

PIONEERS OF PROGRESS

THE 2024 CANNUAL REPORT




50CAN

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Embracing America's Pioneering Spirit in Education

Education has always been at the heart of America's democratic experiment—and at the core of America's educational progress is locally-driven innovation.

Thomas Jefferson articulated this vision in an 1820 letter to his friend Charles Jarvis: "I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society, but the people themselves: and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with wholesome discretion, the remedy is, not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." In the letter, Jefferson went on to argue for a system of free, publicly-supported elementary schools, to be coupled with the itinerant teachers and religious institutions of the day, to help ensure America's success.

In 1827, **Massachusetts** passed a law requiring all towns to create free, public elementary schools and was soon followed by **New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio** and **Indiana**. Within fifty years, every state had adopted their own system of tax-funded elementary schooling, turning this idea into a reality and elevating American literacy rates to the highest in the world.

Throughout American history, ambitious new ideas and state-led innovation have driven educational progress and set the pace for the world, as American pioneers continually sought ways to ensure every child reaches their full potential. After the Civil War, it was the Freedmen's School movement in states like **Virginia, North Carolina** and **Georgia**, supported by local churches, that provided the first organized opportunity for African Americans to get the education they deserved in the South. In the late 19th century, the kindergarten movement, first championed in states like **Wisconsin**, introduced nurturing, play-based early learning environments tailored to children's developmental needs. Around the same period, **Massachusetts** and other states ignited the high school movement, vastly expanding secondary education access and equipping generations with critical

skills for a rapidly modernizing economy. Meanwhile, Catholic communities undertook an unprecedented expansion of independent schools, exemplified by **New York's** extensive school-building campaign, creating the world's largest and most successful network of private schools serving children from all walks of life.

Building upon this tradition, the late 20th century saw the majority of states further empower families through homeschooling laws, building upon the pioneering leadership of states like **North Dakota** to help families offer personalized education beyond traditional classrooms. Next door in **Minnesota** teachers launched the charter school movement, providing a new platform for innovation and offering parents alternative schooling opportunities beyond the confines of their zip code-based school zones.

Today, **Florida** and other pioneering states are advancing the microschoools movement, creating intimate, customized learning communities that meet individual student needs. Paired with the broader personalized education movement, states are now leveraging technology and tailored curricula, ensuring education remains dynamic, responsive and adaptive to children's needs.

From our country's founding aspirations to today's advocacy campaigns, state-led innovation has continuously redefined what is possible in education, demonstrating the revolutionary impact of pioneering new models and the unstoppable power of the American spirit. It is that spirit that animates our work at **50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now**.

In the pages that follow, we invite you to explore our progress over the past year across the four streams of our work, as we support visionary educators and communities in building the education systems of tomorrow.



Michael Phillips
Michael Phillips
Board Chair, 50CAN



Lisa Graham Keegan
Lisa Graham Keegan
Board Chair, 50CAN
Action Fund



Marc Porter Magee
Marc Porter Magee
CEO and Founder,
50CAN



Derrell Bradford
Derrell Bradford
President, 50CAN

50CAN 2024 By the Numbers

2024
Policy
Wins **25**

Education
That's Right
for You Wins **9**

Tutoring
and Care
for All Wins **6**

Open and
Connected
Learning Wins **1**

Family's Right
to Know Wins **3**

Clear Path
to a Career
Wins **6**

Local State
Survey Partners **19**

20,090
Parents
Surveyed

10
50CAN
Builders

35,012
Students receiving
summer learning as
a result of 50CAN

Communications
and Policy
Fellows Trained **17**

102
Network
Media Hits

50CAN Action Fund 2024 By the Numbers

2024
Total
Elections **49**

78%

41
Priority
Elections

Priority
Election
Win Rate

50CAN
ACTION FUND

14
Democrats
elected in
priority
elections

18
Republicans
elected in
priority
elections

Advocate **verb**

ad•vo•cate

: to support or argue for (a cause, policy, etc.) : to plead in favor of

An executive director **advocated** for children by passing a universal tutoring bill.

: to act as advocate for someone or something

Every family—in all 50 states—deserves a fighter who will **advocate** for them.



As a country, we must confront a stark reality: a student from a high-income family often enjoys world-class educational options and opportunities, while a student from a low-income family experiences educational scarcity. We believe advocacy is the key to changing this.

The State of Educational Opportunity in America: A Survey of 20,000 Parents, a report we published in October of last year, illuminated this disparity:

- For families with annual household incomes below \$25,000, only 22 percent of their children received **tutoring** in the past year but for those making \$1 million or more, that number jumps to 72 percent.
- Only 33 percent of the children in low-income families participated in **summer programs** in the past year while it leaps to 88 percent for the children of the wealthy.
- Just 14 percent of low-income high school students participated in an **internship** or other work-based program compared to 69 percent of high schoolers in the wealthiest families.
- Finally, while only 26 percent of low-income families exercise some form of **school choice**, that number jumps to 69 percent for families making over \$1 million a year.

Is it possible to bring the educational opportunities of the most advantaged students to all students? **That's what our Believe in Better educational agenda is all about.** As an organization of local advocates, 50CAN works to rewrite the laws and policies that shape our education system so that educational opportunity becomes the norm for all, not just the fortunate few. And in communities across this nation, we are seeing incredible strides towards this goal. Last year, states in our network from North Carolina to New Mexico proved that, with the right policies, we can expand educational opportunities and services at an unprecedented scale. From universal ESAs that empower families to customize learning to new funding that guarantees tutoring for every student who needs it, these victories show that a brighter educational future is within reach.

Yet our work is far from finished. Expanding access to educational opportunities and learning innovations requires updating old systems and breaking down barriers—removing caps on excellent charter schools, ending the zoning of students through residential assignment, scaling affordable access to enrichment programs and ensuring information about options flows freely to every family. It also means championing ideas that will boost learning in the classroom, like the science of reading, and reimagining high school by building up programs that connect students to a world of opportunities beyond the four walls of a school. With dedicated, goal-driven local advocacy, we can transform great ideas into concrete policies that open doors for millions of children.

Our vision and the policy pillars of Believe in Better inspire us every day. We have seen that when we aim higher, kids benefit. Let's give all our children the opportunities they deserve.


Marc Porter Magee

CEO & Founder, 50CAN



Expanding Educational Opportunity in Louisiana

In a fourth-grade classroom in Baton Rouge last fall, a handful of Louisiana legislators, State Superintendent Cade Brumley, Accelerate founder Kevin Huffman, media members and advocates watched as a young student worked one-on-one with a virtual tutor on core math skills. “I love tutoring,” the girl said with a huge smile. “I just wish we could do it all day!” It was a small scene with big implications: the first experience that elected leaders would have with the universal tutoring program they had signed into law earlier that year.

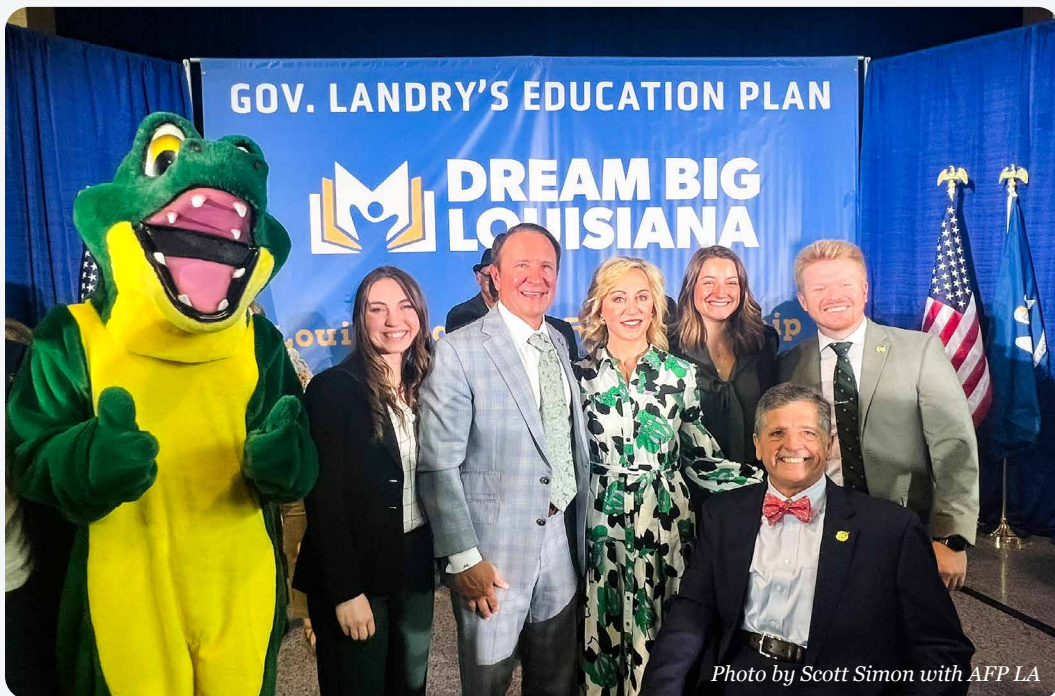
What they were witnessing was one piece in a comprehensive strategy to improve education in the Pelican State. In a single year, Louisiana leaders enacted a **universal tutoring program** to help kids catch up, a **universal education savings account** to expand educational choice, and a **mandatory math screening program** to address our national math crisis. This was a trifecta of policy victories for the Louisiana Kids Matter campaign, its Executive Director Kelli Bottger, legislative leaders and, most importantly, the state’s kids and families.

With learning loss lingering from the pandemic, Louisiana made a \$30 million investment to embed **high-dosage tutoring** during the school day for

elementary students who are falling behind. The new program, established by Senate Bill 508, ensures that any K-5 student scoring below proficiency in reading or math will get dedicated tutoring time with a qualified instructor. In fact, Louisiana became the first state to enact a universal K-5 tutoring plan. The scale is sweeping—over **300,000 students** are now eligible for extra help in reading and math through this initiative. Lawmakers also boosted an existing after-school tutoring voucher program by \$5 million, allowing families to access up to \$1,500 in tutoring outside of school hours. Already, more than **19,000** students have enrolled to get help after school or over the summer.

The idea is simple but is proving effective: **consistent tutoring, delivered three times a week or more, can be a game-changer** in catching kids up and propelling them forward. “Tutoring is one of the few educational strategies that we know works for almost all kids,” 50CAN VP of Policy Liz Cohen wrote at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Four years later, Kelli delivered.

Louisiana didn’t stop with tutoring, with Kelli and her partners creating a universal Education Savings Account program—a landmark victory for school



choice in the state. Senate Bill 313, dubbed the Louisiana Giving All True Opportunity to Rise (LA GATOR) Scholarship, will allow every family to direct state education funds to the learning environment of their choice, with low-income students and students with special needs receiving larger scholarship amounts to ensure equal opportunity.

For Louisiana families, it means that zip code and income will no longer limit the educational opportunities available to their kids. And for the national school choice movement, Louisiana's ESA adds further momentum.

Finally, Louisiana's lawmakers, inspired by 2023's science of reading bills, turned their attention to an often-neglected predictor of academic success: elementary math skills. They passed a first-in-the-nation requirement that all **K-3 students be screened in numeracy** three times a year to catch problems early. The goal is that no child's math deficits go unnoticed—or unaddressed—until it's too late. Education watchers say this aggressive focus on numeracy sets an important precedent. Other states have adopted K-3 reading screenings due to the "science of reading" movement; Louisiana may inspire a similar trend in tackling the early math gap.

In an era where our politics are often fiercely divided, Louisiana's 2024 education agenda saw **Republicans and Democrats come together** in support of what was best for students. The bills didn't pass without debate, to be sure, but the final votes demonstrated a rare bipartisan commitment to making the bold changes kids need.

The tutoring initiative, in particular, enjoyed across-the-board support. High-dosage tutoring had support from Republican Governor Jeff Landry's administration and from legislators in both parties who saw the urgent need to address learning loss. The House and Senate approved the \$30 million tutoring plan with overwhelming majorities. Even the ESA fight, historically a partisan fault line, saw some measure of cross-aisle collaboration. By the end, the House passed the ESA bill 68-28.

Taken together, these three policies signal an unprecedented commitment to meeting families' desire for an education system that does things differently, by giving families more agency. In states across the country, the future of education is coming into focus—and Louisiana's sweeping 2024 agenda stands out as a bold blueprint for the future.

3 Questions with Steven Quinn on the FIRE Parent Advocacy Fellowship

Why do a national parent advocacy fellowship? What was the need?

We've had pockets of advocates across the country, but in speaking with other outreach directors we recognized parent advocates had a lot to learn from each other across state lines. We realized a fellowship could be a force multiplier, letting people learn from the good work going on in other states both in terms of policy and tactics. A rising tide will lift all the advocacy boats.

Who is a fellow who inspired you in the inaugural cohort?

Well this is hard, because they're all so, so great. The first that comes to mind is Lasharn Ferroudj, a parent who has been an avid charter supporter and really used the fellowship to not only add to her advocacy toolbox but also sharpen her policy knowledge. As a result, she's testified at the capitol in support of expanding school options and is working with other local parents to raise their voices as well.

What are you changing for year two?

We're going to take a much more expansive view of partnerships. Working with the National School Choice Awareness Foundation was great in 2024, and we'd like to bring in more local and national partners to provide additional insight and perspectives. Over the next couple of years, I'd like to ensure we have a FIRE fellow in every state—think of everything we could learn!



The Education That's Right for You

DelawareKidsCAN gave charter schools greater flexibility to hire the school leaders that work best for their school through SB311, legislation that gives charter schools autonomy in hiring administrators.

GeorgiaCAN expanded educational opportunities so that more families could access the school of their choice by passing SB233, the state's first ESA, which provides \$6,500 for students in low-performing schools.

GeorgiaCAN also improved the regulatory environment and facilities funding for charter schools, by moving charter school oversight to the charter commission and ensuring that districts cannot skim funding from charters or disobey charter laws through regulatory mispractice.

HawaiiKidsCAN worked to expand access to high-quality charter seats. The team passed a study from the House as House Resolution HR64. The bill asks the board to work with the charter commission to address charter facilities access.

JerseyCAN successfully addressed inequities in charter school facilities funding through the creation of a low-interest, revolving loan fund for charter and renaissance schools.

In order to deliver every family the choice of school that best fits their needs, **Louisiana Kids Matter** passed the first universal ESA program in the state. The ESA award is based on a scale, with low-income and students with special needs receiving maximum scholarship amounts. The program also requires participating schools to ensure students take the state assessment or a norm-referenced test.

NewMexicoKidsCAN successfully defeated efforts to revert the state's educational governance from a governor appointed secretary of education back to an elected state board of education—which would have caused chaos, increased politicization and spurred misalignment across the state's education systems.

NewMexicoKidsCAN, together with their coalition, cleared the path for the approval of several new charter schools and enrollment expansions that create thousands of high-quality charter school seats.

TennesseeCAN secured investments in facilities funding for charter schools by securing an additional \$15 million grant from the state for facilities.



Tutoring and Care for All

ConnCAN fully implemented the Multilingual Learner Bill of Rights, passed last year, with the Department of Education issuing guidelines for schools and a set of tools to help them adhere to the new legislation.

DelawareKidsCAN worked to secure an additional \$2 million in the approved budget to support 20 literacy coaches statewide. Literacy coaches will provide much needed professional development assistance to ELA instructors as the state moves toward full science of reading implementation.

GeorgiaCAN built on prior years' passage of bills to ensure students would be taught with science-based reading strategies by passing \$10 million for literacy screeners and literacy coaches, while also refining the list of approved screeners for schools.

JerseyCAN continued a multi-year effort to align New Jersey's literacy approach to the science of reading by passing a package of bills that establish a statewide literacy screener, a working group to guide and provide recommendations on literacy implementation to the Department of Education, professional development for teachers and a reading intervention program for struggling students based on foundational literacy.

As a result of **Louisiana Kids Matter's** advocacy, Louisiana became the first state to pass a K-3 math universal screener and a \$30 million statewide tutoring program embedded in the school day for students not achieving mastery in literacy or math, with over 300,000 students eligible for participation. The team also passed the Steve Carter Tutoring Program to provide students with \$1,500 for tutoring in reading and math after-school or over the summer, with \$5 million invested and 19,000 students already enrolled.

TennesseeCAN increased access to high-quality tutoring services for all students by renewing \$130 million in funding in order to provide over 100,000 kids with continued services in grades K-9.



A World of Open and Connected Learning

Transform Education Now expanded direct aid to families for outside-the-classroom learning and extracurricular opportunities by securing \$5 million from the Denver City Council to expand after school support through the MySpark program.



A Parent's Right to Know What's Working

GeorgiaCAN ensured the state maintains a high-quality system of assessments and evaluation by requiring the state to produce “single score grading” in its school accountability system, making it easier for parents to interpret scores.

TennesseeCAN successfully advocated for the release of an A-F grading scale for school performance, adding to the comparative information available to parents.

TennesseeCAN supported parents having an understanding of how their school is spending money by ensuring their access to TISA spending data, which has now been released to all Tennesseans.

A Clear Path to a Career

CarolinaCAN worked to remove unnecessary teacher license credential barriers that prevent great teachers from entering the profession by eliminating the PRAXIS test as a prerequisite to continue within the college of education.

ConnCAN worked to clarify school funding allocations for agricultural and vocational-technical schools by passing legislation that ensures these schools will receive clear financials from the Department of Education on how much money they will receive per student.

GeorgiaCAN strengthened career pathways by enacting a suite of four career pathways bills that came out of a study commission on dual-enrollment. Collectively, the bills make it easier for companies to hire apprentices, allows more students to fast-track their education through dual-credit courses, improves the alignment of courses with high-demand jobs, and ensures that higher-education credits are transferable between institutions.

HawaiiKidsCAN achieved a win in their efforts to guarantee a year-round counselor for college and career by passing HR170, a resolution requiring the Board of Education and Department of Education to explore best practices for year-round counseling, which will lay the groundwork for 2025 and higher rates of FAFSA completion.

JerseyCAN worked to create new pathways into the teaching profession through teacher apprenticeship programs by working with legislators to form a new teaching apprenticeship commission that will take on the issue over the coming months.

Louisiana Kids Matter helped pass legislation to restructure the Workforce Investment Council to a working advisory committee. The new advisory committee will develop a job forecast to align the newly passed state accountability system with industry certifications to ensure students secure a high-wage high-demand job upon graduation from high school or a postsecondary institution.





Spark verb

/spärk/

: to set off in a burst of activity : activate

The National Voices fellow's op-ed **sparked** conversations among policymakers.

: to stir to activity : incite

Stories of transformative educational opportunities can **spark** policy change.






Take a quick scan of today’s media landscape and you’ll see why we’re investing so heavily in new messengers and policy minds. Many of us start our day not with a newspaper at the doorstep but with podcasts in our headphones or viral videos in our feeds. In 2025, more than half of American adults tune into podcasts every month, and a single viral TikTok or YouTube video can reach more people in a day than a traditional news broadcast might in a week. This isn’t just a shift in technology—it’s a cultural sea change in how ideas spread. To build the public will for educational change, we must meet people where they are, spark big ideas through the channels they actually use and build trust with a wide range of families that something different is indeed possible.

At 50CAN we are embracing the power of storytelling in all forms. In 2024, our team and fellows have been lighting up new media: recording podcasts on education policy, launching a YouTube series (“I’m Derrell Bradford and this is AdvocacyLabs!”) and going live on social platforms to engage communities in real time. By leveraging both traditional and modern platforms, we’re working to ensure that the message of educational opportunity reaches parents, students and supporters directly.

Of course, even the best message needs messengers. That’s where our commitment to training and supporting the next generation of education leaders, willing to work across the aisle and champion the future, comes in. Through initiatives like our National Voices Fellowship, we bring together talented advocates from across the political spectrum and equip them with cutting-edge skills in communication and policy. **Picture a cohort that looks like America—urban and rural, politically left, right and center, all united by a passion for kids** and with the savvy to navigate everything from a school board meeting to an X exchange. These rising leaders are writing op-eds, appearing on TV and creating online content—all to drive home the idea that every child deserves a full range of educational opportunities and the education that’s right for them.

In a world of constant content, authenticity and clarity are more important than ever. We’re proud that our 50CAN family works to lead with both heart and hustle. Whether I’m breaking down education debates on the evening news or one of our fellows is hosting a webinar on school innovation, we are igniting conversations that cut through the noise.

 **Derrell Bradford**

President, 50CAN



Brandon outlined three reasons to support ESAs and school choice in general. I believe because the people support it.

"It is beyond me how our party has gone against our base this long on this particular when it actually is germane to the base and their outcome," said Brandon. "The reason is because it makes sense. It is our constitutional responsibility. No law says we have to go to public schools; the law says we are required to provide a public education. It is our constitutional responsibility to provide access to what the parents deem adequate."

How can policymakers and practitioners reduce chronic absenteeism? The answer is sports.

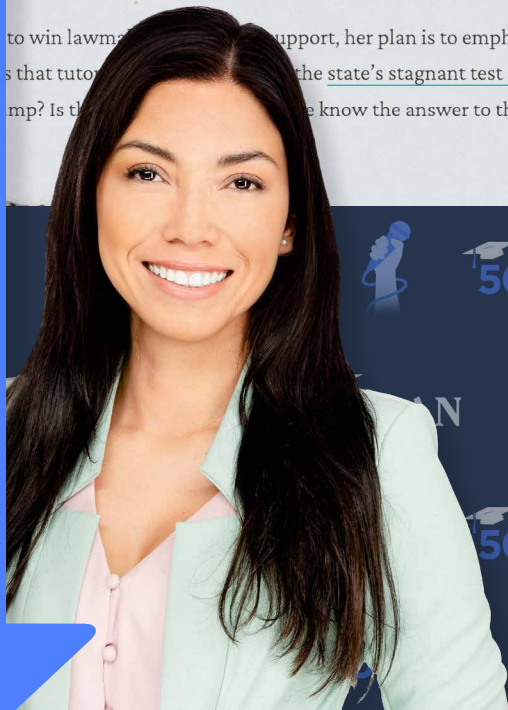


CHALKBEAT

Essential education reporting across America

Paula White, the executive director of the advocacy group JerseyCAN, is one of the people who have had to keep paying for tutoring, too.

to win lawmakers' support, her plan is to emphasize the importance of tutoring. "The state's stagnant test scores — 'Are we doing it right? Is this the answer? We know the answer to that is 'no,'" she



When I applied to the National Voices Fellowship, I expected to gain skills that would help me become a stronger advocate for education. What I didn't expect was how it would shape the way I think about policy and the relationships I would build with people across the political spectrum.

From day one, the program pushed me beyond the usual debates, challenging me to engage with full honesty in the complexities of education policy. The readings were enriching on multiple levels—whether analyzing the latest research on learning loss or debating the trade-offs in education reform, I walked away from each session knowing more than before and eager to keep learning.

National Voices and my fellow participants also equipped me with the tools to communicate that knowledge in ways that truly move people. From on-camera training that refined my presence in interviews to writing workshops that helped me craft compelling op-eds, and personal brand coaching that encouraged me to think critically about how I present myself as a leader, every aspect of the fellowship strengthened my ability to advocate effectively.

But what has meant the most to me is the safe space to share ideas. In my cohort, there were fellows from all political backgrounds—people who, outside of this program, might never have found themselves in the same room. And yet, we bonded over a shared belief that every child deserves access to great schools. We had tough conversations, we challenged each other, but we always came back to what unites us: the belief that opportunity should be available to all kids, not just some. I know I've made lasting friendships in this fellowship—people I can turn to for advice, support and, most importantly, the motivation to keep fighting for kids.

I leave this program with more than just knowledge and skills—I leave with a renewed sense of purpose and a network of incredible people who are all working toward the same goal.

Krissia Spivey
National Voices Fellow, Cohort VI



The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Politics Business Sports Entertainment Food Things to do Wellness Access

By Maureen Downey

Jan 4, 2024

Michael O'Sullivan leads GeorgiaCan, a nonprofit organization that seeks to identify and advance student-centric policy solutions to improve educational outcomes.

The New York Times

“You can’t give reparations to the system that I said Derrell Bradford, president of 50CAN, a group that supports the expansion of charter schools and vouchers. to the people the system harmed.”



EPISODE 2 • SEMESTER 3

MAKING OUR HOPES, OUR REALITY

DR. ARSENIO ROMERO
NEW MEXICO
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION



3 Questions with New Mexico Rising Host Amanda Aragon

What motivated you to start a podcast?

New Mexico Rising was about creating a spark—making both everyday New Mexicans and education leaders more informed and more optimistic about fixing our schools. We’re tired of the same defeatist narratives. Yes, we have challenges, but we also have real solutions. This podcast cuts through the noise and drives action, equipping people with the knowledge and belief that change is possible.

What’s one thing you’ve learned?

Collaboration is everything. The best episodes happen when we listen to parents, learn from fellow podcasters and work closely with our production team to shape great storytelling. Even beyond the podcast, advocacy itself is collaborative—real change happens when we bring people together, break down silos and make sure every voice is heard.

How has it helped with your advocacy?

The podcast has made education policy personal. Parents tell me they finally understand funding debates. Teachers say an episode helped them push for a better curriculum. Even policymakers listen—and when they come on as guests, it’s a real dialogue, not just politics. New Mexico Rising isn’t just a show—I’m seeing it begin to shape the education conversation in our state.



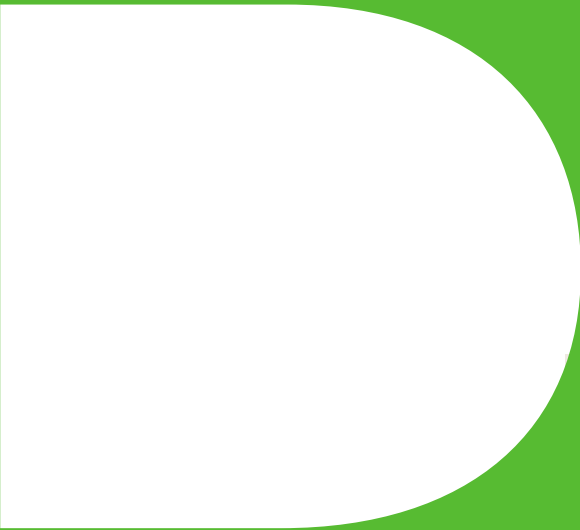
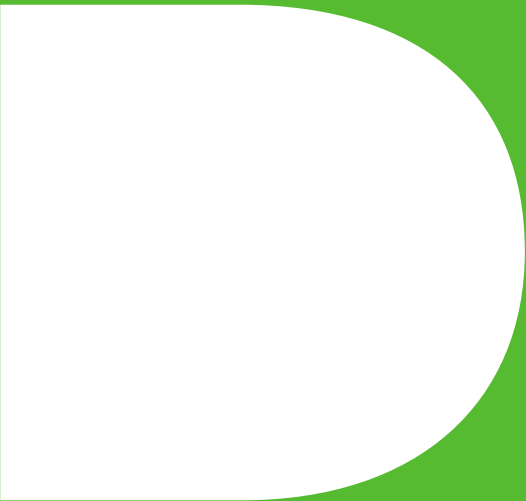


Build **verb**

/bild/

: to develop according to a systematic plan, by a definite process, or on a particular base

Kids have immediate needs that can be solved if we make it easy for leaders to **build** the solutions.



During my years as a pastor, I learned that true service means sometimes you have to roll up your sleeves to build something that makes a difference in people's lives. That's the spirit we've embraced at 50CAN in our Build work—turning bold ideas into real programs that help children and families here and now. **While policy wins create possibility, it's our direct-to-field initiatives that help to turn those possibilities into tangible progress.** This year, I have been humbled to see our network living out the value of building for others.

One powerful example is the effort led by our HawaiiKidsCAN team to boost college access. After a botched rollout by the US Department of Education, Hawaii faced one of the sharpest declines in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion rate in the nation—a 20% drop—leaving over \$12 million in financial aid for college on the table. In response, our advocates in the Aloha State didn't just admire the problem from afar, they built a solution. They launched a statewide campaign to personally engage students and families on the importance of the FAFSA, from community workshops to text-message reminders. This on-the-ground work is opening doors for students who might otherwise have missed out on the scholarships and grants that make higher education attainable. It's the kind of servant-leadership that changes lives: one form filled out, one student's dream brought closer to them.

We also worked to combat learning loss through innovative summer learning efforts. The Summer Boost initiative from Bloomberg Philanthropies, which 50CAN supported by helping administer the program, showed just how much can be achieved when we invest in kids' growth outside the traditional school year. Of the more than 35,000 students who participated last summer, the percentage meeting grade-level standards nearly doubled in math and more than doubled in English by the program's end. Think about that—thousands of children, many from our most underserved communities, mastering the skills and knowledge they need to succeed because someone cared enough to build a summer program that would extend their learning over the course of a year. That is the power of an approach to education that prioritizes access to opportunities, big dreams and bold philanthropy.

These stories affirm a timeless truth: **when you build up children, you build up communities and futures.** I am incredibly proud of how our 50CAN family has lived our values, not just by advocating for change, but also implementing solutions hand-in-hand with local schools and partners. From Hawaii to Maryland, we are proving that big challenges can be met with creative action. And we're just getting started. In the coming year, we will continue to build—programs, partnerships and pathways—to ensure every child has the support to thrive.



Michael Phillips

Board Chair, 50CAN







“ Being a 50CAN Builder means having the best of both worlds—the national expertise in communications, finance, and strategy, but also a team that’s laser-focused on putting kids first. Whenever we hit a challenge, the attitude isn’t ‘That’s too hard,’ it’s ‘How do we solve this for students?’ That mindset, combined with real support, makes all the difference in turning bold ideas into real impact. ”

Ben Austin, 50CAN Builder

The background features a stylized illustration of a government building with a pattern of stars and stripes. In the foreground, several silhouettes of people are shown in various poses, some holding papers, suggesting a busy office or public service environment.

Serve verb

/sərv/

: to be of use

: to be worthy of reliance or trust

: to hold an office; discharge a duty or function

Our leaders must be informed on the opportunities their constituents do and don't have access to, in order to best **serve** them.

Y Jones, T	Y Ridley, Jas
Y Kelley	Y Ridley, Jor
Y Kendrick	N Roberts
Y Kennard	N Romman
Y Knight	Y Sainz
Y Knod	N Sampson
Y Knott	N Schofield
Y Knott	N Scoggins
Y Knott	N Scott
Y Knott	Y Seabaugh
Y Knott	N Sharper
Y Knott	Y Silcox
Y Knott	Y Smith, L
Y Knott	Y Smith, M
Y Knott	Y Smith, T.P.
Y Knott	N Smith, V
Y Knott	Y Stephens
Y Knott	Y Stinson
Y Knott	N Stoner
Y Knott	Y Tarvin
Y Knott	Y Taylor, D
Y Knott	N Taylor, R
Y Knott	Y Thomas, B
Y Knott	N Thomas, M
Y Knott	Y Townsend
Y Knott	N Tran
Y Knott	N Vance
Y Knott	Y Wade
Y Knott	Y Washburn
Y Knott	Y Werkheiser
Y Knott	N Westbrook
Y Knott	Y Wiedower
Y Knott	N Wilkerson
Y Knott	N Williams, A
Y Knott	N Williams, M.F.
Y Knott	Y Williams, N
Y Knott	Y Williamson
Y Knott	N Willis
Y Knott	Y Yearta
Y Knott	VACANT 125
Y Knott	VACANT 139

Speaker
Burns

233 **PASSAGE**
Yeas 91 Nays 82



Photo by All Digital Photo and Video

If we want to provide parents with a broader set of options and opportunities for their children, we must remember that policy change is ultimately a political act. As someone who has served on the front lines of education reform, as a state legislator and a state superintendent, I have seen how the political environment in a state can either unleash opportunity or stifle it. In state after state, big wins for kids have come not just from good ideas, but from the dedication of elected officials willing to fight for those same ideas in statehouses and the political arena.

Consider the contrast we see across the country. **In some states, governors and legislators from both parties have joined forces to enact groundbreaking education reforms**—from empowering parents with new choices to investing in tutoring, summer camps, afterschool programs and career pathways—creating conditions where educational opportunity can flourish. In other states, unfortunately, progress has stalled when leaders retreated from bold action. The lesson is clear: building strong political support is key to ensuring great policy ideas have a chance to see the light of day.

That's why the work of the 50CAN Action Fund is so crucial. We exist to recruit, support and embolden those public servants who are ready to do right by kids, even when it's hard. **This year, our network helped achieve significant policy victories that will improve students' lives, and each one came with a story of political courage.**

In Louisiana, Rep. Jason Hughes was one of several Democrats who stood up against partisan pressure to pass a universal ESA. In New Jersey, Senator Teresa Ruiz sounded the alarm over lagging reading scores and championed a package of four bills to remake literacy instruction across the state. These breakthroughs didn't happen by accident—they happened because leaders, advocates and families worked together through the political process to put students' needs at the center.

It's often said that politics is the art of the possible. By engaging strategically in elections, in state capitols and in our communities, we are not only winning policies but also building a new generation of leaders who believe in the promise and potential of every student to be the best version of themselves. Some are Democrats, some are Republicans, but all are champions for kids—proving that expanding educational opportunity can and must be a bipartisan cause.

As we celebrate the wins of the past year, we are already gearing up for the challenges ahead. The landscape of 2025 and 2026 presents both obstacles and openings. Our message to every lawmaker and candidate is simple: if you have the courage to put students first, we will have your back.


Lisa Graham Keegan

Board Chair, 50CAN Action Fund

The Educational Opportunity Survey

Not long ago, our team at 50CAN found ourselves puzzling over a gap in the education landscape: In the U.S., most education decisions are made at the state and local level—yet much of our information on education is national, averaging away local nuances. Critical questions remained unanswered. How do parents in Mississippi or Maine feel about their children’s education compared to parents in California or Colorado? Are low-income families getting the same access to tutoring, summer camps and internships as higher-income families? Surprisingly, no comprehensive dataset existed to paint that picture.

We set out to change that.

In 2024, 50CAN partnered with Edge Research to launch The State of Educational Opportunity in America—an unprecedented, state-by-state examination of family experiences in education and the opportunities they do and do not have access to. This was not a quick online poll or a narrow focus group. It was a massive undertaking: over 20,000 parents across every state (and D.C.) answered in-depth questions about their children’s education to inform the survey.

To ensure credible state-level results, the survey had to be huge—400 respondents per state, a scale virtually unheard of in education polling. The effort reached parents from all walks of life: urban, rural, and suburban communities, parents of kids in district schools, charter schools, private schools, homeschools and microschoools.

By the end, we had created a detailed almanac of what families are experiencing and prioritizing in American education, with a large enough sample to compare trends state-by-state.

The survey cast a wide net, recognizing that education isn’t just about what happens in the classroom. We asked not only about perceptions of school quality and the availability of choices but also tutoring, mental health supports, out-of-school activities, career pathways, and access to information on school finances and student academic progress.

By tackling everything from core academics to what happens outside the schoolhouse walls, the survey aimed to illuminate the full range of learning opportunities available to kids across America. What is important to parents? Where do they see needs unmet? In essence, the survey handed the mic to parents, allowing them to highlight what’s working and what isn’t in their states.

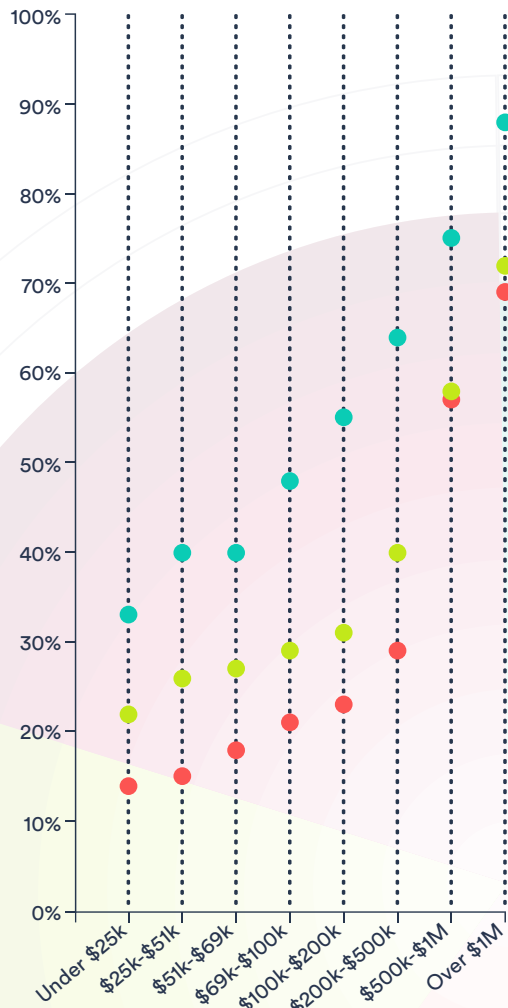
But the true goal of the survey wasn’t just to collect data, it was to drive action. Across the country, we’ve partnered with 19 states—and more on the way—

to release state-specific versions of the survey to drive conversations in the media and in the capitol buildings of numerous states, where our teams have hosted information sessions with governors and legislative leadership of both parties.

The message to these leaders is clear: **listen to what parents are telling us, and let’s use this information to build an education system that provides opportunity for every child.** If we take these 20,000 voices to heart, the future of education policy and advocacy will be not only data-driven, but also firmly rooted in the needs and hopes of families—exactly where it should be.

Participation by Household Income

- Tutoring
- Summer Camp/Program
- Internships/Work-Based Programs



The State of Educational Opportunity in Colorado

A Survey of Colorado Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in Connecticut

A Survey of Connecticut Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in Delaware

A Survey of Delaware Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in the District of Columbia

A Survey of DC Parents
October 2024



The State of Educational Opportunity in Florida

A Survey of Florida Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in Georgia

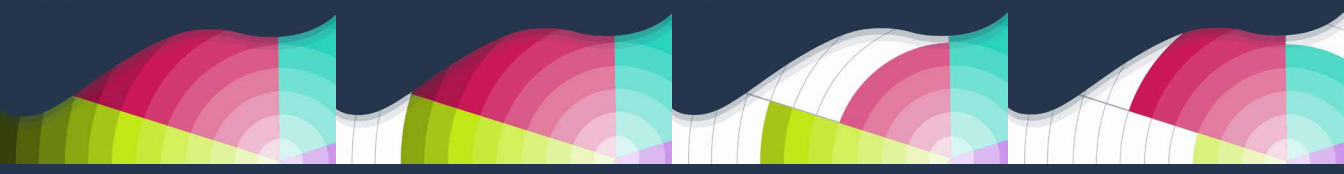
A Survey of Georgia Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in Hawaii

A Survey of Hawaii Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in Idaho

A Survey of Idaho Parents
October 2024



The State of Educational Opportunity in Indiana

A Survey of Indiana Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in Kentucky

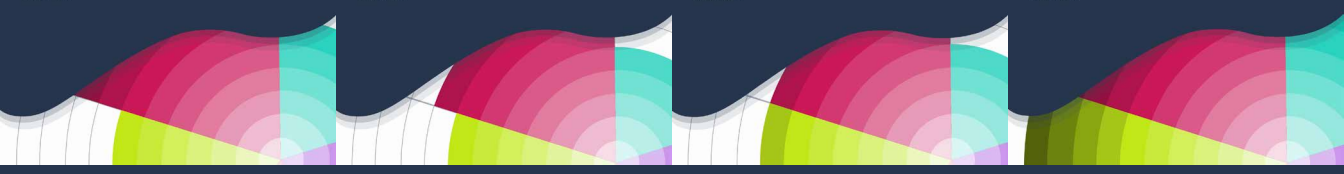
A Survey of Kentucky Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in Louisiana

A Survey of Louisiana Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in Massachusetts

A Survey of Massachusetts Parents
October 2024



The State of Educational Opportunity in Montana

A Survey of Montana Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in Nevada

A Survey of Nevada Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in New Jersey

A Survey of New Jersey Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in New Mexico

A Survey of New Mexico Parents
October 2024



The State of Educational Opportunity in North Carolina

A Survey of North Carolina Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in Ohio

A Survey of Ohio Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in Tennessee

A Survey of Tennessee Parents
October 2024

The State of Educational Opportunity in America

A 50-State Survey of 20,000 Parents
October 2024



Donor List

We are grateful to all who invested in our work in 2024. The generous support of many donors across our network helps us in our mission to fulfill the hopes and dreams of millions of families for the education system their children deserve.

\$100,000 +

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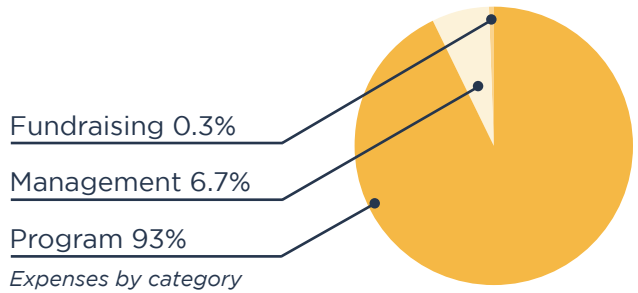
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- Riverview Works Fund at the Delaware Community Foundation
- Sandia Foundation
- Santa Fe Community Foundation
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- Thornburg Foundation
- Turrell Fund
- yes. every kid. foundation.

\$1,000-\$4,999

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- Anonymous
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- Lāna'i Community Benefit Fund of the Hawai'i Community Foundation
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- Nā 'Ōiwi Kāne
- Valerie Rockefeller
- Saga Education
- Science and Technology Park Development Corporation
- Smoky Torgerson

This list reflects gifts pledged or received in 2024. If your name appears differently than you would prefer, please reach out to grants@5ocan.org to request an update.

Financials



50CAN INC.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY*

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2024

Revenue	
Contributions	\$113,647,860
Fee for Service	\$5,876,174
Other Revenue	\$1,207,205
Total Revenue	\$120,731,238
Expenses	
Salaries & Benefits	\$8,434,813
Contract Services	\$11,787,633
Grants to Schools	\$54,941,448
Supplies & Materials	\$250,035
Facility & Equipment	\$350,535
Travel, Meetings & Events	\$1,093,759
IT & Technology	\$443,249
Insurance	\$83,955
Other Business Expenses	\$231,744
Total Expenses	\$77,617,171
Net Revenue	\$43,114,067
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$17,967,020
Net Assets, End of Year	\$61,081,087

*All financial information was obtained from 50CAN's internal budget tracking for the 2024 fiscal year. All audit reports, Form 990s and previous CANnual Reports can be viewed or requested at 50can.org/financials.

50CAN Board and Staff

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Marc Porter Magee
CEO & Founder, 50CAN



Roland Martin
CEO, Black Star
Network & Host of
#RolandMartinUnfiltered



Andrew Schwedel
Partner, Bain & Company

As both a 50CAN Board Member and a respected voice in education, Katherine Haley lives out our mission of expanding opportunity for all children. In March 2022, Katherine was appointed by Governor Doug Ducey to the Arizona State Board of Education, a role in which she now serves as Board President. In this capacity she helps oversee statewide academic standards, state accountability, teacher preparation and Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Account program. Katherine's career spans over 20 years in public policy and philanthropy. She served as a chief education advisor on Capitol Hill, where she was instrumental in reauthorizing the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program to give more low-income students access to great schools. She later founded the **Oak Rose Group**, a consulting firm dedicated to advancing policies and initiatives that lead to human flourishing in education and beyond. Katherine's deep belief that education is an essential driving force for upward mobility fuels her work on our board. Whether she's building coalitions of philanthropists to invest in innovation or guiding state education policy in Arizona, Katherine's leadership exemplifies 50CAN's values—she opens doors for students at every turn. It's an honor to have a champion like her on our team, working for a brighter future for America's kids.





*Ann Borowiec, 50CAN Board Member
Photo by All Digital Photo and Video*

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Company & former
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Andrew Thode
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Jenny Wang
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CarolinaCAN



Steven Hernández
Executive Director,
ConnCAN



Hamish MacPhail
Deputy Director, ConnCAN



Luis Ortiz
Director of Community
Engagement and Family
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Britney Mumford
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Michael O'Sullivan
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GeorgiaCAN



Steven Quinn
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GeorgiaCAN



Cymara Hancock
Advocacy Manager,
GeorgiaCAN



Ty'Sheka Lambert
Community Engagement
Organizer, GeorgiaCAN



Missy Purcell
Community Organizer
Associate, GeorgiaCAN



David Sun-Miyashiro
Executive Director,
HawaiiKidsCAN



Erica Nakanishi-Stanis
Advocacy Director,
HawaiiKidsCAN

“

For me, education is deeply personal. I come from a long line of educators and know how powerful learning can be when strong teachers, resources and systems align. That's why I do what I do at HawaiiKidsCAN—helping to advance policies that set youth up for success. Whether it's building data systems to measure the impact of workforce development initiatives, ensuring students who struggle with literacy are identified early on, or working with families to ensure their voices are heard, I want to make sure education in Hawai'i serves all keiki. There's nothing more rewarding than seeing our community thrive because we successfully connected the wealth of resources and supports on our islands to empower the next generation.

”

Erica Nakanishi-Stanis, Advocacy Director, HawaiiKidsCAN



Paula White
Executive Director,
JerseyCAN



Kelli Bottger
Executive Director,
Louisiana Kids Matter



Michelle Braud
Deputy Director,
Louisiana Kids Matter



Amanda Aragon
Executive Director,
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Dominica Chavez
Advocacy Manager,
NewMexicoKidsCAN



Nicholas Hernandez
Executive Director,
TEN, Colorado



Anita Banuelos
Director of Community
Organizing, TEN, Colorado



Dina Puente
Community Organizer
Associate, TEN, Colorado

“ I grew up in New Mexico, and I know what it’s like to navigate our public school system as a student, an advocate and now as someone working to make it better. My passion for education started young, and it’s taken me from being a national student leader in career-tech programs to working directly with parents and communities to push for the changes our kids need. At NewMexicoKidsCAN, I spend my days organizing parents, training advocates and making sure that the people closest to the problems—families, students and educators—are driving the solutions. I believe education should be accessible and designed to help every kid reach their full potential. That’s what inspires me every day.”

Dominica Chavez, Advocacy Manager, NewMexicoKidsCAN

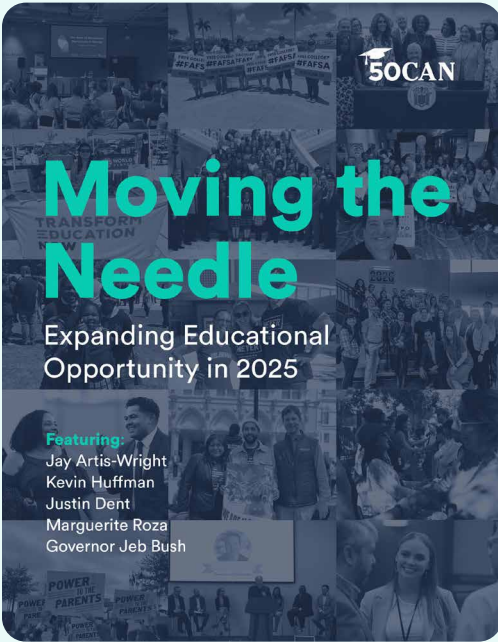


Chelsea Crawford
Executive Director,
TennesseeCAN



Jordan Long
Advocacy Director,
TennesseeCAN

Dive Deeper



Discover how we'll move the needle with our 2025 goals
50can.org/publication/moving-the-needle

Explore The State of Educational Opportunity in America: A Survey of 20,000 Parents
50can.org/education-opportunity-survey

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