Letter from Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation CEO, Shelly Masur

This past year was a time of incredible growth for Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation (CDE Foundation). We are pleased to have added Adam Ebrahim (Director of Implementation for Collaboration in Common), Ed Honowitz (Project Director for the California Labor Management Initiative), and Wendy Dougherty (Senior Project Director for the Family Engagement in the Local Control Accountability Plan Process project) to our team. This growth reflects CDE Foundation’s increased levels of engagement on work that continues to support the extensive remodeling of California’s public education system.

In an educational landscape that often looks like a patchwork of organizations and public entities, CDE Foundation is proud to be a hub for our partners to come together on the critical issues impacting California’s students today.

Through the three projects highlighted in this 2016 Annual Report, we demonstrate how CDE Foundation’s specific ability to convene, communicate and catalyze allows us to act as a trusted partner on projects that are changing how California supports educators and schools as they work to meet the needs of all our students and prepare California’s young people to succeed in the 21st century, however that looks.

As 2017 begins with some uncertainty, we know that California will continue to lead the way in public education. We are excited to continue on the path that the state has set out on and find new ways to collaborate with partners to improve public education and support solutions that result in a strong and valued public education system that serves every student in California.

We could not do this work without the support of our partners and funders. We thank all of you for your continued support and commitment to the state’s students and future.

Please feel free to contact us with questions about our programs and projects, funding, or if you would be interested in a future partnership.

-- Shelly Masur, CEO
    Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation
    shelly@cdefoundation.org

Facebook.com/cdedfoundation   @CDEfoundation
Setting Our Path for the Future: WHAT WE BELIEVE

In 2016, Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation’s (CDE Foundation) leadership engaged in a strategic planning process to set the course for our longer-term future, with a focus on impact, growth, and sustainability.

CDE Foundation’s Board, the staff, as well as our partners provided input and the resulting Strategic Plan reflects our core value of collaboration. The Strategic Plan will help our organization’s staff and Board assess how our current and future work aligns with our Mission and how we work with our partners to convene, communicate, and catalyze to improve California’s public education system.

We would like to thank our staff, the Board of Directors and our stakeholders who contributed to this plan. We would also like to thank the David & Lucile Packard Foundation for generously supporting our planning process.

OUR VISION

Every public school in California has engaged students, effective teachers and leaders, enriching environments that allow every student to reach his or her full potential, and supportive communities that believe in the value and quality of public education.

OUR MISSION

CDE Foundation works as a trusted partner with state education leaders and entities to improve public education through creating, resourcing, and implementing solutions that result in a strong and valued public education system that serves every student in California.

OUR OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Collaborative • Nimble • Financially Responsible
Operating in all aspects with integrity, honesty, and transparency

WHO WE ARE

The CDE Foundation, founded in 2011, is anchored by a small professional staff; a highly engaged 11-member Board of Directors; a complement of highly skilled and effective consultants; strong partnerships with the California Department of Education (CDE) and other education coalition members; foundations and corporations, and a network of individuals, educational institutions, and nonprofits across the State of California who share our commitment to public education.

WHO WE SERVE

California State public education leaders and entities and California’s students

WHAT WE DO

CDE Foundation accomplishes its mission in three ways:
We CONVENE people and organizations to develop goals and innovative solutions to improve for our state’s public education system.
We COMMUNICATE to build awareness and access to key resources.
We CATALYZE new approaches to meet statewide goals, assembling and stewarding resources including philanthropic investments in the CDE and others, to invest in the development of innovative ideas and practices that can scale to advance public education.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2016-2019

1. Successfully execute on programmatic priorities demonstrating positive systemic changes in California’s public education system
2. Fortify CDE Foundation’s position as a trusted partner with the CDE and the education coalition
3. Scale staff, board and infrastructure to ensure core competencies critical to achieving CDE Foundation’s mission and vision
Convene, Communicate, Catalyze: 
HOW WE WORK

The Accountability and Continuous Improvement Task Force

“The report puts a lot of things we’ve been talking about all in one place in specific detail, it is very comprehensive...it really is going to be useful to the Board...For people who want to know what’s on the mind of state policymakers, this is a one-stop shop.”
- Mike Kirst, President of the CA State Board of Education

Beginning in 2015, CDE Foundation convened and supported a team of education leaders—known as the Superintendent’s Advisory Task Force on Accountability and Continuous Improvement (ACTIF) —with the ambitious goal of advising the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) Tom Torlakson on his recommendations to the State Board of Education for a new California system of public education accountability and continuous improvement.

With the support of the California Education Policy Fund, CDE Foundation was in the unique position to bring the Task Force together, having worked with a number of the partner organizations before through the Common Core Communications Campaign and the California Labor Management Initiative. By acting as the convener, CDE Foundation helped catalyze the Task Force’s work at just the right moment for the state. The significant updates to California’s public education system, the aligned leadership at the state level, and the unprecedented collaboration among the state level organizations provided a strong foundation for changing an outdated system to one that provides the kind information our schools need to continuously improve how they serve children.

The Task Force began meeting regularly in Fall 2015 and was co-chaired by Wes Smith, Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Executive Director, and Eric Heins, California Teachers Association (CTA) President. More than 25 additional key education leaders from throughout California were asked to serve on the task force by the SSPI.

After several in-person and virtual meetings and small group work sessions, the Task Force produced its final report: Preparing All Students for College, Career, Life, and Leadership in the 21st Century, which was presented to the California State Board of Education in May 2016.

By committing their time, passion, and wisdom to this work, Task Force members demonstrated the value of coming together and collaborating to recommend a new system that provides a dashboard of information to help make decisions that better serve all of California’s diverse students, families, and communities.

Recognizing the important role the Task Force could play in communicating why their recommendations would catalyze new ways of measuring school improvement, members offered their testimonies at the State Board meeting. Inspired by the Task Force’s work, the State Board of Education recently adopted the groundbreaking California School Dashboard.

Going forward, we are excited to reconvene this group in support of our new accountability and continuous improvement system. We are working to communicate how it will provide new information to parents, educators, and the public about schools and districts, and it will help the districts themselves identify strengths and weaknesses and make needed changes.
Convene, Communicate, Catalyze:
HOW WE WORK

The California Alliance for the Next Generation Science Standards

“Amazing resources. Loved the positive approach and guidance for administrators to approach this difficult topic. Thank you!”
-2016 CA STEM Symposium Attendee

In the ongoing work to improve public education and better prepare California’s students for their futures, the state adopted the California Next Generation Science Standards (CA-NGSS) in 2013. The state and a number of advocacy organizations recognized the effort needed to make science and engineering education a top priority in all districts and schools throughout California and shift to the CA-NGSS. With funding from Chevron and the Samueli Foundation, the California Alliance for NGSS (CA-NGSS) was created in response to this long-term goal.

On behalf of the CA-NGSS, CDE Foundation convenes leaders in education, business, government, and out-of-school networks to support the effective and timely implementation of the CA-NGSS.

Over 60 organizations are involved with the Alliance and represent the state’s major educational institutions, professional associations, unions and professional development providers, along with leading children’s advocates, science centers, businesses and foundations.

As the convening organization, CDE Foundation recognizes the diversity and richness in the roles each of these other organizations play in the successful implementation of the CA-NGSS. CDE Foundation works to move these organizations together and leverage their individual strengths to operate most effectively in the big picture of implementation.

This year, on behalf of the Alliance, CDE Foundation and our partners the California Science Teachers Association and Children Now, catalyzed the development of a set of of core messages to raise awareness, share information, and foster support for NGSS implementation among key stakeholder groups.

This work was accomplished by reviewing a number of currently available communication materials that address the implementation of NGSS in other states and the importance of STEM education. These materials were assessed for their tone and whether they fit into the narrative of the remodeling of California’s public education system. Messages were adapted and refined, and new messages were created to tell the story of California’s unique approach to implementation.

These messages were then reviewed by organizations representing key stakeholder groups and tested for their clarity and persuasiveness through surveys of parents, teachers, and administrators to ensure the messages resonated and prompted support for the CA-NGSS.

The result of this work is a set of Communications Toolkits that provide education stakeholders in California with ready-to-use and source materials to introduce and communicate the value and intention of the CA-NGSS and guide supporters in promoting the implementation of the CA-NGSS.

These four toolkits are intended to support increased and higher quality communications about CA-NGSS with teachers and principals, parents, and district leaders. Since their development, the toolkits have been shared broadly with educators at conferences, through email lists and social media, and in trainings.
Convene, Communicate, Catalyze: HOW WE WORK

Collaboration in Common

“This platform is really effective in organizing the collaborative work teams do every day, but it also creates a space for people across the state to work together around common challenges.”
-Collaboration in Common User

California educators—taking up the challenge of implementing updated standards, frameworks, and programs that support high-quality learning—are developing innovative approaches to teaching that meet the diverse needs of our state’s students. To build the capacity of educators across California, CDE Foundation, in partnership with the California Department of Education (CDE) with seed funding from the Gates Foundation, catalyzed the effort to build an online platform that would connect educators to resources and their colleagues.

After two years of research to better understand educators’ needs and seek and evaluate available technology platforms that could meet them, Declara was identified as the private partner. The result of this public-private partnership is the website and virtual platform Collaboration in Common (CiC).

To connect educators to new approaches, resources and their colleagues anywhere in the state, CiC allows individual educators, sites, districts, and counties to seek out or organize their own professional learning communities, improves communication and resource sharing within organizations, and acts as an open education resource hub that takes advantage of the content experts in our state.

Critical to the success of Collaboration in Common is the ongoing work to communicate and connect with districts, counties and organizations that are seeking out ways to bring their educators together around professional learning and resource sharing. Districts like Vista Unified in San Diego County and the California Department of Education’s Local Control and Accountability Plan Support Team are already on the platform organizing collaborative teams and curating resources to build support systems for other educators. Our ongoing partnerships with organizations like the California Teachers Association are also coming to bear on the success of CiC, demonstrating the strength and respect for CDE Foundation’s role as a convener.

Already, Collaboration in Common has nearly 300 Early Adopter educators onboarded. With the goal of being the virtual platform for professional learning, resource sharing and engagement for California educators, CiC is poised to launch to the public before the 2017-18 school year.
Thank you to our funders. We could not do this work without each and every one of you:
49ers Foundation
Blackboard
Boeing Corporation
California Education Policy Fund
California State University
Chevron
Comcast
Council of Chief State School Officers
David & Lucile Packard Foundation
Dirk & Charlene Kabecnell Foundation
First 5 California
Google
Heising-Simons Foundation
Hewlett Foundation
Northrup Grumman
S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation
Samueli Foundation
Sobrato Foundation
Stuart Foundation

**FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 REVENUE**

- Foundations - $1,307,421
- Fees - $1,443,786
- Corporations - $191,000
- Other - $1,117
- **$2,479,246***

*As the result of grants awarded in the prior fiscal year, revenue was less than expenses for Fiscal Year 2015-2016. The Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2016.*

**FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 EXPENSES**

- Professional Fees - $1,443,786
- Personnel - $494,163
- Materials & Supplies - $413,041
- Convenings & Conference Expenses - $388,573
- Travel - $95,970
- Operating Expenses - $20,693
- Insurance - $5,098
- **$2,861,324***