50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now is a nonprofit organization that works at the local level to advocate for a high-quality education for all kids, regardless of their address.
Dear friend,

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

1. **The American dream requires a great American education system.** Nothing is more important for our country’s future than ensuring a high-quality education for every child, regardless of their address, so that the next generation of American kids can go as far as their dreams can take them.

2. **We have the opportunity to achieve this goal**, but only if we rise to the challenge through innovative policies that promote learning environments where all kids can thrive, and an extraordinary advocacy effort in every state in the nation to turn these ideas into reality.

3. **In order to create and sustain this effort, we will need a locally led approach** that finds, connects and supports diverse local leaders who humbly but relentlessly pursue the policies needed to ensure the goal of high-quality education for all.

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

And we’re making a real difference for kids. We successfully aided the passage of 43 policies, including an historic $282 million salary increase for North Carolina teachers, the largest pay raise in the state’s history, a $48 million investment in expanding access to high-quality early childhood educational options in Minnesota, a groundbreaking teacher evaluation system in Pennsylvania, legislation promoting higher standards for awarding teacher tenure in New York and the expansion of a high-performing charter school in Rhode Island putting hundreds more children on the path to college.

As energized as we are by these results, we know we have a long road ahead if we are to reach our destination. In this prospectus, we
Talent and virtue, needed in a free society, should be educated regardless of wealth or birth.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

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

One of the insights that guided our planning process for the years 2015 through 2017 is how critical leadership development is to the success of these advocacy efforts. Our work for the next three years will focus on continuing the crucial mission of finding, connecting and supporting diverse local education advocacy leaders in states across the country. At the same time, we will also invest our time and resources in a new effort to create a culture of learning and teaching at 50CAN that will support the growth of those leaders and their partners. These efforts will ensure that this movement has both the wisdom and strength to finally reach the goal that Thomas Jefferson set forth at our nation’s birth.

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

Marc Porter Magee, Ph.D.
CEO & Founder, 50CAN
Our mission and vision

50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now is a nonprofit organization that works at the local level to advocate for a high-quality education for all kids, regardless of their address.

As we work toward our mission, the following four beliefs guide our work:

We believe that education is the most important issue facing our country and we have the opportunity in our generation to help usher in an era of high-quality education for all.

We believe that the most important advocacy takes place locally, where the decisions are made and change is possible.

We believe that nonpartisan, research-backed advocacy for policy change is the most critical lever for achieving this goal.

We believe that the most successful local education advocacy efforts follow a “locally led” approach by finding, connecting and supporting a diverse group of entrepreneurial leaders.
Pick the future as against the past; focus on opportunity rather than on problem; choose your own direction—rather than climb on the bandwagon; and aim high, aim for something that will make a difference.

PETER DRUCKER
History

In the 19th century, America created its first public schools. In the 20th century, we created enough schools to enroll every child. We are taking up the 21st century challenge of ensuring a universally high-quality education for all, so that we will finally see every child in the United States realize his or her full potential.

Our story starts not with the 50CAN network, but with the founding of ConnCAN in 2005. At the time, Connecticut was home to the largest achievement gap in the country. A passionate group of citizens—parents, policy wonks and philanthropists alike—came together to bring meaningful change to the education system at the local level. Over the next five years, the ConnCAN team built a successful model of state-level advocacy.

Marc Porter Magee, Ph.D., who was serving as ConnCAN’s chief operating officer, took up the challenge of bringing the success of ConnCAN’s campaigns to other states around the country in 2010.

Officially launched as an independent organization in January 2011, 50CAN has grown into a 40+ person strong network with campaigns in Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, fellowships in California, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Wisconsin and a national headquarters in Washington, D.C.
Leadership principles

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

We draw inspiration from American anthropologist Margaret Mead’s observation that we should

“[n]ever doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

The thoughtfulness and commitment that leads to positive change requires a tremendous amount of discipline. Advocacy at its core is an intellectual as well as a moral pursuit. There is no simple path to success. The landscape is always shifting. We are constantly challenging ourselves to make the right decisions when faced with conflicting advice and determined opposition.

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

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

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

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

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

**HUMILITY** We know we don’t have all the answers and that we can only succeed by constantly testing our assumptions, working in deep collaboration with others and grounding ourselves in diverse viewpoints from across our states. We learn from our successes and our failures and strive to constantly improve.
The road to “yes” was paved with numerous hurdles, a first-round rejection, intense debate and stiff resistance from a well-organized and determined opposition. The debate around Achievement First evolved quickly, beginning with a handful of public exchanges between Cranston and Providence city leaders, then a turbulent public hearing, and finally a statewide fight pulling in the Board of Regents and the governor.

This advocacy effort on behalf of Achievement First had its roots in the 2008 passage of legislation that granted Rhode Island mayors the unprecedented ability to partner with nonprofit organizations to apply to open regional, diverse public charter schools that would draw students together from across municipalities.

These special public charter schools were named mayoral academies. A nonprofit organization called Rhode Island Mayoral Academies was established to provide support and oversee the schools. Soon thereafter, RIMA opened its first mayoral academy in Cumberland, Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy. Around the same time,
RIMA began conversations with another well-established charter school operator, Achievement First.

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

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

On May 26, 2011, the Rhode Island Department of Education came to Cranston City Hall for a public hearing on the mayor’s application. While these hearings were typically lightly attended, in a surprising turn of events, more than one hundred people crammed into the room to take a strong stand against the proposal. Their turnout was not evidence of actual widespread community opposition to the proposal, but instead an organized advocacy effort in large part supported by labor unions opposed to the expansion of these schools.

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

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

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

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

RI-CAN mobilized dozens of parents who braved the intimidation tactics of the vocal opposition to attend a community forum.
and show their public support for Achievement First’s application. Their message was clear: the parents held “welcome” mats and delivered personal testimonies about the transformational power of high-quality schools. RI-CAN’s executive director delivered testimony about the way that high-quality school options had allowed her to set her child on the path to success.

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

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

RI-CAN also conducted an online petition, called on supporters to attend the hearings and went on Latino radio shows to expand their audience and gain momentum. And during the summer of 2011, RI-CAN staff members personally went around Providence and Cranston, compiling video testimonies of parents and thought leaders in the communities who showed their support for Achievement First.

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

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

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

Before a formal application was even submitted, protestors gathered in front of the state Board of Governors for Higher Educa-
tion on October 8, 2011. Governor Chafee’s subtle indication of support was enough to trigger a second wave of protests. Soon after, the opposition movement branded themselves We-CAN (in reference to RI-CAN) and delivered a letter to Governor Chafee.

Once again, the stage was set for heated public hearings and a much-debated decision in January. But RI-CAN and its partners were ready to rally for change. RI-CAN galvanized parents to make 150 phone calls, write 800 emails to public officials and provide 400 petition signatures. The RI-CAN team also published an issue brief on the facts about Achievement First’s record and launched an awareness-raising project about public charter schools called “Seven Facts in Seven Days.”

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

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

Through our work together, we strive to find, connect and support local leaders in states across the country to help them improve educational policies in their communities:

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

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

**SUPPORT LEADERS**
We make it easier for our leaders to do high-quality work and more quickly get results by taking back-office work off their plates and providing best-in-class tools and training.
Policy principles

Reaching our goal of a high-quality education for all children, regardless of address, will require research-backed policies that reimagine how we provide public education. **Our five guiding policy principles are:**

**START EARLIER**
A high-quality education system starts earlier to put every child on the path to success by ensuring all students have the opportunity to attend a high-quality preschool.

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

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

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

**REACH EVERYONE**
A high-quality education system meets every child where they are and brings them up to where they need to be by ensuring they graduate with all the skills, knowledge and abilities needed to be happy, healthy, productive adults who make the world a better place for all.
50CAN University
Lifelong learners.

That’s what we are. Every staff, board, fellow, volunteer and partner member of the 50CAN network knows the value of a high-quality education. We also know that we can only bring great schools to all by continuing to learn and grow every day as advocates.

That’s where 50CAN University comes in. Established in 2013, the program offers courses, workshops, resources and the Education Advocacy Fellowship as an on-ramp into the world of advocacy. 50CAN U aims to shed light on the important work of education advocacy, share stories of success and help advocates develop their own skills.

Education Advocacy Fellowship
While we know that finding the right local leader is critical to any advocacy effort, we also know that even the most promising advocates aren’t often ready to spearhead a campaign on day one. Using what we have learned from a decade of local education advocacy campaigns, the Education Advocacy Fellowship provides our fellows with the support and training they need to grow their policy knowledge, further develop their advocacy skills and build a strong foundation for a local advocacy campaign.

Courses
50CAN’s policy and advocacy courses draw from our collective knowledge to give new local education advocacy leaders the basic skills and know-how they need to lead successful advocacy efforts at home. Our Education Advocacy Essentials workshop gives participants the opportunity to learn the fundamental strategies of advocacy and who the major players are on the education advocacy stage. Our Education Policy 101 course, designed and run in partnership with the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, provides a comprehensive, research-based foundation for navigating current education policy issues at the federal and state levels.

Internal trainings
As our organization grows, it is critical that we develop systems that allow us to capture the knowledge gained across the network and provide opportunities to share and learn from it. We have a full suite of training programs for our staff in place that includes quarterly executive director trainings, annual retreats, network-wide gatherings and professional learning communities.
Fundraising is not about money. It’s about necessary work that urgently needs doing.” We take Ken Burnett’s words to heart.

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

We work to raise both national and local resources to support our campaigns. For our national supporters, we strive to connect their funds to local know-how to ensure their contributions go further. For our local supporters, we aim to amplify their commitments by matching them to national supporters who share their vision for policy change. We are proud of the wide range of support our work has received in our first four years, with 124 foundations, businesses and individuals giving more than $1,000 each to our cause, for a total of more than $25 million in support across all of our campaigns.

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

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

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

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

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

Kids who benefit from high-quality preschool score higher on math and reading tests in their K-12 years, and are more likely to graduate from high school, enroll in college and avoid arrest for a violent crime.

However, in Minnesota there is a pre-K access gap–preventing scores of kids from starting school and life on the right track. Consider just 1 percent of 4-year-old children are enrolled in state-funded pre-K, compared to 29 percent nationally.

For the above reasons, high-quality pre-K access has been a centerpiece of MinnCAN’s legislative work.

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

The facts support quality pre-K. Research shows that Minnesota can expect up to $16 in return for every $1 invested in quality pre-K. This return comes from the long-term social and economic benefits associated with providing widely accessible, high-quality pre-K education, such as lower spending on crime and welfare, and increased tax revenue garnered from the public’s higher earnings.
Research also confirms that the benefits of high-quality pre-K stretch into adulthood. People who attended high-quality pre-K programs are more financially stable, better satisfied with their family lives and less likely to abuse drugs or go to prison.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But Minnesota’s legislative leadership needed a boost due to pushback from the Minnesota Department of Education and Education Minnesota. MinnCAN employed its e-advocacy prowess to coordinate a major online petition, asking Minnesotans to urge Speaker Paul Thissen and Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk to fully fund the MinneMinds proposal so that low-income kids could access quality early learning programs proven to prepare them for lifelong success.
The goal was to draw 1,000 signatures. Instead nearly 1,700 people signed the petition and lawmakers heard the message loud and clear. The policies advocated by the MinneMinds coalition made it into both the House and Senate budget bills.

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

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

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

MinnCAN has continued its MinneMinds work in 2014 and 2015. In 2014, MinnCAN helped secure expanded pre-K scholarships, increase pre-K funding by $4.65 million and remove the arbitrary scholarship cap so the state could better meet student needs.

In 2015, while most legislators agreed that the state should invest more in early learning, they disagreed on how to do so, resulting in one of the most contentious policy debates of the session. Throughout it all, MinnCAN remained steadfast in its belief that Minnesota should use the state’s limited funds to first ensure that low-income children of any age have access to high-quality, full-day early childhood education opportunities. Thanks to hundreds of emails from members and the help of now over 100 partners in the diverse MinneMinds coalition, MinnCAN fought for an equity-based approach to early learning, and ultimately secured an additional $48 million for flexible scholarships for low-income 3- and 4-year-olds, allowing an estimated 9,000 additional kids to access high-quality early learning.

One of the biggest lessons learned from this effort is that big changes require a continuous push, and that you must take advantage of windows of opportunity when they emerge. MinnCAN pledges to keep that drumbeat going strong.

**The Win**

The MinneMinds coalition was proud to see Minnesota make an historic investment of $40 million in high-quality pre-K scholarships for low-income 3- and 4-year-olds. The investment was another step forward on a longer path to increased access for every child in the state.
The people

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

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

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
We are students for life. We capture knowledge and share it across our campaigns, and with the larger movement of education advocates around the country, pairing doing with teaching.

We strive to constantly adapt our national vision and model based on what we are learning in our states through a cycle of continuous experimentation, innovation and improvement.
We are working on the biggest problem our nation faces and we are doing it at a scale that—if we do our jobs right—can actually solve that problem.

Served as chief operating officer at ConnCAN, which emerged during his five years with the organization as the nation's premier state-level education advocacy organization.

Worked in Washington, D.C., as research director of the Partnership for Public Service, was founding director of the Progressive Policy Institute’s Center for Civic Enterprise and was a contributing editor of the Democratic Leadership Council’s policy journal Blueprint.

Earned his Ph.D. in sociology from Duke University.
Oversees the states team, which manages the CAN executive directors to success in their work in the field and recruits new leaders.

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

Served as education policy director for St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman.

Was a classroom teacher at the University of St. Catherine Pre-K Education Center.

I love my job because I’m constantly challenged to do more, to do it better and to do it smarter.
I love coming up against problems and figuring out creative solutions to solve them. That’s what my job at 50CAN is all about.

**INGRID REYNOSO**

**COO**

**Oversees the operations team**, which provides all back-office support to states, including finances, human resources and legal affairs.

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

Earned her **undergraduate and law degrees** from Harvard University.
We believe that we have assembled under one roof the strongest group of executive directors of any education advocacy organization in the country.
Ever since I learned to walk, I have been fighting for equal opportunity and equal access. The work that we do is the most important catalyst for this premise.

Served two terms as state representative in the North Carolina House of Representatives where he focused his work on structural issues impacting the community including education reform and poverty.

While serving as vice chair of the House Education Committee, passed key pieces of legislation regarding school choice including: Tax Credits for Special Needs, Opportunity Scholarships for Low Income Families and the Teacher Paperwork Reduction Act.

Was recognized for his leadership and awarded Legislator of the Year by Parents for Educational Freedom, Black Alliance for Educational Options and Democrats for Education Reform, and was selected by Governing magazine in their “Top 12 Legislators to Watch Nationally” list.
Served as New Jersey Governor Corzine’s education policy advisor and director of policy and worked on countless education issues, including the School Funding Reform Act of 2008, the authorization of $3.9 billion for school construction funding and the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in New Jersey.

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

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

Janellen Duffy
Executive Director, JerseyCAN

Participated in the Presidential Management Fellowship, serving at the Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Senate Finance Committee.

Earned a master’s degree in public affairs from Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School.
Founded KIPP Baltimore and served as executive director for 11 years. During his time as leader of KIPP Baltimore, its schools regularly ranked first on state tests in the city of Baltimore and secured the highest math scores of any public school in the state in several of those years.

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

Served as a founding advisory board member for MarylandCAN.

If we as a society build the will to do so, we can provide high-quality public education for all children in every neighborhood.
Was tapped by Teach for America CEO Wendy Kopp to establish Teach For America—Twin Cities in 2008.

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

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

If our students and their families aren’t at the table, they’re on the table.
When I was a kid I won the lottery in school and I know how important that is. I’m tired of waiting for more kids to have the same choices, teachers, and opportunities that I had.
Served as **director of strategic initiatives for KIPP Philadelphia Schools**, helping to manage their external relations as they entered into an aggressive growth phase.

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

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

In 2013, Jon was named one of *Forbes Magazine’s Top 30 Under 30* in education.

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**As a teacher, you can have an impact on 30 students.** As an advocate pushing for statewide reforms, I am making a difference for nearly 2 million students.
I love political advocacy and I love great schools. In this job I get to use the former in service of the latter.

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

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

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

Earned a **master’s degree** in public administration from Suffolk University.
Board of directors

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

50CAN NATIONAL BOARD

Sandy Vargas
BOARD CHAIR
President & CEO,
The Minneapolis Foundation

Ann Borowiec
Former CEO, JP Morgan
Private Wealth Management

Jonathan Sackler
Director, Purdue Pharma
& founder of ConnCAN

Dacia Toll
Co-CEO & President,
Achievement First

David Wick
Chief External Impact Officer,
KIPP Foundation

Marc Porter Magee
CEO & Founder, 50CAN
State advisory boards

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

**CAROLINACAN**

Taylor Griffin  
Public Affairs Consultant

Rick Lawson  
President, Professional Consulting & Technical Services

**JERSEYCAN**

Ann Borowiec  
Board Co-Chair, Former CEO, JP Morgan Private Wealth Management

Ken Donovan  
Trustee, R&C Donovan Family Foundation

Mary Farrell  
Director, The Maeve Foundation, Inc.

Tom Kean  
Board Co-Chair, Former governor of New Jersey

Shane Harris  
Vice President, The Prudential Foundation

Ray Chambers  
UN Special Envoy for Financing the Health MDGs and for Malaria

Christine Healey  
President, Healey Education Foundation

Samuel Cole  
President & COO, Phigital, Inc.

Tom Healey  
Managing Partner, Healey Development

Dr. Michael Nettles  
Senior Vice President, Educational Testing Service

Mary Farrell  
Director, The Maeve Foundation, Inc.

Larry Rogers  
Treasurer, Better Education for Kids

Ray Chambers  
UN Special Envoy for Financing the Health MDGs and for Malaria

Christine Healey  
President, Healey Education Foundation

Tom Healey  
Managing Partner, Healey Development

Dr. Michael Nettles  
Senior Vice President, Educational Testing Service

Larry Rogers  
Treasurer, Better Education for Kids

Walter Shipley  
Retired Chairman & CEO, Chase Manhattan Bank

Peter Sidebottom  
CEO, AspenWoods LLC

Josh Weston  
Honorary Chairman, ADP, Inc.
WHO IS 50CAN?

OUR STATE ADVISORY BOARDS

MARYLANDCAN

Donald Manekin
Board Chair,
Founding Member, Seawall Development Company

Alice Johnson Cain
Vice President for Policy,
Teach Plus

Jeff Cohen
CEO, Sylvan Learning

Tom Gildee
President, Kids-R-VIPs Foundation

Michael Phillips
Senior pastor, The Kingdom Life Church

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

Mitchell Whiteman
Portfolio Manager, Brown Advisory

MINNCAN

Benson Whitney
Board Chair,
General Partner, Argus Management, Ltd.

Laura Brod
CEO, GeneSegues Therapeutics

Ashley Chirrick
Senior Quality Engineer, Exact

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

Alex Cirillo, Jr.
Former Vice President, 3M

Holly Kragthorpe-Shirley
National Policy Manager, Educators 4 Excellence

Father Michael O’Connell
Former Pastor, Church of the Ascension

Virginia Morris
Chair & CEO, Hubbard Radio LLC

Tim Penny
President and CEO, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

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

Lew Remele
Shareholder, Bassford Remele
WHO IS 5OCAN?

OUR STATE ADVISORY BOARDS

NYCAN

Ed Kirby
Former Deputy Director, Walton Family Foundation

PENNCAN

Mark Gleason
Board Chair, Executive Director, Philadelphia School Partnership

Brook Lenfest
CEO, NetCarrier

Adiah Ferron
Counsel, AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals LP

Marc Mannella
CEO & Founder, KIPP Philadelphia Schools

Mike Pearson
President & CEO, Union Packaging

RI-CAN

Jason Becker
Chief Product Officer, Allovue

Gary Sasse
Director, Bryant Institute of Public Leadership

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

By 2013, the movement was burgeoning. When the state’s cap on the number of charter schools was eliminated in 2011, the sector grew from 96 schools serving roughly 38,000 students to 127 schools serving nearly 50,000 students, a more than 30 percent increase in just three years.

But overall, charter schools have yielded mixed results for North Carolina kids. Some schools are far outpacing traditional public schools, but just as many are performing on par with, or below, traditional district schools. And relatively few charter schools are focused on serving at-risk students, despite the state’s initial goals for the movement and the success of other states’ charter schools that have made big strides with these students. North Carolina charter schools on the whole tend to enroll more white and middle-income students than their district school counterparts. And among the charter schools that do serve the state’s most disadvantaged kids, even fewer serve those students well.

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

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

To ensure a system that offers promising choices, particularly for students who aren’t well served in traditional public schools, CarolinaCAN needed to take a strong stand for quality. The team committed to focusing its early campaign work not on supporting charter schools in general, but on advocating for quality charter schools. This policy stance is evidence-based and also common sense, but sadly not always widely held. A set of policy goals to shift the focus to quality began to take shape: incentivizing schools to provide transportation and free lunch programs, strengthening the state’s authorizing and oversight processes, and focusing on replication of successful charter schools with a track record of improving educational outcomes for kids in the Tar Heel state.

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

The team started where 50CAN always starts, with the data. They combed through state assessment data to identify charter schools that served high percentages of low-income students and outperformed comparable district and charter schools in student achievement and growth. CarolinaCAN identified four that met these criteria: Maureen Joy Charter School in East Durham, Sugar Creek Charter School in Charlotte, Henderson Collegiate in Henderson and KIPP Gaston College Preparatory in Gaston. CarolinaCAN teamed with 50CAN’s national communications team and a local documentarian and Teach For America alum, Janice Smith, and produced short documentaries on each school.

The project had two goals. The first was to clarify public misconceptions about charter schools. CarolinaCAN’s polling data revealed that North Carolinians have serious misconceptions about what charter schools are and what kind of students they serve. Most people in North Carolina and across the country believe charter schools are private schools. The team was seeking to overcome those misconceptions and reinforce through its icon stories that charter schools are
public schools, and many provide the only high-quality education option to disadvantaged students in their community.

The second goal was to start the conversation about the right standard for charter schools in North Carolina. When North Carolinians think of charter schools, CarolinaCAN wants them to immediately think of the schools in its icon campaign: schools that are proving every day that any child can learn at high levels.

The documentaries are beautiful films that have served as a catalyst for change. So far, they have been loaded more than 290,000 times on the CarolinaCAN “Prove What’s Possible” website after being promoted through a social media campaign, and they have sparked conversations across North Carolina, from the schoolhouse to the Statehouse.
The impact: Our record and results.

To date, members of the 50CAN network have run 74 issue campaigns, published dozens of often-cited original reports and emerged as leading education authorities in their respective policy environments.

In our first five years, these seven campaigns helped secure 43 legislative wins across key areas like teacher and principal effectiveness, high-quality pre-K, education funding, college and career readiness, and high-quality school choice.
Advocacy campaigns

**RI-CAN**
- Full-day kindergarten
- School funding formula

**MINNCAN**
- MinneMinds
- Great Teachers
- Strong Charters

**MARYLANDCAN**
- Charter reform commission

**NYCAN**
- Early college high school

**PENNCAN**
- Reward excellence
- Freedom to succeed
- Philly Teachers Contract
- Protect excellent teachers

**CAROLINACAN**
- Year of the teacher

**RI-CAN**
- Put Achievement First
- Success Schools
- Prize Talented Teachers

**MINNCAN**
- Prize first-string teachers
- Scouting Minnesota’s MVPs
- Launch the achievement power play

**MARYLANDCAN**
- Jumpstart public charter school innovation
- Fund quality pre-K for all
- Champion active parent participation

**NYCAN**
- Early college high school

**PENNCAN**
- Expand high-quality choices
- Measure teacher effectiveness
- Start smart

**CAROLINACAN**
- High-quality choice
- Principal development pipeline

**JERSEYCAN**
- Implement CCSS and assessments
- Repeal teacher residency requirement
- Strengthen charter school law
- Support high-quality school growth in Camden

**PENNCAN**
- Seniority and tenure reform
- Equitable school funding formula
- Governance reform for lowest performing schools

**CAROLINACAN**
- Improve teacher pay
- Financial literacy
- Intradistrict open enrollment policy
Policy wins

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

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

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

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

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

Helped secure a $300,000 investment in full-day kindergarten in Rhode Island.

Expanded MinneMinds pre-K scholarships, increasing funding by $4.65 million and removing the arbitrary scholarship cap to better meet student needs in the state.

Helped pass the 2014 Pre-K Expansion Act in Maryland, expanding eligibility to more children, providing grants for half-day programs to convert to full-day and offering additional funding opportunities for wrap-around services.

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

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

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

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

Paved the way for Rhode Island's first Achievement First Mayoral Academy.
Helped pass a bill that calls for the Maryland State Department of Education to conduct a thorough study of charter schools and then recommend proposals to reform the system with a focus on ensuring high-quality options for all kids.

**AIM HIGHER**
Increased state support for New York early college high schools to $6 million.

Successfully advocated for removal of the PSEO “gag rule,” which prohibited Minnesota colleges and universities from advertising the financial benefits of Post-Secondary Enrollment Option classes.

Defeated a bill in 2014 that would have allowed school systems to delay implementation of the Maryland College and Career Ready standards and administration of the PARCC exam.

Successfully secured targeted and effective testing for students in Minnesota.

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

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

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

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

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

Overhauled Pennsylvania’s 40-year-old teacher evaluation system and replacing it with a statewide evaluation system that incorporates multiple measures of student achievement.

Helped pass legislation that makes student learning and achievement the primary purpose of Minnesota charter schools.

Ensured that failure to demonstrate satisfactory academic achievement for all students is now clearly defined as a reason for contract non-renewal or termination of Minnesota charter schools in the state.

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

Kept the implementation of Minnesota’s new teacher evaluation on track, despite attempts from legislators to delay the much-needed change.
Successfully rallied the Minnesota Board of Teaching to grant waivers to incoming Teach For America educators.

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

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

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

Successfully reversed a ruling by the Minnesota Board of Teaching that had denied licensure to talented out-of-state candidates, thus ensuring the faithful implementation of the state’s breakthrough 2011 alternative certification law.

Defeated an amendment to delay implementation of teacher evaluations and protected Minnesota’s No Child Left Behind waiver.

Successfully prevented a significant delay in the use of student achievement in teacher evaluation in New Jersey and supported the creation of a Study Commission that will identify best practices around standardized testing.

Improved the pathway to licensure for qualified, out-of-state teacher candidates in Minnesota.

Overturned an antiquated law on teacher layoff notifications in Rhode Island leading to a more fair and modern system that will not disrupt classroom learning.

Championed an historic $282 million salary increase for North Carolina teachers, the largest pay raise in the state’s history, that includes a restructured salary schedule so that teachers receive higher pay earlier in their career and support for differentiated pay programs for highly effective teachers.

Helped pass legislation promoting higher standards for awarding teacher tenure in New York.

Improved teacher preparation in Minnesota by prohibiting student teachers from being placed with an ineffective teacher during their clinical experience.

Secured an additional $32 million in Rhode Island state aid for education in 2013.

Implemented a student-centered funding formula for schools and removing barriers for districts to implement full-day kindergarten in Rhode Island.

Restored child care subsidies through the Maryland Family Network’s petition and increased financial stability for families.
The launch of MinnCAN in January 2011 was one of 50CAN’s biggest early projects. We developed a comprehensive report on the state of Minnesota schools and paired it with an in-depth set of policy proposals. At the same time, we created MinnCAN’s first website, which we hoped would become an online springboard for action in the coming legislative session. We held a standing-room only press conference at the state capitol to announce the organization, website, research report and policy proposals. It was covered by the Pioneer Press, Star Tribune, Minnesota Public Radio, several local television outfits, the Associated Press, MinnPost and more, all with the theme that Minnesotans were coming together to make changes to the system so that, finally, every student in the state would receive a high-quality education, regardless of their address.

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

One element of the ‘State of Minnesota Public Education’ report we were proud of was the inclusion of Native American student achievement data and the analysis of the achievement gap with white students. We felt we were helping create some urgency around support for Native American education, but in setting up our analysis we
made a mistake that revealed we still had a lot to learn.

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

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

The MinnCAN team had to work hard to repair these relationships so we could work together to improve educational outcomes for Native American students in the state.

What started out as a small, two-month project turned into a comprehensive, year-long effort developed in close collaboration with Minnesota’s Native American communities. The result was the ‘Native American Student Achievement in Minnesota’ report.

Early conversations helped the MinnCAN team understand that the initial plan for a smaller report focused mostly on student achievement data wouldn’t be enough. We needed to listen, really listen, to indigenous leaders, educators, parents and students. As LeMoine LaPointe (Si-cangu Lakota), a youth work consultant, told us, “People have come in and proposed the answer, and never asked the questions. They’ve looked at our risk factors and never asked about our strengths. Yet our cultures were successful not because of our deficits, but because of our strengths.”

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

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

It is very clear from the research MinnCAN conducted, and the tremendous gains in kindergarten readiness, and that the Churchill Elementary School in Cloquet and Detroit Lakes Middle School made MinnCAN’s Top 10 Schools lists for their Native American achievement results. But numbers on a page can’t compare to witnessing these programs in action.

At the schools, MinnCAN team members met with teachers, administrators, parents and students who shared stories of the promising programs in their schools. They listened closely to their stories of successes and challenges, and incorporated them into the report. The principals and teachers in these schools have learned how to best serve this specific population’s needs.

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

The MinnCAN project uncovered a community very aligned with research-based best practices in how to provide learning environments that best meet every child’s needs that other communities across Minnesota can learn from.

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

## CANS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Growth plan</strong></td>
<td>8 states</td>
<td>9 states</td>
<td>11 states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators of success</strong></td>
<td>Each CAN consistently secures two policy victories in its state each year.</td>
<td>Each CAN is a leader in defining a bold vision that moves its state forward.</td>
<td>Each CAN has an excellent executive director and strong deputy.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Each CAN has a strong and influential local advisory board.</td>
<td>Each CAN has consistent and growing local funding.</td>
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## Fellowships

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<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Growth plan</strong></td>
<td>up to 5 fellows</td>
<td>up to 5 fellows</td>
<td>up to 5 fellows</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators of success</strong></td>
<td>There are 10 times more strong candidates than slots per year.</td>
<td>Fellows develop skills in advocacy, policy, communications, fundraising and coalition-building.</td>
<td>100% of fellows complete one of three paths: position with an existing organization, launch a new organization, launch a new CAN.</td>
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### NATIONAL BOARD

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Growth plan</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6+ board members</td>
<td>10+ board members</td>
<td>12+ board members</td>
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<th>Indicators of success</th>
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<tr>
<td>50% percent of CAN states are represented on the national board.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board members make our organization one of their top philanthropic priorities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board members serve as active ambassadors for our organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board members provide strategic leadership in advocacy and fundraising.</td>
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### STAFFING & BUDGET

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<th>Growth plan</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<th>2017</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43 staff</td>
<td>46 staff</td>
<td>50 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$6.7M</td>
<td>$7.2M</td>
<td>$7.7M</td>
</tr>
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We deeply believe that we are working on the most important issue of our day and approaching it with the most critical missing lever: nonpartisan, research-backed advocacy for state policy, driven forward by diverse local leadership and supported by best-in-the-nation thinking.

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

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

We hope that you will join us.

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