

# **Summary Report of National Foundation Investments in High School Improvement**

The National High School Alliance  
High School Funders Collaborative

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## Introduction

This draft summary report of major foundation investments in high school improvement was prepared for review and discussion at the inaugural meeting of the National High School Alliance's High School Funders Collaborative, convened on October 10, 2005 at the Grantmakers for Education conference. The High School Funders Collaborative, established with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, brings together national foundations making major investments in high school improvement. The goals of the collaborative are to:

- Share lessons learned through discussion of common issues, challenges and successes;
- Identify funding gaps and develop a strategic plan for addressing them; and
- Maximize the impact of future investments in high school reform.

In order to catalyze strategic dialogue among members of the High School Funders Collaborative, we have prepared this report as a "first take" to capture information about individual foundation investments and common themes across them. Based on feedback from the Collaborative on the report's content and format, it will be revised, disseminated, and used as the basis for subsequent dialogue.

To develop the report, foundations making major investments in high school improvement were identified, information about these foundation investments was collected and analyzed, and leaders from these foundations were interviewed. This document provides a summary analysis of the information collected in the following seven areas:

- I. Financial Investment
- II. Theory of Action
- III. Major Successes
- IV. Major Challenges
- V. Grantee Type
- VI. Geographic Focus
- VII. Future Emphasis & Strategy

The major investors in high school improvement were identified through the Foundation Directory, and with input from the National High School Alliance's program officers at the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Constancia Warren and Stefanie Sanford, respectively. Bill Porter of Grantmakers for Education, and Dane Linn of the National Governors Association also provided critical input in this process. The National High School Alliance would like to thank each of these individuals for their helpful input.

## I. Financial Investment

This table summarizes the total amount given in 2004 by each foundation studied, the amount and percentage of the total given to education overall, and the amount and percentage of the total given to high school improvement. Some fields in the table are empty: In some cases, foundations have not yet responded to requests for information; in other cases, foundations are still gathering data; and in still other cases, foundations do not calculate investments in the manner requested.

Foundation	Total Giving (FY 2004)	Giving to Education (% of total)	Giving to High School Improvement (% of total)
Annenberg	\$213,209,951	\$65,531,395 (31%)	\$6,707,425 (3%)
Bank of America	\$108,000,000	\$36,000,000 (33%)	“negligible”
Broad	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000 (100%)	0%
Carnegie Corporation	\$84,345,200	\$25,000,000 (29.6%)	\$11,000,000 (13%) <sup>1</sup>
Annie E. Casey	\$180-185,000,000	\$6,000,000 (3.2%)	\$400,000 (.21-.22%)
Bill & Melinda Gates	\$1,261,110,000	\$280,000,000 (22.2%)	\$153,019,943 (12%)
GE Fund	\$52,000,000	\$26,000,000 (50%)	\$5,200,000 (10%)
George Gund	\$28,186,547	\$3,074,500 (10.9%)	NA
Kauffman	NA	NA	NA
Knowledge Works	NA	NA	\$10,211,945
Lumina	\$40,000,000	\$39,200,000 (98%)	“less than 1%”
Prudential	\$25,000,000	\$8,000,000 (32%)	\$0
State Farm	\$20,018,807	\$15,214,293.32 (76%)	NA
Time Warner	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA	NA
Wallace	\$54,873,749	\$31,000,000 (57%)	NA
Walton	\$115,000,000	\$80,500,000 (70%)	\$0
Washington Mutual	\$49,300,000	\$18,700,000 (37.9%)	\$1,000,000 (2%)

## II. Grantee Type

The foundations studied support a mix of direct service organizations; intermediary organizations; and schools, districts, and states through their grant making. The majority of foundations fund schools or districts directly and/or intermediaries that work with schools and districts. Of the four foundations who provide grants to direct service organizations, two—Annenberg and Bank of America—fund only these organizations in the high school improvement area. Four foundations—Carnegie, Gates, Prudential, and Wallace—fund research or policy organizations focused on high school improvement. One foundation—Walton—provides funding directly to states.

Foundation	Intermediaries working with schools and/or	Intermediaries working with states	Direct service organization	Research and/or policy	Schools or districts	State
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<sup>1</sup> This figure encompasses urban school reform which, for Carnegie, is primarily focused on high school reform. However of this \$11 million, \$9 million is locked into a particular program and about \$2 million remains as discretionary funding.

<sup>2</sup> In 2004, Time Warner Inc. didn't make any grants. Instead, they engaged in a strategic planning process focusing on what grants would look like in 2005 and beyond.

	districts		organization			
Annenberg			X			
Bank of America			X			
Broad	X				X	
Carnegie				X <sup>3</sup>		
Casey	X				X	
Gates	X	X <sup>4</sup>	X <sup>5</sup>	X	X	X <sup>6</sup>
GE Fund					X	
Gund	X <sup>7</sup>				X	
Kauffman	X		X		X	
Knowledge Works					X <sup>8</sup>	
Lumina					X	
Prudential			X	X		
State Farm	X					
Time Warner			X			
Wallace				X	X	X
Walton		X <sup>9</sup>			X <sup>10</sup>	
Washington Mutual	X				X	

### III. Geographic Focus

Some foundations studied support initiatives that are national. Others have a more directed geographic focus, sometimes based around areas in which they operate (like State Farm and Bank of America), while others (Knowledge Works, Prudential, and George Gund) have a single state or district focus. Within these geographic areas, some foundations focus on urban areas or rural areas or areas in which there is a large achievement gap or minority population. A breakdown of each foundation’s geographic focus is provided in the following table.

<sup>3</sup> The Carnegie Corporation of New York funds research and policy through intermediaries.

<sup>4</sup> The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s intermediaries working with states include Achieve, National Governors Association, Batelle (OH), California Federation of Teachers (CA), and the New School Fund (NC).

<sup>5</sup> Direct service organizations that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation supports include the Institute for Research and Reform in Education/First Things First, Talent Development High School, and other CMOs and community engagement groups.

<sup>6</sup> The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation gave grants to 14 states through NGA and direct grants to OH, CA, TX, OR, and WA.

<sup>7</sup> The George Gund Foundation funds directly to school districts and intermediaries that work with school districts. The foundation does not fund individual schools and “rarely funds individual non-profits working with an individual school,” according to a 9/23/05 interview with Ann Mullin.

<sup>8</sup> The Knowledge Works Foundation “acts as an intermediary for other funders as well as providing direct funding to schools or districts,” according to a 9/30/05 interview with Debbie Howard.

<sup>9</sup> The Walton Family Foundation funds “state associations for charter schools, which don’t necessarily have a connection to a district” according to a 9/14/05 interview with Kathy Smith.

<sup>10</sup> The Walton Family Foundation funds independent charter schools across the country (around 600 all over the U.S.).

<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Geographic Focus</b>
Annenberg	National Regional: southern CA Local: Philadelphia, New York City
Bank of America	Limited to areas of major company operations which now includes 29 states and the DC metropolitan area: AR, AZ, CA, CT, DC, FL, GA, ID, IL, IA, KS, ME, MD, MA, MO, NV, NJ, NH, NM, NY, NC, OK, OH, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, VA, and WA.
Broad	Urban school systems across the country
Carnegie Corporation	National (adolescent literacy research, practice, and advocacy) Seven urban school systems across the country
Annie E. Casey	Two dozen urban areas across the country
Bill & Melinda Gates	National/Federal (policy, research, and constituent network development) State: CA, WA, TX, OH, IL, NY, NC Urban school systems across the country Individual schools in 42 states
GE Fund	National and international Jefferson County, KY; Stamford, CT; and Cincinnati, OH <sup>11</sup>
George Gund	National (policy) Cleveland Municipal School District & first ring suburban schools
Kauffman	Bi-state MO/KS Kansas City metropolitan area
Knowledge Works	Ohio, predominantly low-income urban and rural districts
Lumina	National 10% of grant dollars (the predominance of the Foundation's high-school investments) are focused in Indiana
Prudential	National Regional (city-based: Phoenix, AZ; Los Angeles, CA; Jacksonville, FL; Atlanta GA; Minneapolis, MN; Newark, NJ; Philadelphia, PA; and Houston, TX); Local (Newark – headquarters city)
State Farm	National Locally in areas of company operation; Three provinces in Canada
Time Warner	New York City
Wallace	National
Walton	Delta focus: Arkansas & Mississippi
Washington Mutual	Primarily in areas of company operations: AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, ID, IL, MA, NJ, NY, NV, OR, PA, SC, TX, UT, WA.

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<sup>11</sup> In 2005, the GE Fund's College Bound program announced a huge funding increase as well as a modification to its previous focus. The geographic focus of this initiative may expand in the future.

## IV. Theory of Action

Foundation officers were asked to talk about the funding strategies, or theories of action, guiding foundation investments, in relation to the six core principles identified in the National High School Alliance framework, *A Call to Action: Transforming High School for All Youth* (2005). A theory of action in philanthropy “connect funded programs to the production of outputs of educational services that allow donors to count and track results. These outputs are connected to the intended outcomes or end states that the donor is focused on achieving on behalf of others.”<sup>12</sup>

*A Call to Action* is a consensus document represents the best thinking of the Alliance partnership, which includes over 40 national organizations with expertise on high schools and youth development. The framework of six core principles, as outlined below, emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive, systemic approach to improving high schools for all youth.

### Core Principles:

- Personalized learning environments
- Academic engagement of all students
- Empowered educators
- Accountable leaders
- Engaged community and youth
- Integrated system of high standards, curriculum, instruction, assessments, and supports

Based on the interviews and a review of documents, there is a wide and complex range of theories of action guiding foundation investment strategy, with the core principles addressed in various degrees and combinations. For example, while some focus exclusively on specific strategies (e.g., teacher preparation, leadership development, adolescent literacy), others take a comprehensive approach that includes strategies addressing all of the core principles. Other foundations, while investing in many or all of the core principles, are also guided by philosophical beliefs about the forces that drive system-wide transformation (e.g., school choice, community engagement, etc.), and the kinds of stakeholders who most effectively drive change (e.g., district leaders, local intermediaries, business community, state policymakers, etc.).

In general, many of the interviewees thought the core principles were interesting and useful as a tool for thinking about future investments. However most of the interviewees did not have a familiarity with the core principles and were, thus, initially hesitant to provide breakdowns of their funding in this manner. Upon review, the responses typically fell into one of two categories: (1) funding falls into several of the core principle categories; or (2) the foundation does not categorize its funding in this manner. Of the interviewees who indicated that they were unable to categorize their funding, further elaboration could typically be characterized in one of three ways: (1) foundations do not categorize their funding of education as “reform”; (2) funding encompasses K-12 education and does not specifically target high school or high school reform; or (3) foundations simply do not analyze their funding in this manner.

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<sup>12</sup> Frumkin, Peter (April 25, 2005). “Strategic Giving and Public School Reform: Three Challenges.” Prepared for American Enterprise Institute Conference *With the Best of Intentions: Lessons Learned in K-12 Education Philanthropy*. Available at [www.aci.org/event959](http://www.aci.org/event959).

The following excerpts from interviews and foundation documents provide additional insights into the theory of action guiding each foundation's investment strategy (*note: italics added for emphasis*):

**Annenberg Foundation, Gillian Norris-Szanto**

“The thought is to work on *teacher professional development* believing that that can make a difference to student achievement, the quality of the work force, and to teacher retention. Given that, we've invested in coaching, mentoring, and best practices. The hope is that with this support, teachers will stay in the system and we believe research has shown that the teacher has the greatest impact on students.”

**Bank of America Foundation, Andrew Plepler**

“Neighborhood excellence is the theme. The theory is that the sort of organizations best equipped to *impact local communities* are the local organizations serving those communities....For the most part, [we invest in] direct service because we have people on the ground so we're able to locate groups that do the work.”

**Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Tom Vander Ark**

“Our 2004 strategy hypothesizes that significant 20-year improvement in national graduation and college readiness rates will occur if, in the next 10 years: thousands of good schools are developed/improved; dozens of urban districts make significant progress; a half dozen states make significant policy and student outcome progress; research/evaluation efforts capture lessons learned; communication efforts increase awareness of the problem and promote solutions; and public policy solutions are identified and effectively promoted.”

“Our work increasingly stresses district-wide improvement strategies typically bolstered by promising school improvement providers (e.g. First Things First, Talent Development, High Schools That Work) and complemented by new school networks and state improvement strategies including college-ready standards and strong support/accountability.”

**Broad Foundation, Kevin Hall**

“We believe that talent & management really matter in K-12 and as a sector we've not done a good job attracting and keeping talent or attracting talent from other sectors of society. That's why we've invested in *principal leadership and superintendent leadership*.”

**Carnegie Corporation, Connie Warren**

“High schools need to prepare all students for success. High schools can't do it by themselves; you can't reform all high schools without *reforming districts*. You can't aggregate up; you need to really work with districts. Finally, districts can't do it themselves; you need to include *the community*.”

[From the foundation's website]

“At the heart of Schools for a New Society (SNS) is the concept of *district reform*, which encompasses the idea that in order to improve education for all students, entire school districts must reinvent the way they deliver education, and must *involve the whole community* in reform efforts, including school officials, teachers, parents and students as well as community stakeholders such as

unions, college personnel, elected officials, business leaders, and leaders of community-based and youth development organizations.”

**GE Foundation, Kelli Wells**

“The first phase of the College Bound program started in 1989 and the second phase started in 2000. Most of the money we invest went directly to high schools. The high schools would then invest the money for tutoring, SAT-prep programs, professional development, etc., things to increase the academic environment. The outcome from that was that the overall college-going rate was higher than the national average and the focus was on changing the school environment. For example, in Cincinnati a school didn’t even have a college and career center. So they decided to start there and put things in like computers so kids could access information about schools, and phones so that kids could call and obtain more information or set up or have interviews. So it really changed the mindset of the school. Remember, as of 2005, we’re increasing the funding for this program dramatically.”

[From the foundation’s website]

“The Program’s district focus launched today seeks to achieve systemic change and student achievement in Louisville’s Jefferson County Public Schools, and up to four other districts over the next five years. The strategy starts with a collaboration between the Board of Education, Teacher’s Association and superintendent; and components include constituency engagement, management capacity building, a common math and science curriculum, professional development and in-depth evaluation of the program.”

**George Gund Foundation, Ann Mullin**

“Our strategy around K-12 reform is *system wide change* including 1) *governance and management*, 2) *teacher quality*, and 3) *student learning*.”

**Kauffman Foundation, Margo Quiriconi**

“By creating the right type of *learning environment* and by using strategies we will achieve our goal of the Kansas City Metro area schools producing students well-prepared in math and science.”

**Knowledge Works Foundation, Debbie Howard**

“We don’t just give money and walk away. We work on the ground, hand in hand with our grantees helping them implement their own plan for change.”

[From the foundation’s website]

“Grounded in the belief that learning is about relationships, the Transformation encourages *teacher, community, and student engagement*, placing the power for change in the hands of those who can make it happen.”

[From OHSTI Theory of Change draft document]

“In our Ohio High School Transformation Initiative, we promote effective educational policies, practices, and systemic improvements in Ohio by:

- 1) *Supporting/enabling communities* to create and improve educational institutions and learning environments
- 2) *Engaging communities* in effective education planning
- 3) *Aligning and leveraging* public and private *resources*

- 4) Advocating to *enact legislative change* and advance administrative practices that improve Ohio's education policies
- 5) Translating experience, data, and research-based theory and practice into effective action
- 6) Providing *skill-and capacity-building* for adults *and* students in support of educational change."

**Lumina Foundation for Education, Jill Kramer**

"We made grants to high schools that mainly fell into one initiative to expand AP/IB/dual enrollment (expanding college credit enrollment in high school) as a strategy to promote access to post-secondary education. Schools could use the funds for professional development, curriculum alignment, or direct support for students (for example paying test fees for AP exams, etc.)."

**Prudential Foundation, Lata Reddy**

"We take a *holistic approach* based on the idea that the more *supports* children can have, the more likely children are to succeed. Hence the funding we do in early childhood, *school leadership, and community engagement.*"

**State Farm Companies Foundation, Lonnie Smith**

"Our whole theory of action, overarching all of our funding is to improve student achievement at the core. We view this as being a work force issue. In viewing it that way, we've devised three different categories that hone in on and impact student achievement and also, in the process, address the achievement gap."

**Time Warner Inc., Lisa Dolberry Hancock**

"At the end of the day, what we want to do is help improve student outcomes and we want to increase the college-going rate among underserved young people by providing them with the skills they need to make successful transitions between middle school and high school and high school to college. The notion that out of school time is a space that young people could use opportunities to enhance learning that they might not receive during school time, especially in underserved communities, explains why our two portfolios of investment, Aim High and Media & Creative Arts, focus on out-of-school time."

**Wallace Foundation, Richard Laine**

"The premise to our theory is that we're betting that *leadership* is a major leverage point for change across districts and states. The only way this can happen is if we define leadership and the conditions so we need to invest in training leaders differently AND the conditions in which they operate. We would make the argument that you need to work at multiple levels. So we invest at both the state and district level and focus our grantees on both the training side and conditions side."

**Walton Family Foundation, Kathy Smith**

"Our theory of action is to create *high-quality educational options* for K-12 students. If you create higher opportunity for students, then you get students who are 'college ready' or ready for work in an area they're interested in."

**Washington Mutual, Marc Frazer**

"The theory of action behind funding the New Teacher Project and supporting the National Board Certification is that if we *help teachers achieve their goals*, students will reap the benefits. Regarding

our investments in category F (integrated systems...) the theory is that the leaders who govern those systems need to be working in partnership; college entrance requirements should bear some resemblance to high school exit requirements. *Alignment* is key. A challenge is getting the *business community* interested.”

## **V. Major Successes**

Interviewees provided a variety of examples from their funding initiatives as evidence of success that touched on improving arts, developing leaders more effective educators, creating new paths to college and new schools, providing scholarships, and fostering service learning. That said, with few exceptions, foundations have very little evidence of success that is based on rigorous evaluation.

The following excerpts from a sample of interviews provide additional insights into the major successes identified by each foundation:

### **Bank of America Foundation, Andrew Plepler**

“I think our relationship with the New York City public schools (from what the school system tells us) in its ability to fund and sustain arts education for K-12 public school students has been a big success.”

### **Broad Foundation, Kevin Hall**

“I think we’ve had the best success around our leadership programs. There are probably 14-15 superintendents who are graduates of our program and now in urban districts.”

### **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2004 Annual Report**

Successes include “opening new paths to college through expansion of early college high schools, continuing progress in urban districts (New York City, Oakland and Chicago), urging local leaders to prepare all students for success, and supporting dynamic new schools across the country.” The foundation is also confident that almost all of the nearly 1,000 new schools sponsored will be breakthrough performers and will function better than previous options.

### **GE Foundation, Kelli Wells**

“We saw change within the schools. We’ve taken low-income students and focused their environment on the next step – college. The rates of students going to college did go up in the schools we supported.”

### **George Gund Foundation, Ann Mullin**

“A number of the high schools have managed to physically and emotionally do it – they have taken the steps to make their schools into smaller learning units. The day to day, how they work still requires attention, but simply having done it as a community is a big success.”

### **Knowledge Works Foundation, Debbie Howard**

“The establishment of our schools is the first level of major success. Six new Early College high schools across the state of Ohio, the oldest of them is three years old and in their second year, they had students take the Ohio graduation test and over 90% of them passed the test on their first try –

and these had been traditionally low performing, urban students. We have also seen the community become involved, businesses, and parents, in a way that they haven't been in a long time."

**Lumina Foundation for Education, Jill Kramer**

"We had 14 schools and they more than doubled the classes offered as well as the number of students taking the courses in the three years of the grant." The foundation will be completing an evaluation in January 2006.

**Prudential Foundation, Lata Reddy**

"We're so new to high school reform that our successes are only anecdotal at this point."

**State Farm Companies Foundation, Lonnie Smith**

"We've been able to connect our funding in education (service learning) to our fair business result. We're addressing a community need with our service learning (for example, teen driving accidents) so we're addressing a societal issue and reducing claims but more importantly, student achievement is improved in the process."

**Time Warner Inc., Lisa D. Hancock**

"It is really too soon to talk about major successes since we just made grants in June and July of 2005 based on the new focus that came out of the planning in 2004."

**Wallace Foundation, Richard Laine**

"We've learned that the focus of the first few years of our initiatives was training people, but not addressing the conditions into which they were going. Now we're trying to do both to enable better trained leaders (including teachers) to behave differently in better conditions that will get better results for all kids."

**Walton Family Foundation, Kathy Smith**

"From a philanthropic standpoint, the number of charter schools we've helped to exist and the number of scholarship programs we've helped – families have been influenced in a positive way with immediate impact in their lives."

## **VI. Major Challenges**

Three major themes arose out of the comments from program officers about the challenges they face in improving high schools. In general, program officers expressed frustration about the entrenched nature of the education system, a painful lesson learned several years ago by the Annenberg Foundation's Challenge Grants,<sup>13</sup> or the difficulty of convincing stakeholders that high school reform requires urgent attention and significant investment. Related to this challenge is the issue that change in education occurs slowly. As a result, stakeholders' perception, according to some program officers interviewed, is that high school reform has been tried and failed even when progress is being made.

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<sup>13</sup> Hess, Frederick (October 2005). "Introduction." In Hess (editor), *With the Best of Intentions: How Philanthropy Is Reshaping K-12 Education*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Publishing Group.

Finally, some program officers—echoing Frumkin (2005)<sup>14</sup>—said that one of the biggest challenges high school reformers face is sustaining and replicating successes, especially given the high rate of turnover among school and district leaders.

The following excerpts (and in some cases, summaries) from a sample of interviews provide additional insights into the major challenges identified by each:

**Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

Lessons learned from major challenges in the past year include the following: “1) Failing high schools are very difficult to turn around – the worst should be closed/replaced; 2) System level support for improvement is vital; 3) Improving curriculum and instruction may be even more important than supportive structures; and 4) School, district, and state leadership are vital to college bound expectations into actions.”

**Broad Foundation, Kevin Hall**

“Change is relatively slow moving in this sector, people are scared of change, and there’s not a clear path yet for people. Additionally, as a country, we don’t realize how dire the situation is yet.”

**Carnegie Corporation, Connie Warren**

Major challenges have been 1) the difficulty in getting people to understand what district reform really means; that it doesn’t just mean schools within the district, but also restructuring how the district manages itself; 2) the deeply embedded and entwined inequities within school districts; and 3) the extent to which school districts think they can do it themselves and can resist partnerships.

**Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bruno Manno**

“All the challenges are related to the relatively intractable nature of the bureaucracy called public education and its unwillingness to re-invent itself especially as that relates to focusing on meeting the needs of the kids and not those it employs.”

**GE Foundation, Kelli Wells**

“One challenge we faced was ‘how do you have replication?’ How do you take this and put it at another school and have a success again? This is what contributed to our refined focus since the end of 2004. Now we’re working at a district level.”

**George Gund Foundation, Ann Mullin**

“Right now, the way high school reform has been implemented it has been an incremental change, not a wholesale change. The hope is that the incremental change will lead to wholesale change, but there’s such urgency to address the needs and ways our schools are educating our children that the incremental change sometimes seems impractical.”

**Knowledge Works Foundation, Debbie Howard**

“The system itself presents a challenge. The schools we’re working with were organized for efficiency, not necessarily effectiveness of instruction, and these are schools/systems that are over

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<sup>14</sup> Frumkin, Peter (April 25, 2005). “Strategic Giving and Public School Reform: Three Challenges.” Prepared for American Enterprise Institute Conference *With the Best of Intentions: Lessons Learned in K-12 Education Philanthropy*. Available at [www.aci.org/event959](http://www.aci.org/event959).

100 years old so there is a lot of tradition there. Getting people to envision operating in a way that they have never operated, never experienced, and never seen before – that’s difficult for administrators, teachers, parents, and students.”

**Lumina Foundation for Education, Jill Kramer**

“Three challenges come to mind. First, turnover: you might start the program with a particular teacher, counselor or administrator who is the project champion and if they leave, you lose that leadership and energy. Next, some in the community had an attitude that if it was a poorer school the kids there couldn’t take AP classes. Finally, we worked with all the schools in Indiana’s district, and we had money to give to all the schools if they came up with a meritorious application and two or four didn’t even apply.”

**Prudential Foundation, Lata Reddy**

“We’ve observed that there’s a communications challenge in terms of conveying the urgency to the public at large. Two other challenges include resistance within the school culture, and the competing priorities within any given district.”

**State Farm Companies Foundation, Lonnie Smith**

“Sometimes the challenge is getting people to see why this is so important or critical. Really conveying that this is a work force issue, really communicating the ‘so what?’”

**Time Warner Inc., Lisa D. Hancock**

”For the current grants (which were fairly large 2 year grants) it may be too soon to talk about significant challenges. We haven’t even gotten the first interim report from organizations yet.”

**Wallace Foundation, Richard Laine**

“Beyond traditional practices, labor contracts, etc., there are some pretty big hurdles out there.”

**Walton Family Foundation, Kathy Smith**

“Any work in education is a challenge. It’s hard to know when you have a number of interventions which of them has made the impact. Additionally, transferring a successful program to another district isn’t always a guarantee of success. The challenge is finding something that is both successful and sustainable.”

**Washington Mutual, Marc Frazer**

“This issue of school reform has been around a long time and we need a new way to break through and get business people involved.”

## **VII. Future Emphasis and Strategy**

Program officers were asked whether their foundation was planning to maintain, increase, or decrease its emphasis on high school improvement as well as whether the foundation was maintaining or changing its funding priorities and strategies in the near future. As the following two tables show, almost all foundations studied plan to maintain their current emphasis, priorities, and strategies on high school improvement. Five foundations—GE, Lumina, Prudential, Wallace, and Walton—plan to increase their emphasis.

***Emphasis on High School Reform***

<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Maintain Emphasis</b>	<b>Decrease Emphasis</b>	<b>Increase Emphasis</b>
Annenberg	X		
Bank of America	X <sup>15</sup>		
Broad	X		
Carnegie Corporation	X		
Annie E. Casey	X		
Bill & Melinda Gates	X		
GE Fund			X
George Gund	X		
Kauffman	X <sup>16</sup>		
Knowledge Works	X		
Lumina			X <sup>17</sup>
Prudential			X
State Farm	X <sup>18</sup>		
Time Warner Inc.			<sup>19</sup>
Wallace			X
Walton			X
Washington Mutual	X		

<sup>15</sup> Bank of America Foundation does not invest heavily in the area of high school reform, but the funding that might fall into this area will likely be maintained.

<sup>16</sup> Kauffman considers high school reform part of its overarching initiative to improve math and science education, although the foundation has joined with the National Governors Association on its National High School initiative.

<sup>17</sup> For its second three-year term, the Lumina Foundation for Education has expanded its initiative to expand college credit course enrollment from 14 to 34 schools within Indiana.

<sup>18</sup> Currently, State Farm Companies Foundation's philanthropic giving is under review by a third party, and it is difficult to determine the impact of the evaluation on funding for 2006.

<sup>19</sup> There were no grants made in 2004. Thus, there is an increase in funding for 2005. The budget for Time Warner Inc.'s grant making is a line item in the overall budget for the corporation. It has not yet gotten final word on the budget for 2006. A request was made for a comparison of education funding between 2003 and 2005.

***Priorities and Strategies for High School Reform***

<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Staying constant</b>	<b>Changing</b>	<b>How/Why</b>
Annenberg	X		
Bank of America	X		
Broad	X		
Carnegie Corporation	X		
Annie E. Casey	X		
Bill & Melinda Gates		X	Increase systemic focus and policy focus
GE Fund		X	Increase funds & incorporate a multi-faceted district focus
George Gund	X		
Kauffman	X		
Knowledge Works	X		
Lumina	X		
Prudential		To be determined	
State Farm	X		
Time Warner Inc.		To be determined	May include the addition of funding to organizations that do research & advocacy work around the achievement gap
Wallace	X		
Walton	X		
Washington Mutual	X		

**VI. Conclusion**

In 2002—the most recent year for which there is reliable data—foundations reported giving approximately \$1 billion to K-12 schooling (it is not possible to determine the amount given for high school improvement). This represents approximately 0.2% of total funding spent on K-12 education. “While it is vital to recognize how limited are foundation resources compared with the vast governmental expenditures on K-12 schooling,” writes Hess (2005),<sup>20</sup> “it would be a mistake to assume that education philanthropy is not influential.” Indeed, it seems clear that foundations have played a leading role in identifying high school improvement as an urgent need and providing funding for efforts—including research, programs, policy development, and advocacy—to improve high-school education and, ultimately, the achievement of high-school students. To be successful,

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<sup>20</sup> Hess, Frederick (October 2005). “Introduction.” In Hess (editor), *With the Best of Intentions: How Philanthropy Is Reshaping K-12 Education*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Publishing Group.

however, foundations will need to “leverage their private giving by attempting to redirect how future public expenditures are used.”<sup>21</sup>

One way to help foundations leverage their funding is to create an analytical framework that all foundations use to characterize their funding for high school improvement. The most significant overarching finding from this preliminary analysis of foundations’ investments in high school improvement is that there currently exists no means to characterize or analyze funding because each foundation uses different language and ways of describing their efforts. While differences should be expected when it comes to goals, theories of action, and strategies, it would be beneficial to all stakeholders involved if foundations could work with a common framework that would enable systematic analysis of successes and gaps in funding. The National High School Alliance, through its High School Funders Collaborative, appears uniquely positioned to develop such a framework and to work with participants to foster collaborations that will result in improved outcomes for youth.

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<sup>21</sup> Greene, Jay (April 25, 2005). “Buckets to the Sea: Why Philanthropy Isn’t Changing Schools, and How It Could.” Prepared for American Enterprise Institute Conference *With the Best of Intentions: Lessons Learned in K-12 Education Philanthropy*. Available at [www.aei.org/event959](http://www.aei.org/event959).