

Making Contributions That Matter

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Big charitable foundations that give money to improve education don't always succeed in doing so. In a study of more than 670 foundations, many that donate in the Northwest, only 11 percent spent at least half of their education dollars on students in under-served populations, and even fewer focused on long-term solutions to problems in education.

Study author Kevin Welner says foundations need to spend more time getting to know the people and communities their grants will be helping – and doing more research on what really works – before they write the check.

"It's a very collaborative effort - and that's extremely important, because we've seen so many examples of philanthropists who have good intentions, and come in with top-down ideas that make no sense at the local level."

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