

# ROGERS FAMILY FOUNDATION

10 Clay Street, Suite 200  
Oakland, CA 94607

To All Our Grantee Partners:

In Fall 2017, the Rogers Family Foundation conducted its second [Grantee Perception Report](#) (GPR). Our team values the relationships we have built and the work we have done together. We greatly appreciate your time, honesty, and sincerity in sharing your candid thoughts and perceptions about the Foundation. It will only help us learn, grow, and strengthen the ways in which we can continue to support organizations and pursue partnerships committed to the highest level of achievement and excellence.

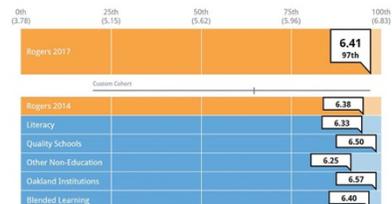
The Foundation entered this second GPR cycle knowing that the past three years have been a time of great change in which the Foundation adopted a new strategic plan, narrowed our fields of focus, and introduced new staff members to lead implementation of the work. The time was right to hear back from you and we knew from our first experience in 2014 that the GPR would give voice to our grantee partners.

As one of the Rogers Family Foundation grantees invited to participate, we wanted to be sure that we shared with you the [entirety of the survey results](#) and also highlight some immediate follow-up actions our team will be undertaking over the next few months. We received a 68% response rate, and remain humbled and impressed by your encouragement and willingness to be a critical friend in providing constructive feedback. Briefly, here are some of our key findings:

- We are proud that when grantees think of the Rogers Family Foundation the words that most come to mind are OAKLAND, Supportive, Engaged, and Innovative.
- Grantee partners continue to rate us high for our impact on and understanding of the local community, as well as for the depth of our understanding of grantee goals, strategies, and challenges.
- Grantee partners also rated us in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for advancing knowledge in the fields in which we work. This is especially true for our efforts in early literacy and blended personalized learning.
- We saw a dramatic decline with respect to supporting a grantee’s ability to sustain the work that we fund, falling from the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2014 to the 6<sup>th</sup> percentile. This is juxtaposed by exceptionally high ratings for the level of field-focused and comprehensive non-monetary assistance our team members provide to grantee partners. These are areas we want to dig into more deeply, and will be doing grantee listening sessions and outreach to continuously improve our practice.

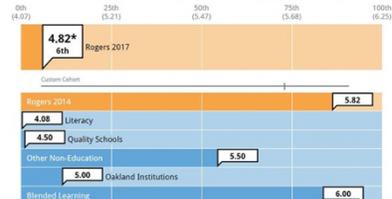
**“How well does the Foundation understand the local community in which you work?”**

1 = Limited understanding of the community, 7 = Regarded as an expert on the community



**“How much, if at all, did the Foundation improve your ability to sustain the work funded by this grant in the future?”**

1 = Did not improve ability, 7 = Substantially improved ability



- The strength and authenticity of our relationships with grantee and community partners is central to our mutual success. We take seriously the decline in ratings for funder-grantee relationships, clarity in communicating our goals and strategy, and the consistency of our communications. We have significant work to do in these categories, and have lined up action steps to better communicate about our work.
- Our grantee partners spend considerably less time on grants administration (proposal development, site visit preparation, reporting, etc.). We fall in the lower 10<sup>th</sup> percentile for grantee hours spent on funder requirements over the lifetime of their grant. We intend to keep it this way, and will continue to strive for opportunities to make our grantmaking operations efficient and accessible.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The Rogers Family Foundation team finds the feedback from the GPR extraordinarily helpful, particular the depth of ideas and suggestions provided in the comments section of the report. We will always view this process as a continuous improvement tool for making us more effective in our work. To that end, here are some immediate actions that you will be seeing from our team in the coming months:

- The Foundation's grants and program operations team will be hosting a set of convenings to share ideas we are considering for improving our grantee partner experience. We will also use these sessions to take input on grantee pain points and improvement ideas. For more information and to express interest in participating, please contact Bonnie Look, our Grants & Program Operations Manager, [blook@rogersfoundation.org](mailto:blook@rogersfoundation.org).
- Our investments in [blended and personalized learning](#) have been steady over the past three years, and our grantee feedback reinforces that consistency. In the coming weeks, we will be finalizing an in-house evaluation that reviews the work of our first cohort of seven schools. It will cover what we have learned, accomplished, and remain challenged by three years later. The report will also share our continued intentions to champion and invest in this initiative. For more information on the upcoming evaluation or to ensure you receive an electronic copy, please connect with Greg Klein, Senior Director for Innovation and Learning, [gklein@rogersfoundation.org](mailto:gklein@rogersfoundation.org).
- We recognize that our [quality schools strategy](#) is both broad and ambitious. Program Officer Sara Levine has been hard at work on tightening and honing its focus and we look forward to releasing an update on our quality schools strategy, tactics, and outcomes in the next two months. If you would like more information or have questions after reviewing the updated strategy, please connect with Sara at [slevine@rogersfoundation.org](mailto:slevine@rogersfoundation.org).
- For more than a decade, the Rogers Family Foundation has supported [early literacy](#) as a bellwether for long-term student success. Our goals have not changed, but we can do more to share updates on the status of this initiative. Program Officer Ryana Barbosa is actively engaged in preparing a "State of Early Literacy" progress report, and we look forward to sharing this in mid-2018. For questions regarding our work in early literacy, please contact Ry at [rbarbosa@rogersfoundation.org](mailto:rbarbosa@rogersfoundation.org).
- As evident in the GPR, our team and grantee partners mutually see the value and effectiveness in providing non-monetary assistance beyond the grant. Keeping the Foundation's capacity in mind, we are committed to looking for ways to intensify these opportunities whenever possible. One such improvement will be the re-introduction of a fee-free community room in our office space that honors our late founder T. Gary Rogers. When completed later this year, the room will facilitate grantee meetings and convenings. For more information, please connect with Senior Executive Assistant, Cynthia Suter, at [csuter@rogersfoundation.org](mailto:csuter@rogersfoundation.org).

- As we near the mid-point of our 2020 Oakland Education Strategy, we found making longer multi-year commitments and general operating grants as key tools deeply valued by grantee partners. GPR comments only further reinforce a desire to see us move further in this direction. You are always welcome to share your expectations with your program officers and to contact Executive Director Rhonnel Sotelo, [rsotelo@rogersfoundation.org](mailto:rsotelo@rogersfoundation.org), regarding the Foundation's overall grantmaking approach and tactics.

Thank you once again for your feedback. As always, please feel free to email/call either of us, or your primary Foundation contact, if you have questions or concerns regarding the GPR.

Sincerely



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