that career readiness is not just a byproduct of becoming ready to succeed in college. It can be, and should become, one of the most powerful ways for a much wider range of young people to learn deeply.

7

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Policymakers often bemoan the lack of coordination between high schools and higher education. Fifteen years ago, for example, the National Commission on the High School Senior Year (2001) noted that the 12th grade serves primarily as a “rest stop” between secondary and postsecondary education rather than “a launching pad for what lies ahead.” States should better align the two systems, argued the Commission, and they should increase the rigor of the high school curriculum so that 12th-grade exit standards actually match up with college entrance requirements.

Since then, states have made some progress raising high school graduation requirements to better meet college expectations, and in expanding access to early college, AP, and IB programs so that students can get a head start on higher education. Similarly, the Common Core State Standards, while subjected of late to intense criticism for

reasons not necessarily related to their content, provide detailed guidelines for creating a college-ready curriculum in literacy and math.

But serious challenges remain, including postsecondary placement exams that aren't aligned to the material taught in high school, high remediation rates among new college students, and low completion rates, especially in community colleges, which enroll the majority of first-generation, low-income, and minority students.

Participants at Turning the Corner argued that if states seriously aim to help all students succeed in postsecondary education, they will have to go well beyond the sorts of recommendations made by the Commission on the Senior Year. It is important to better align 12th-grade standards with the academic demands of the first year of college, and it can be helpful to convene P-16 councils to foster better communication between K-12 and higher education. More important, however, is for the systems to have real reasons and opportunities to collaborate much more closely.

That includes efforts to bring high school and college faculty together to co-design courses that connect the 12th and 13th grades, and it includes advising programs that start preparing students (particularly first-generation college students) for college-going long before senior year, and that support them in their transition to college. Other critical features are early assessment systems, run by higher education, that let students in grades 9-12 know where they stand in relation to college entrance standards, and agreements among institutions to expand early college and dual enrollment, which are known to be effective in boosting college degree completion.

The problem, noted Susan Yonezawa of the Center for Research on Educational Equity, Assessment and Teaching Excellence at University of California-San Diego, is that, "There's very little incentive in state policy now for higher education to enter into such partnerships with the secondary schools. Their approach has always been to say, 'We're responsible for getting kids through our system. We have no responsibility to help your kids before they get to us.' "

Betheny Gross of the Center for Reinventing Public Education concurred, arguing that states can and should encourage secondary and postsecondary education to define themselves as jointly responsible for helping students make a successful transition from high school to college: "Whose job is it to help young people follow through on plans to go to college, or to help them persist at the very beginning, when they're not sure they can do the work? It ought to be the job of both systems working together. And states need to own this issue, because they're the ones whose reach extends across the K16 years."

CONCLUSION

Reaching the goal of deeper learning for all students is going to take a long time. We need patience, persistence, and humility.

Michael Kirst, California State Board of Education

As we write these words, policymakers and education advocates are digging into the nooks and crannies of ESSA. The Department of Education is drafting regulations, due in fall 2016, that will determine in broad strokes how states must implement the law. But many essential details are up to states and local districts to hammer out by the beginning of the 2017-18 school year.

The strategic priorities offered above are those that rang out most clearly from the discussions at Turning the Corner. We know that many other issues, though they received less attention from participants, deserve serious consideration as well. In particular, we wish to highlight several points culled from the reports in the Deeper Learning Research Series:

➤ ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

often have academic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal strengths that schools overlook in the rush to move them into English-only classes. In the long run, if these students are to achieve at high levels—and also become proficient in English—bilingual and dual language instruction shows the most promise. It will be critical for states and districts to improve the recruitment and training of ELL teachers in order to meet the needs of this growing population. (See Gándara 2015.)

➤ **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

also require specialized instruction that many of their teachers are ill-equipped to deliver, but with proper supports in place, most are capable of meeting the goals of deeper learning. These supports tend to benefit all learners, as many struggle with some aspect of cognitive processing such as memory or attention. In designing new assessment and accountability systems, states should incentivize tiered levels of evidence-based instructional and behavioral supports. (See Vaughn et al. 2014.)

➤ **CIVIC READINESS**

hailed by Horace Mann as the main rationale for public education, has much to contribute to and gain from an emphasis on deeper learning. With political discourse more polarized than it has been in decades, it is particularly important today to enable young people to fulfill their responsibility as voters, jurors, and citizens. Civic learning, such as instruction in government processes, discussion of current events, and participation in community service, can easily be integrated with academic content. In fact, the benefits are mutual: Civic education can be a powerful means to learn deeply. (See Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg 2014.)

➤ **DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

can be indispensable to efforts to scale up deeper learning or they can have little effect. Like most education initiatives, the effectiveness of technology depends mainly on the professional capacity of educators. Innovations such as digital teaching platforms to personalize instruction can be powerful tools to meet individual needs and narrow achievement gaps. However, significant investment in research

and development will be necessary to make new technologies practical, affordable, and scalable. (See Dede 2014.)

➤ **RESEARCH INVESTMENT**

might actually be one of the most important pieces of the puzzle of advancing deeper learning in the era of ESSA. All the subjects discussed at Turning the Corner and in this paper require further exploration. Critics of education research complain that rarely is it relevant to the day-to-day workings of schools. This is a critical time to target research toward the nuts and bolts of implementing deeper learning. (See Heller & Wolfe 2015.)

So what happens now? The long, hard slog of educational change. Improving college, career, and civic outcomes for all students under ESSA will require intense effort, experimentation, and even some initial failures. Federal officials, state policymakers, district leaders, school principals, classroom teachers, community members, parents, and, of course students themselves have work to do. Some say that true reform takes a generation. We can aim for significant improvement in far less time.

As Michael Kirst, president of the California State Board of Education, argued at Turning the Corner, there are a few personal competencies that advocates of deeper learning will need more than any others: "patience, persistence, and humility." Kirst noted that not only is it difficult to predict what exactly will come from the shift to state and local control of education. He cautioned that reaching the goal of deeper learning for all "is going to take a long time. We need to have a lot of staying power to bring this about."

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