



EDUCATION INNOVATION RESEARCH NETWORK

Request for Proposals: Personalized Learning Research Project

OVERVIEW RI EDUCATION INNOVATION RESEARCH NETWORK

In early 2017, the Education Innovation Research Network (EIRN) was created as a partnership between EduvateRI, The College & University Research Collaborative (The Collaborative), and the Rhode Island Office of Innovation. The Education Innovation Research Network builds on the work already happening in the state and provides Rhode Island scholars and practitioners opportunities to work collaboratively on research projects related to education innovation topics. This initiative will also help to broker partnerships between state and national stakeholders and capitalize on the wealth of knowledge here in our state. By working closely with state and local education leaders, this network will be a resource that can address pressing education innovation challenges and serve as a model for national innovative education efforts.

While the RI-EIRN will tackle topics that span the innovation spectrum, through EduvateRI's work, Rhode Island stakeholders have identified personalized learning as the focus of the first research project to be funded as part of the Education Innovation Research Network.

BACKGROUND RI PERSONALIZED LEARNING INITIATIVE

In September of 2016, the Rhode Island Office of Innovation, in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Education, Highlander Institute, NE Basecamp by RIMA, and other partners launched the RI Personalized Learning Initiative, to codify the support provided to stakeholders and elevate the work already underway toward personalized learning in the state. Through the partnership, educators and administrators are supported in the development, piloting, and growth of new models for personalized learning as well as the sharing of lessons learned and best practices.

In February of 2017, the RI Personalized Learning Initiative, through EduvateRI, released a vision paper articulating what Rhode Island as a state means—and doesn't mean—by personalized learning. The current version of this vision paper is the work of forty stakeholders—including educators; administrators; families; and nonprofit, higher education, and industry leaders. The paper offers an initial blueprint for how stakeholders at every level, including students and parents, educators and administrators, and state leaders can support a movement toward increased personalization for students. This paper will continue to evolve based on public feedback and will be used as a basis for exploring personalized learning as part of this research project.



COLLABORATIVE SCHOLAR SUPPORT

The Collaborative is supporting the first research project via a competitive process. Scholars funded by The Collaborative are supported throughout the duration of their research. Our editorial team works with scholars to translate research into concise, readable research briefs for a wide audience. Our design team supports scholars in creating rich data visualizations and interactive reports that can easily be shared via print, web, media and social channels. Scholars funded by The Collaborative also receive project management assistance in addition to editorial and design support.

RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The research funded as part of this initial project will provide a focused, short-term exploration of questions related to personalized learning with the goal of providing:

- A better understanding of the efficacy and effective implementation of personalized learning across grade levels, subject matters, and demographics.
- An understanding and identification of the teaching and learning dispositions, styles, and resources needed to best capitalize on personalized learning.
- An understanding of the systems, policies, and frameworks shifts that must be undertaken for personalized learning to be implemented effectively.

Potential questions for exploration (already identified as part of the white paper) that researchers may choose to focus on include:

- How does the role of the teacher change in a personalized learning model? What does human interaction look like given students' use of technology in a personalized learning model?
- How do different elements of personalized learning affect achievement gaps? Cultural relevancy of learning? Equity in our system broadly?
- How do we define success to this end?
- What supports do educators need to be successful in new learning environments? During the transition period?
- What does strong personalized learning implementation look like at different grade levels and in different content areas? How can content mastery be captured across disciplines?
- How do personalized learning models affect the learning of "essential skills"? How do we define success amongst these efforts?
- How does a shift toward personalized learning effect the school social community?
- What system shifts need to be considered when moving to a personalized learning model? Do these considerations change given different models of personalized learning?

GRANT AWARD PROCESS

Key Dates:

June 5	Letters of Intent Due
June 15	Researchers Selected for Team
Later June/Early July TBD	First Team Meeting
September 1	Project Plan Due

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH TEAM

Researchers are asked to submit their letter of intent individually and will be selected based on their ability to contribute to a Research Team by addressing one or more of the priorities outlined above. Alternatively, if you already have a team that you are interested in working with, please indicate that in your letter of intent, or submit a shared letter of intent. Researchers selected to receive funding will work with The Collaborative to create their full proposal and project approach.

Participating in a Research Team. This team will be made up of experts, both faculty and practitioners. Participating researchers may:

Apply individually. Researchers and/or practitioners who submit a letter of intent individually will be asked to illustrate their expertise and potential contribution as part of a team. Individuals will be selected for a team based on their expertise and potential contributions. (See “Eligibility” below.)

OR

Apply as a team. Submit a letter of intent as part of an already established research team. Applicants may also contact Amber Caulkins, amber@collaborativeri.org, at The Collaborative for help identifying team members prior to submitting your LOI.

Priority will be given to researchers who illustrate a creative approach to exploring components of personalized learning (specifically student agency, pace of instruction, learning objectives, and/or instructional approaches) and that incorporate an interdisciplinary approach.

The selected Collaborative Research Team will be supported in knowledge synthesis and will receive project management support. Members of the Collaborative Research Team will participate in planning workshops that include practitioners and policymakers.

Collaborative Research Teams will include two to five participants, ideally with more than one higher education institution represented. Priority will be given to proposals that include at least one other institution. Team members who have never participated in interdisciplinary research, but are interested in applying, will be supported by The Collaborative.

Once selected, researchers will participate in discussions/workshops that are facilitated by local, regional, and national experts who are involved in education research and implementation. The workshops will be opportunities to explore and discuss new techniques, approaches, and tools that are currently being used in national studies.

ELIGIBILITY

This research project is intended to encourage bold, competitive ideas. We seek team members from across disciplines and sectors to devise and implement this research project. Research funding is limited to participants who are affiliated with an institution or school (organization) of higher education and/or elementary and secondary education located in Rhode Island.

SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Submissions will be reviewed by a Review Committee, comprised of EduvateRI, the Rhode Island Office of Innovation, and The Collaborative. The committee will select up to five individuals as part of the Collaborative Research Team. After the team is selected they will prepare a collaborative proposal for final review and approval.

SUBMITTING LETTERS OF INTENT

Interested individuals are encouraged to submit a 1-2 page letter of intent that outlines the following:

1. What questions identified above inspire you and what is your primary area of interest? If you have a preliminary (or a few potential preliminary) research question(s), please include them as well.
2. What is your preliminary model of how to approach questions?
3. Describe your expertise in your subject area and how this experience will contribute to your research agenda or other education related work.
4. Describe your previous experience working on research teams, including any interdisciplinary projects you have undertaken. If you have no prior experience with research teams, please indicate your interest in working on this type of project.

With the letter of intent, all submissions must include:

1. Updated CV or Resume
2. Short bio (150 words)
3. Bulleted list of relevant collaborative work/project/work samples

Letters of Intent can be sent to Amber Caulkins at amber@collaborativeri.org

AWARD

Individual researchers will receive grants of up to \$5,000, with a project total not to exceed \$25,000. There is no overhead charged for these grants. Researchers will also work with graphic designers and editors at The Collaborative to create a research brief accompanied by data visualizations that highlight the key findings of their research.

If you have any questions on eligibility or the RFP process, please contact Amber Caulkins at amber@collaborativeri.org or 401.272.8270 ext. 2.