



## Education Transformation

The McCune Charitable Foundation holds equity as a core value, and sees equitable access to engaging and culturally relevant education as a key component of thriving, prosperous communities. New Mexico is blessed to be home to diverse cultures, languages, and traditions that make learning and growing up here in the 21st century an experience that is uniquely rooted in place and community. This is an asset that was unfortunately ignored by 20th century models of education, but is beginning to be recognized now.

As a result of Judge Sarah Singleton's 2018 ruling on the *Yazzie/Martinez v State of New Mexico* lawsuit, many opportunities to transform the education system in New Mexico have taken shape. Momentum and energy are building as more voices become involved in this conversation. The Foundation will prioritize support for locally designed collaborative and community-responsive efforts that address educational inequities for BIPOC students, English language learners, students with disabilities and low-income students.

The Covid-19 pandemic has momentarily expanded thinking of where and how education happens, and what is possible beyond the traditional indoor classroom setting. While the pandemic brought significant challenges and disruptions to the educational experience for teachers, students, and their families, it also shed light on ways in which outdoor learning is meaningful and significantly contributes to social, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. The Foundation sees expanding equitable access to such opportunities as particularly relevant at this time and in the years to come as we recover and heal.

*BIPOC : Black, Indigenous, and People of Color*

## Education Transformation Key Leverage Points

**Early Childhood Development** – In support of this leverage point, the Foundation will favor proposals that drive the development of innovative, culturally responsive and multilingual early childhood education and wellbeing programming. Collaborative approaches to this work, especially efforts that leverage existing work or connect low-income families to other supportive services, are especially compelling, as are those that support peer-to-peer family engagement. The Foundation also prioritizes efforts to educate the public and lawmakers about the benefits of equitable and accessible early childhood education and wellbeing programs.

**School leadership development** – Leadership is key to the success of any school. In the most successful schools, that leadership extends beyond the administration and includes teachers in the classroom. As more equitable and inclusive models emerge, a growing pool of talented and motivated teachers will be key to the successes of even the most well-conceived approaches to education. The Foundation prioritizes programs and organizations that provide opportunities for professional development and creative career advancement for teachers and administrators.

**Locally designed approaches and multilingual educational opportunities** – While the Foundation appreciates the contributions and implementation of national models in our state, it recognizes that education must be responsive to the communities it serves. Programs and educational approaches that are developed in New Mexico to address New Mexico-specific challenges and that respectfully build on the cultural assets of our state are prioritized for funding.

Multilingual educational opportunities also offer a unique benefit of living in a “majority minority” state with large populations for whom English is a second language. Students in multilingual learning environments have certain advantages over classrooms where only one language is used. New Mexico’s multilingual capabilities, including a broad range of Native languages, provide our state with unique educational opportunities.

**Equitable systems development** is critical for the future of education in New Mexico, especially with a wide spectrum of approaches being proposed to transform educational outcomes in our state. This landscape can be confusing to both community members and lawmakers. The

Foundation prioritizes programs and organizations that demystify education transformation policy and practices and provide supportive spaces for community members to get involved and inform change, and facilitate broader interest in education around the state.

**Afterschool and in-school supplemental programs** will be considered for funding *only if the work is aligned with the foundation’s broader education transformation goals*. In this area there is a strong interest in supporting equitable access to culturally relevant, place-based outdoor learning experiences that are interdisciplinary and that recognize diverse community experts. Organizations that provide support for teachers and spaces for communities of practice in this work are of particular interest, as are programs that go beyond conventional STEM-based curriculum to offer a more holistic multidisciplinary approach that brings in local history, languages, humanities, arts, and health. Priority will be given to programs that connect to broader, community based initiatives or that reflect deeper levels of coordination among groups serving the same populations.