



Date: February 19, 2019

To: Board of Directors

Submitted By: Kevin Sved, CEO & James Dent, CAO

Subject: Organizational Priority: Develop and Pilot External Services to Scale Impact

Agenda Item Type: Informational, Discussion

Objective(s):

- 1) The Board will become familiar with the model providing partnership between Wonderful Prep and Navigator Schools
- 2) The Board will become familiar with other “light touch” dissemination projects with school districts
- 3) The Board will be better prepared to provide feedback and decision-making regarding upcoming decisions around launching a Level 2 pilot model provider backed by the New Schools Venture Fund.

Overview

As stated in our mission, Navigator is committed to “developing top tier teams of educators”. Since our founding, Navigator has striven to provide a replicable school model by supporting the development and dissemination of best practices both internally and externally. We have been able to create two incredibly high performing schools in two different communities and we believe that the use of our model could impact the lives of many more children through collaboration.

Over the years we have hosted hundreds of educators and community members to promote innovation in education. Partnering with districts within our area of geographic focus is one of three impact strategies named in Navigator’s strategic plan. In 2018-19, Navigator has successfully piloted external support to Wonderful Prep. As growth in California is likely to get more difficult, expanding external support services is a pathway to expand Navigator’s impact. We are seeking to build board engagement and support in deepening the external support pilot efforts by applying for a New School Venture Fund grant. The grant will increase Navigator’s impact and influence as an organization while at the same time helping staff codify best practices on our own campuses.

Wonderful Prep Update

Navigator began providing external support to Wonderful Prep in July 2018, with a focus on supporting K-5 math. After five months of support, quantitative and qualitative data demonstrate the powerful impact that Navigator has had on student and teacher outcomes at Wonderful College Prep Academy (WCPA). Teachers and leaders attribute strong improvement in the schools’ academic program and school culture to Navigator’s model and training.

At the beginning of this year, WCPA made a commitment to implement components of the Navigator model including the addition of small-group instruction and the adoption of school-wide behavior

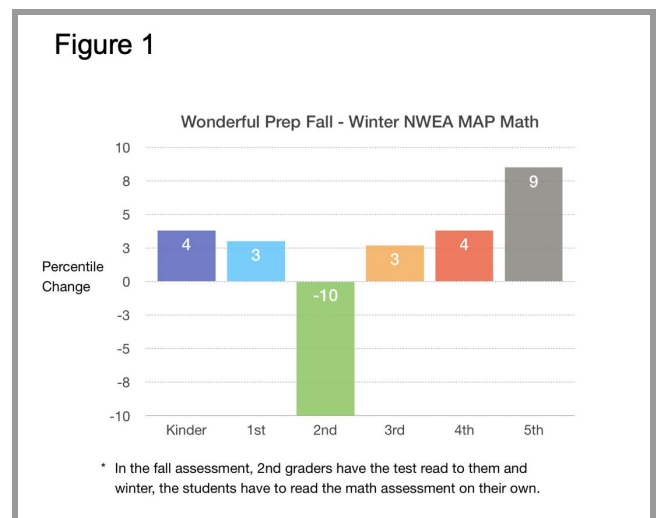
expectations. They have applied our rigorous math assessment plan, including formative and summative tests, and they are using the same programs we use for our interventions. WCPA has begun to implement the same blended learning software with the same weekly goal structure used in our schools. Navigator has spent a total of eight days on site, and the rate of improvement has been impressive. On Navigator's most recent visit in January, it was clear that the model was well on its way to showing exciting results. Classrooms were calm and rigorous, instructional strategies were being implemented across grade levels, and the implementation of Navigator coaching was evident across the school. Visiting Navigator staff reported feeling as if they were in HPS and GPS classrooms, except for the colors of the uniforms.

“I observed the Navigator team quickly build a strong, supportive adult culture among Wonderful teachers focused on one objective – better teaching in service of our students’ learning. The culture in sessions was safe for teachers, new and experienced, to be vulnerable and take massive risks by practicing with their newest colleagues. Navigator leaders modeled for me how to reimagine professional development sessions to be teacher-oriented, practice-centered, and joyful.”

- Justin Steiner
WCPA Principal

Academic Impact

Navigator has focused on supporting Wonderful Prep's math program in grades K-5 since August of 2018. Recently, Wonderful College Prep Academy administered the second round of NWEA MAP testing, a normed assessment that measures growth three times annually. Our goal for math improvement for the year was a five percentile point gain. After just four months, five of six elementary grades showed an average gain of 4.6 percentile points with all five grades on track to meet or exceed the goal (Figure 1). The growth in 2018-19 is double the growth that the school saw in 2017-18. The growth in percentile indicates that Wonderful Prep students are growing at a faster rate than their nationally normed cohort. Second grade was the anomaly, as scores dropped precipitously. One likely reason is that the winter administration is the first time students are required to read the math problems on their own. This underscores a greater issue with reading at WCPA. Overall, the schools' reading percentile scores dropped from fall to winter in most grades. In our classroom observations in October and January, it was clear that WCPA needs support in the implementation of reading centers.



Analysis

As these are the same students that had impressive math gains, it caused us to question why reading scores dropped. While our focus had been in mathematics, our visit in January helped us understand the issue. It was clear that there was inconsistency in the small group instruction in ELA classrooms. At our January visit, WCPA leadership used Navigator professional development materials to train their ELA teachers in reading fluency in K-2 while 3-5 focused on guided reading and student discussion. At the

same time, Navigator worked with the math team and continued the sequence of development planned for the year. It was the first time that WCPA used our training modules and both trainings were well received based on teacher evaluations. WCPA then requested that we begin supporting their reading program in addition to math this school year. This provides an opportunity to continue our support of WCPA into 2019-20 school year.

One of our greatest learning with the WCPA partnership is that we should focus on reading instruction first. Reading helps students understand mathematics and if students aren't proficient readers we predict the math gains will plateau.

Staff Impact

Navigator has not just focused on improving math instruction and building strong school and classroom culture. We have also actively developed the school leaders at WCPA to become effective instructional coaches, to lead data-driven schools and to perform effective classroom walkthroughs. To date, Navigator has held over two dozen teacher and leader professional development sessions covering a wide-range of topics from classroom procedures and routines to building effective assessments and increasing instructional rigor. In each case, teacher surveys have shown high satisfaction rates with the quality and value of the trainings as illustrated in Figure 2 which reports data from the network's entire elementary math team.

Figure 2



On a scale of 1-10, Navigator's math professional development has helped me feel adequately trained to implement high quality math instruction.

Helping WCPA Helps at Home

Supporting Wonderful Prep provides provides several significant benefits to Navigator. First, as WCPA began implementing components of the Navigator model, we identified a number of areas that we had been teaching our staff through the coaching process but had not yet codified and made replicable through professional development. The ongoing identification and development of these professional development sessions will have a significant impact on training our growing staff at all three Navigator campuses.

Another benefit to Navigator is amplified and simplified access of our coaches to our core instructional techniques. For years, coaches have had to hunt around for exemplar videos to share with teachers during their coaching sessions. As a result, work has been duplicated numerous times. With the launch of www.navilearning.org, our online dissemination hub, coaches have a one-stop site that is beginning to provide teaching exemplars that our coaches need, especially for our newest teachers.

Another significant value of disseminating our model is the codification of full-staff professional development that has been tested and vetted by our best coaches. These modules can be delivered whole-staff, to a small group, or to individuals in anticipation of an upcoming coaching session.

“Light Touch” Collaborations

As Navigator has built its internal and external support systems, “light touch” collaborations have been fundamental in determining what we can and can’t yet support well. An example of this is that we now feel confident that we can support any K-5 ELA program with training and coaching materials but still need a year or two of middle school development to be ready to support a middle school ELA or math program. These collaborative partnerships also provide the opportunity to build a deep level of trust with our partners and has helped Navigator develop a reputation in the greater educational community as a supportive organization.

Our objectives with light touch collaborations continue to be:

- To build bridges between public charter and traditional public schools
- To pilot theories of action in low-risk scenarios
- To provide lead teachers and new leaders opportunities to design and deliver professional development
- To develop relationships early that could grow over time into a larger scale support
- To empower external partners to make changes in their organizations

Below we describe our “light touch” partnerships.

Rod Kelley

Navigator has provided support for several organizations and their schools over the years, and we have learned valuable lessons in the process. Our greatest success to date has been the eight year partnership developed with Rod Kelley School in Gilroy Unified. In that time, Rod Kelley has risen from the second-lowest-performing elementary school in Gilroy Unified to the highest-performing. Navigator’s support and collaboration has also led to Rod Kelley scoring in the top ten of Bay Area schools serving low-income Latino students in English language arts and mathematics for the past three years according to Innovate Public School’s annual report. The success at Rod Kelley has helped the Navigator team realize the potential to close the achievement gap on a large scale with systematic and consistent support provided to another organization.

Healdsburg Unified

Since 2016, leaders and teachers from Healdsburg Unified have been frequent visitors to our existing sites. Inspired by Navigator, Healdsburg educators have transformed their classrooms to include small-group instruction, added televisions and iPads in classrooms to support learning, and are using much of our online ELA and math curriculum.

Last spring, Healdsburg requested a one-day, on-site training for all staff in the district. This event was held in

Table 1

Low-income Latino Students Proficient in English

NAME OF SCHOOL	% PROFICIENT IN ENGLISH	CHANGE IN % PROFICIENT FROM LAST YEAR	DISTRICT / AUTHORIZER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL			
Gilroy Prep (Charter)	74%	↑ 3	Gilroy Unified
The Mission Preparatory School (Charter)	71%	↓ 2	San Francisco Unified
Madison Elementary	63%	↑ 26	San Leandro Unified
Hammer Montessori at Galarza Elementary	59%	↑ 7	San Jose Unified
Durham Elementary	52%	↑ 7	Fremont Unified
Rod Kelley Elementary	52%	↑ 5	Gilroy Unified
Richmond College Preparatory (Charter)	49%	↑ 5	West Contra Costa Unified
Rocketship Redwood City (Charter)	47%	↑ 16	Redwood City Elementary
Southgate Elementary	47%	↑ 7	Hayward Unified
Ayers Elementary	47%	↑ 8	Mt. Diablo Unified

Low-income Latino Students Proficient in Math

NAME OF SCHOOL	% PROFICIENT IN MATH	CHANGE IN % PROFICIENT FROM LAST YEAR	DISTRICT / AUTHORIZER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL			
Gilroy Prep (Charter)	66%	↑ 6	Gilroy Unified
The Mission Preparatory School (Charter)	64%	0	San Francisco Unified
KIPP Excelencia Community Preparatory (Charter)	59%	↓ 3	Redwood City Elementary
Rocketship Mateo Sheedy Elementary (Charter)	57%	↑ 15	Santa Clara County Office of Education
Rocketship Spark Academy (Charter)	57%	↑ 3	Franklin-McKinley Elementary
E. M. Grimmer Elementary	51%	↓ 5	Fremont Unified
Rod Kelley Elementary	51%	↑ 5	Gilroy Unified
Rocketship Redwood City (Charter)	49%	↑ 17	Redwood City Elementary
Richmond College Preparatory (Charter)	49%	↑ 5	West Contra Costa Unified
Monte Gardens Elementary	47%	↑ 10	Mt. Diablo Unified

August. The feedback from teachers and principals prompted district leadership to request a second day of district-wide professional development in October. Because of the partnership with Wonderful Prep, Navigator was well-prepared to deliver these two days of classroom management and instructional rigor training. All costs were covered by the district, including a fee under \$5,000 for the two days. Healdsburg Unified also sent a large contingent of teachers and two elementary principals to visit GPS in December.

“Over the past three years the team at Navigator has gone above and beyond to provide information, host multiple visits by teams of educators from Healdsburg, shared resources and served as a source of inspiration. The lessons we have learned is transforming teaching and learning and the outcomes of our students.”

Erin Fender

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Healdsburg Unified

Hollister School District

Navigator has had a close partnership with RO Hardin, beginning in 2013 when HPS originally opened. Navigator shared technology hardware and software with upper grade counterparts and created joint professional development opportunities. Over the next three years, RO Hardin and HPS continued to work closely with co-visitations occurring regularly. In the spring of 2016, the superintendent of the district committed significant resources to make RO Hardin a priority school. We spent two weeks training RO Hardin and Navigator staff side-by-side. Unfortunately, the superintendent and principal left prior to the summer training and new dynamics within the district emerged. The new principal of RO Hardin as well as the new superintendent were not as supportive of the priority school plan as the previous administration. As a learning experience, we realized the importance of top to bottom support within the organization for model implementation to be a success. It is critical to have continued leadership support as well as to identify early-adopters and pilot classrooms at sites to launch the model. These lessons have helped lead to significantly stronger partnerships with WCPA and Healdsburg Unified as we have vetted their readiness in ways that we did not with our first pilot with RO Hardin.

Two other schools in the Hollister School District are now actively seeking support from Navigator. In response to their requests, we held several voluntary after-school workshops devoted to classroom management and small group instruction at the two sites. Attendance and continued interest have been significant and the principals and coaches have reported immediate changes and improvements in classrooms after these “light touch” workshops.

Future Partnerships

The [New Schools Venture Fund](#) (NSVF), a nonprofit venture philanthropy fund that has invested over \$260 million in innovative schools over the past twenty years, recently offered the nation’s top charter school management organizations and districts the opportunity to become model providers for partner organizations. This new and exciting strategy aims to bring best practices from high-performing charter and district organizations to partners across the K-12 educational sector.

Navigator was one of six organizations selected from over seventy applicants to receive a planning grant totaling \$78,000. This initial Stage 1 funding is designed to support the creation of a pilot plan this spring that will describe how we could provide components of the Navigator model to partner districts and charter organizations during the 2019-20 school year. In December, the NSGF met the six recipients of

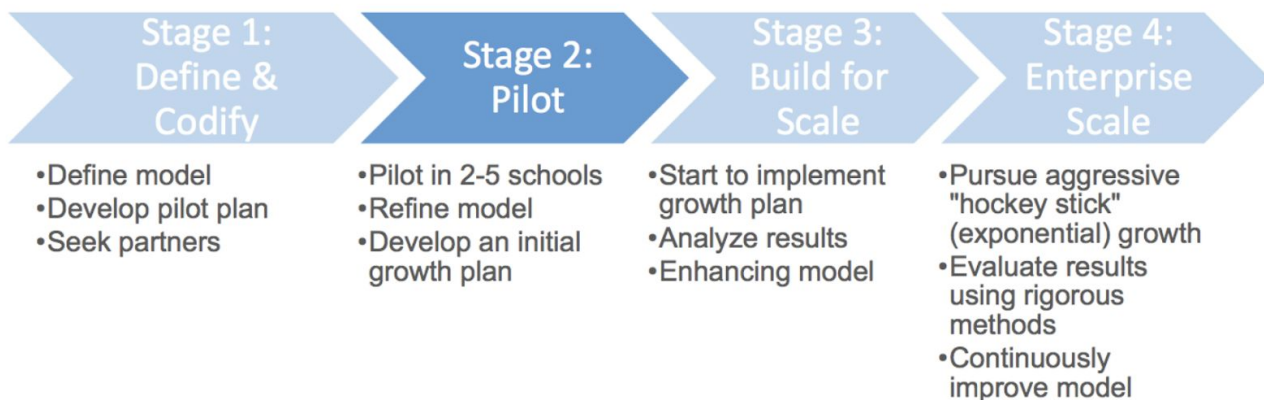
the first round planning grants at its headquarters in Oakland. NSGF presented each team with a larger, [second-round grant proposal](#). Model providers will implement core components of their program with 2-5 partner organizations. The funding for Stage 2 would allow Navigator to increase the size of our academic development team, provide for travel and other expenses related to off-site trainings, and help subsidize partners' costs for implementation.

It is the nature of a continuously improving organization like Navigator to add layers of excellence to our model. The NSGF grant will fund the development of trainings to benefit our staff and our external partners and the grant proposal aims to fund organizations that have already defined effective, replicable models and are ready to share. Below is an excerpt from the grant proposal:

At NewSchools Venture Fund, we support the launch of innovative new schools as well as the redesign of existing ones. To accelerate the pace of adoption of innovative approaches in existing schools, we are focused on building a pipeline of “model providers” that share the following attributes:

- *Partner with schools and systems to improve learning outcomes for a whole school or a meaningful portion, such as a full content area for a grade band (e.g., middle school math, K-8 social-emotional learning)*
- *Offer a bundle of integrated tools and resources designed to help schools reach those outcomes*
- *Provide schools with implementation support, either as a direct service or through trusted third-party partners*
- *Set ambitious goals for student outcomes, share responsibility for results, and establish feedback loops to continuously improve the model*

Because the segment is nascent, this list is likely incomplete and will undoubtedly evolve over time. But for now, we have found this list helpful at providing some clarity about what this concept is and is not. Our goal is to identify 3-5 model providers on a path to serving hundreds of schools each. Because most of the entrepreneurs and organizations we meet are still in the early stages of a multi-year journey to get to this point, we are currently focusing most of our investments in organizations at Stages 1 and 2 below. As ventures in our portfolio mature, we hope to shift toward more investments at Stage 3.



This RFP is targeted toward organizations at Stage 2 – those who have already defined a model and are ready to pilot. Typically, we expect teams to leverage two academic years to run their pilots before

considering larger scale; that said, we are open to team who may be ready to add several schools after the first year.

While a final grant award amount is not guaranteed, we anticipate being eligible to receive funding to support up to three full time employees to do the off-site trainings as well as developing the trainings for external and internal use.

Next Steps:

Determine information that board needs to make an informed decision

Continue viability and risk analysis

Consideration of a board study session at a future board meeting or retreat