**Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

Lessons Learned

Since 2000, Gates Foundation worked across U.S. to expand opportunity through improved public education. They believe “all students deserve to graduate high school with the skills and knowledge that prepare them for college, career, and life.”

Invested nearly $**4 billion to improve high schools** and **provide scholarships to college**.

Made **significant progress in two areas**:

* calculating accurate graduation rates and
* strengthening high school graduation requirements

**Summary of findings:**

1. Small schools can improve school climate, grade progression, and student attendance. However, improved **graduation rates do not always mean greater student achievement.**
2. Requirements to succeed in today’s workplace and in college are the same – postsecondary education is required for a family wage job. A **high school diploma is not necessarily a college-ready diploma.**
3. Significantly improving student outcomes requires **a focus on teaching and learning inside the classroom.**
4. **Teacher and principal support is critical**, especially when redesigned schools change educators’ roles and responsibilities that adversely affect their colleagues.
5. Effective solutions and policies must travel well and be easily adapted to local conditions and circumstances.

**What’s next for Gates?**

**“Excellent teachers are critical to student success.”**

Set high expectations for ALL children and provide teachers and students with supports they need to succeed.

* **Five-year $335 million project to examine whether aspects of effective teaching can be systemically measured. Classroom management, clear objectives, diagnosing and correcting common student errors. ($$ to Helayne’s group.)**
* Teacher buy in is key to long-term reform.
* Unions can be nudged in the right direction (to stand for excellence in education instead of the status quo.
* Don’t overestimate the power of philanthropy. $600 billion a year is spent by various government entities on education. Gates focus shifted from “trying to buy systemic reform with school-level investments to leveraging private money in a way that redirects how public education dollars are spent.”