



# GAME 2019 CHANGERS

Ideas, Innovation, Inspiration

Bill Anderson • George Blumenthal & Mary Papazian • Joe Burton  
Assembly member David Chiu & Mayor Sam Liccardo • Carol T. Christ  
Bracken Darrell • Jenny Dearborn • John Donahoe • Jennifer M. Granholm  
James Gutierrez • Congress member Jim Himes • Sarah Krevans  
Tekedra Mawakana • Sangeeth Peruri • Ryan Popple  
Dan Rosensweig • Bill Ruh • Ahmad Wani



**SANGEETH PERURI**

Founder & CEO

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**THE UNFORTUNATE  
REALITY IS THAT  
OUR SCHOOLS  
DO NOT PREPARE  
MANY OF OUR  
CHILDREN TO  
PARTICIPATE IN THE  
CALIFORNIA DREAM.**

**PROJECT 2 MILLION: AN AUDACIOUS, YET  
PRACTICAL GAME CHANGER TO ELIMINATE  
THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN CALIFORNIA**

California is the land of dreams. But the home of Google, Apple, Facebook, Tesla, and so many innovation giants is also the land of broken dreams. Our schools are failing two million students – an astounding 1 out of 3 students. If you’re born to a poor family or if you’re Latino or African-American, your odds are even worse; you have a 70 percent likelihood of failing in school.

The unfortunate reality is that our schools do not prepare many of our children to participate in the California dream. The root cause isn’t a lack of desire to see students succeed but a lack of knowledge on how to drive change across entire school systems, so that every student receives the premium education that only some currently receive.

Given my own fortunate upbringing in those premium educational settings, I’ve spent the last five years trying to understand how I could help. Over time, I heard many common areas of blame: funding gaps, lack of access to early learning options, teachers’ unions, or limits on charter schools. However, I also learned that there are numerous examples where changing these factors did not improve outcomes; the opposite held true as well when there was great success when none of these factors were altered.

Of course, I have also listened to those who feel strongly the solution is hurting the existing public school system. But for this to be the best option, every district would need to be failing. Fortunately, there are districts scattered around California that are changing the odds for their students year after year – regardless if they’re rich or poor, white, Latino, or African-American.

**Understanding the common denominators across these public schools is the key to serving all children well. Here is what I, as well as experts in the field, have observed in successful districts:**

- a culture of high expectations for students, teachers, and administrators
- data systems that use an improvement science framework where data is used as a flashlight (rather than a stick) for continuous learning
- training that empowers administrators, principals, and teachers to work together to improve educational quality
- stable leadership that can execute decisions

When these elements are in place, additional initiatives are likely to work. When these elements are missing, even the most well-intentioned actions and investments are doomed from the start.

It’s all about the underlying system. Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets. This profound truth should be hung in every superintendent’s office.

In academic circles, this principle is well understood, but the challenge is translating theory into improved educational practices. After years of searching, I began working with and funding Principal’s Exchange, an education training, research, and consulting firm that has dramatically reduced the achievement gap in numerous districts in California for 20+ years. Now, it is focusing on scaling it’s impact. Three years ago, it joined Think Together, one of the largest expanded learning providers in the state. Together, it is now serving 200,000 students. This year, it is launching Project 2 Million to end the achievement gap for the two million students that are failing in California schools every year. It’s an audacious plan, but given its 20 years of proven results, I believe it can do it. I will be dedicating my time and the majority of my philanthropy towards this initiative.

I’m truly excited and fortunate to collaborate with the team at Principal’s Exchange that is creating a more equitable and just future for all children, no matter their circumstances. California has the resources and desire. Now we have a path to make this a reality and I look forward to working with Principal’s Exchange and a coalition of the willing to walk down this path, together.



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***Mentor or role model?***  
Mahatma Gandhi



***Last book read?***  
Measure What Matters



***What inspires you?***  
Helping others and overcoming obstacles