

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

THE 2025 CANNUAL REPORT



 50CAN

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The 50CAN Effect

Education reform in America tends to come in waves. It is most successful, and most enduring, when it extends to all families what was once reserved for the wealthiest among us.

From the 1840s through the 1870s, the common school movement swept across the country, ushering in an era of **universal public education** and making a new promise to American families: that every child would receive a free, foundational education in reading, writing and math. Literacy and numeracy rates soared.

From the 1900s through the 1930s, the **universal high school** movement made another bold promise to America's schoolchildren: advanced subjects would no longer be confined to elite prep schools serving the lucky few. A generation of expanded opportunity and social mobility followed.

Now we are in the early years of a new movement that aims to bring **universal educational opportunity** to every child. Like the movements before it, it is powered by a simple conviction: that the sphere of educational equality must keep expanding. It makes a new set of promises: that every family should be able to choose the school that is right for their child, that no student who falls behind should go without the tutoring and support needed to catch up, and that every young person should have access to the academic and career pathways that lead to a strong future. If we succeed, a new generation of Americans will have the opportunities and support they need to thrive.

Our mission is to help bring that vision to life in states across the country. And in the states where we are running sustained advocacy campaigns, the signs are encouraging. Our state teams are securing a growing number of policy wins and the ideas behind them enjoy broad support from parents. In CAN states, families are more likely than families elsewhere to back the pillars of this agenda, from free tutoring and summer learning to charter schools and other forms of school choice. And these policies are working. In CAN

states, school satisfaction rose five times faster than the national average, and student achievement outpaced non-CAN states across every grade and subject measured by NAEP, the Nation's Report Card.

These are promising signs of progress that we'll explore in the next section of this report. We are determined to keep learning from both our successes and our failures as we work to accelerate the pace of change in the years ahead.

In 2025, we achieved **29 policy wins** across our state campaigns. In Georgia, our team secured six wins that touched every pillar of our policy vision through effective advocacy, outreach and coalition building. We also welcomed two new state teams to the network with the launch of OhioKidsCAN and Battle Born Kids Matter in Nevada, bringing the number of current state campaigns to 12, reaching more than one in five students in America.

This was a year of investing in people and ideas. To deepen the talent powering our movement, we welcomed a record **71 fellows** across seven fellowship programs, from the FIRE parent advocacy fellowship to our new Math and Data Science Fellowship. Our Vice President of Policy, Liz Cohen, published the book ***The Future of Tutoring*** and led a nationwide conversation about making it a permanent part of the American education system. And at our annual CAN Summit in New Orleans, we put the spotlight on the policies powering Louisiana's nation-leading student achievement gains, learning from a state that has shown what is possible when leaders commit to putting kids first.

The test of any advocacy campaign is simple: is it making life better for the people it was built to serve? That is the standard we're holding ourselves to at 50CAN as we work to usher in this new wave of educational opportunity. As you will see in the pages that follow, it is the standard we ask you to use in judging our work. Our children deserve nothing less.




Michael Phillips
Board Chair, 50CAN




Lisa Grakam Keegan
Board Chair, 50CAN
Action Fund




Marc Porter Magee
CEO and Founder,
50CAN




Derrell Bradford
President, 50CAN

2025 by the Numbers

2025 Policy Wins **29**

Education That's Right for You Wins **12**
Tutoring and Care for All Wins **9**
Open and Connected Learning Wins **1**

Family's Right to Know Wins **4**
Clear Path to a Career Wins **3**

Local State Survey Partners **10**
Parents Surveyed **23,104**

50CAN Builders **11**
Students receiving summer learning as a result of 50CAN **39,050**

Communications and Policy Fellows Trained **71**
Network Media Hits **169**

50CAN Action Fund 2025 by the Numbers

2025 Total Elections **29**

66%
Election Win Rate

50CAN
ACTION FUND

13
Democrats elected in campaigns

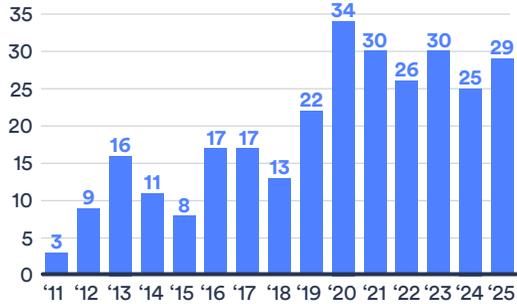
6
Republicans elected in campaigns

2025 Impact Dashboard

Four ways to know *it's working*

- Campaign policy wins
- Policy support by parents
- Measures of opportunity
- Academic outcomes

50CAN Policy Wins Per Year



7 of 7

policy areas had higher parental support in CAN states

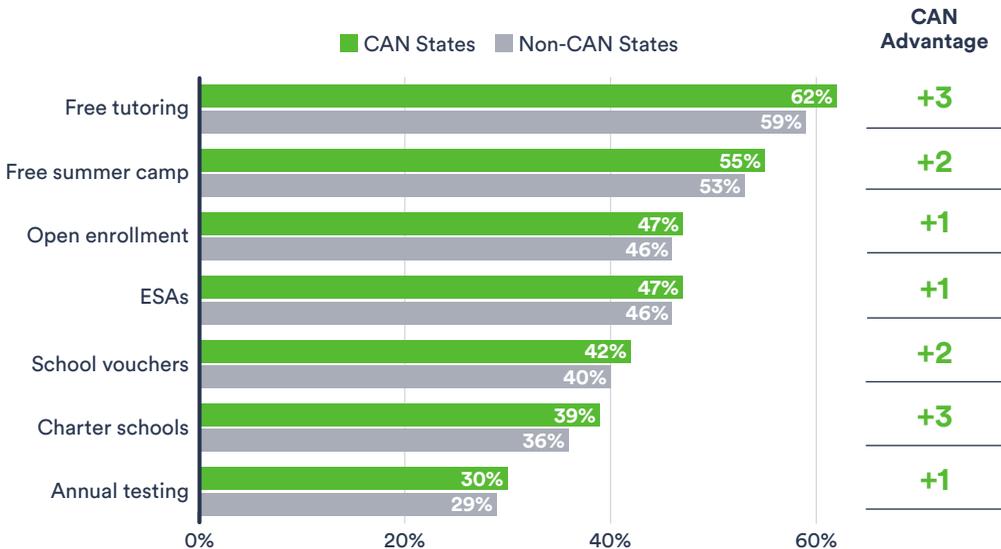
11 of 15

measures of educational opportunity increased in CAN states

4 of 4

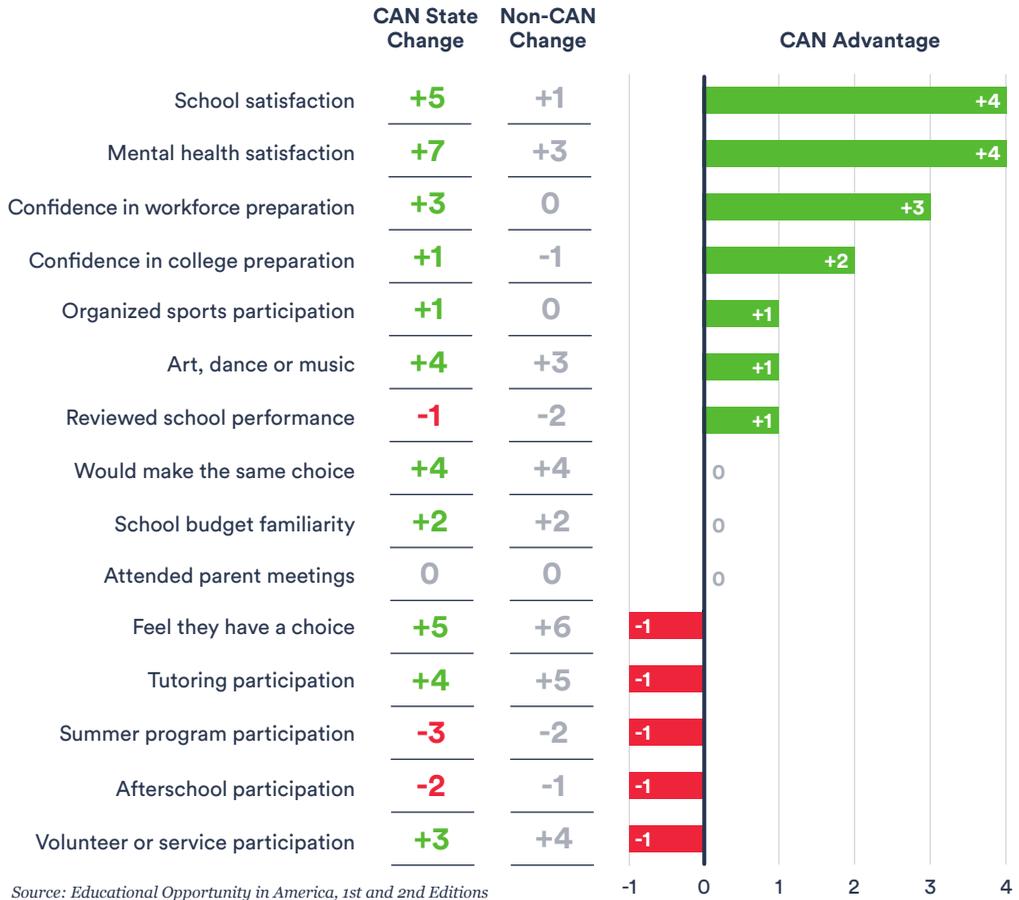
subjects and grade levels where CAN states outpaced non-CAN states

Percentage of Parents Strongly Favoring Policies



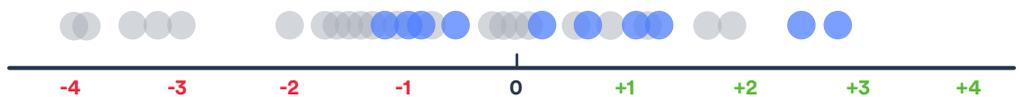
Source: Educational Opportunity in America, 2nd Edition

Change in Measures of Educational Opportunity, 24-25



Change in Students' Average Scale Score on the NAEP, 22-24

■ Non-CAN States (35% improved) ■ CAN States (60% improved)



Change in Months of Learning, CAN vs Non-CAN States



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.



Can you actually make the world better? Everywhere you look these days you find people who will say you can't. They encourage you to be pessimistic about our world, focused on what's going wrong and cynical about the possibility for change. 50CAN is different.

We know that this work actually makes things better because we set clear goals each year and we track our tactics in real time along the way. Over the past fifteen years we've secured 290 policy wins in statehouses across the country and when we look back on these wins, we find that in nine out of ten cases those policies are still going strong more than a decade later.

In 2025, our campaigns secured 29 of the policy goals they announced at the beginning of the year and every single state campaign in our network secured at least one goal. This past year, Georgia helped show the breadth of what's possible with six wins that covered the full spectrum of our policy agenda while ConnCAN demonstrated the staying power of the CAN model with its 20th straight year of securing concrete change in a legislative session.

At the heart of this work is the way our state and national teams work together. Being an advocate who is standing up for what they believe in can often feel pretty lonely. But at 50CAN, our sense of belonging drives everything we do. Knowing your peers face the same challenges and are eager to help you accomplish bold goals can make all the difference. Whether it's Louisiana Kids Matter's Kelli Bottger helping Amanda Aragon bring tutoring and the science of reading to New Mexico, or GeorgiaCAN Outreach Director Steven Quinn swapping best practices with the team at Transform Education Now on helping parents make their voices heard, we see the power of a learning community in action.

So, can you actually make the world better through advocacy? We have proven over the past decade and a half that with the right colleagues at your side, yes you CAN!


Marc Porter Magee

CEO & Founder, 50CAN



Marc Porter Magee and Louisiana Kids Matter Executive Director Kelli Bottger crown the raffle winners at the 2025 CAN Summit gala.



A Perfect Sweep in Georgia

“My two older daughters benefited from charter schools, but not in our district. Now, my son also attends school outside the district. I would love to bring him back, but right now, we simply don’t have enough quality options locally,” reflected Ophelia Nnorom several months after the 2025 Georgia legislative session concluded. “This bill that GeorgiaCAN passed in 2025, the Local Charter School Authorization and Support Act, is going to expand access to excellence.”

When Georgia’s 2025 legislative session wrapped up in late March, the GeorgiaCAN team had pulled off something rare: a perfect sweep of six policy wins in a single session, touching multiple pillars of the Believe in Better framework. For Executive Director Michael O’Sullivan, State Outreach Director Steven Quinn, and team members Cymara Hancock, Ty’Sheka Lambert and Missy Purcell, the sweep was the product of years of relationship-building, coalition work and parent organizing.

“Everything we did in 2025 was common sense legislation. Bills that, at a baseline, were good policy,” Michael reflected, “But I think there are a couple of critical tactical choices we made that resulted in the sweep. First and foremost, we found bill authors who believed in these ideas because they feel so strongly about helping Georgia’s kids.” Michael and his team also approach the legislative process like a chess match, sitting down with coalition partners ahead of

the session to brainstorm every possible legislative hurdle along the way and how they’ll adjust when they arise. “Murphy’s Law can ring true in sessions,” Michael explains. “Strong advocacy is gaming out plans B, C, and D in advance.”

With rising concern over student cell phone use in class, Georgia lawmakers passed the Distraction-Free Education Act (HB340), requiring K-8 schools to keep cell phones out of students’ hands during the school day. The bill sailed through the legislative process, a sign of the broad, bipartisan support. With a package of bills (HB307 and SB93), Georgia joined the nationwide wave of states moving to implement the science of reading. The new laws ban the discredited three-cueing method of reading instruction and mandate that schools use phonics-based, evidence-grounded approaches. The team also secured funding in the state budget for 116 new literacy coaches to help teachers implement the changes in their classrooms.

On expanding educational options, the new Local Charter School Authorization and Support Act (SB82) created incentive grants for local school boards that approve new charter schools, with seed funding secured in the budget. And, following the 2024 passage of the Georgia Promise Scholarship, the team successfully advocated for the program to be fully funded at \$141 million, providing ESA scholarships for up to 22,000 eligible students.



Parent advocates were especially important in the passage of SB82, which Michael attributes to a multiyear investment in their capacity to lead: “GeorgiaCAN is known for our authentic parent advocacy, and that’s something we invest in heavily,” Michael says. “Pick any of the bills we worked on this year, and parents were there every step of the way alongside school leaders, educators, superintendents and community leaders.”

The session also delivered \$12.5 million for afterschool program grants. GeorgiaCAN discovered through the first edition of the Educational Opportunity Survey that Georgia leads the nation in the gap between high- and low-income families’ access to afterschool opportunities. Armed with that data, the team partnered with the Georgia Afterschool Alliance, made the case to lawmakers and delivered.

Finally, the team worked with the Governor’s office to support the Top State for Talent Act (SB192), which laid the groundwork for expanded career pathways and internships, positioning Georgia for future legislative action to connect students to the careers of tomorrow.

“Each one of these policies will make a difference in the lives of Georgia’s students, but working together and building on our wins from the past several years, they’re part of a comprehensive approach to expanding educational opportunities for Georgia’s kids. Every single one of them has individual needs and interests,” Executive Director Michael O’Sullivan noted.

A 20-Year Relay Race of Impact in Connecticut

In October 2025, longtime partners, supporters and past and current staff gathered in New Haven to celebrate the milestone of ConnCAN’s 20th anniversary. It was a night of music, celebration and reunion, along with New Haven’s trademark pizza. Throughout the night, one of the themes that kept emerging was the way effective advocacy is a relay race, with the handoffs between leaders essential to driving long-term change.

The ConnCAN story starts with Alex Johnston, who took a leap of faith 20 years ago to launch a new kind of education advocacy campaign in Connecticut. Alex pioneered an approach grounded in impact, both the annual goals and the relentless innovation on strategies and tactics that eventually became the foundation of the 50CAN model. When Alex stepped down in 2012, Jen Alexander picked up the work and charted a

new path, launching initiatives to make school boards more transparent and securing major policy victories, including the authorization of a new crop of charter schools. Seven years ago, Subira Gordon leveraged her deep knowledge of the Connecticut legislative process to build new coalitions and secure the biggest reform of the state’s school funding system in history, sending more than \$130 million to the highest-need districts.

Today, it is current Executive Director Steven Hernández and his team who carry the work forward. In the 2025 legislative session, ConnCAN delivered four policy wins: the authorization of five new charter schools, additional reforms to the state funding system, and a big investment to expand both tutoring and teacher literacy training. These wins, year-after-year no matter which way the political winds are blowing, are proof of an advocacy campaign that is built to last.



The Education That's Right for You

ConnCAN cemented funding for charters and magnet schools, preventing a series of cuts that had been proposed in the state budget.

DelawareKidsCAN fought and won approval for a new dual language charter school in Sussex County: Las Américas ASPIRA.

GeorgiaCAN incentivized local school districts to approve high-quality charter school petitions, resulting in the first new district-approved charter schools in seven years.

GeorgiaCAN also launched the state's Georgia Promise Scholarship ESA program, fully funding it to the tune of \$141 million in its first year.

Louisiana Kids Matter created a charter school revolving loan program.

NewMexicoKidsCAN defeated a constitutional amendment that would have brought back an elected school board, which would have had ramifications for quality charter school authorizing.

NewMexicoKidsCAN ensured a new charter school was created in Las Cruces, a community with limited school options, and ensured that three additional high-performing charters could expand their seatcounts.



CarolinaCAN secured over \$400 million to move every student off the waiting list for the state's Opportunity Scholarship.

TennesseeCAN obtained additional financial resources for charter schools, including \$5 million for an Equitable Facilities Fund and \$20 million for additional charter school facilities.

TennesseeCAN expanded education options for families by enacting the Tennessee ESA, securing \$143 million for 20,000 seats in the first year.

Battle Born Kids Matter created an open enrollment program in Nevada that will allow students to attend a public school outside their designated attendance zone.

Battle Born Kids Matter passed a provision that allows an increase in the enrollment cap for charter schools if they serve students who are zoned for schools labeled as low-performing, persistently underperforming or overcrowded.

Tutoring and Care for All

ConnCAN expanded on their literacy reform work by securing advanced literacy training for 500 K-12 teachers each year.

DelawareKidsCAN increased funding for literacy coaches by securing an additional \$1 million in the state budget.

DelawareKidsCAN ensured student demographics will be a weighted factor in the student-funding formula as the final recommendation of the Public Education Funding Commission to the legislature.

GeorgiaCAN passed a package of literacy reform bills, including a ban on three-cueing, funding and training of literacy coaches, and more aligned supports for students with dyslexia.

GeorgiaCAN also passed the Distraction-Free Education Act, a bill restricting cell phone usage by K-8 students during the school day.

JerseyCAN acquired an appropriation of \$6 million in the state budget for literacy coaches and coordinated a state deployment and instructional coherence strategy.

NewMexicoKidsCAN ensured all educator preparation programs will include science of reading instruction, as well as pre-service training in the field to practice instructional skills.

CarolinaCAN removed the Praxis as a requirement for alternatively certified and lateral entry educators.

Battle Born Kids Matter required teachers to complete coursework in foundational literacy and aligned teacher preparation programs with the science of reading.



A World of Open and Connected Learning



Transform Education Now found a permanent home for Denver's innovative MySpark afterschool program, with the city council approving an additional \$1 million.



A Parent's Right to Know What's Working



DelawareKidsCAN passed legislation requiring that school report card data is easily accessible on the state's website, with additional data points that weren't previously available to parents.

TennesseeCAN protected the state's framework for assessment and accountability after it was targeted legislatively by anti-accountability groups.

Louisiana Kids Matter ensured that as a portion of the evaluations of career programs, the programs will be assessed on their alignment to state workforce needs.

A Clear Path to a Career

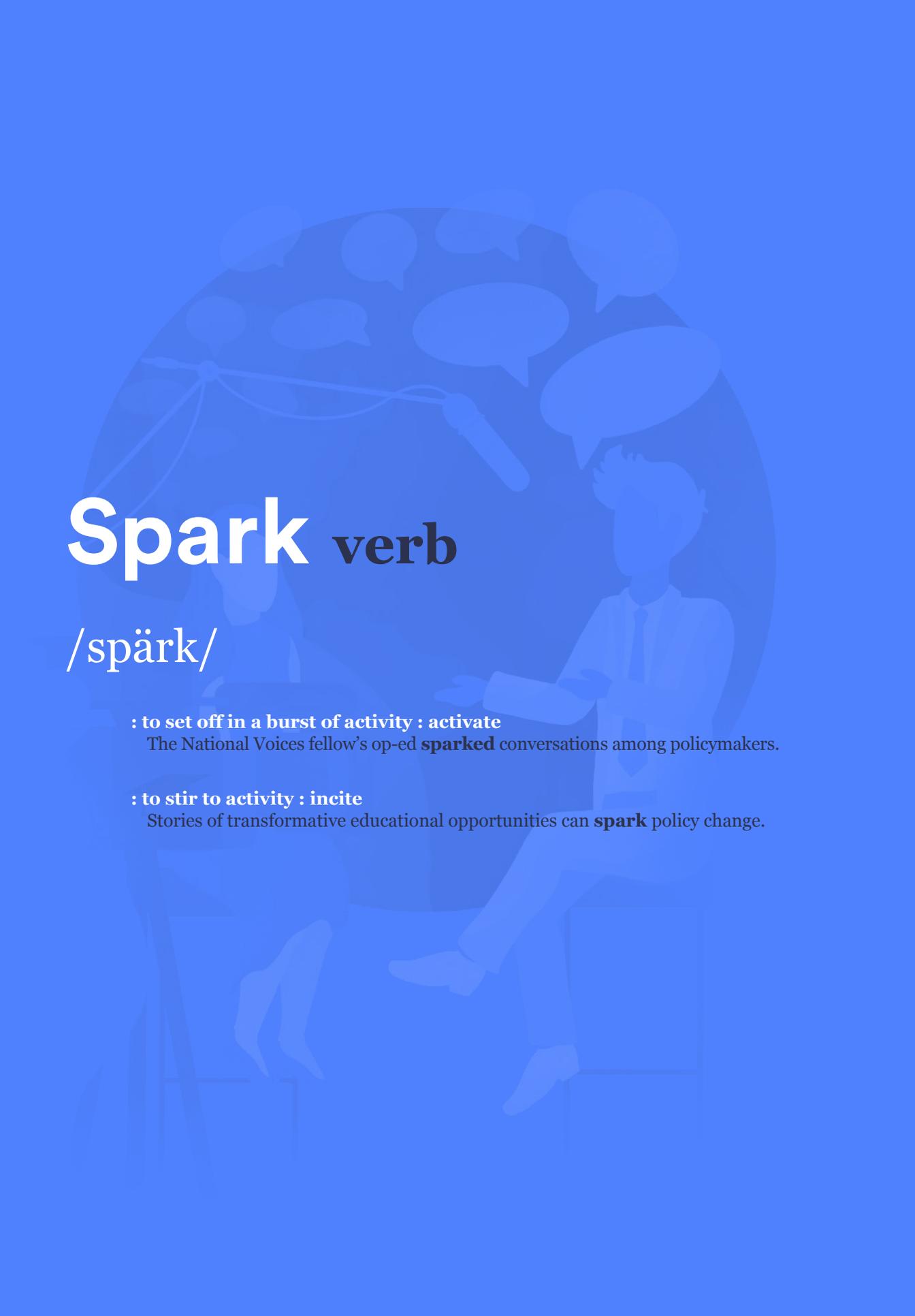
GeorgiaCAN helped to enact the Governor's Top State for Talent Act, which included an evaluation of high-demand careers and created a system to determine the return on investment (ROI), for both the state and the student, of career pathway programs in relation to high-demand careers.

GeorgiaCAN supported an expansion of the state's need-based financial aid program, which provides students who are at-risk of lapsing on college tuition payments with the assistance to complete their degrees.

HawaiiKidsCAN created an interagency working group to build a new cradle-to-career data system in Hawaii, which will enforce data sharing at the state level, track students beyond high school and assess success in placing them in high-demand jobs that better enable them to afford living in Hawaii.

Louisiana Kids Matter passed the career pathways ROI analysis bill, which allows for the collection of data critical to evaluating the relationship between industry-based credentials and careers.





Spark verb

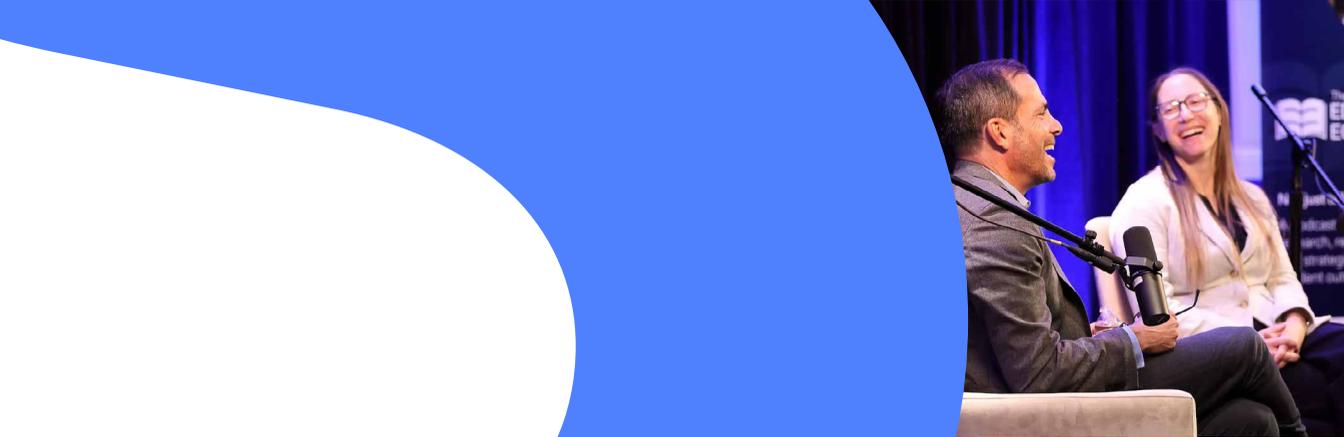
/spärk/

: 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.





The future has enemies, and for it to take root here in the present it needs advocates; passionate bridge builders with a vision of what is possible for the families and kids they serve. This is, however, a tough time for an advocate who wants to bring people together around shared goals. While social media platforms in particular give us new and in-the-moment ways to engage supporters and prospective allies, the incentives of these platforms make it even more difficult to unify the strange bedfellows that have historically driven education policy change. In a world of fractured audiences and “engagement is engagement” algorithms, we have to work harder than ever to open up the space for a different kind of leader to emerge.

From our National Voices fellows who advance a vision and model the behaviors necessary for productive and positive policy change, to our parent and teacher fellows engaged in the difficult local and community-based advocacy that helps today’s students, our commitment to bringing people together remains foundational. According to Gallup, just 27% of American adults consider themselves Democrats, and the same percentage consider themselves Republicans. Neither of these groups, alone, are enough to make and sustain change. Our fellows are committed to bringing people together and sharing this welcoming vision in venues such as The Washington Post, The Hill, The 74 Million, The Dallas Morning News and ABC News.

Our leadership team lives out these same values as well, with its members participating in events at venues such as the Harvard Kennedy School, Johns Hopkins University, The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, The National Black Caucus of State Legislators, The Charter School Growth Fund, ExcelinEd, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and Education Next. Notably, in 2025 we continued to sharpen our policy view with the publication of *Mathways: Every Kid is a Math Kid*, building on the work of our Believe in Better framework. Additionally, Liz Cohen, our Vice President of Policy, released the extremely well-received book *The Future of Tutoring*, published by the Harvard Education Press.

Supporting and cultivating our fellows as they take their place in the state-and-national discussion, and in key political and philanthropic institutions, while advancing our policy vision, are among the most important things we do at 50CAN. We SPARK people, policy, and ideas. And I thank you all for making it possible.


Derrell Bradford

President, 50CAN



School choice exists in Jersey but it belongs to the privileged and that would change that

Vouchers would give parents the power toward an education that best meet the

By Amber Okolo-Ebube



“For the National Voices Fellowship, 50CAN brought together advocates from across the ideological spectrum to stress-test and strengthen the ideas that are foundational to the future of education. This created space for authentic dialogue while encouraging a humble curiosity to challenge ourselves and question assumptions. We read The Republic alongside Nobel Prize winning economic theory, tracing the philosophical threads that still animate American education reform. The point was to humanize one another and work to ask better questions, especially in the context of disagreement. Through this process, we found that we had much in common, especially our collective desire for all students to have access to the education that is best for them.

What emerged from those conversations was something increasingly rare in policy circles: genuine conversation and warmth between people who disagreed and kept talking anyway. I admire the 50CAN team’s thoughtfulness they brought to the planning, the intentionality behind every session, and the quality of the questions they put in front of us.

The fellowship also opened a door I hadn’t fully anticipated, by offering access to many of the architects of the modern education reform movement. Learning from the policy leaders who have shaped the national conversation on accountability, school choice, tutoring and school finance was both grounding and clarifying.

The relationships built through the fellowship didn’t stay there. They continue to shape the work I do every day and I am honored to have had the opportunity to participate.”

Lucy Chen

Vice President of Advocacy and Community Engagement, Cathedral Arts Project



The Arts Aren’t ‘Nice to Have’ — The Can Be Student Engagement & Attention

Chen: Many of our charter students and military kids don’t have access to the arts. My Florida program helps fill



Could School Choice Work at the Federal Level?

A nationwide tax credit could expand education freedom overnight—but could also open the door to new forms of federal overreach.

CharterFolk Contributor Derrell Bradford – “Say It Loud ...”

I am a charter school... about it. I do, however... choose charter scho... serve students and b... importantly, we sho...



NBC NEWS

Trump signs sweeping executive order to expand school choice

Derrell Bradford, the president of 50CAN, a nonprofit group that supports school choice, said the executive order “is timely, given many governors, families, students and educators across the nation, in all types of schools, are celebrating National School Choice Week right now. I, and I am sure many other advocates at the state level, look forward to seeing the recommendations put forth on this



The74

ANALYSIS

Summer Reading Can Help Boost Literacy. Why Don't High Schools Require It?

Cohen: Survey of D.C.-area high schools shows... incoming 9th graders to read during vacation... opportunity.

In October, 50CAN VP of Policy Liz Cohen published *The Future of Tutoring: Lessons from 10,000 School District Tutoring Initiatives* with Harvard Education Press, documenting how high-impact tutoring moved from the margins to the mainstream of American education. Drawing on visits to schools in Ohio, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., Liz captured both the promise and the pitfalls of this powerful initiative as states and districts built tutoring programs at scale.

The book climbed the charts on Amazon and sparked a national conversation in education circles. Liz co-hosted a launch event with **The 74** in New York City and sat for a live taping of the **College Board's** Education Equation podcast at College Board Forum 2025. She appeared on AEI's podcast with Nat Malkus, **Fordham's** Education Gadfly Show, and *Trending in Education*, among others. **Cal Newport** called it “the definitive book on what we learned during the Covid years.” **Education Next's** Michael Thomas Duffy praised it as “a grounded, practitioner-oriented roadmap” arriving at exactly the right moment. Liz also launched a companion Substack newsletter to continue the conversation featuring interviews, including with Sam Olivieri, Steven Ritter and Brown University's Matt Kraft.





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.



It's easy in education to point at what's broken. It's harder, but much more important, to get on the field and build something that works. That's what 50CAN's Build work is about. We take all the incredible support systems we have created to support our state campaigns and make them available for new educational ideas and entrepreneurs. That allows these organizations to move much faster and help a lot more kids.

Take Charleston County, South Carolina, home to the widest racial achievement gap among the state's large districts. That gap had been entrenched for decades until **Cheryl Cromwell**, the executive director of **Charleston RISE**, said enough is enough. Through a sixteen-week Parent Empowerment fellowship, RISE trains cohorts of parents to understand how their children's schools are performing, to navigate the system and to show up at school board meetings ready to ask the hard questions that need to be answered to close these gaps. In 2025, Cheryl and her team provided essential parent voices to champion and successfully pass the Educational Scholarship Trust Fund. They also established a new program with the superintendent and district leadership, where officials meet quarterly with RISE's parent ambassadors, conversations that eventually lead to a district-wide commitment to send every parent a letter annually, indicating whether their student was above, on or below grade level in reading and math.

In 2025, 50CAN also continued our partnership with **Bloomberg Philanthropies** to help administer the **Summer Boost** initiative, one of the nation's most promising and scalable experiments in how to help kids recover from pandemic learning loss by making the most out of summer. Of the more than 39,000 students who participated, there was a 17 percentage point increase in students scoring proficient on the ELA assessment and a 19 percentage point increase in students scoring proficient on the math assessment. Behind every one of those data points is a child who came back to school in the fall stronger and more confident because someone chose to build rather than wait.

At 50CAN, we never want to let a good idea wither on the vine due to a lack of support or infrastructure. In the year ahead, we'll keep supplying these Builders with everything they need to help make our kids' dreams come true.


Michael Phillips

Board Chair, 50CAN





Building Freedom

There were seasons in Jay Artis-Wright's childhood when life looked stable from the outside, and seasons when it didn't. There were times, she says, when her family had "the prettiest house on the block," and she was the only Black girl in her class, and times when her family was living out of a car.

In 11th grade, Jay divided her time between managing her schoolwork and writing her college applications, focused on the future that she wanted to craft. It wasn't easy. "When I reached high school, I encountered a culture of low expectations, with more remedial classes than college prep, along with violence and disruption. However, I found ways to succeed as an athlete and a member of the student council," Jay says. Thinking those extracurriculars would carry her through the college application process, she asked a civics teacher for a letter of recommendation. He laughed and told her she was not "college material."

But another educator saw something different. A teacher in the Upward Bound program, a woman who recognized both Jay's hurt and her potential, stepped in with a different message: "You are going to ignore that. You are absolutely going to college." That was an intervention that seemed small at the moment, but had an extraordinary impact on Jay's life. "When people talk to me about students navigating a world where not every adult sees their potential, I don't have to imagine who they mean. That was me," Jay says. "That was my life."

Today, as the leader of Freedom to Choose Schools, Jay has transformed that conviction into public advocacy. "My parents grounded me in the belief that we are better than our circumstances, not a product of them," she says. "I carry this into my work because Black and Brown people are too often viewed through a lens of deficit. I want to highlight the resilience and perseverance required to thrive despite one's circumstances."

Freedom to Choose Schools, founded in 2019 by Howard Fuller and Steve Perry, is leading the effort to support and advocate for the growth of schools founded by Black and Latino educators. "We talk a great deal about school choice from the perspective of parents and students, but not nearly enough from the perspective of the educators and founders creating excellent options in the first place," Jay says.

Freedom to Choose Schools works as a bridge-builder, linking school leaders, coalition partners and lawmakers. Among the clearest examples is Leaders and Lawmakers, a convening program model that brings school leaders into direct conversation with elected officials. "If lawmakers and educators are going to shape policy together, they need to actually sit down together first," Jay explained. In one effort, 14 school leaders and eight lawmakers came together—including members of the Black and Latino caucuses and lawmakers who had not been receptive previously to school choice—to talk about challenges facing local charter schools, especially around facilities.



It worked. By the end of 2024, one participating lawmaker was ready to move, saying that the educators should help shape legislation and should come to the state capitol to make their case.

That energy helped create momentum around a bipartisan bill, SB475, championed by Senator Rashaun Kemp, which proposed a one percent sales tax dedicated to capital investment across the public school system. For more than five years, charter schools had been excluded from receiving that funding. As a result of Leaders and Lawmakers, Freedom to Choose Schools and Senator Kemp committed to making sure that exclusion will end with the passage of SB475.

“Real impact requires long-term investment, multiyear planning and the patience to build relationships that can result in changes further down the line. We have to help school leaders move from isolation to connection, and from connection to coalition.”

- Jay Artis-Wright

Executive Director,
Freedom to Choose Schools

That work is now stretching across multiple states, including Georgia, Tennessee, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas. Around Jay is what she describes as a “rockstar board,” including nationally respected leaders such as Howard Fuller, David Hardy, Steve Perry and others who have helped sharpen the organization’s direction and goals. “Between my board offering strategic advice, and 50CAN providing the organizational backbone that lets me focus solely on programming and impact, I have the support I need to build. And we need to build faster, because our kids can’t wait,” Jay says.





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.





Throughout my career, I've seen how education policymaking requires a few ingredients: a committed advocate on-the-ground who can bring the voices of parents and students forward, research-backed policy ideas that have been proven to work, and leaders with the courage and conviction to take on the hard work of governing on behalf of kids.

In 2025, across the country, 50CAN Action Fund worked to identify, support and stand behind the public servants who are ready to cast partisan debates aside and put families first. Through our Believe in Better Education Policymaker Fellowship, we continued to deepen the policy knowledge of current elected officials by bringing together a bipartisan group to learn from state bright spots and develop legislation. By bringing together policymakers from different states and both parties, we created a space for the kind of conversations that lead to better ideas and better legislation.

Across the country, the 50CAN Action Fund's state leaders also supported candidates in 29 races and in two out of every three races we helped secure a win. Among those victories:

- We helped elect two members of the Albuquerque public school board, including the reelection of education champion **Courtney Jackson**, who has played a critical role on the Albuquerque Board of Education, ensuring the board set goals, built a strategic plan and held themselves accountable to an improvement in student outcomes.
- In Georgia, we helped elect **Kaycee Brock** and **Tony Mitchell**, two new members of the Atlanta Board of Education, with the GeorgiaCAN Action Fund making over 60,000 phone calls to turn out voters for their winning campaigns. Kaycee, a former classroom teacher, believes deeply in furthering GeorgiaCAN Action Fund's focus on literacy and career pathways, and Tony is a founding board member of a local charter school that was approved to open and funded because of previous legislation supported by the GeorgiaCAN Action Fund.
- We went five for five in Louisiana legislative special elections, including supporting a victorious **Larry Selders**, who is a leading voice for critical reforms in the Louisiana House of Representatives. When a Senate seat in the heart of Baton Rouge opened up for a special election in early 2025, Louisiana Kids Matter was quick to endorse and support him. Selders went on to defeat a former elected official in a heavily contested race.

The political opportunities ahead are significant. In 2026, 36 states will elect a new governor, and whether education features prominently in those campaigns will depend on the work we do right now. Our message to candidates is that if you have the courage to put students first and share in our vision of bringing educational opportunity to all kids, we will be behind you and your campaign all the way to victory.


Lisa Graham Keegan

Board Chair, 50CAN Action Fund

Senator McMath Goes to New Mexico

Senator Patrick McMath may be the Republican Senator from Louisiana's 11th District, but he's also a champion for education, a distinction that even the Senator himself finds surprising. "Education has always been on my radar, but I wouldn't say it was a primary focus," Senator McMath reflected. "That started changing when I was appointed to the Committee on Health and Welfare. I saw firsthand how our students in Louisiana were performing and I knew we could do better. We just needed discipline and courage."

As luck would have it, Senator McMath's early reflections on his state's education system were already underway when he was introduced to Louisiana Kids Matter Executive Director Kelli Bottger. "The first time I met Kelli, I remember thinking that this was someone who shared my belief that we could do big things for kids," Senator McMath said. "But Kelli also had a lot of expertise. As a legislator, you meet with a lot of people who have a lot of ideas. When I asked Kelli how I should get started, she told me, 'Come with me to see this tutoring pilot. You're going to leave convinced it works and we can scale it.'"

After the visit, Senator McMath sponsored successful legislation that made Louisiana the first state in the country to have a universal tutoring program. "I can't underscore enough how much of a gamechanger that was for the tutoring landscape," 50CAN VP of Policy Liz Cohen shared. "Louisiana's universal program, and the NAEP results that followed, caused every other state across the country to sit up and ask what was happening."

One of those states? New Mexico.

"Advocacy can certainly come with moments of frustration," Amanda Aragon, Executive Director of New-

MexicoKidsCAN laughs. "And early last year, I was frustrated by stagnation. Sure, there was the stagnation of results—the 2024 NAEP showed, once again, New Mexico sits in last place for student achievement—but it was also the stagnation of belief. A belief that New Mexico could actually change things, could actually turn our education trajectory around."

Amanda needed a proof point. And after an early morning brainstorm with Kelli, she had an idea. Three months later, Kelli and Senator McMath boarded a flight to head to New Mexico.

Amanda, Kelli and McMath gathered together with the alumni of NewMexicoKidsCAN's Changemakers program, legislative staffers and district officials. "We are hard-pressed, being in a space where people just don't believe that we can change—don't believe we can do better than 50th. But Louisiana was at the bottom of the rankings not that long ago. What Kelli and Senator McMath did was challenge that lack of belief. I didn't realize it immediately, but within months it was clear there was something happening: the conversation had changed. From parents to elected officials, there's just a completely different degree of motivation to take improving education seriously."

"I'm always happy to tell the Louisiana story and share the ideas that are working, especially if they lead to better educated students," Senator McMath said with a smile. "I had to develop my own belief in what was possible, and we should be thankful for leaders like Kelli and Amanda who help instill that in others."



In 2025, the 50CAN Network Grew to Two New States



Amber Keener
Political Director, OhioKidsCAN

OHIOKIDSCAN

In late 2025, 50CAN welcomed its newest state campaign: OhioKidsCAN, led by Political Director Amber Keener. The launch came at a moment of real momentum in the Buckeye State, with grassroots engagement from parents converging with legislative interest in education reform.

“We're seeing real momentum from two directions at once,” Amber shared. “There's heavy grassroots engagement from parents and at the same time there's real interest from both the legislature and potential new leaders in making education a priority.” OhioKidsCAN will work to empower Ohio families, community leaders and advocates to push for stronger education policies and systems through public engagement, strategic advocacy and candidate support.

BATTLE BORN KIDS MATTER

Alongside Ohio, 50CAN also launched Battle Born Kids Matter in Nevada under the leadership of Executive Director of Policy Patricia Haddad Bennett. Nevada presents a unique political landscape, with strong forces pulling the state both to the left and the right politically, yet the state has found bipartisan common ground on education.

“In Nevada, we have a Republican Governor and a Democratic legislature, and even with that dynamic we've passed the largest investment in schools in the history of the state, as well as raising the bar for accountability,” Patricia shared. “It took real bipartisan work to get those policies through, and at a time where partisan fracture lines permeate so much of our lives, Nevada really stands as a model of working together on collective priorities.”

Battle Born Kids Matter will advocate for more high-quality schools by mobilizing communities and championing practical solutions to Nevada's education challenges.



Patricia Haddad Bennett

Executive Director of Policy,
Battle Born Kids Matter

Donor List

We are grateful to all who invested in our work in 2025. 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 +

- Anonymous (2)
- Barr Foundation
- The City Fund
- Daniels Fund
- Give for the Future Fund
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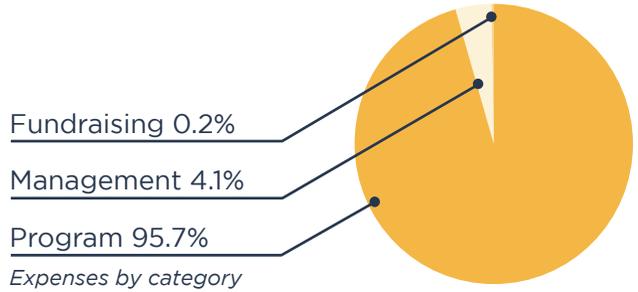
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- Odyssey
- Organizing for Education in Colorado (OEC) Funder Collaborative
- Paul & Jan Schueller Family Fund
- Riverview Works Fund at the Delaware Community Foundation
- Sartain Lanier Family Foundation
- Studyville
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- yes. every kid. foundation.

\$1,000-\$4,999

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- Stronger Together Hawai'i Scholarship Fund of the Hawai'i Community Foundation
- Teach For America
- Janet Tomko
- United Way of Greater Atlanta

This list reflects gifts pledged or received in 2025. If your name appears differently than you would prefer, please reach out to grants@5ocan.org to request an update.

Financials



50CAN INC.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY*

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2025

Revenue	
Contributions	\$98,889,975
Fee for Service	\$5,417,742
Other Revenue	\$1,381,622
Total Revenue	\$105,689,339
Expenses	
Salaries & Benefits	\$8,877,431
Contract Services	\$14,889,915
Grants to Schools	\$65,956,618
Supplies & Materials	\$229,816
Facility & Equipment	\$624,521
Travel, Meetings & Events	\$1,572,956
IT & Technology	\$432,062
Insurance	\$61,285
Other Business Expenses	\$308,269
Total Expenses	\$92,952,873
Net Revenue	\$12,736,466
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$32,549,763
Net Assets, End of Year	\$45,286,229

*All financial information was obtained from 50CAN's internal budget tracking for the 2025 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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Chief Operating Officer,
TDJ Enterprises



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Co-Chair JerseyCAN Board
& former CEO JP Morgan
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President, Diggs
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Founder and Partner,
Oak Rose Group



Lisa Graham Keegan
Partner, The Keegan
Company & former
Arizona Superintendent
of Public Instruction



Marc Porter Magee
CEO & Founder, 50CAN



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



Andrew Schwedel
Partner, Bain & Company

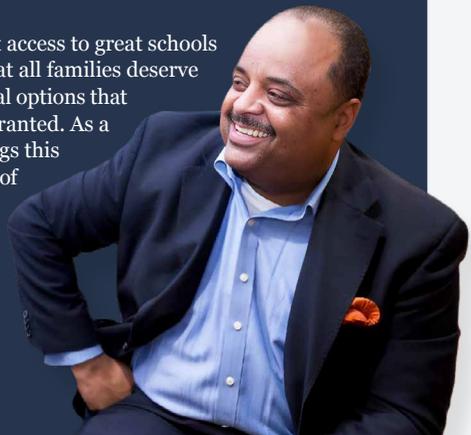


Rod Ward
CEO, CSC

As both a 50CAN Board Member and one of the most prominent voices in media, Roland Martin brings to our organization the same dedication to ensuring opportunity for all that has defined his career at every juncture.

Roland is the CEO of the Black Star Network and the host of #RolandMartinUnfiltered, one of the most-watched digital shows in the country. Over a career spanning more than three decades in journalism, he has built a reputation for holding leaders accountable and amplifying the voices of communities too often left out of the conversation. He is a four-time NAACP Image Award winner and was named Journalist of the Year by the National Association of Black Journalists.

Roland has long argued that access to great schools is a civil rights issue, and that all families deserve the same range of educational options that wealthier families take for granted. As a board member, Roland brings this conviction to the governance of 50CAN, helping ensure that we never lose sight of the families who stand to benefit most from the changes we seek to deliver.





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Partner, The Keegan
Company & former
Arizona Superintendent
of Public Instruction



Ann Borowiec
Co-Chair JerseyCAN Board
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Melissa Farmer
Director of Strategic Growth



Rick Funaro
Social Media Associate



Sherzod Gulamov
Director of Finance



Andi Shaw
Digital Experience Manager



Andrew Thode
Campaigns Manager



Jenny Wang
Controller

“As a first-generation immigrant, I experienced the U.S. public school system for the first time through my son. When he started school, I felt what I think every parent feels, the hope that your child will get the best education possible. My son, like any kid his age, is full of dreams. One day he wants to be a train engineer, the next he wants to build rocket ships. I know that without a good education, those dreams stay just dreams. That’s why I’m at 50CAN. I’m proud that my work supports teams that work tirelessly to make quality education accessible for all kids, regardless of where they live. This is an organization that truly cares, and I’m glad to be part of it.”

Sherzod Gulamov, Director of Finance, 50CAN

The State and Local Teams



Marcus Brandon
Executive Director,
CarolinaCAN



Steven Hernández
Executive Director,
ConnCAN



Hamish MacPhail
Deputy Director, ConnCAN



Luis Ortiz
Director of Community
Engagement, ConnCAN



Britney Mumford
Executive Director,
DelawareKidsCAN



Michael O'Sullivan
Executive Director,
GeorgiaCAN



Steven Quinn
State Outreach Director,
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

“

As a native of Augusta, Georgia, where many schools have performed below grade level for decades, I did not initially recognize the power of advocacy—but my mother did. Her commitment to seeking better educational opportunities through school choice changed the trajectory of my life. Because of that advocacy, I was able to reach the highest level of education and earn a doctorate.

Today, I carry that legacy forward in my work at GeorgiaCAN. I am grateful to serve in a role that empowers parents to become their child's strongest advocate. In every county I visit, I am reminded that there are children in need of resources, access, and opportunity. Waking up each day with the honor of serving children affirms that I am walking in my purpose. I am proud to contribute to policy development and education reform that expands opportunity and strengthens communities statewide.

”

Ty'Sheka Lambert, Community Engagement Organizer, GeorgiaCAN



Paula White
Executive Director,
JerseyCAN



Kelli Bottger
Executive Director,
Louisiana Kids Matter



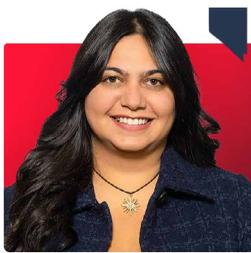
Michelle Braud
Deputy Director,
Louisiana Kids Matter



Amanda Aragon
Executive Director,
NewMexicoKidsCAN



Dominica Chavez
Advocacy Manager,
NewMexicoKidsCAN



Patricia Haddad Bennett
Executive Director of Policy,
Battle Born Kids Matter



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Political Director,
OhioKidsCAN



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TEN, Colorado



Anita Banuelos
Director of Community
Organizing, TEN, Colorado



Dina Puente
Community Organizer
Associate, TEN, Colorado



Fernanda Cerros
Operations Manager,
TEN, Colorado

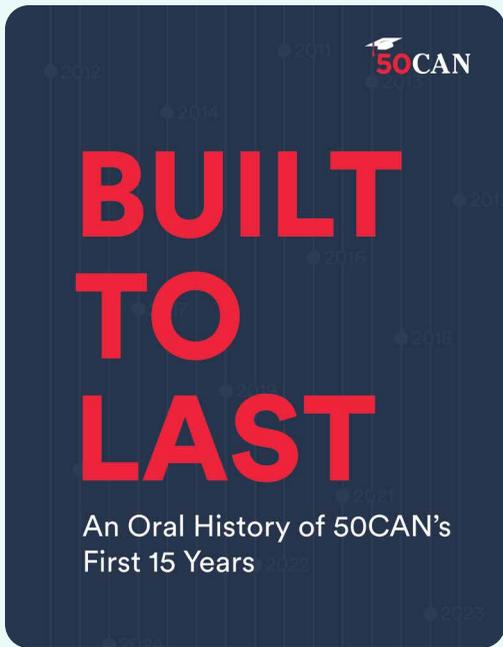


Chelsea Crawford
Executive Director,
TennesseeCAN



Jordan Long
Advocacy Director,
TennesseeCAN

Dive Deeper



Learn about how we're building toward greater educational opportunity with our 2026 goals:

50can.org/goals-wins/our-57-goals-for-2026

Read Built to Last: An Oral History of 50CAN's First 15 Years, drawing on over two dozen interviews:

50can.org/publication/fifteenth-anniversary-oral-history

Explore The State of Educational Opportunity in America, 2nd Edition: A Survey of 23,000 Parents:

50can.org/education-opportunity-survey

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