Next Generation Learning Challenges
Reviewer Comments
(LPS Oakland R & D Campus was one of five grantees out of over 100 applicants)

Proposal Title: Leadership Public Schools Oakland R & D Campus

Proposal Strengths:
The review team reached almost immediate consensus that the proposed R & D model would both challenge the current models of blended learning and provide ongoing learning for further development. Leadership Public School model is the result of three years of design work and presents us with the notion that this field is developing , needs prototyping and is challenged to both provide opportunities for students to accelerate as well as recuperate their learning in a learning environment that is scaffolded. Due to the changing landscape, a foundation of this model is that the school will also function as an R & D lab to continually learn, adjust practice and invent tools to meet student needs.

A key asset of this network is the strong and evident capacity of the Leadership Team. In addition to carefully implemented design work, they show the ability to attract and engage quality partners in the development and continual improvement of the model. As this model design is complex and the school will have the additional function of R & D work the strong ability of the team to implement is fundamental to success.

Reviewers noted the high level of innovation in design through the combination of academics, scaffolding and college prep skills. The model includes the design of a comprehensive data system that will support benchmark formative assessments in all core courses that are well developed. In addition, the use of technology enabled assistive devices for students "provide a neglected medium for learners of varying gifts and abilities."

The school design maximizes through the use of components, multiple technologies to personalize student learning. Reviewers felt these tools were "state of the sector". To this end the R & D model is a key dimension of the work. For example, as the school and its partners work toward developing a comprehensive learning system they have developed tools such as the ExitTicket that allows students to use any kind of technology to take online assessments and quizzes. This will allow for real time data to be available to teachers, students and administrators to deeply personalize the students learning.

Opportunities and Challenges:
The R&D model that this school will employ will inform the development and effectiveness of multiple technologies in a college going setting that strives toward mastery. Results from this work can strengthen the development of future models across the blended learning design field.

LPS is not scaling the way others scale. They have the opportunity to implement a different kind of scale-up strategy and think about how they plan to share their products and R&D learnings with the world (and with our network).

It will be an asset to have a learning organization as a member of this cohort as the broader pool of grantees assesses new modalities. Reviewers noted that the materials they have chosen, such as CK12, will also get better over time making the R & D approach a smart lens to develop through.

This design challenge adds risk as the integration of all of these technologies may lead to challenges in replication. It was noted that the LPS team will have to address this and its implications.

Leadership Public Schools has been named one of five national Next Generation Learning Challenges grantees!

The LPS Oakland R&D Campus, planned to open Fall 2012, represents an innovative blended learning model and an exciting new vision for urban education. LPS Oakland R&D Campus will serve as a real-world R&D lab addressing three key issues: the need for rapid academic acceleration of students entering high school below grade level, the need for a realistic path that bridges the transition to college for first generation and low-income students, and the need for students to build economic assets that will empower them to persist through college and envision employment opportunities beyond their immediate frame of reference.

Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) is a multi-year, collaborative initiative focused on identifying and accelerating the growth of effective education technology that can help improve college readiness and completion in the United States--especially among low-income students. NGLC is led by EDUCAUSE with collaboration from The League for Innovation in the Community College, the International Association for K-12 Online Learning, and The Council of Chief State School Officers.

We are excited about this important recognition and the tremendous opportunity it represents for LPS students, students across the country, and the national education reform movement!