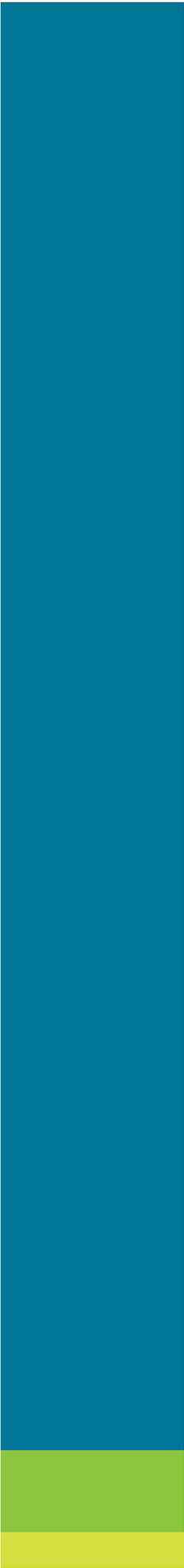


who's who
in a growing
education
reform
movement



The Education Trust





who's who in a growing education reform movement

Across the country, nonprofit civic-led organizations are working toward a shared goal: transforming the nation's system of public schools to ensure that every student has access to a great teacher and a great school. In some states, these organizations are independent nonprofit organizations; in others, they may be a branch or affiliate of national organizations.

In many states, more than one such group is active in the state capital, packing a punch from multiple directions, leveraging different constituencies. They all are driven by the understanding that public policy plays a crucial role in shaping public education.

Education reform advocacy organizations have been working at the state-level for more than twenty-five years, but the last decade has seen a significant increase in their number and in the intensity of their focus and methods. It's no coincidence that as reform organizations proliferate the movement accelerates: the mission of such organizations is to build and mobilize a constituency for change.

As the reform sector grows, many of the philanthropists who support this important work are asking for clarity about the unique contributions of groups working to advance education reform at the state-level. To address those important questions, leaders of several prominent national advocacy organizations, along with several leaders of single-state groups, gathered with the simple goal of delineating their respective efforts and fostering stronger working relationships across the sector. Doing so, they understood, would sharpen their ability to describe not only the importance of their own work but to help differentiate the contributions of colleagues from other organizations. Because the PIE Network was an established supporting organization to most of these groups, PIE Network was invited to play a convening role.

Leading education philanthropists commissioned this report to help them and other funders better understand the distinguishing contributions of all the reform players. Basic questions these funders regularly pose include:

- Why are so many groups necessary?
- What distinguishes each player?
- Where and in what capacity are groups working?
- Who and what unique leverage does each bring to the table?
- In what ways, if any, are these groups working together to advance common goals?

This report answers those questions. It focuses on the organizations poised to play leading roles in shaping the overall policy framework at the district, state, and national level but focuses most heavily on the state-level, where the landscape is increasingly crowded. It gives special attention to the roles and distinctions among the national advocacy players that have emerged over the past decade (50CAN, Democrats for Education Reform, Education Trust, and Stand for Children, and StudentsFirst) who together have 40 branches or affiliates working at the state-level) and then provides a comprehensive mapping that also includes the 23 single-state groups working in the sector. It does not include in its scope the groups many call social entrepreneurs—innovators such as KIPP, Teach for America, NLNS, or The New Teacher Project—as these organizations, while working to change public education, are doing so while contributing to the education delivery system.

It's no coincidence that as reform organizations proliferate the movement accelerates: the mission of such organizations is to build and mobilize a constituency for change.

The PIE Network is grateful for the collaboration among our colleagues who worked together to create this report and was honored to play a leading role gathering the many insights from all the contributors who together shaped this document.

History of the Advocacy Sector

A CIVIC VOICE IN THE STATEHOUSE. Many give credit for the birth of the education advocacy sector to the Prichard Committee, an organization launched by civic leaders in Kentucky in 1983 to bring urgency and accountability to Kentucky's statehouse, demanding action to change a school system that was then ranked last on almost every national measure. Prichard's founders recognized that a permanent political constituency made up of leading citizens concerned about their state's future was essential to sustain any commitment to reform over time. In the 29 years since the Prichard Committee's formation, the need for a civic-led constituency for education reform has become more widely understood. As it has, the roles, forms, and aim of education advocacy organizations have evolved over time, sharpening policy goals as well as the strategy and tactics for moving those goals forward.

Prichard's founders recognized that a ... constituency made up of leading citizens ... was essential to sustain any commitment to reform over time.

When *A Nation At Risk* (1983) sounded the alarm about the need for higher standards, the National Business Roundtable played a strong role in helping business leaders at the state-level form state-based organization to support those reforms. The strongest of those groups are still active, including the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, Oklahoma Business Education Coalition, and Washington's Partnership for Learning.

At the same time, a growing sector of social entrepreneurs, including charter schools that offered alternative models of schooling as well as organizations such as Teach for America, and NLNS that sought to reshape crucial talent pipelines, were coming on the scene. As such organizations grew, they built enormous alumni networks and developed their advocacy chops, recognizing the importance of political engagement to their own viability. Still, in the early day of charter advocacy, the backers of systemic reforms such as adopting learning standards and tests to measure them and the supporters of charter schools kept separate company; those ideas were often seen more as competing strategies than symbiotic goals.

Enter No Child Left Behind (NCLB), landmark federal legislation passed in 2001 that dramatically increased the federal role in education. In particular, it required every state to focus not just on average achievement levels but also on the gaps between the lowest and higher performances among different socio-economic and racial/ethnic groups. NCLB also combined policy approaches that up until that time had been viewed more as competing views rather than complementary strategies by giving equal attention to systemic reforms aimed at raising standards, closing gaps, and increasing teacher effectiveness as well as disruptive reforms that created choices for families, fostered innovation, and created competitive pressures on all schools to improve.

The Education Trust played a leading role in advancing NCLB nationally, demonstrating the power of using well-developed data to change the conversation about policy goals. In early 2000, the Education Trust created the Education Trust West to bring that same data-packed strategy to California.

THE NEXT GENERATION EMERGES. Also in the early part of in 2000, leading education philanthropists from California founded EdVoice, the first of a kind of next generation advocacy group. A few years later, the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN) was similarly founded on the East Coast. These groups are often recognized as the beginning of next generation advocacy because both groups broadened the tactical toolkit for advancing education reform. Each looked outside traditional approaches in education to study the form and strategies of successful advocacy groups such as the AARP, the NRA, and the Sierra Club. They brought fresh thinking to education reform advocacy, adopting strategies such as voter engagement and mobilization tactics much more commonly employed by these other, more sophisticated advocacy sectors.

They brought fresh thinking to the reform movement, adopting strategies such as voter engagement and mobilizations tactics employed by ... more sophisticated advocacy sectors.

A MOVEMENT TAKES HOLD. Through the early to mid-2000s, the word “movement” increasingly appears in discussions of education reform. A check with Webster shows the definition of “movement” as “a group of people working together to advance shared goals.” But a quick scan of the history of other social movements tells a more complicated story. Social movements such as women’s suffrage, civil rights, environmental protection, or more recently, the tea party, all share two defining indicators that demonstrate pursuit of a cause as raised to “movement” status. One is that no single organization plays a leading role or served as titular head. Rather, movements by their nature involve multiple organizations founded independently of one another and working, often over a decade or more, to achieve those shared goals by bringing different strengths and different leaders to the work.

With so many passion-driven, independent groups working toward the same goal, the second common characteristic is almost inevitable. Every social movement sees significant infighting among leading groups. Resisting that tendency and concentrating instead on larger shared goals requires significant, intentional efforts to stay focused on those shared goals for social change. Therefore, within all movements, regular gatherings of leading voices are needed to maintain that common focus on a larger shared purpose.

By the latter part of the 2000s, it was clear that education reform had achieved movement status. In 2007, several national organizations committed to advancing education reform were founded, all headed by high profile movement leaders. Democrats for Education Reform, bringing a clear constituency backing reform to the Democratic side of the aisle, tapped Joe Williams, recent author of *Cheating Our Kids* to lead that effort. The Foundation for Excellence in Education, led by former Governor Jeb Bush, also launched that year to help governors, lawmakers, education chiefs, and state education advocacy organizations as they initiate, advance, adopt, and implement reforms. And recognizing that while many single-state organizations were working at the state-level they had not connected in ways that supported collaboration, the PIE Network, founded by the nation's leading policy organizations, also held its first meeting in the fall of 2007, growing into the leading support organization for state-level advocates.

Also late in the decade, Stand for Children, a grassroots advocacy organization founded in 1996 that had been working mostly at the district level and on state education funding, strengthened their commitment to reform at the state-level. As the decade closed, 50CAN was founded as a new, separate organization to replicate the ConnCAN model in other states.¹

As the next decade began, The Education Trust launched its second-full-time state organization in Michigan. Yet another new player, StudentsFirst, emerged on the national scene that same year. Founded by another prominent national voice, Michelle Rhee, whose appearances on magazine covers and talk shows such as "Oprah" brightened the national spotlight on reform, StudentsFirst in many ways pushes the boundaries of reform, blending efforts to improve teacher quality with a commitment to vouchers, an issue still seen by many as a "third-rail" reform issue. The most recent addition to the national landscape is America Succeeds, a replication effort based on the success of Colorado Succeeds that was launched in 2012 to develop and optimize business engagement in states and regions across the country.

The education reform movement was highly effective at leveraging a new federal initiative when the Obama administration launched Race to the Top (RTTT), a competitive grant strategy for accessing more than \$4 billion in federal funds. The high stakes and short timelines of the grant process bolstered political will to tackle more serious reform issues. Reform advocates heavily leveraged that competition among states, comparing their own state's plans to others and spurring their state leaders to create bold and comprehensive proposals.

ENDURING CONTRIBUTION OF SINGLE-STATE ORGANIZATIONS.

Alongside all these national developments, independent civic-led groups continued to grow within states, as groups such as Advance Illinois, Colorado Succeeds, Rodel Foundation of Delaware, Kids Ohio!, the League of Education Voters, SCORE (Tennessee), and the Texas Institute for Education Reform also proved effective as leading voices in their states. While it's fair to say that many of the national organizations working in the last decade have sharpened the tactics and strategies advocates use to bring pressure to their state capitals, it's equally fair to say that many of these leading single-state organizations have demonstrated their enduring strengths as well. Where groups are representing established bases of political and civic power, such as groups organized to represent the business voice in their states, we see dramatically different strategies for advocacy, relying less on voter engagement, social media or other more public forms of exerting pressure and more on the quieter work of representing powerful interests behind the scenes. Because these groups are also less public in their criticisms, and because their governing boards are made up entirely of in-state leading civic, business, and philanthropic leaders, they often (but not always) emerge as the player most able to convene the range of interests working at the state-level to forge consensus as final deals come together.

As is true in all movements, as the education reform movement has grown, so has the noise and, sometimes, conflict, among its leading organizational voices. Tensions surface even when groups pursue the same goals but following different strategies to achieve those ends, especially when those differences include how much change—and conflict—advocates believe a state can sustain in any given year. At the state-level, the PIE Network has been playing a unique role to convene the leaders of state-level advocacy organizations, creating the relationships that help to mitigate such conflict. More recently, learning the lessons from other social about the damaging effects of infighting among movement leaders, many education reform leaders arranged a meeting among most national advocacy leaders to build stronger working relationships focused on goals they all shared.

In August of 2011, the chief executives from leading single state and national groups, including 50CAN, ConnCAN, Democrats for Education Reform, the Education Trust, the Foundation for Excellence in Education, the League of Education Voters (WA), Stand for Children, and PIE Network, met at the Warwick Hotel in New York. The agenda was informal; they talked for an afternoon about their hopes and concerns for education reform as well as lessons learned about strategies for mobilizing public support for improving schools. They agreed to meet regularly, recognizing the importance of working better together to advance their many shared goals. Since that first meeting, that loosely organized “Warwick group” has continued to meet informally to discuss shared challenges, identify opportunities to share resources, and tackle common challenges.

In states where we are seeing the biggest wins, a coalition of groups has been a crucial factor.

Seeing the growth in the sector, many funders ask, are so many organizations really necessary? That question is a good one and must be considered in the context in which advocates most often work: the arenas--legislative hearing rooms, board of education meetings, or judicial chambers--where education policy is deliberated. Whenever proposed improvements for education reform are discussed in policy-making chambers, a significant number of groups line up at the microphone to testify in defense of the status quo. Generally, it's only when there is more than one organized voice for reform working in a state that a line starts to form in favor of reform as well. And where there are multiple voices, their collective commitment to reform tends to be stronger because of the healthy competition that's fostered. In the states where we are seeing the biggest wins, a coalition of groups has been a crucial factor in passing reform legislation or regulations.

Upon closer look, there really isn't that much redundancy at the state-level. Yes, policy goals overlap and the tactics of advocates can appear similar, but these groups represent different constituencies bringing distinct abilities to leverage business, civic, or philanthropic leaders, mobilize voters, or bring grassroots involvement. Some, given their leadership, have more influence on one or another side of the political aisle. Where groups aren't coordinating messages and strategies, so many voices make more noise than music. Working together, they form a longer line at the microphone with a consistent message in support of reform.

Case studies published by the Center for American Progress² discussing Illinois' campaign to pass Senate Bill 7, by Democrats for Education Reform³ and Stand for Children⁴ discussing the campaign to support CO's SB 191, and from the PIE Network (Race to Reform and Seizing Opportunity⁵) all provide more insight into how advocates work together, bringing different strengths and voices to the policy making process.

1. ConnCAN is an independent organization and not a part of 50CAN.

2. Center for American Progress. Illinois, the New Leader in Education Reform? (July 2011). www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/07/pdf/illinois_education.pdf

3. Democrats for Education Reform, Creating A Winning Legislative Campaign: The Colorado Story, <http://tinyurl.com/7yh2xbr>

4. Stand for Children. The Passage Of Colorado's Senate Bill 191: The Passage Of Colorado's Senate Bill 191: Game Changing Teacher And Principal Effectiveness Legislation. https://stand.org/sites/default/files/National/Case%20Study_THE%20PASSAGE%20OF%20COLORADO.pdf

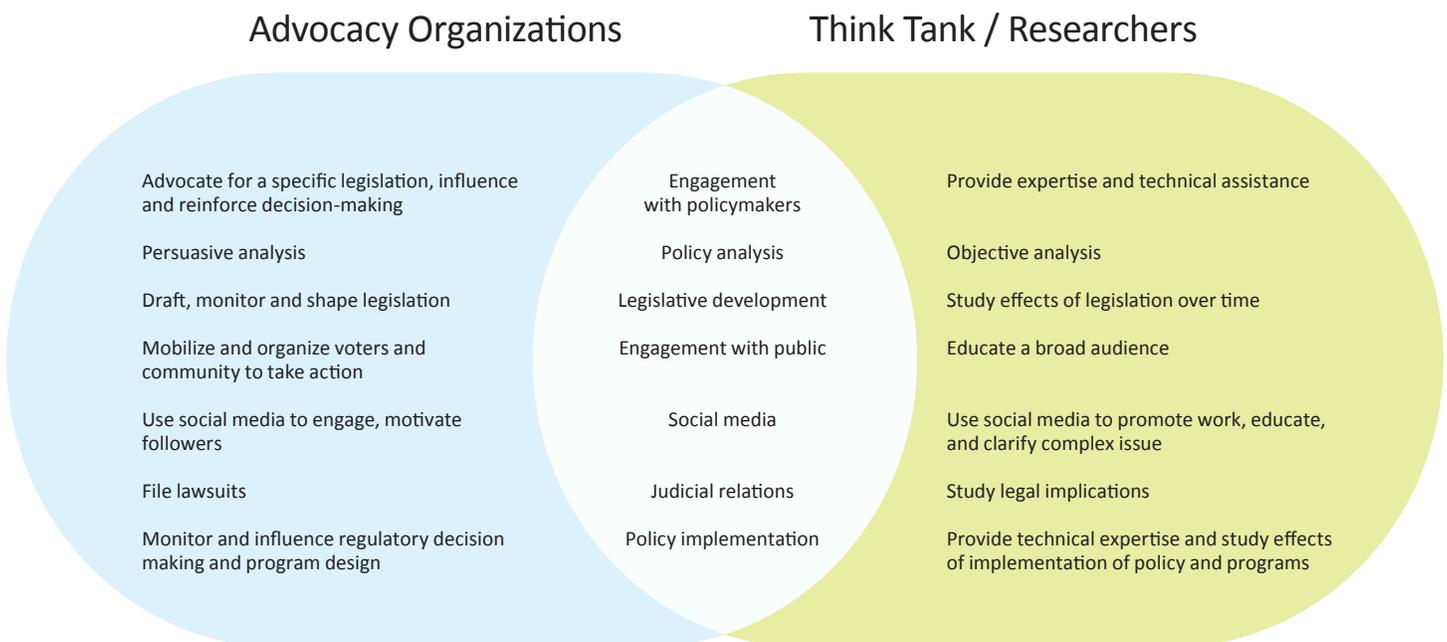
5. Policy Innovators in Education Network. (April 2010). Race to Reform: How Education Reform Advocates are Leveraging Race to the Top. <http://tinyurl.com/6wg2p79> and (January 2012). Seizing the Opportunity: How Education Advocacy Groups and State Policy Makers Work Together to Advance Reform. <http://tinyurl.com/7lpv9s8>

Distinguishing Characteristics of Advocacy

In the earlier decades of the movement to reform education, much of what was considered “advocacy” would be more accurately described today as good communications, which is an essential but not sufficient ingredient in the advocacy campaigns that differentiate a new generation of reform advocates. Similarly, think tanks play essential roles in advancing reform as well, and some engage in direct advocacy in limited ways, but are more often tactically restricted given their legal status as well as the goals of most to remain “objective” sources of information. Many advocacy organizations invest heavily in developing and effectively communicating policy goals and analysis, but their efforts don’t stop there. They also invest time in building influential relationships with policy-makers, engaging voters, and other tactics needed to advance legislative change.

The following display underscores the often-blurred roles of policy and advocacy organizations while also highlighting some of the essential tactics that distinguish the unique role that education advocacy organizations play to advance reform policy.

FIGURE 1
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF ADVOCACY



Distinctions in Form and Function

There are a number of advocacy tactics employed by all advocacy groups that might serve as a test of whether or not a group is actually engaged in advocacy work as opposed to conducting policy analysis on the sidelines. For instance, if an organization can't describe its process for actively monitoring developing legislation, it's likely that it's not a key player in the state's legislative process. But there are also a number of tactics that help distinguish among advocacy groups who bring differing varieties of expertise with them. For example, some have built special expertise in developing and leveraging persuasive research and data analysis and then building coalitions to advance their cause. Others represent specific constituencies, such as the business community, parents, and local community leaders, while others are developing more sophisticated techniques to mobilize voters concerned about education but not yet active in the policymaking process.

Figure 2 shows the variations among the national advocacy organizations in terms of the level of policy-making each group engages in, their legal status, and the leverage each brings to the negotiating table.

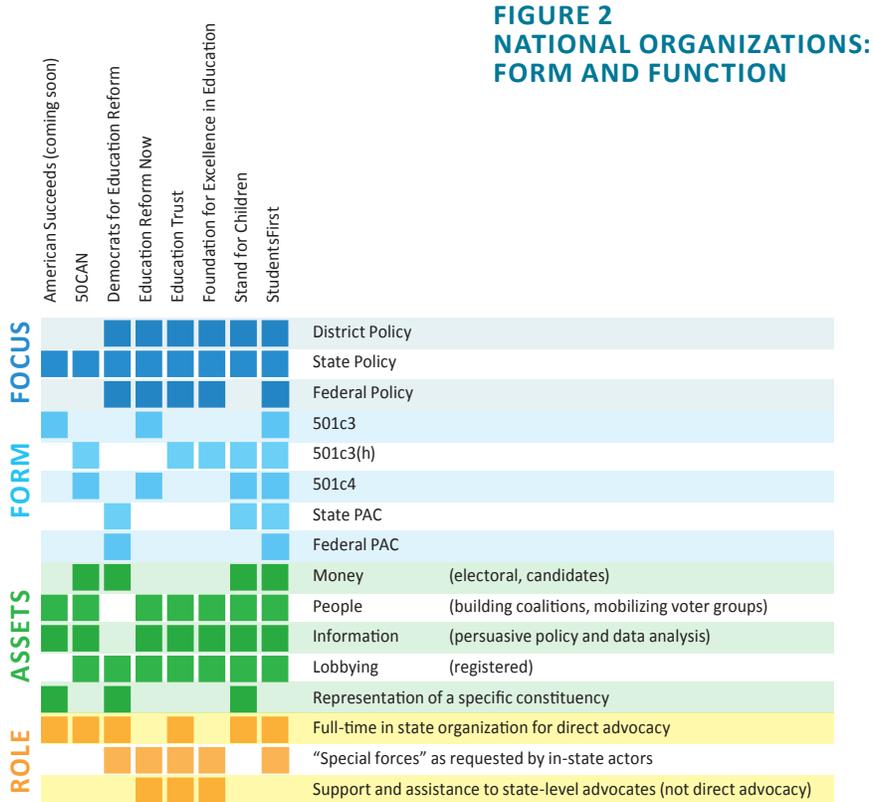


Figure 2 also distinguishes the roles different groups play, differentiating between organizations that make a permanent, full-time commitment to engage in a state's policymaking process and those deploying "advise-and-assist" efforts that bring added strength at strategic times. To understand why that's so important, we return to the context of the statehouse. The organizations that represent the various fractions of "the education lobby"—groups such as employee unions, school board associations, and other role-specific educator associations—all recognize the importance of full-time engagement in their state capitals. That many of these groups own land and large headquarters near their state capitals demonstrates how much those groups invest in ensuring their voices are permanently represented. Similarly, while rules guiding policy-making always involve some provisions for public transparency, it's sadly not at all uncommon for harmful provisions to be introduced into bills in the 11th hour of lawmaking. To advance reform—or guard against bad provisions being passed within hours before the final bell of a legislative session—reform advocates who are similarly committed to full-time engagement in a state are essential.

Still, there are many strategic reasons a state's leading advocacy group will periodically call on help from friends and allies who can bring needed expertise, a credible voice, or funding to back reform candidates and/or policies at a particularly critical juncture. Often, state policymakers are motivated to compete or at least keep pace with neighboring states or to impress party leaders across state lines; effective advocates leverage that motivation by bringing in credible expert testimony or support. Allies from other states can also help in-state groups push the boundaries of reform because leaders from outside a state can be more candid or aggressive with fewer consequences for long-term relationships. The Foundation for Excellence in Education, Democrats for Education Reform, the Education Trust, and StudentsFirst all provide this type of advice and assistance.

Figures 3 and 4 show state by state where these organizations are working and in what capacity. We distinguish permanent in-state commitments as groups that have staff working and living in the state and some form of a state-based board that ensures the group is pursuing a locally grounded agenda (Fig. 3). By contrast, we identify "advise and assist" efforts as those where national groups are dedicating varying degrees of effort to influence the state's legislative cycle short of making that permanent commitment (Fig. 4). Our goal is to refresh this full display annually to continue to show the expanding reach of the reform movement.

There are many strategic reasons a state's leading advocacy group will call on help from friends and allies ...

FIGURE 4

Advise and assist, single or multi-issue focus ²

Commitment from policy leaders

State	Advise and assist, single or multi-issue focus ²				Commitment from policy leaders			
	Education Trust	Democrats for Education Reform	Foundation for Excellence in Education (Excel in Ed)	StudentsFirst	Excel in Ed's Chiefs for Change	Race To The Top winners		
						Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Alabama			P/V	L/P/V				
Alaska			P					
Arizona			P/V					
Arkansas								
California				L/P/V				
Colorado			P/V					
Connecticut	P	C	P/V	L/P/V				
D.C.		C						
Delaware		C						
Florida	V	C	P/V	L/P/V/C				
Georgia			P/V	L/P/V/C				
Hawaii								
Idaho			P/V					
Illinois								
Indiana			P/V	L				
Iowa			P/V	L/P/V/C				
Kansas			P/V					
Kentucky	P		P/V					
Louisiana		C	P/V					
Maine			P	L/P/V				
Maryland		C	P					
Massachusetts								
Michigan			P/V	L/P/V/C				
Minnesota	V	C	P/V	L/P/V				
Mississippi	P		P/V					
Missouri		C		L/P/V				
Montana			P					
Nebraska								
Nevada		C	P/V	L/P/V				
New Hampshire								
New Jersey			P	P/V/C				
New Mexico	P/V		P					
New York	V			P/V/C				
North Carolina	V	C	P/V					
North Dakota								
Ohio		C	P/V	L/P/V				
Oklahoma			P/V					
Oregon	P		P/V					
Pennsylvania	V	C	P/V	L/P/V				
Rhode Island			P/V					
South Carolina			P/V					
South Dakota								
Tennessee	P/V		P/V	L/P/V/C				
Texas	V	C	P/V					
Utah			P/V					
Vermont								
Virginia		C	P/V					
Washington	V		P/V					
West Virginia								
Wisconsin			P/V					
Wyoming								

Keys

coming soon
staff and/or board in place but not fully engaged in the policy making process.

shaded states
lack full-time advocacy group

L
full-time contract *lobbyist*
committed to the full policymaking cycle covering multiple issues

P
provide *policy*, research, other assistance to advance one or more issues

V
(*voice*) gave testimony or other presentations to build support

C
provided political backing for reform *candidates*

Notes

1. The organizations in Figure 3 are committed to multi-issue reform agendas, have in-state staff, and boards solely committed to education reform.

2. These organizations played a role in the state for the entire 2012 legislative session, moving a particular issue through testimony or supporting candidates.

More About This Report

The hope for this report is that it will clarify the contributions of the many organizations working in different ways to advance education reform. As all continue to work together, these groups look forward to moving the discussion beyond “who’s who” to examining deeper questions surrounding effectiveness, measuring success, and broader movement questions such as which combinations of advocacy work and players contributes to the greatest successes for education reform. The groups all look forward to continuing ongoing collaboration on specific campaigns and general increased effectiveness of the reform movement.

The PIE Network is grateful for the confidence of our colleagues who entrusted us with the role of pulling this information together, with special thanks to Joe Williams of Democrats for Education Reform for lending his voice to the final report. This report was created through the collaborative efforts of the following national and single state groups: 50CAN, Colorado Succeeds, ConnCAN, Democrats for Education Reform, the Education Trust, the Foundation for Excellence in Education, the League of Education Voters (WA), Stand for Children and StudentsFirst.

Three leading funders commissioned this work, challenging the advocacy sector to help others better understand *who’s who* and *working where?*, as well as to better distinguish contributions of the many groups working to advance education reform. The organizations that led in the creation of this report are grateful to The Edythe and Eli Broad Foundation, the John and Laura Arnold Foundation, and Bloomberg Philanthropies for backing this effort and for their ongoing commitment to sustaining education reform.



Who's Who in Their Own Words

50CAN

The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now identifies and supports local leaders building statewide movements to ensure that every child has access to a great public school. The 50CAN model, a spin off of ConnCAN's ground-breaking accomplishments in Connecticut, is built around the conviction that all politics is local but locals shouldn't have to start from scratch. They identify education reform leaders in their communities on the staff and board level and then provide them with the tools needed to build an effective advocacy movement in their state, including national-caliber communications and research such as websites, lobbying strategies, policy expertise and social media savvy. By empowering local leaders, 50CAN works to create a true, lasting, effective state-based education reform movement tackling 50 sets of education policy challenges in 50 states to close the achievement gap between the haves and have-nots in America. 50CAN believes that great state policies lead to great schools and that great schools change everything.

LEGAL STATUS: 501(c)3h and 501(c)4. Each state CAN is part of the overall organization and not a separate entity.⁶

DISTINGUISHING STRATEGIES: Pairing homegrown leaders with national-caliber political strategists, policy experts and communications specialists.

(6) ConnCAN is a separate legal entity and not a part of the 50CAN organization

America Succeeds

An expansion model launched in response to requests from states across the country to replicate the success of Colorado Succeeds, America Succeeds is a policy and advocacy organization committed to improving our nation's public education system by developing and optimizing business engagement in states across the country. Our vision is to have a powerful and robust "business voice for education reform" in every state. The motto of America Succeeds is "Great Schools are Good Business." The mission is to create, incubate, and support business-led organizations exclusively committed to transforming the public education system. America Succeeds provides a comprehensive support system focused on strategic policy and advocacy development and implementation.

LEGAL STATUS: 501(c)3

DISTINGUISHING STRATEGIES: Engage business to transform state public education systems, particularly as it relates to improving the workforce pipeline and economic development. The organization's theory of action is to boost of the power and efficacy of independent affiliates. Like Intel, we do not provide the operating platform, but our partners are "Powered by America Succeeds".

ConnCAN

ConnCAN—the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now—is leading a movement to improve educational outcomes for Connecticut’s kids. We bring advocates, policy makers, parents, educators, and community leaders together to change the system and give all kids access to great public schools.

Since 2005 we have been hard at work doing just that. ConnCAN fights to increase accountability, flexibility, and choice in Connecticut’s public education policies. We focus on results and get it done by:

- Spearheading robust policy platforms using best-in-class research developed by our own team as well as state and national policy experts;
- Empowering state and local leaders with the information they need to make change; and
- Providing a platform for tens of thousands of concerned advocates to become part of the solution by involving them in the campaign and connecting them to state and local policy makers.

LEGAL STATUS: 501(c)(3)

LEADING ISSUES: ConnCAN is committed to four key priorities – better funding, better educators, better schools, and better instruction. This translates into recent policy wins such as a new teacher evaluation system focused on measurable student learning, a strategy to turn around our lowest performing schools, a Common Chart of Accounts for all school districts, and increases in per-pupil charter school funding.

Democrats for Education Reform (DFER)

Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) is political action committee whose mission is to encourage a more productive dialogue within the Democratic Party on the need to fundamentally reform American public education. Launched in 2007, DFER is now a national organization headquartered in Washington, DC, operating on all levels of government to educate elected officials and support reform-minded candidates for public office. DFER leverages its PAC to create positive incentives for reform minded Democrats to run for or stay in office, then supports those members with proactive issue campaigns to drive policy change. DFER’s non-profit, non-partisan arm, Education Reform Now (ERN), provides policy support to its state groups as well as the sector more broadly, and its advocacy arm, Education Reform Now-Advocacy, enables it to do lobbying and campaign work. These three organizations give DFER the flexibility it needs to advance real reform and effect political elections.

LEGAL STATUS: DFER is a federal PAC (state branches have their own state PACs as well); Education Reform Now is a c3 (non-profit); Education Reform Now-Advocacy is a c4.

DISTINGUISHING STRATEGIES: Fighting it out within the Democratic Party

Education Trust: The Education Trust

is the leading voice nationally in the effort to improve achievement and close the long-standing gaps that separate low-income students and students of color from other young Americans, pre-kindergarten through college. With an unmatched track record of influence on national policy, the 15 year-old organization is now bringing its unique combination of hard-hitting data analyses, common sense policy solutions, and on-the-ground work with practitioners to the state-level, with offices in California and Michigan and partnerships under discussion with other state advocacy groups.

LEGAL STATUS: 501(c)3h

DISTINGUISHING STRATEGIES: Organizing information/data research

LEADING ISSUES IN 2012: The Education Trust continues work, in 2012, on issues of: college affordability, high academic standards and high-quality assessments, strengthening accountability in K-12 and higher education, supporting educators and promoting quality instruction, fiscal equity and comparability, and enhanced public information and reporting.

Foundation for Excellence in Education: Excel in Ed

Led by Jeb Bush, Excel in Ed supports and assists state leaders, policy makers, and education advocates to understand, develop, and implement education reform policies. The Foundation advocates for a broad reform agenda. Staffed with former legislative and executive branch employees, Excel in Ed provides customized support to governors, lawmakers, education chiefs, and state advocacy organizations as they advance, adopt, and implement reforms. Excel in Ed hosts an annual National Summit on Education Reform and supports the work of Chiefs for Change, a bipartisan coalition of the nation's most reform-focused state education chiefs, and Digital Learning Now!, designed to transform states' policies to allow digital learning to flourish in and out of the classroom. Excel in Ed's sister organization – the Foundation for Florida's Future – focuses c4 advocacy work in the state of Florida.

DISTINGUISHING STRATEGIES: Leveraging Jeb Bush's expertise and vision in advancing a menu of education reforms, Excel in Ed provides strategy development specific to each state in advancing reform, tailored communications to support the work, technical services in framing reforms for legislators, and organizational strategies to quickly and efficiently implement reforms.

LEADING ISSUES: Excel in Ed believes there is no "silver bullet" to reform education and improve student achievement. It supports a broad menu of reforms including: Standards and Accountability; K-3 Reading; Effective Teachers and Leaders; College Readiness; Outcome-Based Funding; all forms of School Choice, including universal vouchers; Digital Learning; and effective implementation of Common Core State Standards.

League of Education Voters

The League of Education Voters is an organization made up of parents, students and leaders who believe in a quality education from cradle to career. LEV is the only Washington-based organization working to improve public education from early learning through higher education. We shape the debate, build powerful coalitions and grow the grassroots to achieve meaningful reform and adequate resources for education.

Legal Status: 501(c)3 and 501(c)4.

DISTINGUISHING ISSUES: Raising our standards and expectations for kids, teachers and administrators. Preparing kids so they have the opportunity to go to college. Adequately funding our schools. Proper evaluation of students, teachers and administrators for full accountability. Providing teachers with the support and resources they need to make their students succeed.

DISTINGUISHING STRATEGIES: Citizen's Report Card on Washington Education, redefining basic education to include all day K and other programs, ensuring passage of school levies and bonds, working with the legislature and through the initiative process to lift Washington's bar on public charter schools.

The PIE Network

Founded in 2007 as a project and established in 2011 as viable nonprofit organization, the network supports, promotes, and accelerates the state-level advocacy movement, augmenting the capacity of small state organizations, increasing collaboration and spreading intelligence across state lines and creating a robust feedback loop between state-level reform leaders and leading national policy organizations. The network currently connects 34 organizations from 23 states and the District of Columbia. Most of the state affiliates of leading national reform organizations—groups such as The Education Trust, 50CAN, and Stand for Children—are members of the PIE Network, along with the many independent state-level advocacy organizations who make up more than half of the network's members. The nation's leading policy thinkers who span the ideological spectrum but agree to back the network's policy commitments on core reform principles provide ongoing policy guidance and resources to the network's members.

LEGAL STATUS: 501(c)3h

DISTINGUISHING STRATEGIES: Because the network is not a front line advocacy organization but exists to support groups that are, it is uniquely positioned to convene the movement's many advocacy leaders for collaborative efforts such as this report.

LEADING ISSUES: Members of the network share common commitments to system building strategies, such as raising standards, increasing accountability, and improving teacher effectiveness together with system disrupting strategies of increased charters, choice, fiscal flexibility, and innovation.

Stand for Children

harnesses a decade of disciplined state and local advocacy and organizing with a proven track record for catalyzing policy victory. Now in ten states (AZ, CO, IL, IN, LA, MA, OR, TN, TX, WA) and rapidly expanding, Stand for Children's strengths are an engaged and effectively organized constituency of parents; a nuanced grasp of the policies that improve student achievement; and the grassroots, direct lobbying, and electoral capacity it takes to win. Working collaboratively in communities, Stand elects local and state-level champions for education; delivers legislative policy victories; and follows through to ensure effective implementation.

LEGAL STATUS: 501(c)3h, 501(c)4, state-specific PACs

DISTINGUISHING STRATEGIES: Organizing at the grassroots level

StudentsFirst

StudentsFirst is a national grassroots movement fighting to put laws and leaders in place so that student interests come above special interests. Our goal is to eliminate the achievement gap and put the United States into the top third of countries in educational performance within ten years. Our policy agenda has been explicit since our inception, and includes teacher reforms such as overturning LIFO, choice reforms such as parent trigger, and governance reforms such as mayoral control. Our strategy is to articulate how this agenda will enable a radically better future, so that we can mobilize pro-reform teachers, parents, and employers to enduring changes to politics and policies. Twenty months after launch, we have enlisted 1.5 million members, hired a staff of over 100 outstanding professionals, and helped drive legislative reforms in 11 states that educate over 20% of America's students.

LEGAL STATUS: National 501c3 and 501c4, plus state-specific PACs in key states, as well as new legal entities such as StudentsFirst New York and the Great New England Public School Alliance to drive reform in specific locations.

DISTINGUISHING STRATEGIES: Leveraging Michelle Rhee's lessons learned and national brand from DC; comprehensive policy agenda including controversial issues such as vouchers, student growth measurement, and pension reform; national movement around LIFO and parent trigger to create the environment for state reforms; use of 501c4 funds to build bipartisan political membership.

DISTINGUISHING ISSUES: LIFO; parent trigger; use of student achievement growth measures for 50% of teacher and principal evaluations; mayoral control; pension reform; charter and voucher accountability & expansion. ■