At GE, whether we’re leading the way in aviation or appliances, wind power or water, rail or real estate, we always keep our attention trained on our values: our imagination and clear thinking, our expertise and inclusiveness, and our external focus—our innate drive to look beyond our four corporate walls to take on some of the world’s toughest problems.

Here at GE Foundation, we’ve brought our strengths as a corporation into the philanthropic arena. We’re excited to share with you our signature work in public education, Developing Futures™ in Education. We think this GE corporate citizenship program is a critical initiative for our nation—because we know that a quality education is the single most important factor in determining future success.

Please read on and see how this remarkable program works. A quality education ushers in a lifetime of opportunity. We invite you to join us in this crucial conversation and learn how, together, we can create even more opportunity.

Robert Corcoran  
President & Chairman  
GE Foundation

Kelli List Wells  
Director, U.S. Education  
GE Foundation

An Introduction

To school districts in need of change and reform, GE Foundation offers the same processes and ideas that have made GE such a successful enterprise—that’s the igniting spark behind Developing Futures™.

Launched in 2005, Developing Futures™ in Education offers a clear strategy and high-impact model for reform. In six school districts across our nation, the initiative has used a unique “Three-pronged Approach” to support and accelerate the change process. This approach implements science and math initiatives while using best business practices to manage change and build internal management capacity. For each district, the approach has been customized to meet the specific needs of that particular school district. A GE Management Toolkit guides districts through the change process, with proven strategies and tactics that keep an initiative on course.

This brochure offers a quick snapshot of the important methods and achievements of Developing Futures™. Our signature document, The GE Foundation Developing Futures: A Framework for Advancing the National Education Reform Initiative, explains in greater detail how the initiative works—and why.

If your corporation, philanthropic institution or school district is interested in increasing student achievement and accelerating systemic change, we invite you to read the Framework in its entirety. Please visit www.ge.com/foundation.
The strategy of Developing Futures™ is to apply proven GE business practices and a philosophy of systemic change to America’s education challenges. The initiative’s key premise was that improvements in math and science achievements were intertwined with school district management capacity. Lasting curriculum improvements demanded a culture of collaboration, innovation, quality improvement and accountability. Only with such improvements in place could students gain the knowledge and skills so critical to college readiness and lifelong success.

With an investment of nearly $150 million, the program began with a long-term commitment to seven urban districts: Louisville, KY; Cincinnati, OH; Stamford, CT; Erie, PA; Atlanta, GA; New York, NY; Milwaukee, WI. Each of the seven cities is home to a significant GE business presence. This allows for strong local support ranging from dedicated volunteers (more than 1,600 GE volunteers total) to more targeted contributions of specific GE expertise (such as in information technology or facilities management) from GE’s highly recognized training resources.

Taking Up the Challenge

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Developing Futures™ has gone to work where the challenges are toughest—and the rewards are the greatest. Across the nation, in districts small and large, we’ve made substantive change for school districts that serve a few thousand students—or more than a million.

How We Work

Districts must commit to a collaborative process of decision-making that engages all internal and external stakeholders: district leaders and administrators, teachers, their professional organizations, parents, students and the community. GE reinforces this collaboration by leveraging the professional capacity of GE executives and volunteers, as well as outside experts and state and national leaders. Through collaboration with a diverse group of stakeholders and support organizations, the learning network truly is greater than the sum of its parts.

We are driven by Six Sigma, a process management protocol integral to GE’s culture. From its roots as a rigorous statistical quality control mechanism, Six Sigma has become a means of improving performance and quality for any process in an enterprise, from financial to operational. In Developing Futures™, this methodology is evident in grant management aspects as well as in the building of management capacity within the districts themselves. The GE Foundation—in partnership with the GE businesses—has invested in extensive Six Sigma training for key groups at each of the Developing Futures™ district sites.

The GE Foundation has guiding principles and common strategic elements, but we make a significant investment in listening and learning, in order to apply and modify concepts appropriately. The results of adapting GE tools have proven significant. Common language has evolved, as well as a common set of guidelines for decision-making.

In most districts, this includes: a full-time GE program manager to coordinate and facilitate the initiative, champion the program and work closely with the superintendent; a full-time district resource person to work with the program manager to manage the grant; a full-time GE employee who serves as the liaison to the larger GE community and program manager of all grant-related activities; a teacher liaison; and a district liaison. This structure facilitates buy-in early on, encourages smoother transitions as changes take place in the districts and embeds a performance-driven culture.

Where We Work

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Collaboration is Key to the Change Management Process.

We Invest Deeply in Accountability Systems.

We Adapt to Priorities of the Community.

We Nurture a Robust Management Structure.
The GE Foundation Three-pronged Approach

The Three-pronged Approach is successful because the three focus areas work together, leading to sustainable systemic change. While supporting district initiatives in science and math, GE Foundation works to build internal management capacity and develop leadership. Simultaneously, efforts to manage change are implemented by engaging constituents and cultivating a culture of collaboration.

MANAGING THE SYSTEMIC CHANGE PROCESS

1. Constituency Engagement
   In order for school districts to make positive changes, teacher organizations, school boards and managers need to share expectations, strategic direction and a common vision. Collaboration and learning from each other help build and maintain support for change.

   Internal Collaboration:
   The diverse groups within a school district—the school board, teacher organizations, the superintendent and administrator organizations—must all work together with the same vision and goals for change.

   External Collaboration:
   When reform initiatives are being planned and implemented, the community becomes a crucial partner in supporting that change and moving the initiative forward.

2. Leadership & Professional Development
   Few factors are as crucial to students’ success as their access to effective teachers and leaders. Professional development programs provide teachers and leaders with the skills they need to drive student achievement and enact district-wide improvements.

3. GE Volunteer Engagement
   A cornerstone of GE’s work is its determination to leverage the professional capacity of its executives and staff to support educational reform and encourage innovation.

4. Management Capacity
   To help school administrators quickly identify and overcome challenges, GE introduced school district officials to GE management tools and courses, taking time to help local officials customize the corporation’s practices to their specific district needs.

BUILDING INTERNAL MANAGEMENT CAPACITY & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

5. Competitive Standards & Curriculum Alignment
   Policymakers across the United States recognize the importance of establishing and attaining high standards. School officials must develop an understanding of best academic standards—both nationally and internationally.

6. Assessment & Evaluation
   Like many corporations, GE recognizes the importance of using good data and precise measurements to assess and evaluate performance. GE Foundation provides technical assistance to school districts on their assessment and evaluation systems to help districts make continuous improvements.

SUPPORTING DISTRICT MATH & SCIENCE INITIATIVES

On the Ground: Implementing Developing Futures™ in Education
GE Process Management Toolkit

Developing Futures™ offers a distinctive contribution to the education reform movement by sharing with educators GE's corporate experiences in accelerating and scaling up change. Process Management tools that will assist school districts include:

Section 1: Continuous Improvement & Accountability Tools

**SIX SIGMA TOOL**
A proven and powerful method for ensuring quality. Six Sigma uses five linking steps throughout any operation or process to monitor and deliver excellence: define, measure, analyze, improve, control (DMAIC).

**TOLLGATE REVIEWS**
This process, part of a continuous-improvement effort, allows teams to manage accountability at specific milestones: The team makes a presentation summarizing its work, and reviewers ask questions, probe for more detail and then make decisions about next steps.

**RED/YELLOW/GREEN TRACKING TOOL**
This template, used as part of a Tollgate Review, is a kind of progress report that monitors and assesses the completion of a project. The tool helps team members see that their projects are on target, on time and under budget.

**GE WORKOUT**
This process-improvement tool is used to sort out a project’s key steps in order to reduce the number of steps it takes to complete a task. The goal is to eliminate waste and improve organizational efficiencies so problems can be more quickly solved.

Section 2: Accelerating Change Processes

**NEW MANAGER ASSIMILATION PROCESS**
A change in management can slow down productivity as team members adapt to a new manager’s style and expectations. This tool helps to open communication channels and provides a forum for open discussions of issues, questions and concerns, thus smoothing out the transition process.

**CHANGE ACCELERATION PROCESS**
This process is to ensure buy-in from team members who are being asked to accept and deal with a change. Its goal is to help leaders create a shared understanding of the need for the change so team members can embrace the new model and move forward with it.

Section 3: Functional Efficiencies

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROCESS**
A dynamic IT procedure for school systems uses the Six Sigma DMAIC process to help define and improve IT needs: define, measure, analyze, improve, control.

**HUMAN RESOURCE PROCESS**
To support a district’s efforts to staff schools with highly qualified teachers, an effective HR system should employ the Six Sigma DMAIC process, while ensuring that key players are contributing to the assessments. The New Manager Assimilation Process (see above) helps leaders align goals and expectations with their teams.

**FACILITIES MANAGEMENT PROCESS**
In facilities management, as in other operations in a school system, the Six Sigma DMAIC process is key in determining what physical environment is most conducive to the learning process—and in identifying cost-saving practices that will yield best solutions.
In 2006, the superintendent of Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) contacted the local GE business for technical assistance to address facilities management challenges: the average age of each building in the district was more than 65 years. A GE facilities consultant verified that 83 percent of the schools needed to be either refurbished or rebuilt. A team consisting of the local GE business engineer, the district director of facilities and the appointed district architect began meeting on a regular basis, driving the project forward quickly, effectively and efficiently. The consultant implemented a GE process called Quick Market Intelligence (QMI) that allowed contractors, school administrators and facilities managers to collaborate more closely and present decisions to the board of education. Several GE volunteers with Six Sigma black belts were selected to coach school personnel on solving engineering problems. As a result of GE’s technical assistance and adaptation of process-management tools in standardization and bulk-purchasing program for equipment, CPS saved millions of dollars. In fact, the savings derived from GE’s cost-saving measures were so significant that the district was able to build an additional school.

GE staff’s evaluation of effectiveness in the district’s human resources department—which included training at a GE facility—resulted in a significantly refined hiring process. The stakeholders also were trained on a standard GE management resource tool, the New Manager Assimilation Process. This allows a team and its leader to align expectations, as well as identify and avoid potential roadblocks. Given the degree of change throughout the Stamford district, these sessions were viewed as a crucial opportunity to develop a sense of trust within the district’s new leadership team.
acknowledgements

GE Foundation Developing Futures™: A Framework for Advancing the National Education Reform Agenda reflects the vision, strength and collaboration of many individuals and organizations. For a complete list of our contributors, please see www.ge.com/foundation.

Special recognition goes to the students, parents, superintendents, teacher organizations and staff of our participating districts, whose commitment to the GE Foundation’s concept of collaboration among key stakeholders helped us realize and refine many of the founding principles of the Developing Futures™ initiative. We believe our engagement has played a key role in creating stronger school districts; we know that this initiative taught GE Foundation how to be a more effective, responsive partner in the education reform initiative. Our thanks to everyone who participated in this bold venture.

The Developing Futures™ project is not about a corporation advising school districts from afar. GE Foundation has sent its managers and other employees with expertise in various fields into school systems to help districts make changes aimed at improving many aspects of how schools operate and what students learn. One example of this corporate on-the-ground engagement is taking place in Erie, where members of GE Transportation’s IT Department have helped the district build a new IT system, using the GE performance-monitoring system known as Six Sigma. The new infrastructure integrates a Web-based curriculum and a student information system that, for the first time in the district’s history, gives teachers access to real-time data around the clock. In addition to its data-access benefits, the new system will save the district fiscal resources.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF ERIE, PA
ERIE, PA

23 SCHOOLS 12,500 STUDENTS