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THE LEARNING ACCELERATOR ANNOUNCES $2M IN FUNDING FOR OPEN EDUCATION RESOURCES
The Hewlett Foundation leads early funding of 10 content developers creating free course materials that can be frequently updated, are easily tailored to individual student needs, leverage technology, and are designed to more effectively engage students

Cupertino, CA – April 16, 2015 – The Learning Accelerator, a nonprofit supporting the implementation of high-quality blended learning across the United States, today announced funding totaling $2 million to help create free, comprehensive, high-quality, open educational resources (OER) supporting K–12 mathematics and English language arts that are aligned with state learning standards. On behalf of the K-12 OER Collaborative, The Learning Accelerator also announced ten content developers that will create rapid prototype units of the educational content for review in summer 2015.

Every year school districts across the country spend over $8 billion on instructional materials.[1] Printed textbooks quickly fall into disrepair and their content lapses out of date, while costly yearly subscription fees for online content only allow schools to lease (not own) materials. The huge aggregate demand represented by the nationwide need for new materials creates a unique opportunity for schools to acquire higher quality, more effective, and less expensive content that is aligned to state educational standards.

"The funding provided by the Hewlett Foundation and The Learning Accelerator's matching donors is an investment in our nation's future," said Scott Ellis, CEO of the Learning Accelerator. "Too many of our country's 50 million K-12 students and their teachers have gone too long with instructional materials that are, ironically, both costly and inadequate. Open educational resources are an important part of a comprehensive solution to improve student learning experiences and outcomes while freeing up budget dollars for other critical educational needs."

With OER, states and districts can transition from expensive and rigidly controlled materials to new open instructional resources that are free or low-cost, flexible, and significantly improved in comparison to traditional materials. Most notably, their licenses grant permission for anyone to freely and legally use, adapt, and redistribute the resources.

The OER effort is led by the K–12 OER Collaborative, a group of 12 states and numerous nonprofit organizations, with the goal of creating free resources designed to enable all students to master foundational skills and knowledge to achieve college and career readiness. States in the collaborative include Arizona, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, Utah,

Wisconsin, and Washington. The Collaborative received proposals from 24 content developers. Over ninety educators in the participating states reviewed the proposals and helped to select the ten content developers who will build rapid prototype units of content for a specified learning standard at each grade level. The results of the rapid prototype evaluations will be a major factor in determining which content developers are selected to move into the full-course development phase of the initiative.

The selected content developers for the rapid prototype effort are:
- edCount LLC
- Expeditionary Learning
- Illustrative Mathematics
- Learn Zillion
- Literary Design Collaborative
- Mathematics Vision Project
- Odell Education
- Public Consulting Group, Inc.
- University of Utah
- Victory Productions

"Each of the content developers announced today has an excellent track record in building quality educational content tied to state standards," said Jennifer Wolfe, Partner at The Learning Accelerator and Project Director for the K-12 OER Collaborative. "We believe that the materials they are creating will be judged by educators as superior to much of what they are using now on many dimensions, including, but by no means limited to, their cost."

For more information about The Learning Accelerator's OER work, contact TLA Partner Jennifer Wolfe at jennifer.wolfe@learningaccelerator.org.

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The Learning Accelerator is a nonprofit dedicated to transforming education by accelerating the implementation of high-quality blended learning in school districts across America. Learn more at learningaccelerator.org. **What is blended learning? Watch this brief video:** (https://vimeo.com/89546618).

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1. http://publishers.org/schoolfundingfacts/#sthash.blgryX9p.dpuf