

Marshall Street

Empowering Teachers, School Leaders, and School Communities

PRESENTED BY

Siegel Family Endowment

We are a foundation focused on understanding and shaping the impact of technology on society.

About Siegel

Siegel Family Endowment employs an inquiry-driven approach to grant making that is informed by the scientific method and predicated on the belief that philanthropy is uniquely positioned to address some of the most pressing and complex issues facing society today. Our grant making strategy positions us to be society's risk capital. We support high quality work that will help us derive insights to timely questions and has high potential for future scale. Our focus is on organizations doing work at the intersection of learning, workforce, and infrastructure. We aim to help build a world in which all people have the tools, skills, and context necessary to engage meaningfully in a rapidly changing society. Siegel Family Endowment was founded in 2011 by David M. Siegel, co-founder and co-chairman of financial sciences company Two Sigma.

Our Focus on Learning

We strive to understand how we can better equip individuals with the knowledge they need to contribute to and engage with a rapidly changing society. Yet, we also recognize that every factor in a learner's education – from broadband access to safe and affordable housing to the development of social-emotional skills – can widen inequality and impact success. Our work supports and shapes programs and solutions that build lifelong learning opportunities and envision an education system that works for everyone, by addressing long standing social and economic inequities.

Schools as Community Infrastructure

For schools to become the most effective and powerful versions of themselves, it's critical to understand their place within and connection to the communities they serve, and how both systems – school and community – must be strengthened in tandem. Using a multidimensional framing for school allows us to consider their infrastructure needs in a holistic way that elevates the school community's strengths and resources, and identifies needs that remain unmet. By conceptualizing and conceiving of schools as bigger than the buildings in which they operate, we have an opportunity to expand what schools can do, and ensure that they are set up to do that critical work.





A DIVISION OF SUMMIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

About Grantee

Marshall Street was founded by Summit Public Schools as an effort to encourage school improvement through a set of innovative, research-based practices and programs for teachers, leaders, and schools. Marshall Street is founded on the premise that every student should have the opportunity to live a fulfilled life and that theory and practice must reinforce each other to dismantle barriers to educational equity. At present, Marshall Street works directly with school communities through their three core programs: Teacher Residency, Leadership Institute, and Continuous Improvement.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Nonprofits have to walk a fine line of both following their north star while also adapting to the changing needs of those they serve.** They can and should be flexible in the programs, processes, and approaches that they offer, responding to changing needs, context, feedback, and program effectiveness. Mission, vision, and values should guide those changes.
- **Educational programs that are truly transformative marry theory and practice, research and experience.** To do this work effectively, educational nonprofits must engage a range of stakeholders, including researchers, teachers, school and district leaders, students, families, and others. At the core of this work is a commitment to acknowledging the expertise that practitioners bring, and supporting practitioners in drawing on research to inform practice.
- **When nonprofits consider if and how to scale, it's important to consider impact and delivery on mission.** Growing a program may not make sense if it is not responsive to local conditions or if local communities are not engaged. In such cases, nonprofits may consider engaging in capacity-building work to enable local communities to take ownership of a program. Or nonprofits may publicize their work to make an approach normative in the field.
- **Systemic change in education requires a shift in organizational culture matched by strong local capacity.** That shift requires empowering all members of an educational system to take ownership and to inspire change within the areas that they operate. It also requires that school and district leaders be open to those changes, and work to adapt solutions that come from within and outside the community.

Executive Summary

How can we build capacity to make transformative, institutionalized, and long-lasting systemic change within school communities? How can that capacity for school improvement serve students—particularly the most marginalized students—more effectively? And how can school communities take ownership of those capacity-building initiatives while still realizing the benefits shown through other implementations? Those are the questions at the heart of Marshall Street, the national program development division of Summit Public Schools, which operates a network of public charter schools in California and Washington state that has been in existence for more than two decades.

Marshall Street currently runs three programs that seek to **build local capacity, advance equity, and empower school improvement:**

1 The [Marshall Teacher Residency](#) is an accredited one-year teacher preparation and credentialing program in California that creates a diverse pipeline of teachers who are from the communities that they serve. The program emphasizes hands-on learning, mentorship, and coaching—all of which prepare residents to be effective and confident teachers from day one.

2 The [Marshall Leadership Institute](#) operates fellowship programs to develop school leaders at various stages of their careers. Partnerships with schools and districts create diverse pipelines of capable school leaders.

3 Marshall Street's [Continuous Improvement program](#) leverages a set of principles and practices to help educators “get better at getting better.” Currently, Marshall Street uses a continuous improvement approach in its work with the [Networked Improvement Community for Students with Disabilities](#), an effort to achieve dramatic gains in the learning experiences, environments, and outcomes for Black, Latinx, and low-income students with disabilities.

Practitioners themselves are at the heart of this work, and school partners are key to adjusting and implementing projects and models in their own communities. As Greg Ponikvar, founding executive director of the Marshall Leadership Institute and incoming executive director of Marshall Street reflects, “though our work is national in scope, we will always design programs in close collaboration with our partners and are responsive to the communities they serve.” ■

Programs and Examples

Marshall Street takes on big, equity-focused challenges in K-12 education in concrete, iterative, and sustainable ways. Initially launched to meet locally-felt, globally-evident challenges in public education, Marshall Street currently serves a range of school communities through innovative programs that tackle challenges ranging from diversity in the teaching profession, to high-quality educator preparation programs, to school leadership development, to support for serving Black, Latinx, and low-income students with disabilities more effectively. Marshall Street’s approach is flexible and responsive. It marries rigorous research with practitioner experience. And it is rooted in the communities that it serves, even while applying lessons learned to new schooling contexts.



Core Elements: What Makes the Program Work?

1

Maintaining Flexibility in Approach and Consistency in Mission

Marshall Street begins with research and adjusts its approaches and programs to what it learns through data. “We use data to ensure that we are regularly improving our programs,” Marshall Street founding executive director Adam Carter explains. “We’re not going to compromise the core of *why* we’re doing what we’re doing or even *what* we’re doing. But we’ll certainly change *how* we do it.”

Over time, some of Marshall Street’s initiatives have shifted. For example, [Prepared Parents](#) focused on supporting families and caregivers in nurturing students’ social-emotional and learning needs at home. With remote learning receding, the program sunsetted—even as the resources remain available for interested parties. At the same time, Marshall Street’s leaders expect that new projects will emerge, including a renewed focus on an earlier Marshall Street project on [postsecondary pathways](#).

Marshall Street also continually makes adjustments to existing programs in response to what data show about the outcomes of programs. That was certainly true of Marshall

Street’s teacher pipeline work, which began in-person in the Bay Area but adapted so effectively to a virtual model during the pandemic that it enabled the program to scale to serve schools across California.

While this flexibility allows Marshall Street to remain responsive and encourages accountability and continuous improvement, Marshall Street’s leaders stress the importance of remaining committed to a core set of values. This articulation of the “why” of the programs helps Marshall Street identify partners who will be successful participants, and also sets parameters about the types of activities that will best meet student needs. “We want partners to be able to sustain our programs after our initial work in districts and schools,” Ponikvar explains. “So we partner with like-minded school systems, teachers, and leaders who are committed to the work of long-term sustainable change.” Being clear and transparent about the [core values](#) that are motivating Marshall Street’s activities go a long way toward achieving that goal.

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2

Marrying Theory and Practice, Researchers and Practitioners

“We believe in a culture that’s practitioner-focused,” says Carter. That’s not to say that Marshall Street dismisses relevant research or theory. Far from it. Research serves as a crucial backbone as Marshall Street staff define the challenges that they hope to address and as they design programs for addressing those challenges. For example, the Marshall Teacher Residency was developed in response to [research](#) showing the positive impact on students and communities when teachers reflect the backgrounds and identities of their students. And the program’s design—which focuses on real-world, in-classroom learning and mentorship—is deeply rooted in [research](#) and was

developed in collaboration with experts at Stanford University.

By “practitioner-focused,” Carter means that Marshall Street “leads with the needs of students, families, and educators, and then relies on research to begin addressing those expressed needs,” rather than the other way around. Just as Summit Public Schools does [for students](#), Marshall Street situates its work around the people who participate in its initiatives, stressing work around identity and belonging as crucial to becoming effective educators and leaders. Carter credits this commitment to placing students, and practitioners, at the center of the work for [Marshall Street’s success](#).

3

Empowering Both Organizations and Individuals

Through all of its programs, Marshall Street works with both individuals and organizations. That’s by design. “We work with systems to align themselves towards the type of programs or instructional models that actually support students,” Ponikvar says. But, he’s quick to add: “That is a hard job, and a slow job.”

Marshall Street offers a few ways of speeding that change. Through programs like the Teacher Residency and the Leadership Institute, it aims to create change agents *throughout* organizations—to empower individuals who work in different roles to bring their training and values to their work.

At the same time, Marshall Street also partners with public charter school networks and public school districts to address areas of critical need—whether it is recruitment of diverse teachers or support for emerging school leaders. Those

partnerships give visibility to critical challenges and empower partners to develop sustainable models for addressing them after Marshall Street’s involvement is over.

That process is far from easy. Carter says that Marshall Street has honed its approach to working with school and district organizations over time. “It takes so much more than developing resources in order to actually create change for kids in a way that enhances their learning experience and environments.” Carter continues, “We try to really honor school communities’ individual contexts and work with partners to apply central pillars that we know are effective—data systems, for example—to their particular goals, needs, and communities.” That change comes both through organizations and the individuals that comprise them. Ponikvar explains, “It’s a very iterative process.”

Impact and Next Steps

Impact

Marshall Street tracks data points that align with its core goals and then routinely adjusts its programming to be more responsive to those goals. As with everything that Marshall Street does, the method for achieving the outcome may shift in response to data and local context. What does not shift is the ultimate goal. What does this look like in practice?

Let's examine The Marshall Teacher Residency as one example. The chief aim of this program is to produce high-quality teachers who represent the communities they serve. That's important because students who are served by educators who have similar experiences, backgrounds, or identities as they do perform better academically and [experience better outcomes](#). For the Marshall Teacher Residency, [impact measures](#) include a variety of short- and long-term measures that examine teacher quality, and the connection between the community and Marshall residents.

- **Nearly two-thirds of residents are from the communities they serve.** Over one-in-five are alumni of the schools they serve. And 19 percent are former staff of the schools they serve.
- **Sixty-eight percent of Marshall residents identify as people of color**, compared to only 21 percent of teachers nationwide. Forty-five percent of Marshall residents identify as male, nearly double the national average.
- Four years after graduation, **90 percent of Marshall Street's first cohort remained in the classroom** or moved into school leadership positions. Nationally, only 55 percent of entering teachers remain in the profession five years later.

Over time, Marshall Teacher Residency has sought to increase its impact in these areas by removing barriers for participation, while still ensuring quality. For example, Marshall Street now partners with nonprofit lenders to improve financing options and looks to alternate forms of assessment of applicants. By focusing on educator [mindsets](#) rather than undergraduate GPA, Marshall Street's teacher residency is both expanding access to the teaching profession and establishing more reliable measures of aspiring teacher potential.

When it comes to ensuring teacher quality, Marshall Teacher Residency looks to other proxy measures:

- Marshall Street built its teacher residency program in partnership with Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE) and developed a program that emphasizes

hands-on practice, data-driven learning, collaboration, and mentorship—all practices that research correlates with teacher quality and readiness.

- Marshall Teacher Residency has been accredited by the California Commission for Teacher Credentialing. As such, it is the only program that is not offered through an institution of higher education to be accredited. Recently, the program gained accreditation in special education and elementary education, allowing it to serve K-12 in its entirety.
- Marshall residents spend 6-8 hours in the classroom, four days a week, for an entire year. That represents an increase of two-thirds over the required number of clinical hours for accreditation programs in the state of California. [Research](#) shows that this type of intensive, hands-on preparation results in better teacher performance and retention.
- All school leaders who host Marshall residents are confident in their abilities as first-year teachers—confidence about preparation that also extends to the residents themselves.
- Ninety percent of Marshall residents pass the national performance assessment, an external validator of teacher readiness. In comparison, just 72 percent of aspiring teachers pass the same test nationally.

Next Steps

Marshall Street invites a range of stakeholders to get involved in its work:

- 1 Aspiring teachers in California can apply to be part of the [Marshall Teacher Residency](#), while experienced teachers can apply to serve as Mentors in the program.
- 2 School networks seeking to strengthen and diversify their leadership pipelines can partner with the [Marshall Leadership Institute](#) to customize and embed leader programs in the regions where they operate. Aspiring and new leaders can also apply directly to join a [fellowship program](#).
- 3 School networks interested in learning more about Marshall Street's [Continuous Improvement](#) work, which builds on previous networks focused on English Learners and Black and Latinx students with disabilities experiencing poverty, can reach out about opportunities to become involved. Resources from those improvement efforts are available [here](#).

To learn more and contact Siegel Family Endowment, visit www.siegelendowment.org