

# Federal R&D Investment for Innovative Learning Models

## The Traditional School Model: A Barrier to Educational Equity

For more than a century, a singular operating model has governed mainstream schooling in America. A failure to evolve and modernize this factory model, one that is oriented around teaching 25-30 same-aged students learning the same material at the same time, represents perhaps the most significant barrier to educational equity. This model makes it nearly impossible to meet the unique strengths and needs of each student — especially those in our most marginalized communities.

**Innovative Learning Models are designed to help move us to learning that is equitable and responsive to the needs of the 21st century.**

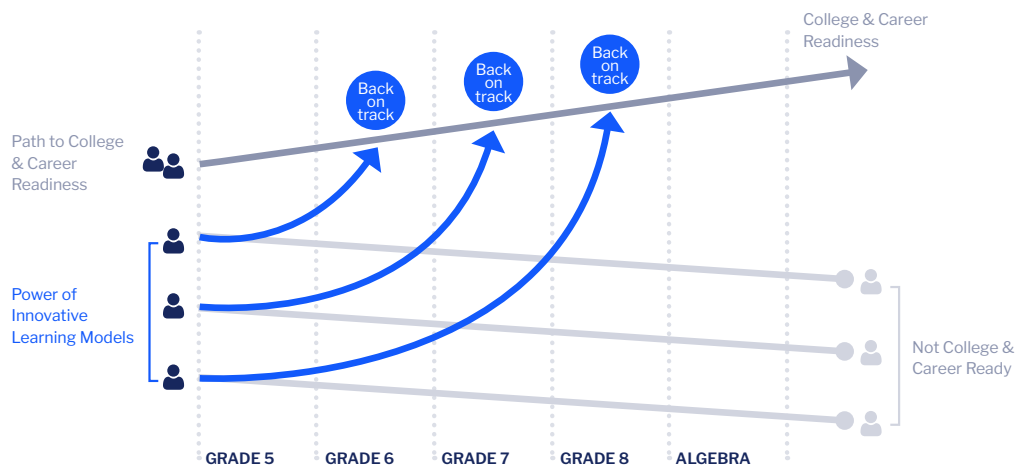
“Addressing the needs of all students is not easy but that is the goal of equity in education. The true meaning of equity [is] acknowledging students’ differences and giving them what they need to be successful.”

— Dr. Pedro Noguera, Founder  
UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools

Current Classroom	Future Classroom
Unequal Expectations & Opportunities	High Expectations with Unlimited Opportunities
Emphasis on Cognitive Learning	Whole-Child Focus
Rote Activities	Rigorous Learning
Irrelevance	Relevance
Assimilation & Marginalization	Affirmation of Self & Others
Reinforcement of Status Quo	Social Consciousness & Action
Isolation	Connection & Community
Inflexible Systems	Customization
Passive Compliance	Active Self-Direction
Siloed Schooling	Anytime, Anywhere Learning

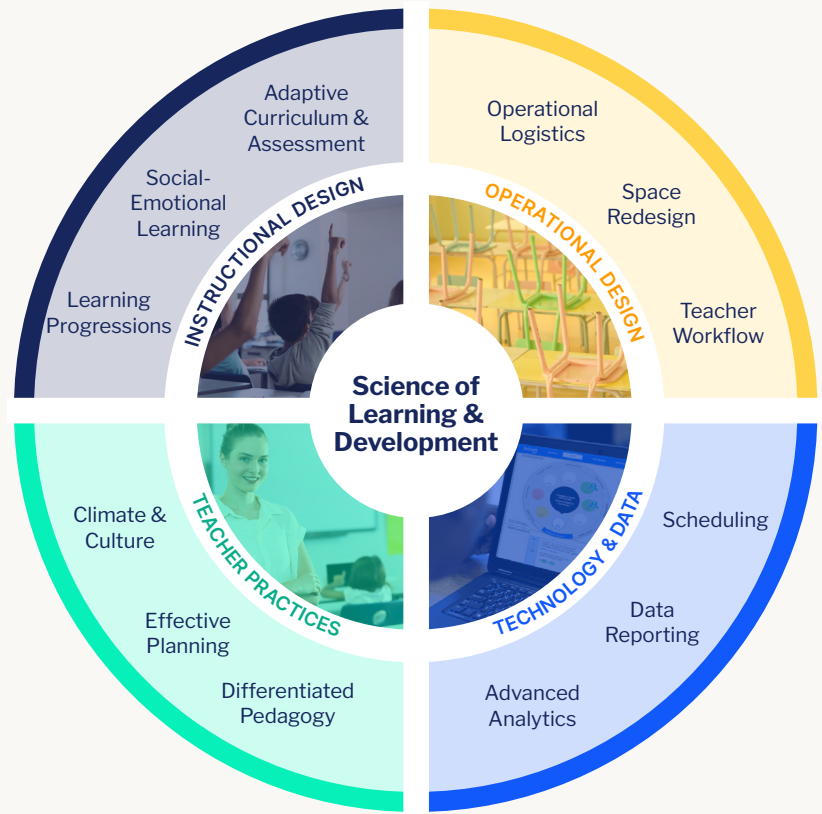
Adapted from Transcend’s “Ten Leaps for Equitable, 21st-Century Learning”

**Two out of five students will graduate college- and career-ready under the current instructional model. Innovative Learning Models can help students who are behind get back on track.**



## What are Innovative Learning Models?

Innovative Learning Models are bundles of integrated tools, resources, systems, and pedagogical practices. Through adoption of these models, schools can reliably shape individual student learning experiences towards an explicit set of objectives. These models are not simply technological platforms or point solutions for teachers to use. Rather, they reflect an approach to schooling that is fundamentally different from the standardized operating model that has characterized American education for more than a century. Most essentially, **they enable schools to provide individual students with an educational program that's right for them given where they are, and where they need to be.**



## An Opportunity for Federal Government to Reimagine Schools

Innovative Learning Models simply cannot emerge without a sustained public investment in educational research and development (R&D). That's because many private investors view the K-12 sector as too fragmented and unreliable to warrant the upfront investment required to bring them to life. Federal investment in early-stage R&D has led to breakthrough innovations in defense, health care, and energy. Now is the time to bring the same approach to the K-12 sector.

**Federal R&D Funding**  
(budget authority, dollar amounts in millions)

DEPARTMENT	FY2020 ACTUAL	FY2021 ACTUAL	FY2022 ACTUAL	FY2023 REQUESTED
Defense	\$62,438	\$70,079	\$65,691	\$83,769
Health & Human Services	\$44,455	\$42,226	\$42,023	\$61,816
Energy	\$19,476	\$17,788	\$21,027	\$23,731
Education	\$344	\$364	\$405	\$402

Source: Congressional Research Service

Over the next decade, **an annual investment of \$750 million in education research and development**, would provide funding to inform how best to address student learning loss and support the development of **75 new Innovative Learning Models**. These student-centered models, implemented and rigorously evaluated, can achieve transformative impact.

To further advance a movement to more Innovative Learning Models, the federal government can promote systemic policy change through two priorities:

- 1 Development and testing of Innovative Learning Models, and in particular those that support the strengths and needs of students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, students of color, low-income students and those facing systemic barriers to high-school completion.
- 2 Long-term grants focused on bringing implementation of Innovative Learning Models to scale.