



AN OPEN LETTER: A VITAL OPPORTUNITY OF RE-EMERGENCE FOR EDUCATION

October 29, 2018

This month, we had the honor of serving on the review panel to evaluate proposals for *Pathway 2 Tomorrow's* Call for Proposals. The experience was powerful and reaffirmed what we all know about our education landscape today. Civil discourse is often lacking, but what we experienced was meaningful and illustrative of what is possible. We are a diverse set of leaders who are in no way abandoning our foundation but believe we need to cast a positive vision for education for future generations. The P2T review process was grounded in the belief that different perspectives coming together would refine our thinking so the ideas behind the proposals transform into actions to positively impact the path forward.

We are at a pivotal moment in education. As divides become more apparent, Pathway 2 Tomorrow (P2T) is inspiring fresh thinking and connecting an increasingly siloed landscape. Through P2T, individuals from all experiences and perspectives are committed to improving our education system and preparing our children for meaningful careers while maintaining high expectations for all.

As P2T prepares to announce the selected proposals -- and winners of a \$15,000 stipend to refine and expand on their solution -- it is important that we emphasize that the purpose of P2T extends beyond the awards themselves. It represents one avenue to once again make education relevant in the fabric of our communities and the importance of pulling together to leverage the relevance into impact.

P2T, to date, has demonstrated the value of bringing people together and leveraging our unique convictions to achieve further progress. It has reminded us of what's possible for our country when we engage in respectful discourse and work toward a common goal. P2T has acquired over 100 partners and supporters -- from all regions, roles, and political inclinations -- agreeing that we must shift our approach and commit to a newfound, locally responsive direction. P2T garnered 240 ideas from 33 states, representing both urban and rural communities, and many perspectives -- parents, entrepreneurs, elite researchers and education leaders.

The act of bringing a diverse set of individuals together was intentional and positioned each proposal for robust review through various lenses. The conversations were lively, the debates were respectful and the outcomes are valuable. While we represent a group of people who are working every day on improving education for our nation's students, we often don't know of the promising initiatives that are currently underway all over our country. P2T has helped us uncover these locally responsive solutions.

Both higher education and K-12 leaders must come together, in collaboration with private sector partners, to make aligned, substantive changes to our overall education system. These systemic, and likely disruptive, shifts must improve the skills of graduates, tying strategies to economic and workforce demands, and inform opportunities for further innovation. We must change how we think about education



and teach our children to think critically and problem solve on their own through student-centered and personalized approaches. We must reimagine the roles of educators and advocates to position education as a desirable career – training, supporting, and rewarding educators is a key component of progress. We will continue to steward our current coalitions, while recognizing that the tent must be broadened to encompass our students and families and to leverage the resources and relationships of the larger community for maximum impact.

The momentum we've built can continue to bridge the divides. Our way forward builds upon the foundational principles of autonomy, accountability, equity, and choice, while calling for more audacious ideas -- to disrupt the status quo and transform the existing system -- and for courageous leaders to accelerate progress and coalesce the next phase of the education movement. The process of idea generation and the themes that emerged from P2T's Call for Proposals clearly indicate that education remains a priority in the minds of Americans, and individuals at all levels are committed to finding solutions to guide the next phase. A new wave of relevancy is upon us, but it is contingent upon many voices and perspectives working in alignment again. The solutions will come, but only if we can leverage our commitment and inspire the commitment of others.

We are committed to rebuilding relationships and pushing the boundaries of education reform's history to find new horizons. We will demand of ourselves that we move beyond our tired, sometimes jaded perspectives, and encourage the same of others. We have shown, personally, that there is value in reinventing and reigniting the fuel that working together inspires and it starts with passion, commitment, and courage. We believe that as Americans, we will pull together and harness our unique convictions for what is possible for our next generation.

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