

# PROSPECTUS

## 2014 – 2016

50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now is a nonprofit organization that works at the local level to advocate for a high-quality education for all kids, regardless of their address. We help develop local education leaders by providing them with the research, tools and ideas needed to create learning environments that best meet every child's needs.

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# Dear friend,

50CAN was founded in January 2011 on three deeply held convictions:

- 1. The American Dream requires a great American education system.** Nothing is more important for our country's future than ensuring a high-quality education for every child, regardless of their address, so that the next generation of American kids can go as far as their dreams can take them.
- 2. We have the opportunity to achieve this goal,** but only if we rise to the challenge through innovative policies that promote learning environments where all kids can thrive, and an extraordinary advocacy effort in every state in the nation to turn these ideas into reality.
- 3. In order to create and sustain this effort, we will need a “bottom-up” approach** that finds, connects and supports diverse local leaders who humbly but relentlessly pursue the policies needed to ensure the goal of high-quality education for all.

Three years into this journey, these convictions have become more than a set of beliefs. They form the foundation for our daily work. We draw inspiration from the early results of that work. We've built a strong, nonpartisan, research-backed organization driven forward by the work of a talented, energetic and diverse staff guided by the wise counsel of state and national boards. We've forged strong partnerships through our state campaigns and helped change the conversation in communities across our nation about what's possible.

And we're making a real difference for kids. We successfully aided the passage of 28 policies, including a historic \$40 million investment in expanding access to high-quality early childhood educational options in Minnesota, a groundbreaking teacher evaluation system in Pennsylvania, performance-based teacher contracts in lieu of traditional tenure in North Carolina, the expansion of a high-performing charter school in Rhode Island putting hundreds more children on the path to college, and many more.

As energized as we are by these early results, we know we have a long road ahead if we are to reach our destination. In this prospectus,

# Talent and virtue, needed in a free society, should be educated regardless of wealth or birth.

THOMAS JEFFERSON



we draw upon what we have learned through both our early successes and failures to provide a roadmap for the next three years.

One of the insights that guided our planning process for the years 2014 through 2016 is how critical leadership development is to the success of these advocacy efforts.

Our work for the next three years will focus on continuing the crucial mission of finding, supporting and connecting diverse local education advocacy leaders in states across the country. At the same time, we will also invest our time and resources in a new effort to create a culture of learning and teaching at 50CAN that will support the growth of those leaders and their partners. These efforts will ensure that this movement has both the wisdom and strength to finally reach the goal that Thomas Jefferson set forth at our nation's birth.

We are incredibly grateful for the early help and support we've received, and I look forward to walking with you on the road ahead.

Marc Porter Magee, Ph.D.  
President & Founder, 50CAN  
March 2014

# The vision

In the 19th century, America created its first public schools. In the 20th century, we created enough schools to enroll every child. In the 21st century, our challenge is to ensure that all children receive a high-quality education, regardless of their address.

## ***A tradition of advocacy***

We see our work not as a novel endeavor, but instead as the latest chapter in a great American tradition of educational advocacy.

We draw inspiration from the 19th century pioneers who helped plant the seeds of public education in states across our country and from their 20th century counterparts, who developed a public school system that for the first time ensured that every child in America had an opportunity to attend school.

We strive in our daily work to give new life to this tradition of advocacy by taking up the 21st century challenge of ensuring a universally high-quality education for all, so that we will finally see every child in the United States realize his or her full potential.

## ***The power of education***

We believe deeply in the transformative power of education because a great education can change everything. It can transform the dreams of one child, the health of a community, the strength of our economy, the fabric of our democracy and America's very standing on the global stage. We draw inspiration from the powerful impact that 20th century education advocates had on

our country during the development of universal public education. We aim to have the same impact in our century through the development of a universal high-quality public education system.

## ***A second wave of public education***

We believe that ensuring all kids receive a high-quality education in the 21st century is “a second-wave policy challenge.” First-wave challenges are overcome by providing a service or product people don't have yet. Second-wave challenges are different, and far more complicated. Universalizing a public service, like education, is much easier than ensuring it is operating with excellence at scale.

Indeed, the same principles of continuity, stability and uniformity that helped us quickly and efficiently scale up our school systems to provide every child with an opportunity to get an education in the 20th century have tended to work against the innovation, customization and continuous improvement that hold the most promise for ensuring the education we provide in the 21st century is truly great for every child.

What's needed now is a new kind of public education system that starts earlier, ex-

pands choices, aims higher, cultivates talent and reaches everyone.

Securing big gains in the educational outcomes we seek will require that we rethink how our public education system works. The system requires policy innovations and grassroots experimentation to nurture and extend promising approaches. Successful efforts will then create the education system of the future, where all kids receive the education they need to reach their full potential.



### ***Faith in progress***

We see through our work in communities around the country powerful proof points that a great education can be the norm rather than the exception. We believe that progress is possible and we have a responsibility to do everything we can to ensure we live up to the opportunities of this century.

We believe our public school system belongs to the public. We will build the will to enact these changes in our states one relationship at a time and we will transform the American education system through innovative policies enacted in one statehouse at a time.

We are honored to stand shoulder to shoulder with the families, teachers, principals and citizens working every day to make this dream a reality in the daily lives of our children.

# The winning fight to bring a high-quality school to Rhode Island kids

RI-CAN: The Rhode Island Campaign for Achievement Now sought to give hundreds of kids access to a high-quality school, regardless of their address, with the 2011 campaign to bring the successful Achievement First charter school network to the Ocean State. The nine-month campaign concluded when the Rhode Island Board of Regents voted “yes” on Achievement First’s application to open a mayoral academy in Providence.

The road to “yes” was paved with numerous hurdles, a first-round rejection, intense

debate and stiff resistance from a well-organized and determined opposition. The debate around Achievement First evolved quickly, beginning with a handful of public exchanges between Cranston and Providence city leaders, then a turbulent public hearing, and finally a statewide fight pulling in the Board of Regents and the governor.

This advocacy effort on behalf of Achievement First had its roots in the 2008 passage of legislation that granted Rhode Island mayors the unprecedented ability to

partner with nonprofit organizations to apply to open regional, diverse public charter schools that would draw students together from across municipalities.

These special public charter schools were named mayoral academies. A nonprofit organization called Rhode Island Mayoral Academies was established to provide support and oversee the schools. Soon thereafter, RIMA opened its first mayoral academy in Cumberland: Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy. Around the same

time, RIMA began conversations with another well-established CMO, Achievement First.

The nonprofit charter school operator emerged in 2003 from the successful Amistad Academy, a public charter school established in New Haven, Connecticut. Achievement First was created to scale the best practices and impact of Amistad. Since its inception, the network had expanded its operations in Connecticut and launched in New York. RIMA saw an opportunity to bring their proven model to Rhode Island.

RIMA and the mayor of Cranston partnered in 2011 to apply for an Achievement First Mayoral Academy program that would serve Cranston and Providence students from kindergarten through 12th grade in five schools. RI-CAN applauded the mayor as a “super leader” and made a public endorsement of the Achievement First project. This was a small step that marked RI-CAN’s entrance into a battle for school choice that would soon unfold on a much bigger scale.

## OPPOSITION TO ACHIEVEMENT FIRST’S FIRST APPLICATION

On May 26, 2011, the Rhode Island Department of Education came to Cranston City Hall for a public hearing on the mayor’s application. While these hearings were typically lightly attended, in a surprising turn of events, more than one hundred people crammed into the room to take a strong stand against the proposal. Their turnout

was not evidence of actual widespread community opposition to the proposal, but instead an organized advocacy effort in large part supported by labor unions opposed to the expansion of these schools.

Due to their sharp rhetoric and surprising turnout at the otherwise lightly attended event, the opponents of the application dominated the hearing. As a result, they also dominated the newspaper coverage, contributing to the perception that the Achievement First application faced stiff public opposition.

Determined not to let the true will of the community be drowned out by these well organized opponents, partners in support of the application formed a coalition of their own, which included RI-CAN and RIMA. What played out next was a high-profile back-and-forth between opponents and advocates.

In June of 2011, a small band of opponents rallied on the steps of City Hall during a separate, preexisting parent rally, hoisting above their heads passionate signs that read “Let Teachers Teach” and “Whose School? Our School!” They sought to portray supporting RIMA as tantamount to opposing Cranston Public Schools.

The same week as the rally, RI-CAN fought fury with facts, publishing data that showed why bringing the high-quality CMO to Rhode Island would yield positive results for the community. And later in June, the president of the Providence City Council wrote an open letter to the Board of Regents urging them to support Achievement First’s application to open an elementary school for Cranston and Providence students.

RI-CAN mobilized dozens of parents who braved the intimidation tactics of the vocal opposition to attend a community forum and show their public support for Achieve-



ment First's application. Their message was clear: the parents held "Welcome" mats and delivered personal testimonies about the transformational power of high-quality schools. RI-CAN's executive director delivered testimony about the way that high-quality school options had allowed her to set her child on the path to success.

To advance the fight against misinformation about Achievement First, RI-CAN and its partners engaged Achievement First communities in Connecticut and New York to give firsthand accounts of their experiences in Achievement First schools. RI-CAN also sought out the perspectives of two Connecticut superintendents who had worked with Achievement First to share their stories, which were published as op-eds in Rhode Island newspapers. According to the superintendents, the positive impacts of Achievement First were not limited to students in the program's classrooms; the entire public school system improved, because success is contagious.

Throughout the summer of 2011, RI-CAN continued to recruit other parents to share their personal stories about the power of a quality education. They organized phone banking to call the governor in support of Achievement First. And to demonstrate the large numbers of parents eager for more choices, the partners created an unofficial application for parents who wanted to send their children to Achievement First Mayoral Academy, which hundreds of parents filled out to demonstrate demand.

RI-CAN also conducted an online petition, called on supporters to attend the hearings and went on Latino radio shows to expand their audience and gain momentum. And during the summer of 2011, RI-CAN staff members personally went around Prov-

idence and Cranston, compiling video testimonies of parents and thought leaders in the communities who showed their support for Achievement First.

Despite all of the work to make these parent voices heard and ensure a decision based on the facts, the opponents of Achievement First scored an initial victory in the fall of 2011 when the Board of Regents rejected the first proposal for an Achievement First program based in Cranston.

## A SECOND SHOT

RI-CAN refused to take no for an answer and continued with its partners to press forward in its effort to beat back myths with facts. Less than a month after the Board of Regents rejected the application to open an Achievement First Mayoral Academy, Governor Chafee and Commissioner Gist visited Amistad Academy in New Haven, Connecticut. Chafee's public statements after the visit revealed that he was clearly impressed by the school's record of achievement, and that he was open to an Achievement First school in Rhode Island.

Providence Mayor Angel Taveras soon applied in partnership with Achievement First for two new elementary schools, which would start by serving children in kindergarten and first grade in 2013. Unlike the first application, this proposal was for the schools to be located in Providence. It would also incorporate an open lottery.

Before a formal application was even submitted, protestors gathered in front of the state Board of Governors for Higher Education on October 8, 2011. Governor Chafee's

subtle indication of support was enough to trigger a second wave of protests. Soon after, the opposition movement branded themselves We-CAN, an intentional reference to RI-CAN, and delivered a letter to Governor Chafee.

Once again, the stage was set for heated public hearings and a hotly debated decision in January. But RI-CAN and its partners

were ready to rally for change. RI-CAN galvanized parents to make 150 phone calls, write 800 emails to public officials and provide 400 petition signatures. The RI-CAN team also published an issue brief on the facts about Achievement First's record and launched an awareness-raising project about public charter schools called "Seven Facts in Seven Days."

Weeks later, in a 4-to-3 vote, the Achievement First Mayoral Academy application was approved by the Board of Regents. The fight for Achievement First taught us that even when the odds are long and the opposition is stiff, it's never too late to stand up for parents who want choices and the educators fighting to open high-quality schools.



Pick the future as against the past; focus on opportunity rather than on problem; choose your own direction—rather than climb on the bandwagon; and aim high, aim for something that will make a difference.

# The mission

50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now is a non-profit organization that works at the local level to advocate for a high-quality education for all kids, regardless of their address. We help develop local education leaders by providing them with the research, tools and ideas needed to create learning environments that best meet every child's needs. As we work toward our vision of a high-quality education for all kids, regardless of their address, **the following four beliefs guide our work:**



## Every story has a beginning. Ours starts not with the founding of 50CAN in January 2011, but with the founding of ConnCAN six years earlier.


In January 2005, a group of philanthropists and civic leaders in Connecticut confronted a hard truth: their state was home to the largest achievement gaps in the country between haves and have-nots.

Rather than tackling these problems head on with an energetic agenda, Connecticut's political leaders were running away from them. Connecticut's commissioner of education at the time called the state's achievement gap an optical illusion where the wealthy students were simply throwing off the curve for everyone else. In 2005, Connecticut became the only state to sue the federal government to stop the implementation of No Child Left Behind, in part to prevent the state from having to test more students and break out those results publicly by race and class.

Years of investing in promising school and district-level programs, such as the award-winning Amistad Academy, a charter school in New Haven, Connecticut, and

college scholarships for high school graduates in Bridgeport, Connecticut, were being undermined by weak state policy. These philanthropic leaders concluded that they would have to advocate for policy change at the statehouse if they hoped to achieve their goal of ensuring that all Connecticut students would receive the high-quality education they deserve.

To help advance this goal, under the leadership of philanthropist Jonathan Sackler and prominent civic leaders from across the state, ConnCAN: The Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now, was created and quickly emerged as one of the preeminent education advocacy organizations in the country. In its first five years, from 2005 to 2010, under the leadership of Executive Director Alex Johnston, ConnCAN dramatically shifted the conversation in Connecticut to the need for educational change, and **secured a string of policy victories against the odds, including:**





## TEACHER CERTIFICATION

The most significant overhaul of Connecticut teacher certification laws in more than 20 years, removing the barriers that kept experienced teachers from other states from teaching in Connecticut, putting Teach For America on a path for growth, and removing roadblocks that kept excellent math and science candidates out of the classroom.



## DATA ACCESS

A law that makes available to nonprofits and universities stores of previously concealed longitudinal student achievement data and allows dissemination to the broader public to help determine which schools and programs are getting results for kids.



## PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATION

A new pathway to certification so that Connecticut's most talented classroom teachers can become school principals.



## SCHOOL CHOICE

The transition of the Hartford School District to a portfolio model, with every school becoming a school of choice, which resulted in a doubling of the high school graduation rate from 29 percent to 60 percent.



## INCREASED ACCESS & FUNDING

A tripling of the number of students in high-quality public charter schools and a 50 percent increase in per-pupil charter school funding, bringing charter school funding to parity with traditional public schools.



## TEACHER EVALUATIONS

A guarantee that for the first time, every district in the state is required to evaluate teachers based on their students' achievement growth.

Reflecting on the accomplishments of securing breakthrough wins in a state previously considered to be one of the most inhospitable to reform, in 2010 New Leaders founder Jon Schnur remarked, “Every state in the country should have a ConnCAN.”

In 2010, Marc Porter Magee, Ph.D., who was serving as ConnCAN’s chief operating officer and the campaign manager of its successful advocacy campaigns, took up the challenge of bringing the success of ConnCAN’s campaigns to other states around the country. Joined by a core group of his ConnCAN colleagues and talented new team members from around the country, Marc’s belief was that education advocacy absolutely had to be locally driven, but that local leaders shouldn’t have to start from scratch. They went to work building a new kind of organi-

zation: one dedicated to helping local education advocates start campaigns of their own by leveraging everything learned in Connecticut and in new state campaigns across the country.

Officially launched as an independent organization in January 2011, 50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now has now grown into a 35-person, \$6 million nonprofit with campaigns in Rhode Island, Minnesota, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and North Carolina and a national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

## Our model of education advocacy is built around our belief in the transformational power of local leaders.

We draw inspiration from American anthropologist Margaret Mead’s observation that we should “[n]ever doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

The thoughtfulness and commitment that leads to positive change requires a tremendous amount of discipline. Advocacy at its core is an intellectual as well as a moral

pursuit. There is no simple path to success. The landscape is always shifting. We are constantly challenging ourselves to make the right decisions when faced with conflicting advice and determined opposition.

Our five principles of leadership—**PORCH**—form a code of conduct for 50CAN as we navigate this terrain to reach our goal of a high-quality education for every child, regardless of address.

**PLUSSING IT** Borrowing a phrase from Walt Disney, we challenge ourselves to do great work and then go a step beyond that... and then a step beyond that. We strive for “better” and “best” in our work.

**OPTIMISM** We believe deeply in the American dream and our ability to foster real change in our states, even when faced with seemingly insurmountable odds. We approach tough challenges with high spirits.

**RELENTLESSNESS** We are dogged in pursuit of our mission and our goals. We don’t back down.

**CANDOR** We are authentic about our challenges, mistakes and triumphs. We’re honest with others, and with ourselves.

**HUMILITY** We know we don’t have all the answers and that we can only succeed by constantly testing our assumptions, working in deep collaboration with others and grounding ourselves in diverse viewpoints from across our states. We learn from our successes and our failures and strive to constantly improve.



# The MinneMinds campaign for quality preschool in Minnesota

Kids who benefit from high-quality preschool score higher on math and reading tests in their K-12 years, and are more likely to graduate from high school, enroll in college and avoid arrest for a violent crime. In Minnesota, though, there's a pre-K access gap—preventing scores of kids from starting school and life on the right track. Consider just 2 percent of 4-year-old children are enrolled in state-funded pre-K, compared to 28 percent nationally.

For the above reasons, high-quality pre-K access is a centerpiece of MinnCAN's legislative work.

What started as a small movement of committed advocates eventually grew into a statewide coalition, called MinneMinds, with the ambitious goal of securing \$185 million in early education scholarships for all 3- and 4-year-olds living at or below 185 percent of the poverty line. It was an investment worth making that would take an unprecedented advocacy effort to achieve.

The facts support quality pre-K. Research shows that Minnesota can expect

up to \$16 in return for every \$1 invested in quality pre-K. This return comes from the long-term social and economic benefits associated with providing widely accessible, high-quality pre-K education, such as lower spending on crime and welfare, and increased tax revenue garnered from the public's higher earnings.

Research also confirms that the benefits of high-quality pre-K stretch into adulthood. People who attended high-quality pre-K programs are more financially stable,

better satisfied with their family lives and less likely to abuse drugs or go to prison.

Still, the fight for a major public investment in pre-K brought myriad challenges and tested the coalition of 70-plus members.

## TAKING THE NEXT STEPS, FROM IDENTIFYING QUALITY PROGRAMS TO INCREASING ACCESS

In many ways, MinnCAN's pre-K focus began in 2011 when they successfully advocated for a \$6 million investment in new pre-K scholarships that were tied to the statewide expansion of Parent Aware, a voluntary rating system used to gauge the quality of the state's early education and care programs.

Parent Aware sets a high bar that programs must reach to secure public funding. When it's fully implemented statewide in 2015, the ratings will provide every parent with a clear measure of quality when choosing the right program for their child.

But helping Minnesota families find the best programs for their children was only the first step. Lawmakers needed to invest more in providing low-income kids with access to high-quality pre-K.

So in January 2013, on the heels of President Obama's State of the Union address during which he underscored the value of early childhood education, MinnCAN announced a commitment to making that vision a reality.

## MINNEMINDS

MinneMinds is comprised of 70+ member organizations, an unprecedented coming together of education and children's advocates. MinnCAN Deputy Director Nicholas Banovetz serves on the group's executive committee. MinnCAN also ran the phone banking efforts that targeted Governor Dayton and legislative leadership, the online advertising campaign that connected everyday Minnesotans with e-advocacy opportunities, and played a leading role in the media outreach for the campaign, including the creation of a compelling infographic that made the case for expanded access to high-quality early childhood education options.

These concerted efforts, including two major op-eds from Executive Director Daniel Sellers, proved effective. By April, the legislature was on track to bring home a huge win for Minnesota's littlest learners.

But Minnesota legislative leadership needed a boost due to pushback from the Minnesota Department of Education and Education Minnesota. So MinnCAN employed its e-advocacy prowess to coordinate a major online petition. The MinnCAN team asked Minnesotans to urge Speaker Paul Thissen and Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk to fully fund the MinneMinds proposal, so that low-income kids could access quality early learning programs proven to prepare them for lifelong success.

The goal was to draw 1,000 signatures. Instead nearly 1,700 people signed the petition and lawmakers heard the message loud and clear. The policies advocated by the MinneMinds coalition made it into both the House and Senate budget bills.

Seeing enthusiasm from Minnesotans across the state made our team even prouder to serve in the MinneMinds coalition. It also stoked another wave of advocacy: a sustained drumbeat from MinnCAN and the membership base of volunteers to ensure that lawmakers would maintain their support of pre-K between April and the day they voted on the budget.

With legislative hearings underway, and with just hours remaining in the legislative session to act, the coalition gave the volunteers another opportunity to take e-action.

Ultimately the MinneMinds coalition rallied more than 7,000 early childhood education advocates, one-third of whom were MinnCAN members, to contact key local decision-makers.

## THE WIN

The result: Minnesota made a historic investment of \$40 million in high-quality pre-K scholarships for low-income 3- and 4-year-olds.

While historic, this investment was just another step forward in what will have to be a long-term effort until every child is reached. More funding is needed to expand the reach of the scholarships and the size of the scholarships must increase so that they can cover the full year. It's also important to expand program eligibility so this investment incentivizes early childhood education providers to strive for the highest quality.

That's why MinnCAN is continuing its MinneMinds work in 2014. One of the biggest lessons from this effort is that big changes require a continuous push while taking advantage of windows of opportunity when they emerge. At MinnCAN, we pledge to keep that drumbeat going strong.



# The model

Our model is designed to combine a “bottom-up,” leadership-centered approach with a national view of the education landscape. Just as there is not any one silver bullet solution to improving education, there is not a silver bullet advocacy solution either.

We aim to build enduring, research-backed advocacy campaigns that find a path to success no matter which way the political winds are blowing or the obstacles standing in the way of change.

Our local leaders run our state campaigns as well as work with our national

team to help guide 50CAN to long-term success. Through our work together, we strive to find, connect and support local leaders in states across the country to help them improve educational policies in their communities:

## FIND LEADERS

We identify outstanding education leaders in each state and give them an opportunity to lead as executive directors, staff, board members, philanthropists and advocates through the creation of a CAN.



## CONNECT LEADERS

We build deep connections between our state campaigns so that we can learn from one another, share strategies, adopt best practices and pool resources.



## SUPPORT LEADERS

We make it easier for our leaders to be do incredibly high-quality work and more quickly get results by taking back-office work off their plates and providing best-in-class tools, from reports to graphic design. We aim to match local contributions one to one with funds raised nationally. We also provide trainings on campaign planning, policy, communications and advocacy tactics through our 50CAN University program.




We believe that it is possible, within a generation, for all children in our country, regardless of their address, to have access to a high-quality education. Our vision is that all American children are engaged in learning environments that inspire and support them.

All students will have access to vibrant, innovative classrooms and out-of-school educational experiences, guided by caring and committed teachers who help them aim high. Working with actively involved family members, teachers will provide their students with the personalized instruction, tools and support needed to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities they will need to succeed in the world.

Reaching this goal will require innovative, research-backed policies that reimag-

ine how we provide public education, and a sustained, nonpartisan advocacy effort in every state in the country. Drawing upon the most authoritative national research and the knowledge and insights developed by innovative local educational leaders across the country, we work to secure those policy changes that will move us closer to the public education system of the future, where all children have the opportunity to fulfill their full potential. **Our five guiding policy principles are:**





## START EARLIER

A high-quality education system starts earlier to put every child on the path to success by ensuring every child has the opportunity to attend a high-quality preschool.



## EXPAND CHOICES

A high-quality education system is not one-size-fits-all. Instead, it provides families with multiple options so they can find the learning environment that best meets the needs of their children. And it makes use of new technologies to allow teachers to create individualized learning opportunities for their students that aren't just limited to their school building.



## AIM HIGHER

A high-quality education system sets clear, rigorous standards for the knowledge, skills and abilities students need to have to succeed in the global economy. It uses trusted assessments to measure progress towards these goals. And it holds schools accountable for results.



## CULTIVATE TALENT

A high-quality education system creates an environment where America's most talented teachers and leaders thrive. That means attracting great leaders to be principals and giving them more flexibility and support while also holding them more accountable for results. It also means attracting great teachers and giving them more freedom and support in their own classroom while rewarding them for meaningful outcomes like student performance.



## REACH EVERYONE

A high-quality education system meets every child where they are and brings them up to where they need to be by ensuring they graduate with all the skills, knowledge and abilities needed to be happy, healthy, productive adults who make the world a better place for all.



This push for a new wave in public education, one that will ensure a great education for every child, is a movement in its infancy. Though these education policies are informed by decades of research, we have a lot less experience advocating for them.

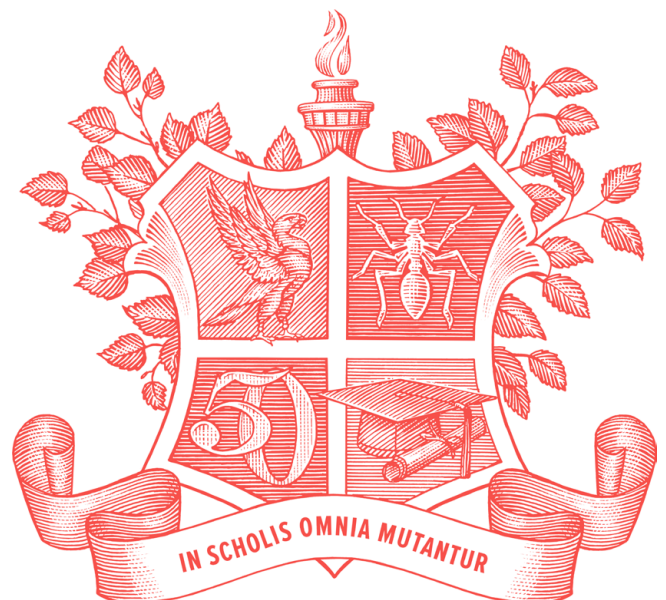
By contrast, the Sierra Club is 119 years old, the Environmental Defense Fund is 44 and Greenpeace is 40.

We still have a lot to learn if we are to succeed in our efforts to secure the fundamental changes we seek. To address this urgent need, 50CAN U aims to bring the same kind of rigorous training to promising state advocacy leaders that organizations like KIPP and New Leaders for New Schools have brought to school leaders.

In year one, 50CAN U trained our six state campaign executive directors in the science and art of advocacy and policy. Learning at 50CAN U takes place through in-person seminar retreats, online classes and year-round work that includes frequent “after action reports” during campaigns, interaction with on-call experts and weekly “50CAN U office hours.” The tight collaboration between our state and national teams every week of the year is leveraged to ensure that 50CAN U isn’t just a series of gatherings but a culture that informs everything we do.

Using the lessons we learned during our inaugural year, we are launching an external program in 2014 meant to take everything we are learning across our state

campaigns and provide it to a wider network of education advocates working in their communities across the country. One of our first external ventures is Ed Reform 101, an online education policy course developed in partnership with the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. We beta tested the Ed Reform 101 course in the fall of 2013 and plan to launch a full 10-week course in 2014 open to emerging education advocacy leaders across the country. Our beta course featured lectures and interactive sessions with Chester B. Finn of Fordham, Tom Loveless of the Brookings Institution, Dan Goldhaber of the University of Washington, Marty West of Harvard University and Pat Wolfe of the University of Arkansas.



“Fundraising is not about money. It’s about necessary work that urgently needs doing.” We take Ken Burnett’s words to heart.

In our work to raise the resources needed to power our campaigns, we strive to never lose sight of why we raise this money: to bring us closer to the day when all children receive the high-quality education they deserve.

We work to raise both national and local resources to support our campaigns. For our national supporters, we strive to connect their funds to local know-how to ensure their contributions go further. For our local supporters, we aim to amplify their commitments by matching them to national supporters who share their vision for policy change. We are proud of the wide range of support our work has received in our first three years, with 65 foundations, businesses and individuals giving more than \$1,000 each to our cause, for a total of more than \$20 million in support across all of our campaigns.

We see our funders as true partners in this mission. We strive to enable our donors to realize their capacity to change the world for the better through our campaigns. We work to always be honest, open and truthful with our donors, to let them share in our triumphs and our failures in the difficult work of advocacy. We also welcome the active participation of local supporters through our state advisory boards.

### **A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization**

We are a nonprofit organization certified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) with tax-exempt status. We operate under what’s known as the 501 (h) Election, which allows nonprofits to use up to a limited percentage of their revenues towards certain lobbying activities, which are clearly defined by the IRS. While we do engage in limited lobbying under this (h) Election, the vast majority of our work falls outside of the national or state definitions of lobbying and is instead defined as public education.

### **50CAN Action Fund: A sister 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization**

50CAN also has an independent, sister 501(c)(4) organization, called the 50CAN Action Fund. As a 501(c)(4), the Action Fund is not limited in the amount of lobbying it can do within a year and it can participate in political campaigns and elections, as long as its primary activity is the promotion of social welfare.



# Proving what's possible in North Carolina

CarolinaCAN launched several months before the campaign, with Julie Kowal at the helm as executive director.

Before joining CarolinaCAN, Julie worked as a consulting manager with Public Impact in North Carolina. At Public Impact, Julie earned a reputation as a leading thinker in education policy, and recognized both the promise of high-performing charter schools and the perils of faulty charter school accountability systems.

North Carolina opened the door to public charter schools in 1996. The goals of the initial legislation were to provide North Carolina families with more schooling choices, to increase classroom innovation and to improve learning opportunities, particularly for at-risk and gifted students.

By 2013, the movement was burgeoning. When the state's cap on the number of charter schools was eliminated in 2011, the

In November 2013 CarolinaCAN: The North Carolina Campaign for Achievement Now launched the “Prove What’s Possible” campaign, to elevate high-quality charter schools across the state that are reaching kids, regardless of their address. Through the campaign, we promoted the stories of students, families and educators whose lives have been positively impacted by an excellent charter school.

sector grew from 96 schools serving roughly 38,000 students to 127 schools serving nearly 50,000 students, a more than 30 percent increase in just three years. And over the next few years, hundreds more schools are likely to open across the state.

But overall, charter schools have yielded mixed results for North Carolina kids. Some schools are far outpacing traditional public schools, but just as many are performing on par with, or below, traditional district schools. And relatively few charter schools are focused on serving at-risk students, despite the state's initial goals for the movement and the success of other states' charter schools that have made big strides with these students. North Carolina

charter schools on the whole tend to enroll more white and middle-income students than their district school counterparts. And among the charter schools that do serve the state's neediest kids, even fewer serve those students exceptionally well.

It also doesn't help that charter schools in North Carolina are not required to provide free or reduced-price lunch to low-income kids or any type of school transportation for their students. As a result, many of the schools end up with barriers that make it hard to attract those most in need.

The next decade presents a crucial opportunity for North Carolina to define its charter school sector. Will it replicate the trends of past decades or will it seize the opportunity to build a charter sector characterized by equity and excellence?

To ensure a system that offers promising choices, particularly for students who aren't well served in traditional public schools, CarolinaCAN needed to take a strong stand for quality. Julie committed to focusing her early campaign work not on supporting charter schools in general, but on advocating for quality charter schools. This policy

stance is evidence-based and also common sense, but sadly not always widely held. A set of policy goals to shift the focus to quality began to take shape: incentivizing schools to provide transportation and free lunch programs, strengthening the state's authorizing and oversight processes, and focusing on replication of successful charter schools with a track record of improving educational outcomes for kids in the Tar Heel state.

The public engagement strategy was simple. Tell the story of the absolutely amazing, high-quality charter schools in the state serving low-income kids and kids of color, and use those stories to set a high bar for every new school to come.

We started where we always start, with the data. We combed through state assessment data to identify charter schools that served high percentages of low-income students and outperformed comparable district and charter schools in student achievement and growth. We identified four that met these criteria: Maureen Joy Charter School in East Durham, Sugar Creek Charter School in Charlotte, Henderson Collegiate in Henderson and KIPP Gaston College Pre-

paratory in Gaston. Julie teamed with both our national communications team and a local documentarian and Teach For America alum, Janice Smith, and produced short documentaries on each school.

We had two goals. The first was to clarify public misconceptions about



charter schools. Our polling data revealed that North Carolinians have serious misconceptions about what charter schools are and what kind of students they serve. Most people in North Carolina and across the country believe charter schools are private schools. We were seeking to overcome those misconceptions and reinforce through our icon stories that charter schools are in fact public schools, and many provide the only

high-quality education option to disadvantaged students in their community. The second goal was to start the conversation about the right standard for charter schools in North Carolina. When North Carolinians think of charter schools, we want them to immediately think of the schools in our icon campaign: schools that are proving every day that any child can learn at high levels.

The documentaries are beautiful films that inspire everyone who watches them. So far, they have been loaded more than 290,000 times on the CarolinaCAN “Prove What’s Possible” website after being promoted through a social media campaign, and they are sparking conversations across the state, from the schoolhouse to the statehouse.



# The people

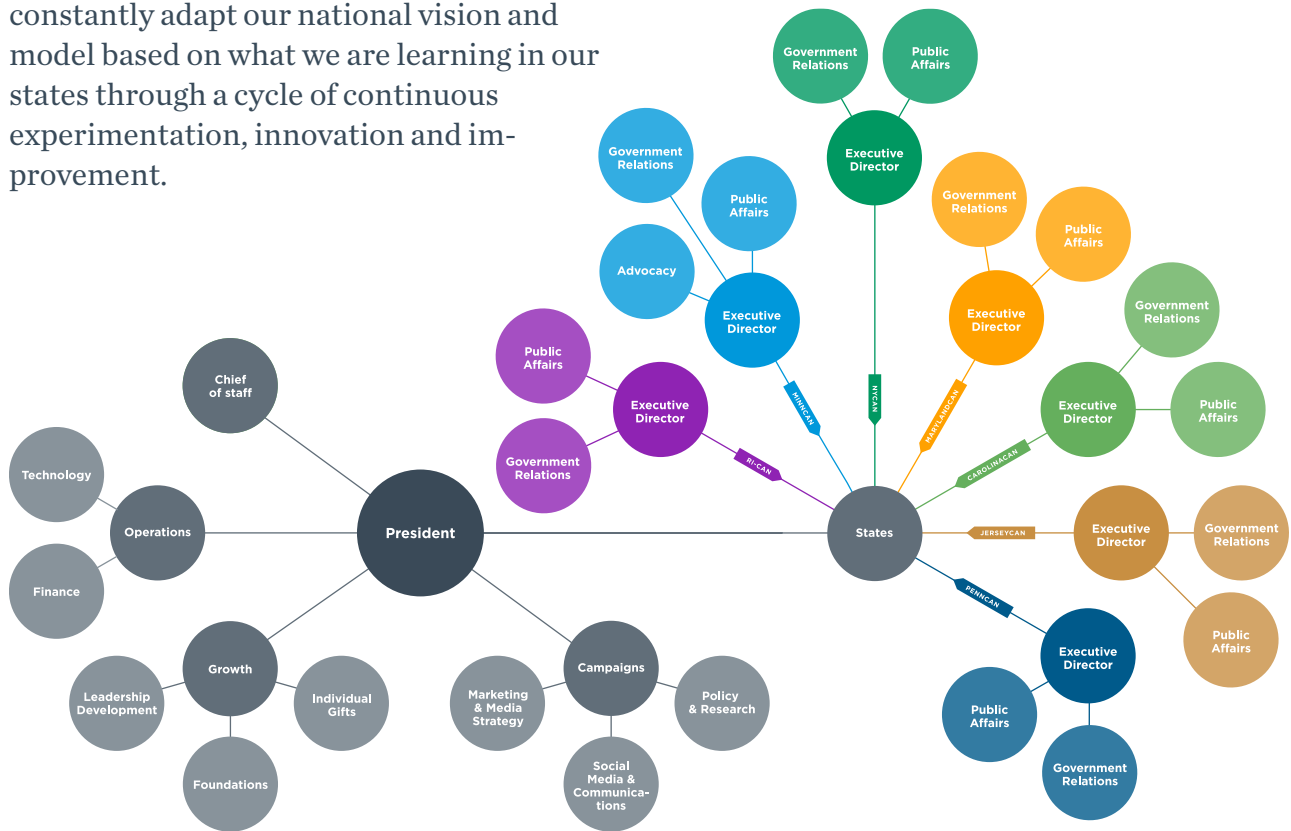
50CAN is, ultimately, about people. Our success or failure will be determined by how well we attract great people, how well we support them and how much they grow through our work together. We are working to build an organization where a diverse group of talented advocates are able to do the best work of their lives in a culture that supports and sustains them.

All labor that uplifts  
humanity has dignity and  
importance and should  
be undertaken with  
painstaking excellence.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

We are students for life. We capture knowledge and share it across our campaigns, and with the larger movement of education advocates around the country.

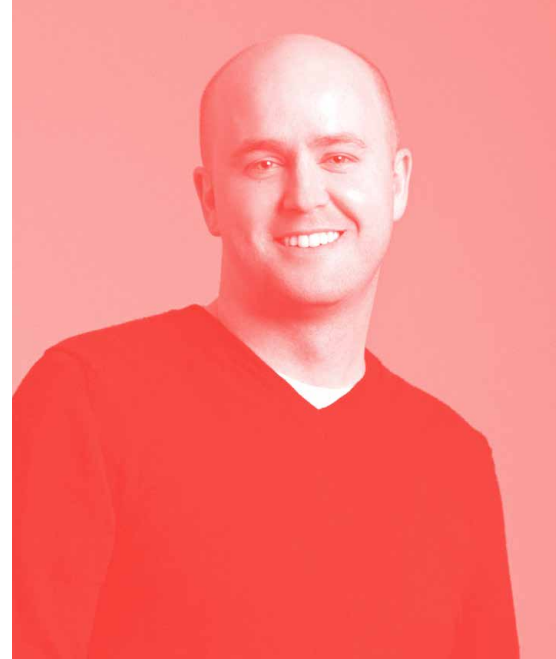
We strive to pair doing with teaching in everything we do. This spirit is woven into the fabric of our organization through the 50CAN University program. We strive to constantly adapt our national vision and model based on what we are learning in our states through a cycle of continuous experimentation, innovation and improvement.



**Marc Porter Magee, Ph.D., is president and founder of 50CAN.** As president, Marc sets the strategic vision for the organization and works in partnership with its senior leadership team to create new state campaigns, recruit state executive directors and board members, drive fundraising efforts and build the national office that supports these campaigns.

Previously, Marc served as chief operating officer at ConnCAN, which emerged during his five years with the organization as the nation's premier state-level education advocacy organization. As chief operating officer, Marc led the research, communications, development and government relations teams at ConnCAN, and served as the campaign manager of its highly successful advocacy campaigns. While at ConnCAN, Marc pioneered a suite of new tools, ideas and platforms that gave life to the CAN model, including school report cards, state of education reports, ConnCAN's microtargeting recruitment strategy, its annual campaign structure and its core policy principles.

Prior to joining ConnCAN, Marc worked in Washington, D.C., as research director of the Partnership for Public Service, founding



director of the Progressive Policy Institute's Center for Civic Enterprise and as a contributing editor of the Democratic Leadership Council's policy journal *Blueprint*. He is co-editor, with Will Marshall,

of the book *The AmeriCorps Experiment and the Future of National Service* (2005), author of more than 50 policy reports and briefs, and his research on civic engagement, collective action and public service has been published by the Review of Public Personnel Administration, Brookings Institution Press and Oxford University Press.

Marc, a product of public schools and the son, husband and brother of teachers, is a graduate of Georgetown University (1997) and received his Ph.D. in sociology from Duke University (2002). Marc and his wife Kathleen live in Alexandria, Va., with their three children.

We believe that we have assembled under one roof the strongest group of executive directors of any education advocacy organization in the country.



## CHRISTINE LOPES

Executive Director,  
RI-CAN

Served as **chief strategy officer** for Rhode Island Mayoral Academies, during which time she collaborated closely with RI-CAN to pave the way for the high-performing Achievement First charter school system to open in the Ocean State.

Served as the **executive director** of Common Cause Rhode Island.

Served as a **legislative aide** for the Massachusetts House of Representatives, during which time she worked closely with the staff and members of the House Committee on Education on statewide education policy.

Earned a **master's degree** in public administration from Suffolk University.

I love political advocacy and I love great schools. In this job I get to use the former in service of the latter.



Was tapped by Teach for America CEO Wendy Kopp to **establish Teach For America—Twin Cities** in 2008.

Led a broad, bipartisan coalition of community stakeholders to push for **alternative teacher certification legislation** in Minnesota. After three years, one crushing defeat, and countless late nights at the state capital, the bill passed in 2011.

**Taught sixth-grade math** at Warren County Middle School in North Carolina. While there, Daniel raised his students' state test scores to the point of closing the achievement gap between them and their wealthier peers, an accomplishment that landed him a spot as a finalist for Teach For America's 2008 Sue Lehmann Excellence in Teaching Award.



**DANIEL SELLERS**  
Executive Director,  
MinnCAN

If our students  
and their families  
aren't at the table,  
they're on the  
table.

Served as **New Jersey Governor Corzine's education policy advisor** and director of policy. During this time, she worked on countless education issues, including the School Funding Reform Act of 2008, the authorization of \$3.9 billion for school construction funding and the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in New Jersey.

**Worked for the Newark Charter School Fund** to improve the number of high-quality public school options for all of Newark's students and to foster collaboration between charter schools and the district as their vice president of policy and advocacy.



## JANELLEN DUFFY

Executive Director,  
JerseyCAN

**Participated in the Presidential Management Fellowship**, serving at the Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Senate Finance Committee. At HHS and the finance committee, Janelle worked on welfare reform, youth development and early childhood issues.

**Earned a master's degree** in public affairs from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School.

I get to wake up every day and work with education leaders across the state to help turn the dream of great schools for all into a reality.



## JASON BOTEL

Executive Director,  
MarylandCAN

**Founded KIPP Baltimore** and served as executive director for 11 years. During his time as leader of KIPP Baltimore, its schools regularly ranked first on state tests in the city of Baltimore and secured the highest math scores of any public school in the state in a few of those years.

**Taught for three years** at Booker T. Washington Middle School in Baltimore through Teach For America.

Served as a **founding advisory board member** for MarylandCAN.

If we as a society  
build the will to do  
so, we can provide  
high-quality public  
education for all  
children in every  
neighborhood.

Served as **director of strategic initiatives for KIPP Philadelphia Schools**, helping to manage their external relations as they entered into an aggressive growth phase.

**Taught reading and social studies** as a Teach For America corps member at Morrison Elementary School in Philadelphia.

## JONATHAN CETEL

Executive Director, PennCAN

As a college student, Jon **co-founded an after-school group for students in West Philadelphia** called Real Community Exchange Starts with Students.

In 2013, Jon was named one of **Forbes Magazine's Top 30 under 30** in the area of education.



As a teacher, you can have an impact on 30 students. As an advocate pushing for statewide reforms, I am making a difference for nearly 2 million students.



**Featured expert on school turnarounds** for the U.S.

Department of Education's Doing What Works website, and she has led workshops with school, district, state and federal leaders on fostering successful turnarounds.

**Served as a research assistant** at the UNC Center for Civil Rights and the UNC School of Government.

**Earned her law degree with honors** from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**JULIE KOWAL**

Executive Director,  
CarolinaCAN

Led some of the most promising school reforms in the nation as a consulting manager for Public Impact. **She advised the state of Tennessee** when it created its Achievement School District, **helped the Colorado Department of Education** develop a system to address chronically failing schools, guided the development of a statewide agenda for **improving teacher quality in Indiana**, and served as an expert panelist for a national initiative to retain generation Y teachers.

At CarolinaCAN, I get to partner with wise leaders and great organizations in my own state to bring [my] experience home.

Our work in support of these state leaders is organized into four national teams, each lead by a talented and committed leader.

## ADENA SILBERSTEIN

Senior Vice President of Growth



**Runs Team Growth**, which supports state and national fundraising efforts and leads the 50CAN University initiative.

Since the summer of 2009, **Adena has worked to bring 50CAN to life**, first in development, then as chief of staff and now as senior vice president of organizational growth.

Served as ConnCAN's first-ever development director, **a public school teacher** and a doctoral student at NYU, where she studied 20th century American Jewish history with a focus on education.

I get to figure out how to keep that momentum going as we grow out of our start-up years. What could be better?



## INGRID REYNOSO

Senior Vice President of Operations

**Runs Team Operations,** which provides all of the back-office support to states, including finances, human resources and legal affairs.

Served as general counsel and director of human resources for the charter management organization Uncommon Schools, **winner of the 2013 Broad Prize** for Public Charter Schools.

Earned her **undergraduate and law degrees** from Harvard University.

I love coming up against problems and figuring out creative solutions to solve them. That's what my job at 50CAN is all about.



**Runs Team Campaigns**, which provides communications, policy, research, mobilization and political strategy support to the states.

**Served as communications director for ConnCAN**, helping craft the issue campaign structure that secured major policy victories for the organization.

**Worked as communications manager** for the Save Darfur Coalition and as a journalist in Washington, DC.

Earned her **public policy master's degree** from University of Chicago.



I love my job  
because creativity  
is the means  
and social justice  
is the end. What  
could be better?

**KAREN SILVERMAN**

Senior Vice President of  
Campaigns

**Runs Team States**, which manages the CAN executive directors to success and recruits new leaders to run campaigns.

**Served as founding executive director of MinnCAN**, where she ran two successful campaigns and raised more than \$1 million in local funds to support its work.

**Education policy director** for St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman.

**Classroom teacher** at the University of St. Catherine Pre-K Education Center.



**VALLAY VARRO**  
Senior Vice President  
of States

I love my job  
because I'm con-  
stantly challenged  
to do more, to do it  
better and to do it  
smarter.

50CAN's national board of directors is made up of top state and national leaders in education who are working together to ensure that we continue to expand our reach and do so with a level of effectiveness that ensures our advocacy efforts get results for kids.

50CAN

**Sandy Vargas**

President & CEO,  
The Minneapolis Foundation

**Jonathan Sackler**

Director, Purdue Pharma  
and founder of ConnCAN

**Dacia Toll**

Co-CEO & President,  
Achievement First

**Delia Pompa**

Senior Vice President of Programs,  
National Council of La Raza

**Marc Porter Magee**

President & Founder, 50CAN

**Richard Barth**

CEO & President,  
KIPP Foundation

**Ann Borowiec**

Former CEO, JP Morgan  
Private Wealth Management

In every state where we operate, we work to recruit a local advisory board made up of civic leaders from throughout the state.

## JERSEYCAN

**Ann Borowiec**  
Former CEO, JP  
Morgan Private Wealth  
Management

**Tom Kean**  
Former Governor  
of New Jersey

**Ray Chambers**  
Chairman & CEO, MCJ  
Amelior Foundation

**Samuel Cole**  
President & COO,  
Phigital, Inc.

**Ken Donovan**  
Trustee, R&C Donovan  
Family Foundation

**Mary Farrell**  
Director, The Maeve  
Foundation, Inc.

**Shane Harris**  
Vice President, The  
Prudential Foundation

**Tom Healey**  
Managing Partner,  
Healey Development

**Dr. Michael  
Nettles**  
Senior Vice President,  
Educational Testing Service

**Larry Rogers**  
Treasurer, Better  
Education for Kids

**Walter Shipley**  
Retired Chairman & CEO,  
Chase Manhattan Bank

**Josh Weston**  
Honorary Chairman,  
ADP, Inc.

**Christine Healey**  
President, Healey  
Education Foundation

## MARYLANDCAN

**Alice Johnson Cain**  
Vice President for Policy, Teach Plus

**Jeff Cohen**  
CEO, Sylvan Learning

**Omari Todd**  
Senior Vice President of Regional  
Operations, Teach For America

**Howard Stone**  
Administrative Specialist,  
Prince George's County Government

## MINNCAN

**Michael Ciresi**  
Partner, Robins, Kaplan,  
Miller & Ciresi L.L.P.

**Virginia Morris**  
Chair, Hubbard Radio LLC

**Timothy Penny**  
President and CEO, SMIF

**Father Michael  
O'Connell**  
Pastor, Church of the  
Ascension

**Frank Forsberg**  
Senior Vice President  
of Systems Change &  
Innovation, United Way

**Alex Cirillo, Jr.**  
Former Vice President, 3M

**Vernae Hasbargen**  
Former Trustee, Blandin  
Foundation

**Addison Piper**  
Former Chairman & CEO,  
Piper Jaffray & Co.

**Benson Whitney**  
General Partner, Argus  
Management, Ltd.

**Ann Mulholland**  
Vice President of  
Grants & Programs, MN  
Philanthropy Partners

**Lee-Ann Stephens**  
High Achievement Program  
Advocate, St. Louis Park  
Public Schools

**Jan McDaniel**  
Chair, World President's  
Organization-Twin Cities

RI-CAN

**Michael Obel-Omia**  
Head of School, Paul Cuffee School

**Kara Milner**  
Rhode Island parent

**Anna Cano-Morales**  
Director of University Relations,  
Roger Williams University

**Gary Sasse**  
Director, Bryant Institute  
of Public Leadership

PENNCAN

**Mark DeSantis**  
CEO & Co-Founder,  
kWantera

**Mark Gleason**  
Executive Director,  
Philadelphia School  
Partnership

**Brook Lenfest**  
CEO, NetCarrier

**Adiah Ferron**  
Counsel, AstraZeneca  
Pharmaceuticals LP

**Marc Mannella**  
CEO & Founder, KIPP  
Philadelphia Schools

**Mike Pearson**  
President & CEO,  
Union Packaging

# Really listening to the community about Native American Achievement in Minnesota

This story starts with an early success marred by an unintentional mistake.

The launch of MinnCAN in January 2011 was one of our biggest early projects. We developed a comprehensive report on the state of Minnesota schools and paired it with an in-depth set of policy proposals. At the same time, we created MinnCAN's first website, which we hoped would become an online springboard for action in the coming legislative session. We held a standing-room only press conference at the state capitol to announce the organization, website, research report and policy proposals. It was covered by the Pioneer Press, Star Tribune, Minnesota Public Radio, several local television outfits, the Associated Press, MinnPost and more, all with the theme that Minnesotans were coming together to make changes to our system so that, finally, every kid in the state will receive a high-quality education,

regardless of their address.

Our founding executive director, Vallay Varro, who came to MinnCAN from St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman's office, where she served as his education advisor, was quoted in the press as saying, "The truth is that in Minnesota in the year 2011, where you are born largely determines where you will end up. At a time when the demographics of our state are rapidly changing, the kids who need a great public education the most are not getting one."

One element of our 'State of Minnesota Public Education' report we were proud of was the inclusion of Native American student achievement data and the analysis of the achievement gap with white students. We felt we were helping create some urgency around support for Native American

education, but in setting up our analysis we made a mistake that revealed we still had a lot to learn.

In the report, we referred to Native American students as descendants of “Minnesota’s first settlers.” Many readers may not have noticed it on launch day, but it meant a lot to one group of Minnesotans. Native Americans do not consider themselves settlers



of Minnesota; they are indigenous to many areas that comprise Minnesota.

Native American students are one of the student groups that we work to serve. The math gap between Minnesota’s Native American students and their white peers is 44 percentage points, nearly 20 percentage points wider than the national gap. The Native American high school graduation rate hovers between 40 and 50 percent. It wasn’t until two years later when MinnCAN began work on a more in-depth study of Native American achievement that we began to hear about the hurt feelings and appreciate the mistake in our first report.

The MinnCAN team had to work hard to

repair these relationships so we could work together to improve educational outcomes for Native American students in the state. What started out as a small, two-month project turned into a comprehensive, year-long effort developed in close collaboration with Minnesota’s Native American communities. The result was the ‘Native American Student Achievement in Minnesota’ report.

Early conversations helped the MinnCAN team understand that the initial plan for a smaller report focused mostly on student achievement data wouldn’t be enough. We needed to listen, really listen, to indigenous leaders, educators, parents and students. As LeMoine LaPointe (Sicangu Lakota), a youth work consultant, told us, “People have come in and proposed the answer, and never asked the ques-

tions. They’ve looked at our risk factors and never asked about our strengths. Yet our cultures were successful not because of our deficits, but because of our strengths.”

So we challenged ourselves to shift our thinking away from “What’s wrong?” toward “What’s right?” As part of the 2013 Road to Success tour, MinnCAN team members were able to visit schools for which the data documents their success with Native American students.

No one knew what the team would find when they walked through the doors of these schools. We knew from our research that kids in the High Five preschool program in Minneapolis consistently made

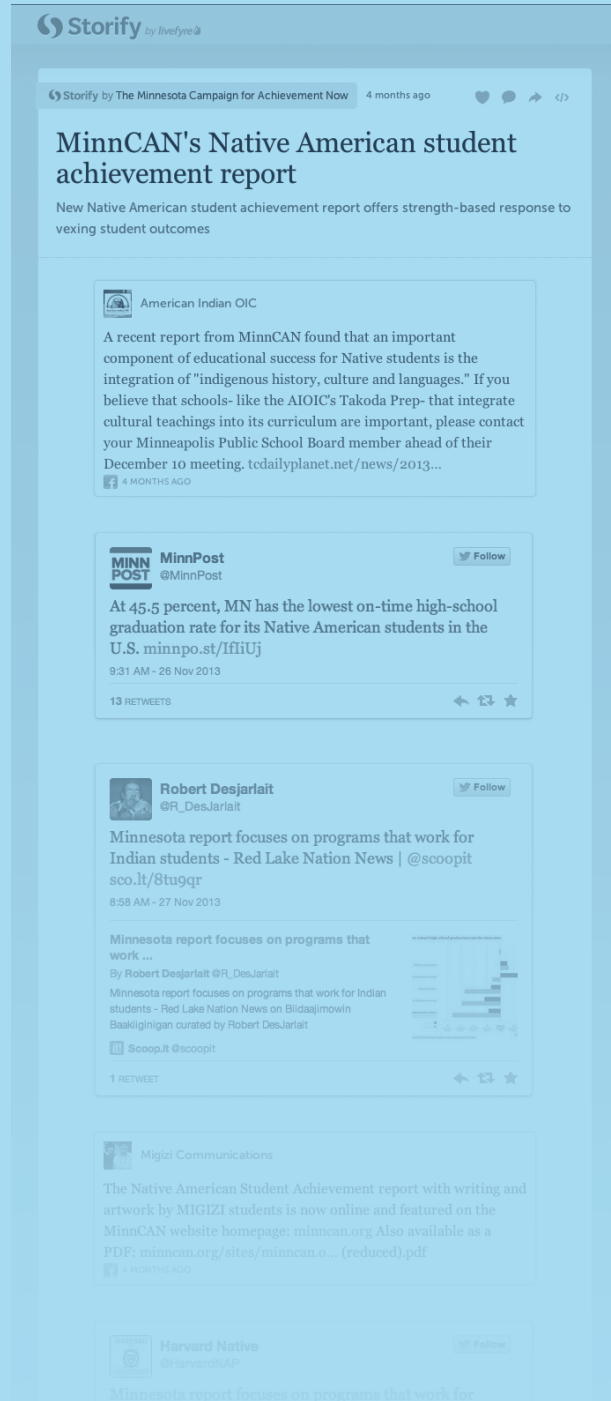


tremendous gains in kindergarten readiness, and that the Churchill Elementary School in Cloquet and Detroit Lakes Middle School made our Top 10 Schools lists for their Native American achievement results. But numbers on a page can't compare to witnessing these programs in action.

At the schools, MinnCAN team members met with teachers, administrators, parents, and students who shared about the promising programs in their schools. They listened closely to their stories of successes and challenges, and incorporated them into the report.

This collaborative approach not only produced a much richer report, but also a much more successful one. It helped drive an important conversation with the public, with features in MinnPost, Twin Cities Daily Planet, the Star Tribune, and Indian Country Today; spotlights on many Native American websites and blogs; buzz on social media, including a tweet from Education Secretary Arne Duncan; and requests for hard copies to distribute flowed in from partners, such as the United Tribes of White Earth.

The principals and teachers in these schools have learned how to best serve this specific population's needs. This project uncovered a community very aligned with research-based best practices in how to provide learning environments that best meet every child's needs that other communities across Minnesota can learn from.



The project became more than a research report. It created a partnership, one that will not only have long-term benefits in Minnesota, but that will also serve as an example throughout the 50CAN network of states.

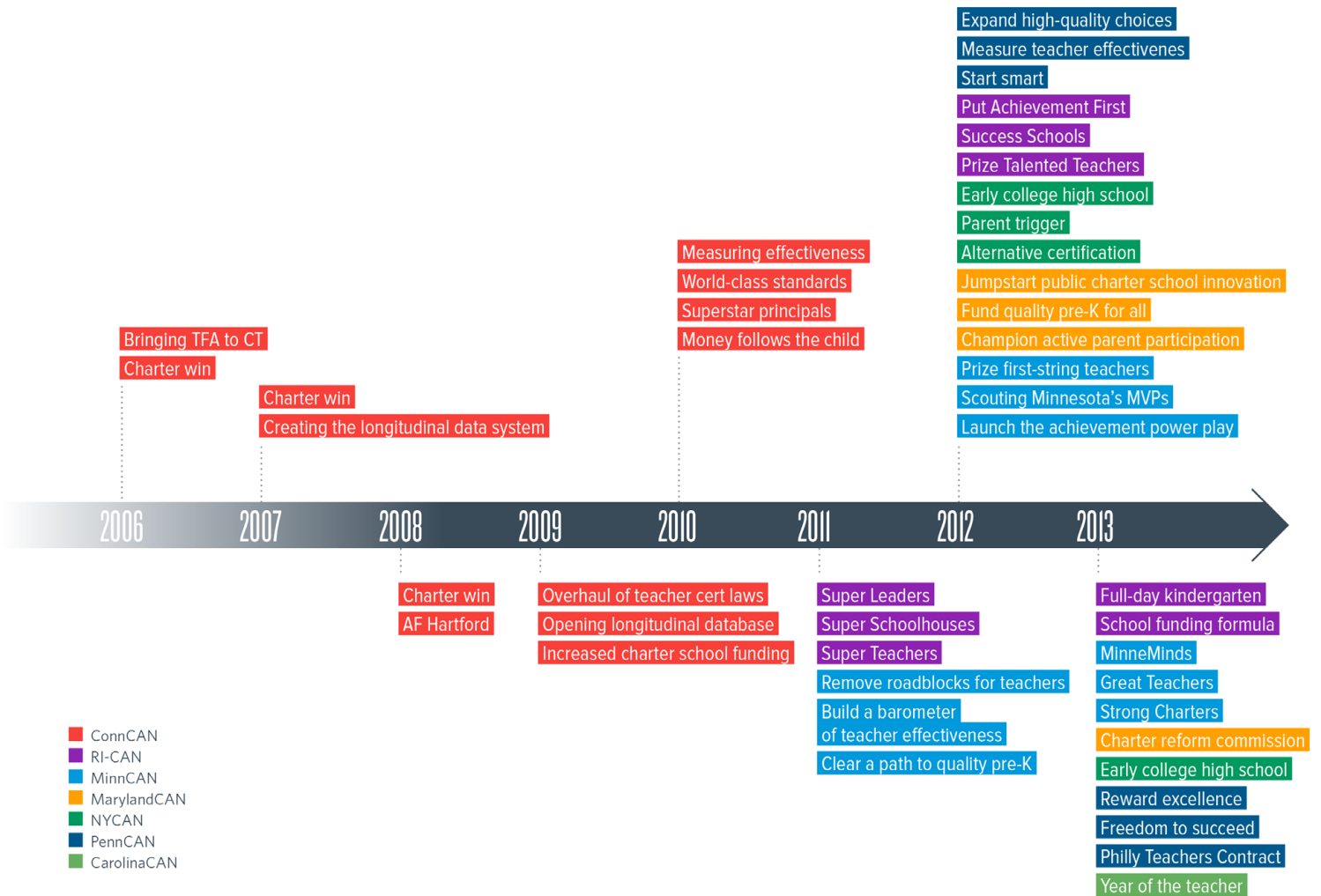
## Our impact

To date, members of the 50CAN network have run 32 issue campaigns, published dozens of often-cited original reports and begun to emerge as leading education authorities in their respective policy environments.

In our first three years, these seven campaigns helped secure 28 legislative wins across key areas like teacher and principal effectiveness, high-quality pre-K, education funding, college and career readiness, and high-quality school choice.

# A deep well of experience

## 45 education reform advocacy campaigns



## A record of wins 28 policy victories

### CHOICE

Expanded high-quality school options in Pennsylvania by helping enact the Educational Improvement Scholarship credit.

Helped pass a bill that allows Minnesota charter schools to collaborate with their home districts.

Paved the way for Achievement First to enter Rhode Island, and helped ensure the Providence charter school would open on schedule.

Helped pass a bill that calls for the Maryland State Department of Education to conduct a thorough study of charter schools and then recommend proposals to reform the system with a focus on ensuring highquality options for all kids.

Boosted accountability in Minnesota's charter school sector by ensuring that charter authorizers are now required to prepare annual reports to track student achievement, as well as operational and financial performance.

Ensured that Minnesota charter schools have more equitable funding and will benefit from per-pupil funding increases.

Helped pass legislation that makes student learning and achievement the primary purpose of Minnesota charter schools. Ensured that failure to demonstrate satisfactory academic achievement for all students is now clearly defined as a reason for contract non-renewal or termination of Minnesota charter schools.

### TEACHERS

Cleared the path to Minnesota classrooms for teachers with alternative certification.

Established an evaluation plan for Minnesota teachers that incorporates student learning.

Raised the bar for Rhode Island teachers by ensuring that prospective educators must pass a reading test.

Helped raise the bar for New York teachers by ensuring that 40 percent of an educator's grade correlates with student achievement data.

Overhauled Pennsylvania's 40-year-old teacher evaluation system and replaced it with one that bases 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation on student achievement data.

Helped bring a refined focus to the teacher skills exam in Minnesota, and initiated a department task force to review licensure skills assessments for the long haul.

Kept the implementation of Minnesota's new teacher evaluation on track, despite attempts from legislators to delay the much-needed change.

Helped implement performance-based teacher contracts in place of tenure in North Carolina.

Successfully championed the creation of a North Carolina taskforce that will explore matching teacher pay with effectiveness.

Won annual teacher evaluations in North Carolina that take student performance into account.

Successfully rallied the Minnesota Board of Teaching to grant waivers to incoming Teach for America educators.

## PRE-K

Secured \$4 million in funding for scholarships for Minnesota low-income families to access high-quality pre-K options.

Garnered the community support that helped Minnesota win \$45 million in the Race to the Top early learning challenge.

Expanded funding in Maryland to give low-income families access to pre-K programs.

Protected \$100 million in Pennsylvania block grants that support innovative full day kindergarten and pre-K programs.

Partnered with the MinneMinds coalition to win an historic \$40 million investment in early childhood education that will increase access to quality pre-K for Minnesota's low-income 3- and 4-year-olds.

Rallied to win a \$300,000 investment in Rhode Island's full-day kindergarten program to ensure access to high-quality early education for all kids.

## PRINCIPALS

Enacted a principal evaluation plan in Minnesota that mirrors the new teacher evaluation system so that principals are held to the same standards as their teachers.

## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Increased state support for New York's early college high schools to \$6 million.

## FUNDING

Successfully urged lawmakers to fulfill the promise of equitable school funding in Rhode Island with an additional \$32 million in state aid for education.

Our campaigns have not only pushed critical legislative and administrative reforms, but have also begun to change the public conversation around providing every child with a high-quality education, regardless of their address.

Today, the growing CAN network benefits from more than 20,000 members who have collectively sent more than 30,000 messages to public officials. Our campaigns have been featured in hundreds of news stories, in publications such as MinnPost, Star Tribune, Providence Journal, Providence Business News, The Baltimore Sun, The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and Patriot News. Each state has also been actively involved in community events, including panel discussions and local task forces.

In December 2012, Whiteboard Advisors surveyed a panel of federal and state education leaders on the effectiveness of education advocacy groups. We are proud to report that 50CAN was rated the #1 organization running local advocacy campaigns across all three categories: lobbying and policy advocacy, coalition building and persuasive research and communications.

**We are very excited for our 2014 campaigns, which will advocate for the following goals:**

**CarolinaCAN:** Compensation reform to reward excellent teachers, charter school quality, greater enrollment equity in charter

schools and implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

**JerseyCAN:** Charter school policy reform and faithful implementation of the Common Core State Standards and aligned assessments.

**MinnCAN:** Effective teaching and leadership, higher standards for student achievement through Common Core State Standards-aligned tests and more kids in high-quality pre-K.

**PennCAN:** Ending last-in, first-out layoff policies for teachers, teacher tenure reform, charter school reform, funding equity based on real-time student enrollment and Common Core State Standards implementation.

**RI-CAN:** School facilities aid, faithful implementation of the Common Core State Standards and aligned assessments, and public engagement on education issues in election.

**MarylandCAN:** Charter school reform, expansion of high-quality pre-K and Common Core State Standards implementation.

# Goals and growth plan

When we started 50CAN three years ago, we developed a three-year business plan to help guide our early work. Now that we are emerging from our start-up phase, we are using those three years of hard-won knowledge about what it really takes to build a national network of locally based education advocates to put forward a new vision for growth and success over the next three years.

Our organizational plan for the next three years is centered on the notion of leadership development through a learning and teaching culture. When we first launched 50CAN, our focus was on effectively replicating the ConnCAN model in new states. But now that we are up and running in states across the country, our challenge is not to replicate a single approach, but instead to build connections across all of these campaigns to accelerate the pace of learning across our entire network. We aim to develop leaders who are growing together through a continuous cycle of innovation, testing and improvement.

## **Organizational goals for the next three years**

### ***Statewide campaigns***

In each of our states, we aim to define the school system of the future and work together with partners to build the public will to enact the changes needed to reach our goals. These campaigns are our flagships, where

we draw the lessons that inform our culture of learning and teaching and where we work every day to improve the lives of kids in these states.

By the start of 2017, we aim to have 10 CANs with the following characteristics:

- Each CAN consistently secures two policy victories in its state each year.
- Each CAN is a leader in defining a bold vision that moves its state forward.
- Each CAN has an excellent executive director and strong deputy.
- Each CAN has a strong and influential local advisory board.
- Each CAN has consistent and growing local funding.

### ***50CAN University***

In addition to our internal trainings, we are developing three new core programs under the auspices of 50CAN University:

- 1 Fellowships.** Our plan is to pursue growth into new communities

through a 12-month fellowship for aspiring CAN executive directors. The 12 months will be spent completing a curriculum designed to teach them the fundamentals of education advocacy. At the end of the 12 months, fellows can apply to launch a new CAN if they meet the required criteria.

By the start of 2017, we plan to have four fellows per year in a program that exhibits the following indicators of success:

- At least two-thirds of fellows successfully launch new CANs.
- There are three times more strong candidates than slots per year.
- Fellows raise the bar for CAN executive directors.

**2 Partnerships.** Our plan is also to pursue growth through partnerships with other education organizations that would benefit from advocacy and policy training for their boards, staff and volunteers.

By the start of 2017, we plan to have three partners per year in these programs.

**3 Courses.** We are also planning to pursue growth through trainings delivered via online courses. We already successfully beta tested our Ed Reform 101 policy course with 30 participants from within 50CAN and outside our organization in partnership with the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, and are exploring locally tailored education policy courses for in-state advocates, as well as an education advocacy course.

By the start of 2017, we plan to have three courses per year. We will:

- Add one new course each year, for a total of three courses in areas such as policy, advocacy and organizational development.
- Double the enrollment size of each course each year.
- Use courses as a recruitment mechanism for fellows.
- Explore possible partnerships and university sponsors to fuel growth.

### ***50CAN board of directors***

We are focusing on a board development strategy that brings leaders from our state advisory boards onto the national board to strengthen our focus on local leadership. By the end of 2017, we are working towards the following goals:

- Eighty percent of CAN states are represented on the national board.
- Board members make 50CAN one of their top philanthropic priorities.
- Board members serve as active ambassadors for our organization.



## CANS

	2014	2015	2016
<b>Growth plan</b>	7 states	8 states	10 states
<b>Indicators of success</b>	<p>Each CAN consistently secures two policy victories in its state each year.</p> <hr/> <p>Each CAN is a leader in defining a bold vision that moves its state forward.</p> <hr/> <p>Each CAN has an excellent executive director and strong deputy.</p> <hr/> <p>Each CAN has a strong and influential local advisory board.</p> <hr/> <p>Each CAN has consistent and growing local funding.</p>		

## FELLOWSHIPS

	2014	2015	2016
<b>Growth plan</b>	1 fellow	3 fellows	4 fellows
<b>Indicators of success</b>	<p>At least two-thirds of fellows successfully launch new CANS.</p> <hr/> <p>There are 3 times more strong candidates than slots per year.</p> <hr/> <p>Fellows raise the bar for CAN executive directors.</p>		

## PARTNERSHIPS

	2014	2015	2016
<b>Growth plan</b>	1 partner serving 20 people	2 partners serving 60 people	3 partners serving 120 people
<b>Indicators of success</b>	<p>1 new partner per year.</p> <hr/> <p>Retain 100% of partners year to year.</p>		

## COURSES

	2014	2015	2016
<b>Growth plan</b>	1 national course serving 100 people  1 pilot state course serving 50 people	2 national courses serving 400 people	3 national courses serving 1,200 people
<b>Indicators of success</b>	<p>Add 1 new course each year, totaling 3 courses in areas such as policy, advocacy and organizational development.</p> <hr/> <p>Double the enrollment size of each course each year.</p> <hr/> <p>Use courses as a recruitment mechanism for fellows.</p> <hr/> <p>Explore possible partnerships and university sponsors to fuel growth.</p>		

## NATIONAL BOARD

	2014	2015	2016
<b>Growth plan</b>	6+ board members	8+ board members	10+ board members
<b>Indicators of success</b>	<p>80% percent of CAN states are represented on the national board.</p> <hr/> <p>Board members make 50CAN one of their top philanthropic priorities.</p> <hr/> <p>Board members serve as active ambassadors for our organization.</p>		

## STAFFING & BUDGET

	2014	2015	2016
<b>Growth plan</b>	35 staff	38 staff	44 staff
	\$6.0M	\$6.7M	\$7.5M

# STRONGER TOGETHER

We deeply believe that we are working on the most important issue of the day and approaching it with the most critical missing lever: nonpartisan, research-backed advocacy for state policy, driven forward by diverse local leadership and supported by best-in-the-nation thinking.

We are very proud of our accomplishments in our first three years and we have big goals for the next three years. But we can't do it alone.

We need champions who believe as deeply in our mission, our track record of success and our plans for growth as we do. That includes major philanthropic investments and civic commitments to serve on our national and state boards.

*We hope that you will join us.*

## **Contact us**

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