

On our final morning, the Fest invited participants up on the dais to share our ideas about prizes or other ways to incentivize innovation and improvement in education. It was a fitting way to direct the discussion--and our own thinking--toward action in our communities.

I was struck by the diversity of insights. Though we seem to agree on a vision for a more student-centered learning process, we haven't determined how to get our education system there. Here are some of the ideas:

- A WD-40 prize in education, celebrating the steps of failure needed to find success (the inventors of WD-40 failed 39 times before they got it).
- A stock option for schools, so that students, parents, and others can invest.
- A "Which way is up?" prize to change the broken assessment system.
- Individual learning accounts to invest in kids' education and provide them with power in selecting their best educational options.
- A Nobel Prize for teachers to fund sabbaticals for those who have successfully implemented an important innovation, and the opportunity to direct a funding initiative to spread the innovation.
- A prize for state legislators who succeed as a legislature: for example, the relaxation of term limits in the next election cycle when the state budget is passed on time and when state per-student funding is distributed equitably across districts.

YES, AND. . . the energy in the room seemed to center around a "Kids Liberation" prize for the development of scalable systems or opportunities that engage students--particularly those at-risk for drop-out--in taking charge of their own learning. This was highlighted in relation to a "Dancing Partners" prize to reward and incentivize collaborations--including among students--that will be needed to accomplish this. In the final keynote, Mayor of Sacramento Kevin Johnson echoed this theme as he challenged us not to let adult systems and politics get in the way of kids' educational needs.