

Bill Gates Drops \$1.7 Billion To Reform Public Schools

Rob Shimshock

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Bill Gates will spend \$1.7 billion “to fund new ideas” in public education, the Microsoft billionaire announced Thursday.

“Every student should get a great public education and graduate with skills to succeed in the marketplace,” Gates said Thursday at a conference in Cleveland, Ohio. “The role of philanthropy here is not to be the primary funder, but rather to fund pilots, to fund new ideas, to let people — it’s always the educators coming up with the ideas — to let them try them out and see what really works super well and get those to scale.”

Gates spoke to approximately 1,000 school officials, reported The Washington Post.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has spent at \$3.4 billion developing public education, including boosting expansion of Common Core State Standards and in support of charter schools and teacher training, WaPo noted.

Gates will dedicate 60 percent of the \$1.7 billion to traditional public schools. Charter schools will receive 15 percent of the investment to aid disabled students and the rest of the money “will be focused on big bets” research and development-oriented.

Gates has shifted education strategies, explaining that the billionaire called high schools “obsolete” a dozen years ago, whereas he now wants to give those schools control of his investments, Rick Hess, education policy director at the American Enterprise Institute, noted to WaPo.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will request ideas from schools Monday and will collect formal proposals early 2018.