



Stanford eCorner

New School Portfolio

Kim Smith, *New Schools Venture Fund*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/613/New-School-Portfolio>

In five years, New Schools has given 10,000 kids access to new schools, says Smith. Public charter schools provide an alternative to government-run schools by giving the school much more flexibility while maintaining accountability. She believes this flexibility encourages innovation and increased performance. Other portfolio items include: 1) Teachscape - an online teacher-training program, which uses a video case method of instruction 2) Successforall - a non-profit literacy program spun out of John Hopkins 3) Carnegie Learning - a for-profit literacy program competitor.



Transcript

So here's a quick summary of our ventures. In our first portfolio, so far in five years we have close to 10,000 kids getting access to a new school. We have a number of new schools rolling out this coming fall that will push that number up in 12,000. 26 new schools launched so far and again, a series of new schools being launched in the fall. I don't know how many of you are familiar with public charter schools but they're public schools that can't select their kids the way a private school would. You apply and if too many children apply, there's a lottery system for who gets in. It's an exchange of accountability for flexibility. So if you apply, describe what you're going to do, the state will track your results and if you don't achieve those results, they close you down in five-year check-ins. But in exchange for that accountability, you have flexibility and don't have to follow the thousand-page ed code that we have here in California. They're in about 35 states.

They're really an important innovation in public education, particularly in terms of structure and governance and management. It's a different way to think about organizing and managing public schools. Our performance-related investments in the first portfolio, a couple are about people, new leaders for new schools which is recruiting new kinds of folks to come in and be school principals and training them in a new way with case method, combining kind of business management strategies with education strategies. Teach for America, I've already described, bringing new folks into teaching. Teachscape is an online teacher training program which uses a video case method of instruction. So trying to make it more convenient for folks who want to become teachers and want to become better teachers and also trying to change the way we think about training teachers. You can't do it in a text base. You can't do it sitting in the classroom. Video case lets you see a great instructor in action. Success For All is an early literacy program which is a nonprofit that spun out of Johns Hopkins University.

We invested in a company called Carnegie Learning that spun out of Carnegie Mellon because it's a for-profit. So we got to see two different approaches to growing curricular intervention, retraining teachers, providing a new way to teach first reading and then algebra. So it gives you a sense of the kinds of things we invest in.