

The W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation

Building to Scale

Best Practices for Using Evaluation to Improve
Programs and Increase Impact

Education Grantee Convening 2010

prepared by



This report summarizes conversations at the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation's 2010 convening of its education grantees, held in Chicago, Illinois, in November 2010. Education First Consulting helped plan and facilitate the meeting as well as prepared this summary report. Education First uniquely helps policymakers, advocates and funders develop broad-based improvement and reform strategies to inspire and engage all students to graduate from high school and postsecondary studies prepared for a competitive world of constant change and innovation.



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Overview and Meeting Design

Supporting grantees in four cities across the country—Boston, Chicago, New York and San Francisco—the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation is committed to providing the educational and developmental opportunities to disadvantaged children and young people that enable them to fulfill their potential. Its grantmaking programs in education, youth development and early childhood development are designed to tackle the problems children and youth face in obtaining an excellent education, accessing the skills that will serve them as they transition into adulthood, and experiencing quality developmental experiences in their earliest years.

In working toward these goals, the Stone Foundation also is committed to strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of its grantees, including regularly convening leaders and helping them develop strategies and compare lessons for expanding impact. In 2010, the foundation organized a day-long session to help education grantees develop plans for quantifying their impact and supporting their growth plans. Sixteen chief executive officers, plus “impact directors” from four organizations, attended (see list in *Appendix A*).

Prior to the meeting, staff from the Stone Foundation spoke with a representative from each grantee in order to capture each organization’s perspectives on the challenges of measuring impact. These interviews (see summary in *Appendix B*) helped inform the agenda for the convening, which was designed to answer these questions posed by the grantees:

- What are ways of overcoming the very real barriers—lack of internal capacity, varying expectations from donors and board members, costs, etc.—to best measure an organization’s impact?
- How can organizations sort through the challenges of attribution and contribution, especially in complex environments and schools like those in which grantees work?
- What are other ways of measuring impact besides measuring student achievement on standardized tests?

Resource experts—including Lande Ajose (*managing partner—BTW Informing Change*), Paul Goren (*executive director—Consortium on Chicago School Research*), Roger King (*independent nonprofit consultant*) and Pranav Kothari (*managing director—Mission Measurement*)—shared insights on designing evaluations, developing theories of change, strengthening organizational learning and clarifying strategies. These presentations sparked dialogue and debate throughout the day. And grantees also actively shared their own observations and lessons learned.

This report summarizes some of the key questions and advice—as well as cautions—that can guide nonprofit organizations as they work to quantify their impact, the success of their programs and the reach of their services. It is organized into six sections (detailed in the *Table of Contents* on the previous page).

Eye-Popping Value: The Link Between Impact and Scale

Having worked closely with dozens of organizations on their growth strategies, consultant Roger King believes that organizations—whether nonprofit or for-profit—realize their potential only when they achieve scale through wide geographic spread, broad program adoption, powerful and full program implementation, sustainability, and wide organizational recognition.¹ In the nonprofit sector in particular, King argues that every organization owes it to itself—and its donors and clients—to consider if it can better accomplish its mission by serving more people with a superior approach and greater experience. Too often in the nonprofit sector, King sees instead a “landscape of myriad pilots, many subscale programs, few institutions and no brands”—missed opportunities to help more people more successfully.

The Stone Foundation’s 2009 grantee convening focused on the broad questions of how organizations can best confront opportunities and challenges involved in scaling, with King featured as a key speaker.² At that meeting, King advised grantees:

- Without a strong value proposition that makes clear a program’s potential quantifiable benefits, a scalable nonprofit organization will not be able to ensure its program’s value exceeds the total cost to clients, funders and stakeholders.
- More nonprofit organizations should embrace the lessons from the business world, such as the concept of the “experience curve”: more experience over time has the potential to decrease program costs and thereby grow an organization more quickly.
- Although pilot programs are important (and traditional) ways of testing new ideas, they do not create wide-scale impact.
- When going to scale, an organization should keep in mind the following five considerations: its products, the vehicles for maximizing impact, its business model, the structure of affiliates and shared experiences with others in the network of nonprofits, and the ability of its management to invest in its organizational capacity.

In addition to this advice from King, the 2009 meeting also featured discussion with some of the Stone Foundation’s grantees who had already scaled their organizations more widely—or were deep in the midst of doing so. They offered these additional observations:

- Measuring impact is an essential part of figuring out whether and how to scale your organization.

¹ King is a nonprofit management consultant specializing in helping nonprofits grow. He has worked with organizations such as Development Studies Center, Playworks, the New Teacher Center and Strategic Literacy Initiative to help leaders develop strategies for scaling.

² A more complete summary of key themes and findings from the foundation’s 2009 education grantee convening can be found at the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation website: www.wcstonefnd.org.

- Organizations need to work with their funders as key partners during the process and pay attention to investments in organizational capacity and infrastructure (and not just investments in program funding).
- Organizations need to guard against the tendency to lose some focus on quality of a program's impact while working to broaden reach and scale.

King readily concedes not every organization should actually go to scale; many lack the capacity, face difficult structural obstacles, or have underlying beliefs and practices that work against wide-scale impact. But he argues the first question to confront in deciding whether scale is possible is to develop clarity about an organization's "eye-popping value."

An organization seeking to scale, replicate and sustain its program must have a deep sense of intrinsic value—it should know exactly how it brings value demonstratively better than the status quo, according to King. And the process of deciding whether the organization does in fact have something worth scaling helps sharpen its program quality and execution. In particular, King has seen, the list of "non-negotiable" program attributes tends to decrease as an organization gets clearer about what really matters as it replicates and what factors really contribute to program success.

Evaluation thus is an essential part of figuring out eye-popping value—and figuring out what program elements really matter to that value. Nonprofits are too often more enamored with their strategies than with their outcomes.

But how then can organizations go about figuring out their value, quantifying their impact and evaluating their success? The Stone Foundation organized its 2010 grantee convening to help its partners wrestle productively and help answer this question. Some of the key findings and advice from the meeting are captured in the following pages.

Evaluation: Do You Have What It Takes?

To kick off the meeting—and help ensure all participants had a common framework and vocabulary for thinking about evaluation issues—Lande Ajose of BTW Informing Change reviewed key considerations in designing evaluations and thinking about measuring organizational impact.

Using evaluation results to inform organizational practice provides a nonprofit with a platform for program improvement, Ajose argued. But deciding on an evaluation approach depends on (1) organizational priorities and preferences, and (2) intended use of evaluation findings.

Traditional evaluations look linear in design: They start with planning, move to implementation and conclude with an evaluation—and frequently result in conclusions that end up on a bookshelf. Instead of using this too-often-not-effective approach, she encouraged nonprofits to look to integrated evaluation models, which are cyclical in design. This approach starts with planning, followed by implementation, with the evaluation proceeding next, only to begin the cycle once more using the evaluation results to inform the next planning process. The integrated model is more flexible and timely, and also better at fostering innovation, explained Ajose. And while both evaluation approaches ultimately are needed to justify funding an organization or program over the long-term, the integrated model helps ensure an organization is always looking forward and not just backwards.

Adding to Ajose's presentation, Paul Goren of the Consortium on Chicago School Research advised, "Think about use as you think about design." In other words, clarify the research questions—and that will drive what sort of evaluation (and what level of complexity) is needed as well as ensure the results are more useful and relevant at the end. If

Little Secrets About Evaluation

Lande Ajose of BTW Informing Change suggested three realities about evaluation in the nonprofit sector that are widely known but rarely openly acknowledged:

#1

Many nonprofits struggle with the concept of evaluation for program improvement. It is a dilemma. They want data to prove a point to their funders. Similarly, a number of funders will not prioritize evaluation for program improvement. Instead, they want data to validate an investment to their Board. Everybody does evaluation to attract more resources. Evaluation is often built on backwards incentives.

#2

Many nonprofit organizations don't have adequate capacity or will to conduct an evaluation, and to conduct it well. Many funders are not serious about developing that capacity in their grantees. Being serious takes: money, time, leadership, staffing resources, ongoing commitment and clarity.

#3

Many nonprofit organizations have bad theories of change because they don't have clarity about strategy, or they don't know what a good theory of change looks like. For most nonprofits, a clear theory of change is the roadmap for understanding impact.

an evaluation is based only on meeting the needs of external stakeholders (including grant compliance), it is not worth the effort, added Ajose. Instead, leaders should deliberately answer these two questions: What is it we want to learn? What does success look like?

According to Ajose and other speakers, if figuring out the research questions is the important starting place, it also is one that too many organizations overlook in their urgency to quantify impact and satisfy funders. Too few organizations know what questions they are trying to answer because they do not know what outcomes they are trying to achieve.

Finally, Ajose and other speakers urged organizations to push to get data sooner rather than later, even if the data is imperfect or less than ideal. Waiting five years for the “perfect” data and evaluation report is not going to help an organization grow or pinpoint its value today.

As parting advice to grantees, Ajose offered these key criteria to decide if an evaluation is likely to be effective for the organization:

1. Answers important questions
2. Timely
3. Reliable
4. Easy to understand
5. Useful and applicable

Improving Your Model: Formative Evaluation Is Key

Program evaluations range from smaller, focused formative studies designed to improve activities to larger, summative research projects that prove overall results. Speakers—and many grantees—worried that too many organizations gravitate toward formal (and sometimes unrealistically expensive) summative studies for their evaluation needs and give short shrift to formative evaluations that can be hugely helpful and more practical. One attendee specifically lamented the “physics envy” he sees (as a former physics major in college himself) throughout the social sector, where quantitative outcomes are valued most.

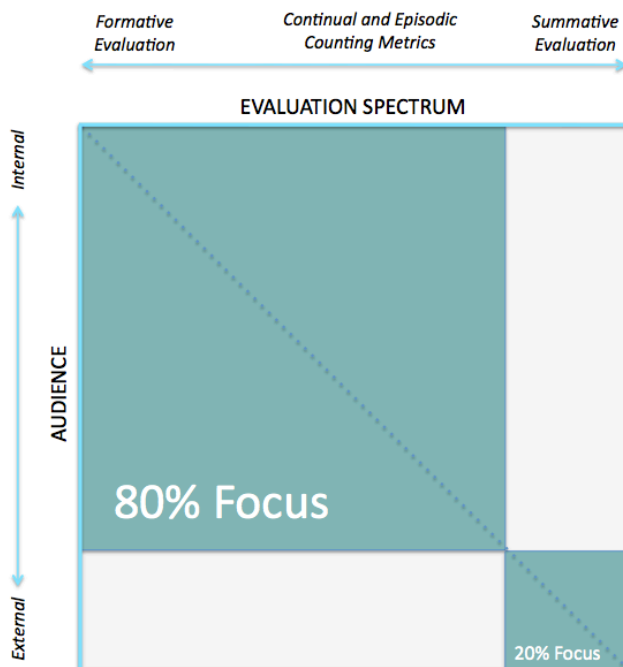
All speakers pointed to the under-appreciated value of formative evaluations for improving programs more quickly and facilitating data-informed decision-making. These evaluations don’t provide the iron-clad certainty about outcomes that a summative evaluation does, but they can provide very useful “leading indicators” of success that are more immediately relevant to organizational learning and growth. Programs that make it a point to integrate formative evaluations into their program design are positioned to tighten their design and more effectively grow, speakers observed. Pranav Kothari of Mission Measurement advised, “Get data to improve your work as fast as you can.”

King even suggested a typology of evaluations (See *Figure 1* on next page) to guide decisions about which evaluations to pursue. He proposed that 80 percent of an organization’s focus and research efforts should be on continuous improvement and formative evaluations of programs; King prioritizes data that is designed for internal stakeholders and audiences and that can directly influence organizational improvements and growth. The other 20 percent of an organization’s focus and efforts, he suggested, should be on episodic summative evaluations, such as randomized controlled trials. In between these extremes are continual and episodic efforts to track key metrics (using a spectrum of evaluation approaches).

“Evaluation as a compliance exercise is out there. But there is a different energy when the evaluation drives improvement and when you ask yourself what you will do with the information from the report. We see this in the schools and organizations in which we are working. Evaluation needs to be an informative practice. The evaluator is the truth teller of his/her organization’s story and impact. Ideally, the evaluator’s role is to fulfill all three purposes of evaluation for an organization: inform accountability, inform practice and inform the field.”

**– Eric Barela
Partners in School Innovation**

Figure 1: Organizational Emphasis for Different Evaluation Approaches



Formative evaluations can help an organization understand why its program works (or doesn't), how it might work better, and under what conditions it is most successful. They won't perfectly solve the question of whether a specific program or intervention can be directly attributed to certain results—whether, for example, a particular program in a school building with other reform initiatives is the one causing increases in student achievement—but it will provide clues that suggest what is working and not working with the program.

Also, formative evaluations—because they are less complicated and less time intensive—provide organizations with the immediate feedback they need to be nimble and keep improving. And of course formative evaluations are less expensive, which puts them in reach of more organizations.

At the same time, King offered this caution: “Don’t drown in formative evaluations.” Because formative evaluations can be conducted so readily and often inexpensively, leaders need to exercise judgments about what information is really most helpful. “Some indicators are more powerful than others,” said King—and leaders should be focused on generating data about a smaller set of the most powerful indicators.

In designing their evaluation plans and considering what formative questions to be investigating, Kothari encouraged grantees to look carefully at summative evaluations conducted by similar organizations or on similar programs; instead of undertaking these sorts of studies themselves, especially initially, organizations should mine the results to inform their own assumptions and research agendas. The designs and components of programs that have been rigorously evaluated and proven to increase student learning can help organizational

leaders better understand how, why and when their own programs should be making a difference. In addition to student learning results, organizations can look for changes in school culture and climate, attendance and drop-out rates, and on-track student progress, among other indicators of success.

A series of well-chosen formative evaluations will eventually give organizations the clearer sense of “eye-popping value” that King encourages them to pursue—and only with that clarity does a larger, more expensive, summative evaluation make sense. In other words, an organization should know its value through formative evaluations before initiating a summative evaluation, such as a randomized controlled trial to determine whether its program’s effects are significant.

Thus, in addition to weighting evaluation activities to emphasize formative evaluations and internal audiences, King also suggests that the weighting shift over time—as the organization matures, learns more about what works best with its programs, and prepares to scale, it also should shift more and more resources to the summative side of the evaluation spectrum.

“The first purpose of evaluation is to look internally at your organization to ensure organizational leadership and commitment are established as well as to ensure that the decisions to make improvements and changes are in place.”

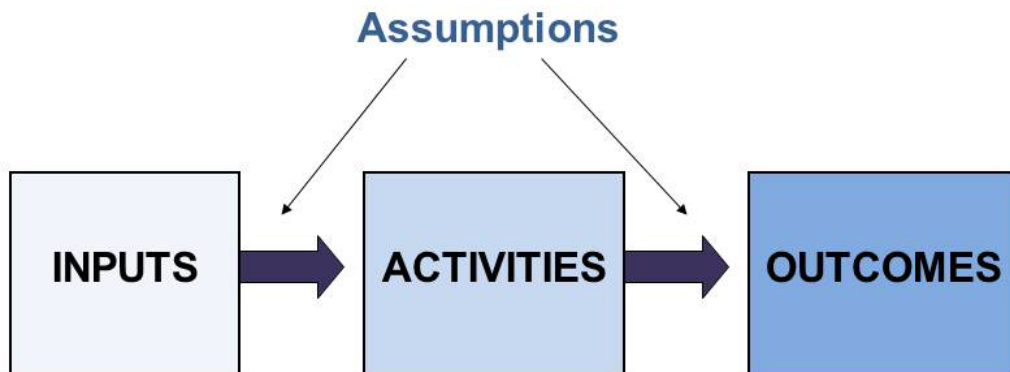
– Srik Gopalakrishnan
New Teacher Center

A “Theory of Change” Can Help ... But Also Hinder

As an organization works to define its “eye-popping value,” many speakers—and grantees—proposed that a well-conceived theory of change can help. A theory of change in the social sector is like a scientific hypothesis: It articulates the assumptions and propositions that organizational leaders believe will lead to a specific goal. As such, a theory of change connects resources to results; it helps to clearly lay out problems, the resources and strategies the organization will use to confront the problems and the short- and long-term outcomes it thinks can be accomplished from these resources and activities.

A theory of change can be as simple as a paragraph or as elaborate as a full-page chart. Regardless of what it looks like on paper, what makes a theory of change potentially so useful, according to Steve Tozer of the Chicago College of Education, is the discipline it imposes on an organization to make explicit assumptions about why certain activities will lead to certain results: Why will doing “x” really lead to “y” result? A good theory of change is well grounded in existing evidence about what interventions or activities cause what result (see *Figure 2* for a simple illustration).

Figure 2: Theory of Change Makes Cause and Effect Assumptions Explicit



Because it identifies both assumptions and outcomes, a well-designed theory of change can guide an organization’s learning process; it can help enforce rigorous thinking about appropriate program outcomes, and it can suggest what things need to be tested and evaluated. Theories of change must have an evidence-based rationale in order to truly be effective guiding tools for programs aiming to grow.

Some grantees suggested a theory of change can be helpful in other important ways, too—such as informing human resources planning for what organizational talent is needed and helping everyone in the organization (including new hires) understand fundamental beliefs of the organization.

At the same time, while acknowledging that a theory of change can be a helpful guiding tool, other speakers and some grantees cautioned that theories of change do have limitations.

Theories of change assume a simple, static world, pointed out King, but in reality the world is complex; too many theories of change he has seen posit unreasonable linkages between cause and effect.

Of course, even the best theory of change is no substitution for high-quality implementation. A theory of change is just a theory if not accompanied by high-quality execution of its activities and a laser-like focus on whether outcomes are being accomplished. As King reiterated at both the 2010 and 2009 meetings, experience over time should help an organization decrease program costs and grow more quickly—and thereby make it a stronger and more effective organization. Or, as Steven Schroeder, former president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, famously noted in an essay about his lessons learned as a grantmaker: “Execution trumps strategy.”

Why High-Impact Organizations Are Also Learning Organizations

“Wonder” was a recurring theme throughout the Stone Foundation convening, and there was a prevailing view that the highest-impact organizations are those committed intrinsically to uncover how and why a program works and what could help it work better. Even as grantees reflected throughout the day about how they could better use formative evaluations to

Managing Organizational Change and Improvement

During the Stone Foundation convening, some grantees identified successful ways of using data to encourage change and improvement in organizations. Their advice and lessons learned include:

- Be transparent about successes and failures.
- Ensure messages are consistent.
- Be clear on what the data is for: accountability purposes or change management.
- Organizations need *both* quantitative and qualitative data—both have value and each speaks to different audiences.
- Collect some data that can help tell your story and personalize the difference your program makes. While “hard” statistics about impact are best for some, others will respond better to real-world anecdotes and stories.

improve their programs and better know their impact, they also were encouraged to think about how well they use evaluation results throughout their organizations. Returning to Goren’s earlier observation about evaluation design—think about use as you think about design—speakers pushed meeting attendees to think about how widely and deeply they are currently using evaluation results and how committed they are to learning from these results and adjusting as an organization.

Conducting evaluations and knowing your impact cannot just be about hard-core metrics, theories of change and evaluation designs. To make a difference in how an organization functions and in the results of its programs, these efforts fundamentally need to be about learning and improving. They need to be driven by an organizational commitment to curiosity, improvement and reflection. Multiple program measures—which are multiple vantage-points for considering and learning about impact—also are essential.

Along these same lines, speakers and grantees also cautioned that leaders must not compartmentalize the evaluation and research functions within an organization. A commitment to learning needs to permeate throughout the organization, not just live in a research arm. It’s easy for evaluation directors or evaluation consultants to be “siloes off” from the core management and implementation functions of the organization. Yet evaluation, reflection and learning need to be deeply embedded in all programmatic work, not a stand-alone activity.

Finally, theories of change have a role in organizational management by getting everyone in the organization

focused on the outcomes to aim for rather than just the strategy. Indeed, it is important to have a “real battle” within an organization, said one grantee, about the beliefs and assumptions of the organization and “the kind of organization it wants to be.”

As a result of attending the 2010 convening, leaders of the grantee organizations articulated several next steps and ways of integrating the ideas and knowledge from the meeting, including:

- Many committed to adding more time for reflective learning into their internal conversations, focusing more energy on building a culture of continuous improvement, and better integrating their evaluation and impact assessment efforts throughout all aspects of their organization.
- Several grantees planned to take a fresh look at their existing theories of change and consider whether their organizational structures still meet the needs of their evolving work.
- Others said they will think more critically about partnerships with (and the role of) external evaluators, and at least one grantee reported plans to better use formative assessments moving forward to determine its impact and ability to scale.
- Grantees also will establish more and deeper opportunities for staff throughout their entire organizations to “dig deeper” into evaluation results, and they will seek to involve more of their program staff in evaluation and measuring efforts.

APPENDIX A:

Stone Foundation Education Grantees

Academy for Urban School Leadership

Boston Plan for Excellence

Boston Teacher Residency

Center for Collaborative Education

Chicago Public Education Fund

Developmental Studies Center

Internationals Network for Public Schools

National Equity Project

New Leaders for New Schools

New Teacher Center

New Visions for Public Schools

Partners in School Innovation

San Francisco Education Fund

Strategic Literacy Initiative

University of Chicago Urban Education Institute

University of Illinois, Chicago, Urban School Leadership Program

Urban Teacher Residency United

APPENDIX B:

Summary of Pre-Meeting Interviews on Assessing Impact with Stone Foundation Grantees

In July 2010, staff from the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation spoke with a leader from each of the foundation's education grantees in preparation for its 2010 convening, which focus on measuring impact. The purpose of these conversations was to capture each organization's knowledge, attitudes and behaviors around the challenges of measuring impact—and to use this information to inform the agenda. Organized by the seven questions the foundation posed to grantees, this document summarizes key themes that emerged across all 16 conversations. This summary was prepared by BTW Informing Change.

1. How do you define impact for your organization? What kinds of metrics do you use to assess progress towards your goals? How frequently do you collect data?

- Organizations define their impact as increasing school performance, student achievement gains and/or student performance on standardized tests.
 - Some define organizational impact by improving school climate, district capacity, student-teacher relationships, integration of immigrant students, college readiness among students, policy change, principal leadership, program/organization sustainability and teacher morale, retention, efficacy, quality and/or effectiveness.
- Metrics for assessing progress range from being specific, quantifiable and measurable (e.g., number of kids graduating from high school, state/district results on summative tests, district/school results on formative or interim tests and college acceptance/enrollment/persistence rates) to general and broad (e.g., teacher-student relationships, instructional leadership, teacher satisfaction and school climate).
 - Certain organizations have specific organizational standards and rubrics that include metrics for progress, especially for measuring changes in teaching practices or school culture/climate (e.g., School Transformation Rubric, emerging Gates Foundation observational rubric).
- Data collection frequency varies dramatically, from being episodic, quarterly, annual and even longitudinal.
 - There is a focus on collecting quantitative data over qualitative data.
 - There is an interest in value-added models and longitudinal tracking (K-16).
 - Organizations use in-house data collection and evaluation as well as hire external evaluators.

- There is a tension that exists when working with third-party evaluators. Third-party evaluators tend to focus on documenting outcomes rather than investigating processes for achieving outcomes, yet funders prefer third-party evaluators.

2. Who are the main external audiences for your impact data? What kinds of data would be important to them to show impact?

Audience	Type of Data of Interest to These Audiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funders/foundations • Organization’s board of directors • Educators who are partners/clients of the organization (e.g., teachers, superintendent, principals, school board) • Policymakers (e.g., Department of Education at state and federal levels, elected officials) • “Thought leaders” in the field and researchers • Parents, community members, public • Consumers of social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student achievement, outcomes and/or performance data (e.g., gain on standardized tests, reduction in achievement gap) • Value-added and/or longitudinal tracking • Teacher quality, retention and performance • Data demonstrating leadership development and capacity building among teachers and principals • Effectiveness of curriculum, a program or a pilot school

3. Are you satisfied by your ability to measure impact? What barriers prevent you from systematically capturing your impact?

- Overall, organizations are not satisfied with their ability to measure impact.
 - 13 out 16 state that they are not satisfied.
 - Only 3 out 16 state that they are satisfied with their ability to measure impact—although these organizations report they could still benefit from more internal capacity, especially for longitudinal evaluation and data analysis.
- The barriers preventing measurement of impact include:
 - Funders have diverging interests and expectations in types of impact data that grantees should capture (e.g., teacher effectiveness vs. teacher quality)
 - A lack of internal capacity in the organization, especially to collect and maintain longitudinal data
 - A lack of a state-wide database with longitudinal data about students
 - Issues with accessing data at the school and district levels due to legality, timeliness of collection/analysis of student performance data or unavailability of data
 - No standard tools to measure teacher effectiveness (and some resistance to the idea of even linking teacher effectiveness with student performance)

- The cost of an external evaluator and lack of funding to hire an external evaluator
- Client schools are not requesting the information

4. What impact data don't you have that you think you need?

- Organizations are interested in the following types of data:
 - Effectiveness/importance of individual program elements in contributing to overall outcomes/success
 - Early intervention systems that can be used to identify students at risk of falling behind
 - Quantitative data on “transformative” and adaptive leadership
 - Data that link teacher effectiveness (e.g., preparation, content, practices) to student performance and growth
 - Data on school culture, professional development programs for teachers and principals, and school systems to determine how changes in these factors influence teacher effectiveness
 - Universal benchmarks that could be used to compare/measure student performance across districts
 - Evaluation of new curricula

5. What systems do you have in place to reflect on what you are learning from your evaluation and assessment activities?

- Systems for reflecting on evaluation and assessment at organizations range from having an admittedly poor-quality system in place to creating a designated Department of Organizational Performance responsible for developing and implementing systems and tools. Examples of types of systems that are in place include:
 - Weekly dashboards, quarterly reports on progress and bi-annual/annual retreats to analyze data and discuss progress
 - Meetings (e.g., bi-weekly meetings) to discuss and reflect on data and their implications
 - Regular dialogues with client schools/teachers/principal about school and classroom data (however, for the most part school leaders are responsible for following up on data and building a data-driven culture on their own)
 - In-house evaluator, evaluation advisory council, collaboration with higher education research departments or external evaluator
 - Formative assessment process for evaluation of curricular program and/or video analysis of classroom practices
 - Use of Effort to Outcomes software to assess teacher effectiveness
 - Focus on developing a logic model

6. In your view, what is the relationship between impact and sustainability?

- According to grantees, the relationship between impact and sustainability ranges from intricately linked to no relationship. However, for the most part, organizations agree that:
 - They need to demonstrate impact to secure funding from foundations and public sources/client schools to influence how money is spent and to get a reputation for the organization.
 - There is a high cost to measuring impact and they do not have sufficient time to assess and demonstrate impact.
 - Impactful interventions do not always receive continuous funding because of donor fatigue or lack of patience.
 - The education field does not have a good way of judging impact.

7. Finally as we prepare for the fall convening, what areas regarding impact would you like the convening to address?

- Organizations are interested in discussing the following topics:
 - Defining student achievement, success, impact and respective metrics (e.g., student success, teacher effectiveness, school success)
 - How to standardize the definition and evaluation of impact across school districts and states
 - How to look at multiple measures of impact and not just student achievement
 - Understanding proficiency targets vs. growth measures
 - Ways of learning about implementation and execution and not just “Does it work?”
 - Discuss practices and standards that contribute to success or impact
 - What an organization must track to show impact
 - Evaluating complex change efforts (e.g., implementing practices for closing the achievement gap in low-capacity environment) or multiple measures of impacts
 - How to obtain access to data at the district level (e.g., examples of MOUs)
 - Ways/best practices for engaging external evaluators
 - Scale of initiative; sustainability of small initiatives vs. large-scale initiatives
 - How to measure teacher effectiveness and who else is undertaking this work
 - How to impact districts
 - How to stay up-to-date in research and evaluation in the education field
 - How to communicate results