

Silicon Valley Community Foundation

ADVANCING INNOVATIVE PHILANTHROPIC SOLUTIONS TO OUR REGION'S MOST CHALLENGING PROBLEMS



EDUCATION IMPACT REPORT



SVCF grants supported after-school math tutoring at St. James AME Zion Church.

Competence in mathematics is essential for functioning in everyday life as well as for success in our increasingly knowledge-based economy.

INTRODUCTION

Silicon Valley Community Foundation was created 10 years ago to focus on the community's most challenging problems, convene regional private and public sector leaders and initiate policy discussion at the regional, state and national level. As we begin a comprehensive grantmaking review process to determine our new grantmaking strategies, to be announced in October 2017, it is important to assess what has been accomplished, what was not successful and what has been learned.

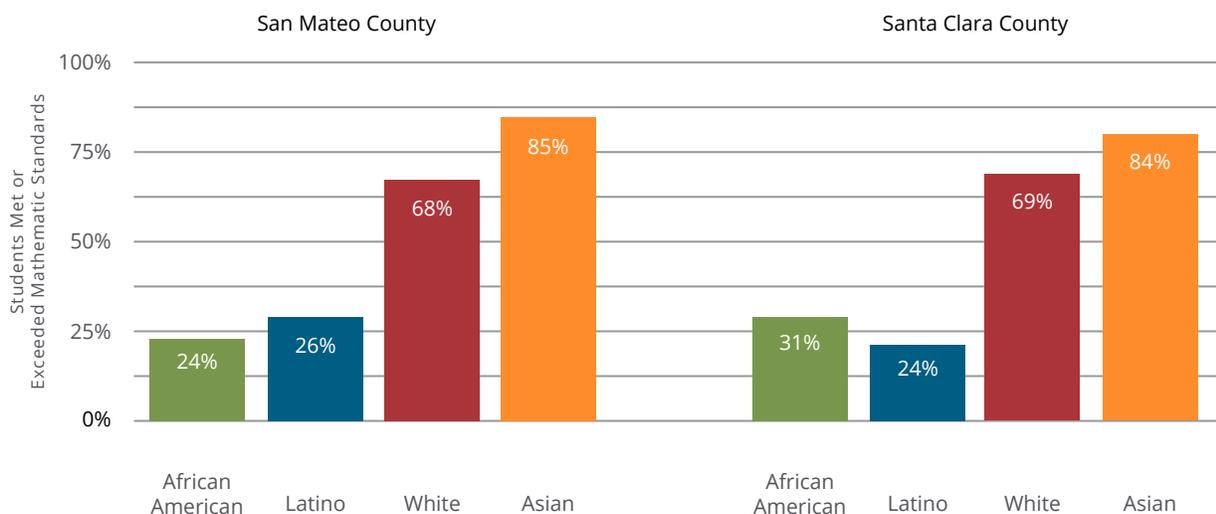
Since 2008, SVCF has made a total of \$90 million in grants to over 500 organizations as part of our strategic grantmaking and community impact work in four key areas: economic security, education, immigration and building strong communities. In addition to these areas, SVCF also makes grants through its Community Opportunity Fund, which focuses on time-sensitive issues and regional innovation.

This work is made possible by the generosity of donors who have chosen to support SVCF with gifts to our community endowment, including bequest gifts. We are especially grateful to the late Tom Ford, who established the Sand Hill Endowment Fund to support SVCF's community impact work – and the region he loved – in perpetuity. We also have been fortunate to receive grants for our work from the Skoll Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation, the Hurlbut-Johnson Fund and the Bernard A. Newcomb Foundation.

We are pleased to present this impact report to summarize the key successes related to our education strategy, as well as our learning over this period. The data presented in the report are based on an independent, third-party evaluation of our grantmaking conducted by LFA Group: Learning for Action.

THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN SILICON VALLEY

Racial Achievement Gap in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties 2015-16 School Year



Source: Smarter Balanced Assessment Results (2016), California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress. California Department of Education

Competence in mathematics is essential for functioning in everyday life as well as for success in our increasingly knowledge-based economy. Eighth-grade math proficiency is an important predictor for college preparedness and professional opportunities. Despite the many signs that point to the importance of middle school math proficiency, an alarming number of students in Silicon Valley are not meeting this benchmark, and achievement gaps by race/ethnicity are quite large. For example, in San Mateo County only 24 percent of African American and 26 percent of Latino eighth-grade students met or exceeded the standard in mathematics, compared to 68 percent of white and 85 percent of Asian students in the 2015-2016 school year. In Santa Clara County, 31 percent of African American and 24 percent of Latino students met or exceeded standards, compared to 69 percent of white and 84 percent of Asian students in the same year¹.

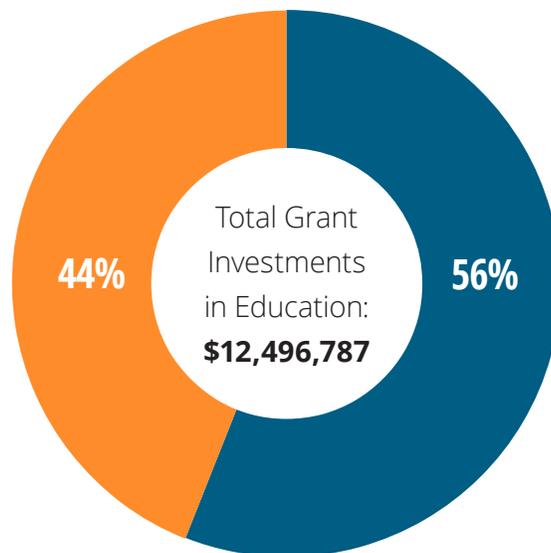
Disparities in the quality of education young people receive underlie gaps in student achievement. Low-income students and students of color disproportionately attend schools that receive fewer of the resources that matter in a quality education, such as experienced teachers. This results in lower student achievement.

Underlying these critical student success factors is a substantial change in educational policy nationwide and in particular here in California. Adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010, as well as the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) have required school districts to undergo significant transformation in recent years.

OUR EDUCATION STRATEGY

After careful research and an extensive community input process, SVCF decided to make strategic investments in programs that improve middle school mathematics instruction both in the classroom – through professional development of teachers – and out of school, through high-quality learning opportunities after school and during the summer. In addition, our investments have focused on supporting local school districts with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics (CCSS-M). These efforts were considered critical to preparing students for success in college.

Our Investments in Education



¹ Smarter Balanced Assessment Results (2016), California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress. California Department of Education.

We recognized that to achieve any measurable difference in these areas required collaboration. To that end, SVCF has actively partnered with other foundations, corporations, nonprofit organizations, donors and government agencies to extend our reach and increase our impact. SVCF also has played a unique role in facilitating collaboration among its grantees. This has been done through quarterly cohort meetings during which grantees come together to learn from each other, engage in critical discussions and collective action to move the needle on challenging social issues.

In addition, each of SVCF's grantmaking strategies and sub-strategies has been guided by an expert advisory committee. The committee has worked closely with staff to discuss trends in the field, review proposals and ensure grantmaking investments have met our strategic goals. Committee members have provided expert involvement and advice as well as public accountability in our grantmaking decisions (see Acknowledgments section).

While SVCF's efforts to bolster middle school math achievement are the focus of this report, we know that learning begins long before a child's first day of school. That is why we have made a number of significant institutional commitments to ensure that our youngest children get off to the best possible start in school and in life. Through our Center for Early Learning, which we launched in 2014, we have started a campaign to make early learning a state budget and policy priority. We are co-leading an ambitious collective impact initiative, The Big Lift, with the County of San Mateo and the San Mateo County Office of Education to dramatically improve third-grade reading proficiency. And SVCF supports Raising A Reader, a national nonprofit organization in 40 states with 2,600 locations. An evidence-based early literacy and parent engagement program, Raising A Reader has demonstrated that its program can improve the reading readiness skills of children from birth to age 8.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED

Through the work of our school district and nonprofit partners we have helped teachers improve their skills and effectiveness in the classroom. Outside of the classroom, our grantmaking investments have helped thousands of students — particularly low-income students and students of color — into, or closer to, college-track high school courses. We have worked with school districts across the region to implement the Common Core standards in mathematics, which have fundamentally changed the way teachers teach and students learn. And we were the sponsor and leading force in passing a law, the California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015, to address course placement practices that were unfairly impacting students of color.

Key successes in each of these areas are briefly described below, and three feature stories showcase notable accomplishments in greater detail.

We Helped More than 400 Teachers Improve their Skills and Effectiveness in the Classroom

Teachers are central to improving student outcomes, yet in schools with high percentages of English learners, students of color and low-income students, teachers tend to be less experienced, are more likely to lack full credentials and have less access to professional development and opportunities to learn from other teachers. SVCF prioritized funding for professional development to improve mathematics instruction. Through our nonprofit partners, we provided more than 900 training and support opportunities to local teachers between 2011 and 2015, which benefitted more than 133,000 students.



To prepare students for success in a 21st century global economy, SVCF's education grantmaking supports mathematics instruction programs and professional development for math educators. Students in action at Alta Loma Middle School.

Of the teachers who participated in these opportunities and for whom data was available, more than 80 percent reported that they improved their overall teaching practices. Overall, students whose teachers received professional development outperformed their peers on standardized tests: 55 percent scored proficient or higher on the pre-algebra or algebra standardized tests, compared to 38 percent of students whose teachers did not receive the training.²

We Provided More than 14,000 High-Quality Extended Learning Opportunities to Deserving Students

While SVCF's in-school strategy has been important and necessary, it is not sufficient to close the achievement gap in mathematics among English learners, lower-income students and students of color. That is why increasing access to high-quality extended learning opportunities after school and during the summer for struggling students has been a cornerstone of our education strategy. Since 2011, more than 14,000 students have participated in rigorous, SVCF-funded after-school and summer programs in mathematics. These programs complement learning during the school day through hands-on, experiential learning and project-based activities that make mathematics fun and relevant to young peoples' lives. More than 70 percent of the students for whom data was available showed an increase in mathematics proficiency as a result of their participation in these programs.

² Based on 2013 Algebra I Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) California Standards Test (CST) scores for San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

We Helped Students Learn a Full Year of Math in One Summer Program

One of SVCF's most impactful grantmaking investments in the education strategy has been to the José Valdés Math Institute. The organization was founded in 1989 by José Antonio Valdés, an immigrant from Cuba who worked as a school janitor in San Jose while earning his California teaching credential. He believed that all students could learn mathematics and worked to prove this true.

The José Valdés Math Institute offers intensive and comprehensive math education during the summer to middle and high school students who are struggling. The goal of the Institute is to help these students achieve success in the most challenging mathematics courses possible. Classes are held at local college and university campuses to promote college awareness and attendance. They are taught by a credentialed teacher with two college-level teaching assistants; classes provide the equivalent of one full year of mathematics instruction (182 hours) over the course of seven weeks.

The Institute first served students in East San José and has now expanded to serve students in several other communities, including Mountain View, East Palo Alto, Redwood City and La Honda-Pescadero. Last year, SVCF provided funding so that students from the Redwood City School District could attend the Valdés Summer Math Institute at Stanford University. Over 100 students whose math skills were one to four years below grade level participated. These students benefitted greatly from the experience, and by the end of seven weeks, more than half had improved their math skills by at least one grade level.

The José Valdés Math Institute was selected as a Bright Spot in Hispanic Education at an event held in Washington, D.C., in September 2015, and is included in the Bright Spots in Hispanic Education National Online Catalog.

We Brought Together Top Education Leaders to Address the Racial Achievement Gap

In 2010, we partnered with the Silicon Valley Education Foundation on a series of forums to examine the gaps in access and achievement for California's historically underserved students. Latino and African American students comprise the single largest group of young people in California's schools, and yet they continue to be short-changed by our public education system. Our invitation-only forums brought together donors, leaders in education, business, civic, nonprofit and philanthropic communities to examine the facts of the racial achievement gap and discuss policy options that local leaders could support and school boards could adopt.

As a result of these discussions, we published "The Time to Act: Closing the Racial Achievement Gap," a policy brief recommending five actions to address the racial achievement gap and the systemic inequities in our schools that contribute to it. One recommendation in particular highlighted the importance of mathematics course placement and called on school boards to establish consistent criteria to make these critical placement decisions. This was an important foundation for SVCF's subsequent legislative efforts on Senate Bill 359, the California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015, featured on page 9.

We Led 27 School Districts Serving 148,000 Students to Work Together to Implement the Common Core State Standards

In 2013, SVCF launched an ambitious, three-year effort, the Silicon Valley Common Core Initiative (SVCCI), to drive and incentivize a collaborative approach to local implementation of California's newly adopted Common Core State Standards. We recognized implementation of the CCSS represented an unprecedented opportunity for the 54 school districts in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties to work jointly. Together, they could achieve economies of scale, encourage professional learning and collaboration among educators and ensure all children are college-, career- and citizenship-ready.

Because it was an opportunity we could not afford to let pass, SVCF was the first local funder in our region to support implementation of the CCSS. We then garnered additional support from individual donors, corporations and other private foundation partners, resulting in nearly \$3 million in funding for the SVCCI with an anchor investment from the Noyce Foundation.

We designed a request for proposal process in April 2013 with input from over 40 school district leaders. In September 2013, we awarded three-year grants to four collaborative groups that represented 27 school districts. Those districts served about 148,000 students, many of them socio-economically disadvantaged. Districts were provided with technical assistance – such as leadership coaching and instructional support on implementation of the CCSS – from two nationally renowned organizations, including the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas, Austin, and Agile Mind, as well as the locally based Silicon Valley Mathematics Initiative. District leaders also met quarterly with SVCF staff to discuss their successes and challenges in implementing the new standards.

Through the SVCCI, more than 500 teachers received training on methods that encouraged students to think critically, creatively and collaboratively. In addition, more than 50 principals and 27 district leaders learned how to align policies and instructional practices to support 21st century skills. With additional funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, we were able to develop the Embrace the Core website (embracethecore.org), which provides Common Core-related information and resources for teachers and parents.

While it is still early to assess changes in student achievement, results from the newly administered Smarter Balanced Assessment³ are encouraging. Data indicate that students in SVCCI districts fared better than students across the state, and English learners and low-income students in these districts performed at levels close to or exceeding the average in both San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

We Helped Establish California's Only Funder Collaborative to Support Common Core

After one year of supporting local school districts with the implementation of the CCSS, we realized this was an area of shared interest among several other California foundations. During the summer of 2014 we helped to establish the California Common Core Funder Collaborative, a cooperative effort of seven funders to support successful implementation of the CCSS and aligned assessments in California.

As of 2016, members of the California Common Core Funder Collaborative include SVCF, Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the S.H. Cowell Foundation, the

³ Beginning in school year 2013-14, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) became the student assessment system in California replacing the Standardized Testing and Reporting System (STAR). The CAASPP includes an end-of-year assessment, the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment, and is administered to students in grades three through eight and eleven in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation and Silver Giving. Together, these funders have pooled their resources into a fund managed by SVCF and have directed investments to the areas of greatest need.

We Provided a First-of-its-Kind Training for 25 Out-of-School Providers to Align Practices with Common Core and Benefit More than 4,300 Students

One of the key differences between the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and previous learning standards is the CCSS focus on developing 21st century skills that require a foundation of critical thinking, problem-solving and resiliency. We recognized that after-school and summer learning program providers needed to be partners in CCSS implementation. But many lacked the training and support necessary for this to occur.

To address this need, SVCF joined with the Silicon Valley Mathematics Initiative, San Mateo and Santa Clara County Offices of Education, and the Region 4 and Region 5 After School Partnerships to create the Silicon Valley Expanded Learning Math Initiative in late 2014. This first-of-its-kind effort equipped out-of-school education providers with the latest research and methods for developing 21st century skills in students. Quarterly training sessions drew an average participation of 25 providers and featured notable guest speakers in the field, as well as ready-to-use lesson plans and activities for providers to implement in their programs benefitting more than 4,300 students.

We Exposed the Civil Rights Violations of Unfair Mathematics Placement Practices

SVCF has a deeply held interest in and commitment to ensuring our education system prepares all students for success. We found that despite our best efforts to close the middle school achievement gap in mathematics, placement issues were getting in the way. What first started as anecdotes from our nonprofit partners was later confirmed by a Noyce Foundation-commissioned study in 2010. The study of nine school districts in the San Francisco Bay Area found that students were being made to repeat Algebra I in the ninth grade despite having successfully completed the course in the eighth grade. Students of color (African American and Latino) and those whose parents had lower education levels were being disproportionately treated in this way.



SVCF's Gina Dalma, special advisor to the CEO for public policy initiatives, meets with students at an event hosted by SVCF called "How Does Math Misplacement Affect Students of Color and What Is Its Effect on the Achievement Gap?" in September 2014.



Students received after-school math tutoring at St. James AME Zion Church with help from an SVCF grant.

In September 2012, SVCF contracted with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights (LCCR) of the Bay Area to investigate the legal implications of these placement decisions. The decision to engage with LCCR was based on pro bono legal counsel provided by George Brown, a partner at the Gibson Dunn and Crutcher law firm and member of the LCCR board. The results of the LCCR investigation were serious and clear: Placement decisions that disproportionately impacted minority students violated state and federal civil rights laws. These facts were documented in an LCCR-issued report, "Held Back: Addressing Misplacement of 9th Grade Students in Bay Area Schools," and shared in two roundtable discussions with school district leaders, school board members and their legal counsels. In addition to exposing the legal liability districts face when math misplacement occurs, the roundtable discussions provided practical solutions to address this problem and featured the work of several school districts in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties that had already taken steps to reform their math placement policies, with promising results.

We Sponsored a Bill that Became California's First Law to Address Math Misplacement

The consequences of math misplacement are serious and far-reaching. Most universities, including California State University and University of California, require at least three years of math for college eligibility and prefer to admit students who have taken advanced math courses such as Calculus or Advanced Placement Statistics. Because colleges evaluate students on the academic rigor of their coursework, students who are forced to repeat the eighth grade math course have less time to complete the advanced math courses that make them competitive applicants for college admission. Failure to take advanced math courses in high school can have a profound impact on a student's future educational and economic success, and imposes a heavy emotional toll on students and their families. It is also demoralizing and demotivating for students when they are unfairly held back.

While we were pleased that some school districts in our region had taken steps to address math misplacement, we were concerned because many others had not. SVCF also learned that the scope of the math misplacement problem was not just confined to Silicon Valley or the Bay Area but was happening to students across the state. Additional research on more than 24,000 students at 24 unified school districts throughout California showed that minority students – even high-achieving minority students – were far less likely to take Calculus in the 12th grade compared to their peers.

It became clear that the problem was extensive and required a statewide legislative solution. SVCF decided to sponsor its first bill, Senate Bill (SB) 359, which was authored by Senator Holly Mitchell (D-Los Angeles). We worked with Lucas Public Affairs, a Sacramento communications firm, to develop a number of tools to bring the hidden problem of math misplacement into the public spotlight. These tools were important in educating legislators and other stakeholders, and ultimately in building a broad coalition of support for the bill. Supporters of the bill included prominent education and civil rights organizations, as well as several business groups that realized the economic implications of math misplacement – a practice that limits the number of successful students pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The intent of SB 359 was to take the subjectivity out of the placement process, requiring school districts to develop and implement transparent and objective protocols for student placement. It also stipulated that there be recourse for students and parents if they disagreed with placement decisions.

We were pleased that the bill passed with unanimous support from both the Assembly and Senate, and was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown on Oct. 5, 2015. School districts must now comply with the law, and SVCF is structuring its future grantmaking investments to ensure this occurs.

We Helped Create a State-of-the-Art Data Analytics Center with Local Education Partners

The use of data to guide teaching and learning is critical for ending stubborn achievement gaps. Studies show that a teacher's ability to consistently track student progress, particularly in early literacy, is essential to tailor instruction in real time and help struggling learners. Because of this, we joined with the San Mateo County Office of Education in 2013 to help create the Center for Learning Analytics (CLA). The center provides innovative solutions to collecting, analyzing, evaluating and reporting student data.

The CLA is at the forefront of education innovation and is designed to help educators use the rapidly increasing amounts of performance data, including the new CCSS-aligned Smarter Balanced Assessment data, to best inform and improve learning experiences. The extraordinary potential of the CLA spurred a \$500,000 investment from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to further the CLA as a national model of best practice for increasing better student outcomes through personalized learning and technology.

WHAT WE LEARNED

While there are many wins to celebrate, it is equally important that we reflect on the lessons SVCF learned from work that fell short of our expectations.

For example, we learned that systemic innovation and reform in education of any kind is difficult given the sheer number of school districts in our region and state. In 2012 we commissioned a report that illustrated that in our two-county region alone, there were 54 districts serving 300,000 students, governed by over 300 independently elected officials who make educational decisions in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. The report went on to detail the decades-long efforts to merge neighboring districts together that have repeatedly been rejected by voters. We experienced some of these challenges when we supported planning efforts to merge two very small school districts together in North San Mateo County; the efforts were ultimately unsuccessful.

The statewide adoption of Common Core State Standards in 2010 has required a paradigm shift in approaches to teaching and learning. It further highlighted the obstacles within and across school districts to implement innovative teaching practices to support the new standards in K-12 education. We learned that fostering collaboration among schools from different districts presented challenges that went beyond sharing knowledge and infrastructure, and touched on leadership stability and teachers' capacity to pursue new methods and approaches to teaching and learning. For example, a regional shortage of teacher substitutes had an impact on the effectiveness of the SVCCI, because it was difficult for teachers to get away from their classrooms for training if substitutes were scarce.

We also saw the importance of continuing to bolster students' academic achievements by investing resources into developing their 21st century skills both in and out of the classroom. This included providing support for teaching practices that helped students solve real-world problems by working effectively with peers, communicating arguments and persevering through difficulty.

But some of our biggest learnings came from our most significant public policy win to date – the signing of Senate Bill 359 into law as the California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015. What started as a closer look at math practices in our local schools quickly confirmed our worst fears, that this was a statewide problem with devastating consequences for African-American and Latino students. With each step of the legislative process, we learned it was useful to frame the issue of math misplacement as one of fairness rather than discrimination – and one with real economic consequences for the state – to garner the widest support possible.

We are both appreciative of what we have learned and proud of what we achieved. We have helped thousands of teachers and students to better their skills inside and outside of the classroom, and helped prepare a new generation for success in mathematics, critical thinking and problem-solving. We are confident that these efforts will result in better futures for thousands of local students.

As we begin a yearlong comprehensive review of our grantmaking strategies, we are eager to discover the possibilities that will emerge, and to begin a new chapter in our efforts to improve the education landscape in Silicon Valley.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SVCF would like to express its deepest appreciation to the many organizations involved in helping us to close the middle school achievement gap in Silicon Valley, and to the expert advisors who have helped SVCF frame and refine our education strategy.

Nonprofit Partners Who Helped Make it Happen

In-School Education Strategy

Ace Charter School
Across the Bridge Foundation
Alpha Public Schools, Inc.
Aspire Public Schools
Bayshore Elementary School District
Berryessa Union School District
Brisbane Elementary School District
Campbell Union High School District
East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy
Foothill-De Anza Colleges Foundation
Foothill-De Anza Foundation (for Krause Center for Innovation)
Ida Price Middle School
Jefferson Elementary School District
Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network
KIPP Bay Area Schools
Krause Center for Innovation
Moreland School District
Mountain View Whisman School District
New Teacher Center
Pacifica School District
Partners in School Innovation
Pivot Learning Partners (Springboard)
Ravenswood Cities and Schools
Ravenswood City School District
Resource Area For Teachers
San José State University Research Foundation
San José Unified School District
San Mateo County Office of Education
Santa Clara County Office of Education
Silicon Valley Education Foundation
Silicon Valley Leadership Group (formerly Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group Sustainable Valley Foundation)
Stanford University
Teach for America, Inc.
Tower Foundation of San José State University
Tower Foundation of San José State University (for Silicon Valley Mathematics Initiative)
Union School District
WestEd
Willow Oaks School

Total Investments - \$7,002,729

Out-of-School Education Strategy

Aim High for High School
ALearn
Belmont-Redwood Shores School District
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Half Moon Bay
Boys & Girls Club of the Peninsula
Breakthrough San Jose
Breakthrough Silicon Valley
Building Educated Leaders for Life of California
Campbell Union High School District
Children’s Empowerment, Inc.
Citizen Schools, Inc.
City Year
Cunha Intermediate Community School
Daly City Peninsula Partnership Collaborative
East Side Union High School District
Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley
José Valdés Math Foundation
La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District
Peninsula Bridge Program
Ravenswood Cities and Schools (for the 49ers After School Academy)
Redwood City Education Foundation
Regents of the University of California Santa Cruz
San Mateo County Office of Education
San Mateo Union High School District
Sequoia Union High School District
Silicon Valley Education Foundation
Somali Community Services
South San Francisco Unified School District
St. James Community Foundation
The National Hispanic University Foundation (for Sunrise Middle School)
THINK Together
We Teach Science Foundation
WestEd
William C. Overfelt High School
YMCA of Silicon Valley

Total Investments - \$5,494,058

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Jivan Dhaliwal
Judy Chirco
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Neal Finkelstein
Patrick Gemma
Rhonda Farber

Organization

Ravenswood City School District
San Mateo County Office of Education
The Noyce Foundation
The Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation
New Teacher Center
Sequoia Union High School District
Santa Clara County Office of Education
San José City Council
Silicon Valley Education Foundation
Berryessa Union School District
Cupertino Education Endowment Foundation
WestEd
Sequoia Union High School District
Campbell Union High School District

Advisors are shown along with the organization with which they were affiliated when they served on the committee.

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