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ABSTRACT

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation recently celebrated the fifth anniversary of the beginning of its modern era in 1997. The Foundation has not made a habit of issuing regular reports on its work, but this opportunity provides the occasion to review what the Fordham Foundation has done. It recaps the major priorities and activities in the national arena and in the Dayton, Ohio, area from 1997 through 2001. The principles of the Fordham Foundation draw it toward two prominent education reform strategies: standards-based reform and market-style reform. In spite of the size limitations of the Foundation, since 1997, it has invested nearly $6 million in national and Dayton programs and publications. The report is organized into two sections. The national section reviews some of the Foundation's efforts to wage the war of ideas, with emphasis on three issues (teacher quality, state standards and accountability, and federal K-12 policy) that have consumed much of the Foundation's attention. The Dayton section focuses on the five main pillars of work in that city: (1) creating high-quality educational choices for needy children; (2) creating effective charter schools; (3) reforming the public school system; (4) assisting the community to understand what is and is not working in education; and (5) strengthening civil society more generally. (SLD)

Thomas B. Fordham Foundation

Five-Year Report

1997-2001

THOMAS B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION

OUTSIDE THE BOX

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May 2002

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INTRODUCTION

The modern Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (TBF) recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. Although TBF traces its origin to 1959, when the late Thelma Fordham Pruett founded it in memory of her first husband, it was virtually re-launched in 1997, following Mrs. Pruett's death. Her estate provided the Foundation with an infusion of resources that led to the expansion of its board and the development of a coherent mission and program: the renewal and reform of primary/secondary education in the United States generally and in Dayton, Ohio, particularly.

The Foundation has not made a habit of issuing regular reports on its work. This anniversary seems like an opportune time to review what we've done and to engage in some healthy stocktaking as we look to the future. In that spirit, this report recaps our major priorities and activities, both in the national arena and in Dayton, from 1997 through 2001. It seeks to analyze what has been accomplished and to show where our efforts have fallen short. As in our education reform work, we hope that this report succeeds in reaching "outside the box" that so often confines self-studies by self-absorbed organizations.

What We Believe

The Foundation's credo guides all its work in education reform. That credo has six essential elements, focusing on the need for:

- dramatically higher academic standards;
- an education system designed for and responsive to the needs of its users;
- verifiable outcomes and accountability;
- equality of opportunity;
- a solid core curriculum taught by knowledgeable, expert instructors;
- educational diversity, competition, and choice.

In practice, those principles draw us toward both of today's most promising education reform strategies: "standards-based" reform (with its trinity of academic standards, tests, and consequences for success and failure) and "market-style" reform (with its emphasis on school choice, competition, alternative providers, and accountability to clients). Some think these strategies are opposed or incompatible. By our lights, just the opposite is true: Each needs the other if it is to have the brightest prospect of succeeding.

We shun two other popular theories of education reform that, in our experience, simply do not work to change institutions, alter behavior, or boost academic achievement. More money—absent standards and markets—won't make a difference. It's just paying the same people more to do the same things. And we've seen little evidence that the addition of more "expertise" to the present system will by itself bring about the needed reforms. That's because, with rare (and happy) exceptions, the present system does not much want to change. Hence we favor strategies that, in effect, force it to.

How We Work

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation has a seven-member board of trustees, including individuals whose main perspective on education is national and some whose primary orientation is to Dayton. It also has a small staff of five professionals in a Washington, D.C. office.

The Foundation's budget is about $2.5 million a year, divided between its two main areas of activity: engaging in the national "war of ideas" about education reform, and fostering effective education reforms in Dayton and vicinity. Though it makes grants to projects and organizations whose work advances its objectives, it does not accept unsolicited proposals. We're pro-active, generally devising our own programs. We prefer to help start things, as we lack both the resources and the inclination to provide routine operating support for existing organizations. Despite our size limitations, since 1997 we have invested a total of near-

ly $6 million in national and Dayton programs and publications. Of this total, $2,564,600 went towards national projects and $3,361,180 supported various activities in Dayton. (Where, the reader may ask, did the rest go? Into writing, editing, commissioning, studying, analyzing, publishing, networking, planning, evaluating, revising, and managing.)

Our national program includes much publishing, both in traditional hard copy form and, increasingly, through our website (www.edexcellence.net) and our weekly electronic newsletter, *The Education Gadfly.* We write some of those publications ourselves; others are studies, analyses, and commentaries that we commission and edit. In practice, TBF is partly a funder of others, partly a lively think tank, and partly a communicator of ideas. Our work focuses on issues, programs, and activities that accord with and advance our principles within the worlds of policy and practice.

This single-mindedness enables us to shape, screen, and evaluate our work in relation to a clear mission and a coherent philosophy of education. That means we often take firm stands on issues, stands that may place us in opposition to the conventional wisdom of the education field and the current policies and practices of many communities, states, and nations. Though we scrupulously follow the rules that proscribe legislative lobbying and political activity by tax-exempt organizations, we are forthright and forceful in advancing research findings, worthwhile ideas, and policy guidance. At the same time, we strive to remain analytical, critical, self-aware, open to new information, insistent on objective evidence, and devoted to careful evaluation.

Partnerships and Leverage

As a small organization seeking to address large challenges, both in Dayton and nationally we typically work with partners and allies as well as grantees and contractors. (Sometimes they're one and the same.) Much of what we've done has hinged on our ability to leverage the interest, energies, and resources of others. Sometimes this is simply a

matter of making others aware of findings, information, or ideas that we have developed or that have come to our attention. Sometimes it's the result of persuading others to join in the creation of projects and programs that use their resources (both money and human capital) as well as ours. Sometimes we have been able to catalyze a project or provide seed money for something that others then come to support with resources far beyond our means.

This Report

The following pages are organized into two sections that correspond to our two main program areas. In the national section, we review some of our more important efforts to wage the war of ideas, with particular emphasis on three issues (teacher quality, state standards and accountability, and federal K-12 policy) that have consumed much of our attention, as well as a discussion of what we've learned about the diffusion of ideas and information. In the Dayton section, we focus on the five main pillars of our work in that city: creating high-quality education choices for needy children; creating effective charter schools; reforming the public school system; assisting the community to understand what is and isn't working in education, as well as its own attitudes, values, and priorities with respect to education reform; and strengthening civil society more generally.

Results

It's famously difficult to appraise one's success in waging the war of ideas. We encounter plenty of suggestive evidence, however, indicators that our work is having an impact on the thinking of others. Our reports and newsletters are in demand, and we find ourselves quoted, cited, and consulted; it's even possible to point to important education issues where our research and ideas have emerged as the main alternative to the conventional wisdom. We've helped spawn new organizations and publications. Our "alumni" have gone on to other ventures

that complement our own. People whose education ideas differ from ours have approached us at conferences to admit that "You're doing a good job and we're learning from you."

Not everything has gone as we had hoped, however. Like most foundations, we've invested in some projects that amounted to little. We've published some reports more out of obligation than pride. We've entered into some partnerships that proved unworkable. Some of our smaller projects can, with hindsight, be seen to have a "random" quality to them, where we didn't apply a stern enough screen to notions that seemed appealing at the time but turned out not to have much to do with our enduring priorities. We seek, in the discussion that follows, to be candid about failures as well as successes.

The evidence in Dayton is somewhat clearer because it can be denominated in the number of children with educational opportunities they did not previously have, in the number of charter schools now operating in a city that had none just a few years earlier, and—we like to think—in the results of the recent school board election. But not everything on this side of our ledger has been a huge success, either. Some charter schools are not doing a good job, and a number of them face fiscal and organizational problems. The private scholarship program has boosted academic achievement for black youngsters but not for others. The new school board faces daunting challenges. Dayton does not yet have the infrastructure and leadership for education reform that it needs. In this part of the report, too, we seek to be open about what we've learned as well as what we may have accomplished.

For the Future

Our mission and principles are not changing, and until we see compelling reason to alter our views about which education reform strategies hold greatest promise, we will continue to advance the two described above (standards-based reform and market-style reform). But our specific programs will continue to evolve. At the national level, for

example, our current federal policy focus is shifting—with Washington's—from elementary and secondary schooling to "special" education for disabled youngsters. Our focus on state standards has broadened to include a greater interest in testing and accountability. We have created a pair of new prizes for distinguished achievement in education reform, the Thomas B. Fordham prizes.

In Dayton, too, our program is evolving. For example, we are shifting our efforts from starting charter schools to ensuring that they are effective. We intend to develop outside services that will help struggling schools improve their business management operations, their delivery of special education, and, we hope, their academic results. We are also working to improve how student achievement in charter schools is measured and reported to parents through the development of a user-friendly rating service that we hope will eventually encompass more than charter schools.

We seek more partners and collaborators who share our mission and our education values. Today, TBF is squeezing its own financial and human resources hard. To do more in the future means we must work with others, both nationally and in Dayton. To make that easier, we have recently created the Thomas B. Fordham Institute (TBFI), an organizational sibling of TBF. Though its board and staff are the same, it seeks to amplify and extend our work by embarking on projects that will be at least partially supported by other funders—individuals, other foundations, and government agencies. Several such projects are now under development. We hope that TBFI will be a major vehicle for advancing the education reform credo described above by accessing energies, resources, and ideas that exceed—and complement—our own.

My colleagues and I invite you to learn more about us from our website, www.edexcellence.net, from our newsletter (to which you can subscribe by sending an e-mail to majordomo@edexcellence.net and writ-

ing "subscribe gadfly" in the text of the message), and from the pages that follow. We welcome your thoughts.

Chester E. Finn, Jr.
President
Thomas B. Fordham Foundation
Washington, DC
May 2002

THE NATIONAL PROGRAM

Overview

When the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation was re-launched five years ago, its trustees enumerated the principles of effective education reform for which this foundation would stand. These included the need for higher standards, accountability, competition, and choice in education. Since then, TBF has published or co-published 40 books and reports (and supported the publication of a handful of others) on a wide range of topics that accord with those basic principles.

Many of the publications originate in a brainstorm, when a staff member or trustee perceives the need for a report examining or explaining a particular issue or problem. Others take shape gradually, perhaps after a skull session involving scholars and practitioners. TBF's research agenda has been clear about principles but opportunistic as to specific projects rather than being guided by any master plan. Over time, however, it has evolved a focus on five major issues: teacher quality, standards and accountability, federal education policy, charter schools and school choice, and education philanthropy. Our work under three of those themes is described below, followed by a big-picture look at how we wage the war of ideas.

I. Improving Teacher Quality

Background

By 1998, most states were trying to boost the quality of their teaching force. Yet it seemed as if many of their efforts were wrong-headed. We set out to help state policymakers understand that some popular ideas for improving teacher quality might not, in fact, be good ideas, and that it might benefit them and their schoolchildren to consider possible alternatives.

To formulate such alternatives, we gathered 12 experts in February 1999 to consider policies that a state might enact to raise the quality of its teaching force. These policies turned out to fly in the face of the conventional wisdom. To get them into circulation, we prepared a manifesto, *The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them*, which reviewed the challenges facing states in this area, explained why the traditional regulatory solution isn't likely to work, and listed alternative policies based on more open entry into teaching, greater school-level control of hiring and compensation decisions, and real accountability for a school's academic results. We invited influential education thinkers and policymakers to sign the manifesto; within days, it attracted fifty-plus signers, including two governors and four state education chiefs.

That manifesto became the centerpiece of *Better Teachers, Better Schools*, a 250-page volume published by the Foundation in July 1999 and made up of essays and studies that provided analytic support for the policy manifesto. We also undertook to grade the states on their efforts to put policies into place to improve teacher quality. *The Quest for Better Teachers: Grading the States*, a 50-state report card, was published later the same year.

When the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future—the most prominent group devoted to teacher quality and the foun-

tainhead of the conventional wisdom—issued a new report in August 1999, they depicted it as a response to TBF's *Better Teachers, Better Schools.*

Outreach to States

In 1999, we began a partnership with the Education Leaders Council (ELC), an organization of reform-minded state education officials, to advance teacher quality reforms. The ELC committed to implementing innovative teacher quality policies in its member states and to working with TBF on a range of initiatives. These included a new clearinghouse for teacher quality information, the tracking of exciting (and disappointing) reforms in the area of teacher quality, and the dissemination of a new electronic newsletter on the topic—the *Teacher Quality Bulletin*—for policymakers, researchers, journalists, and others.

Getting Others Involved

We invited former New Jersey education commissioner Leo Klagholz, widely regarded as the inventor of New Jersey's large alternative certification program, to join our teacher quality campaign. In 2000, he wrote a Fordham report on alternative teacher certification, *Growing Better Teachers in the Garden State*, focusing on the New Jersey experience. We later made a small grant to Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, where Leo now serves as distinguished scholar in education policy studies, to assist his efforts to explain how New Jersey was able to implement its alternative certification program.

We also embarked on several joint teacher quality ventures with the Smith-Richardson Foundation. We found this partnership stimulating and fruitful. One of our joint efforts included a research seminar in June 2000 on value-added assessment, which brought together 15 top scholars and practitioners to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of using different value-added techniques to assess teacher effectiveness.

National Council on Teacher Quality

By 2000, we were convinced that America needed a new organization to focus exclusively on teacher quality. We asked Kathleen Madigan to serve as executive director for the organization, which was named the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ). Michael Poliakoff, a former deputy secretary of education in Pennsylvania, later joined NCTQ as its president. The NCTQ has its own blue-ribbon policy board, comprised of a dozen prominent education reformers.

In its first full year, in addition to $155,000 from TBF, the NCTQ received a total of $175,000 in grants from other foundations and individuals.

The NCTQ gradually took over portions of TBF's teacher quality initiative, such as the information clearinghouse website (www.tqclearinghouse.org) and the weekly *Teacher Quality Bulletin.* NCTQ also plans to report on promising practices for promoting teacher quality, prepare briefing memos evaluating research on specific teacher quality issues, and write articles for key publications so that its analyses can reach a broader audience. The aim of all this activity is to help policymakers and the public better understand the strategic options available to those interested in boosting teacher quality.

ABCTE

In late 2001, the still-new NCTQ was awarded a $5-million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to launch a major new project of national significance. Called the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), this project is being undertaken jointly with the ELC. The board plans to award a portable, beginning teacher credential to highly skilled individuals just entering teaching who have mastered an academic subject and can demonstrate an understanding of effective classroom techniques. This credential will be useful for aspiring teachers seeking to enter the profession without traditional educa-

tion school training. It is meant to be something they can present to schools, districts, and states—in effect the first national credential for alternatively certified teachers.

ABCTE will also award a higher-level credential to experienced teachers who demonstrate mastery of the subjects they teach and who also contribute to improved student learning. There has been strong interest among policymakers and educators in a student-achievement-based master teacher certification program that could serve as an alternative to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which concentrates on pedagogical methods.

Additional Publications

In addition to the four publications noted above, we have published a number of TBF reports on teacher quality and helped to fund others.

Three Fordham reports explore different aspects of this topic. In *Professionalism and the Public Good: A Brief History of Teacher Certification*, David Angus and Jeffrey Mirel trace the emergence of state control over teacher licensure and investigate why American teacher certification emphasizes training in pedagogy rather than subject-matter knowledge. In *Personnel Policy in Charter Schools*, economists Michael Podgursky and Dale Ballou look at how charter schools, which are held accountable for results and freed from red tape governing personnel decisions, take advantage of their freedom by adopting innovative strategies for hiring and rewarding teachers. *Can Teachers Own Their Own Schools? New Strategies for Educational Excellence*, a report by Richard Vedder on the prospects for employee-owned, for-profit schools, was co-sponsored by Fordham and the Independent Institute.

TBF also helped to support two surveys by Public Agenda, a nonpartisan opinion research organization, aimed at contributing to public debates over how to raise the quality of our nation's teaching force.

Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education, published in 1997, was the first-ever study of the values and priorities of education school faculty—and a fascinating and disturbing body of information that turned out to be. *A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why*, which Public Agenda published in 2000, looked at the perceptions and assumptions of three key groups: new teachers, young college graduates who did not choose teaching as a career, and those who hire and supervise the nation's teachers. Fordham contributed a total of $260,000 for these two surveys, with other funders putting in an additional $375,000.

Results

For years, the conventional wisdom about how to boost teacher quality has been to tighten the regulatory screws: impose more requirements, demand longer training programs, and generally focus on inputs. We've been promoting a different approach, one that relies on less regulation, greater freedom and more accountability for results. There is evidence that our ideas and policy proposals have gained wide legitimacy. In addition to the numerous articles we have written for magazines and academic volumes, we have a thick file of clippings that mention our approach to teacher quality. We have twice been asked to testify before Congressional committees on teacher quality issues, and we have been invited to present our approach at the annual meetings of several large education organizations.

In fact, our proposals have been treated by the education establishment and many commentators as the foremost alternative to the conventional wisdom. A recent Educational Testing Service study described the two options before policymakers—the approach of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) and the approach of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. The *Journal on Teacher Education* published an article that compares the "deregulationist" approach to teacher quality to that embraced by the profession

itself. On numerous occasions, we've been invited to debate NCTAF representatives.

Most important, a number of states, school systems, public officials, and political candidates—and even some education groups—are beginning to see the wisdom of creating more entry routes into the teaching profession, de-emphasizing time spent in a college of education, evaluating teachers based on how much learning they produce in the classroom, and allowing a teacher's pay to reflect how effective she is or how scarce her talents are. At the same time, we also see evidence that the "conventional wisdom" is still gaining ground in many parts of the land. This is troubling—but not quite so troubling as the situation four years ago, when it seemed as if policymakers did not even know they had an alternative.

II. Strengthening State Standards And Accountability

Background

Standards-based reform has been America's main education improvement strategy for more than a decade, and President George W. Bush has made it the core of his education policy. The idea behind it is that the way to improve academic results is to stipulate the results you want, devise reliable means of evaluating progress toward them, and create tangible incentives and sanctions—keyed to those standards and results—for all participants in the education process. To this end, 49 states have written academic standards that specify the knowledge and skills that their students should possess at various stages of their education. They're developing—or redeveloping—tests that are aligned with

those standards, and the recently enacted federal education law will cause even more of this to happen. Hopeful signs now abound for this reform, including rising test scores in a few states that have embraced this strategy. Yet standards-based reform also faces peril. Few states combine solid standards with well-aligned tests and strong accountability systems. And some jurisdictions are already showing signs of a backlash against the sanctions, usually in the form of objections to binding high school graduation exams.

Evaluating state standards and accountability systems

Since 1997, TBF has sought to appraise how standards-based reform is progressing. One of our first projects set out to determine just how good state academic standards are. For each of the five core academic subjects—English, history, geography, math, and science—we asked experts to develop criteria for what good academic standards would look like and then, using those criteria, to appraise the standards of every state that had them. In 1997 and 1998, the results were published in five slender volumes—one per subject—that included report cards for each state. We also published *The State of State Standards*, which summarized the results of the five subject-specific evaluations and included essays on the challenges of implementing standards-based reform. We spent about $170,000 on these reports.

What we learned was not too encouraging—most state standards were not up to the task at hand—but we felt it was important to get this information out to state policymakers and the public. As it turned out, these appraisals made the Fordham Foundation's first big splash in the media. The reports on history and geography standards were released at a Washington event featuring then-Governor George W. Bush, Diane Ravitch, and Gilbert Grosvenor, chairman of the National Geographic Society. The reports were covered by many journalists, and more than 100 articles appeared in newspapers and magazines in 25 states. Along with the American Federation of Teachers and the Council for Basic

Education, TBF thus established itself as an arbiter of the quality of state academic standards.

After learning that 40 states had updated their academic standards by 1999, we commissioned a second round of appraisals, using the same reviewers for the sake of consistency—which is not to say we always agreed with them! These appraisals were published in *The State of State Standards 2000*, which included grades for all state standards in the five core subjects, as well as a review of states' progress in building accountability systems around their academic standards. Our expert reviewers found that state standards had improved overall, but that few states combined solid academic standards with strong accountability.

In 2002, we are working with a new organization named AccountabilityWorks to expand our analysis to include the quality of the state tests themselves. That's a topic made all the more urgent by new federal testing requirements. We are contributing $100,000 to this project, joined by $150,000 from another private foundation. We and AccountabilityWorks expect to co-publish *The Consumer's Guide to State Education Accountability* in summer 2002.

Additional reports

From our reviews of science standards, we learned that a number of states treated the politically charged topic of evolution in a less than forthright fashion. In 2000, we published *Good Science, Bad Science: Teaching Evolution in the States*, a state-by-state evaluation of how states handle evolution in their standards. This high-profile report was released at an all-day seminar on teaching evolution, hosted by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

We have also published several smaller reports aimed at helping the public understand standards-based reform. Two of these are among our most frequently requested reports: *Filling in the Blanks: Putting Standardized Tests to the Test*, by Gregory Cizek, a layman's guide to

standardized tests, and *Why Testing Experts Hate Testing*, by Richard Phelps, a point-by-point analysis of arguments that testing experts commonly raise against standardized testing.

Who decides what goes into state academic standards? Sometimes they're set with little input from parents and the broader public, and some of what states put into their standards would surprise and, perhaps, alarm parents, particularly when it comes to what schools should teach their children about America. To determine what parents think about that, we contributed $175,000, which was joined by $135,000 from other funders (including both national teacher unions), to support a study by Public Agenda. The resulting report, *A Lot to Be Thankful for: What Parents Want Children to Learn About America*, was released just before Thanksgiving 1998 and received much attention.

Helping States Set the Bar

In 1999, we were approached by several states about evaluating their high school exit exams. These states had encountered resistance to high-stakes graduation tests from parents and teachers, and they wanted to make sure that they were setting the bar at the right place—that their tests were neither too hard nor too easy and that their passing scores were neither too high nor too low. In discussing this concern with colleagues at Achieve (an organization of governors and leading CEOs that evaluates state standards and tests), we realized that what many states needed was an external benchmark against which to judge their exit standards and tests.

The most logical anchor for high school graduation standards is the skills that a student needs to undertake college-level work or to succeed in an information-age job. In 2000, we joined with Achieve to brainstorm with two other organizations, the National Alliance of Business and the Education Trust, as well as with business and higher education leaders with an eye to developing a set of benchmark standards (in reading, writing, and mathematics) that describe the knowledge and skills

needed for success in college and the workplace. If we could create these benchmarks, states could use them to appraise their own high school exit expectations.

TBF paid about $11,500 for preliminary work on this project, which functioned as seed money to get it fully planned. By April 2001, we had hammered out the final details, and the Hewlett Foundation had agreed to underwrite it to the tune of $2.5 million. Now called the American Diploma Project, it has its own staff of three, but the sponsoring groups continue to guide it. Five partner states were selected, and the national benchmarks will be presented in 2003.

Results

TBF first made its mark in the K-12 education reform world by appraising state academic standards. We continue to be contacted by states, journalists, and policy analysts about the quality of state standards. The grades given by our reviewers to state standards have been reproduced in *Quality Counts, Education Week's* annual publication that serves as an important reference tool for reporters and policy analysts. In some states, Fordham's grades even became an issue in political campaigns. We were gratified that many states that initially scored poorly sought out our subject-area experts for assistance in revising their standards.

The challenges facing standards-based reform are daunting, but we intend to stick with this crucial education reform strategy either until it succeeds or there is compelling reason to abandon it. The critics of standards-based reform have been relentless, and our main regret is that we have not been able to devote more time and resources to refuting their claims and clearing up misconceptions about this important reform strategy on which so much now hinges.

III. Federal Education Policy

Background

In 1998, polls showed that education was the foremost issue on voters' minds, and officials and politicians at every level were eager to get in on the action, including President Clinton and the Congress. With the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—the main federal K-12 education law—up for reauthorization, Washington's denizens were proposing some brand-new programs to add to the mix of 60-plus already housed in ESEA.

We wondered if more programs were what U.S. schools really needed or whether there might be a better way to think about federal education policy. How much good had ESEA done in the decades since Lyndon B. Johnson pushed it through Congress in 1965?

We commissioned a series of reports on these highly visible (and costly) federal programs. The reports painted a vivid picture of the many ways that federal education programs have failed and then offered ideas for fixing them. We published these reports and a number of related papers in *New Directions: Federal Education Policy in the Twenty-first Century*, a sizable volume that came out in March 1999. Some of these essays showed how federal education policy gets in the way of reform-minded states and cities. The final section of the volume offered recommendations for changing the federal role. In different ways, these essays collectively made the case that LBJ's version of the federal role in primary-secondary education sorely needed a major overhaul.

New Directions (on which TBF spent about $75,000) was released in conjunction with a meeting of the National Governors Association in Washington, D.C. It drew considerable media attention, and Michigan Governor John Engler mentioned it in testimony before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. In April 1999,

TBF and the Progressive Policy Institute (the think tank associated with the Democratic Leadership Council) co-hosted a conference on ESEA. It drew a large, bipartisan crowd that included many of the staffers who were already at work on the upcoming reauthorization.

Influencing the ESEA debate

Two proposals set forth in *New Directions* gained attention on Capitol Hill in the early stages of debate over ESEA, at least in part because of TBF's efforts. (We didn't hatch these ideas alone and weren't the only groups discussing them, but we had a serious book to back them up.) The first, "super ed-flex," later dubbed "Straight A's," was a Fordham-developed proposal for maximizing the flexibility given to reform-minded states and districts by allowing them to consolidate their federal funding and direct it toward their own priorities. In return for this flexibility, they would have to produce higher academic achievement. The second proposal, developed by education historian—and Fordham trustee—Diane Ravitch, would transform the big Title I program into a portable benefit for needy children, essentially by "voucherizing" it. Instead of these funds going to school districts, they would follow needy children to whatever school they attended.

Chester Finn and Diane Ravitch testified before Congress on these proposals and TBF's analysis of the problems with established federal programs. The ideas were also embraced by a loose coalition of reform-minded groups that aimed to win Congressional interest. Both ideas made headway in Congress before the ESEA legislative train slowed in the Senate, and the 106th Congress adjourned without completing the reauthorization process.

This seeming reversal turned out to hold a silver lining. For the first time in ESEA's long history, fresh ideas were in play. Had Congress simply repeated the incrementalism of prior legislative cycles, the bill might have kept moving, but the programs would not have worked any better.

New Opportunities to Shape Federal Policy

Federal education policy loomed large in the 2000 presidential campaign, and we provided policy advice to every candidate who asked for it. We hoped that fresh thinking about ESEA would be more welcome in the new Administration and Congress. In December, before the outcome of the presidential race was resolved, we wrote and published a 25-page memorandum to the President-Elect and the 107th Congress titled *Education 2001: Getting the Job Done.* It summarized our analysis of the problems of existing programs and suggestions for reforming the federal role in education. The total cost for the memo was $4,000.

Within a few days of taking office in 2001, President George W. Bush unveiled a comprehensive education reform package titled No Child Left Behind, which included a number of the ideas we favored. A year later, after a complicated route through Congress, this measure was signed into law. It includes demonstration programs that allow some states and communities to seek modest flexibility gains in their use of federal education funds (although Title I funds are not included). The new education law also gives Title I funds some portability: Disadvantaged children in failing schools may use them in other public (and charter) schools of their choice and, under limited circumstances, may use them to purchase "supplemental services" such as tutoring from outside providers.

When President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act in January 2002, there was widespread agreement that its implementation challenges would be enormous. We had anticipated this, and late in 2001 we commissioned a series of short policy papers aimed at exploring the challenges of implementing the law's centerpiece testing and accountability provisions. A month after ESEA was signed, we posted those papers on our website and hosted a lively, well-attended conference featuring their authors. That event was an opportunity to gather Hill staffers who helped draft the law, present and former executive branch officials with responsibility for implementing it, state

education chiefs who will need to comply with it, and journalists and opinion shapers who will need to explain it—all with the aim of better understanding how the revamped ESEA is supposed to work and the challenges that lie ahead.

Another Policy Challenge: Special Education

While ESEA is the main face that Washington shows in K-12 education policy, the federal government plays an even larger role in the education of children with disabilities. A quarter-century ago, Congress passed the measure now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), mandating that disabled youngsters receive a "free appropriate public education" in the "least restrictive environment." IDEA has largely succeeded in ensuring that these children receive educational opportunities and services, but there is widespread dissatisfaction with the program because of its cost, the quality of the services provided, its estrangement from the standards-based reform movement, and the perverse incentives that the special education system creates for policymakers, schools, and parents.

Many people agree that the education of disabled children needs rethinking, but few seem to know what that should mean in practice. Some fear raising the topic lest they be labeled insensitive to the plight of the disabled. In anticipation of the next IDEA reauthorization cycle, in 1999 the Foundation commissioned a set of papers on special education that we hoped would stimulate candor and fresh thinking on the topic.

In November 2000, we again teamed with the Progressive Policy Institute to host a conference called "Rethinking Special Education for a New Century." The audience included Congressional aides, representatives of Washington policy organizations and disability groups, and journalists. What emerged was a sense that the conventional wisdom in this area about how to improve the program—tightening the regulatory vise to ensure greater compliance by states, communities, and

schools—wasn't the only or necessarily the best way to think about it. We contributed $27,700 toward the cost of the conference, with the remaining cost picked up by PPI, supported by a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

In May 2001, we joined with PPI to publish a thick volume on special education law and policy, based on the papers commissioned for the conference. *Rethinking Special Education for a New Century* also had a final chapter (written by TBF and PPI) that outlined principles for the reform of special education. Our total costs for the book were about $132,500. Already on its third printing, *Rethinking Special Education* has been in constant demand since it was released. It has stirred much discussion and was said to be required reading for Bush Administration appointees and members of a new presidential commission on special ed. When that panel, which includes four people who wrote papers for our book, makes its report this summer, we will get a sense of whether our analyses and policy suggestions have made any headway.

To continue to foster reform of special education, TBF and PPI have worked with Public Agenda to develop a survey of parents' views of their disabled children's education experiences under IDEA. We contributed $70,000 toward this survey, and our grant was supplemented by $160,000 raised by PPI. Public Agenda expects to release the results of this survey in mid-2002.

Results

Federal programs have immense inertia and are surrounded by many contending interest groups, most of them devoted to the status quo (and the enlargement of their own slices of the funding pie). Plenty of those interest groups are large, well-financed, overtly political, and accustomed to having their own way. Against that backdrop, it's naïve for policy reformers to expect that the sheer force of their ideas will prevail. And indeed, No Child Left Behind emerged from Congress weaker in key aspects than we had hoped. It's too soon to know what will

happen with IDEA; if the President's Commission embraces bold reform of that program, perhaps some needed changes will finally occur. Our role has been to inject some candor and fresh thinking into the process, and we feel that our efforts have been reasonably fruitful. While we lack the troops to follow every twist and turn on Capitol Hill, we know we've helped to place honest analyses and worthy policy ideas on the table. Next, we expect to turn to other federal policy challenges such as education research, and preschool and higher education.

IV. Diffusion Of Ideas

While TBF engages in a considerable amount of true research, we also devote much staff time and resources to circulating and advancing reform ideas that often go against the grain of conventional education thinking.

Fordham Reports

Some of these ideas are disseminated through traditional means: printing them up and mailing them out. Since 1997 we have directly published three large volumes and more than thirty shorter reports on a wide range of topics, including the persistence of whole-language reading instruction; the tale of why Princeton, New Jersey, needed a charter school; and an evaluation of the best-known philanthropic gift to K-12 education. While some of these reports have been ordered by hundreds of people and extensively quoted in the media, others made far less of an impression.

Sometimes, too, a foray into a particular topic leads to a greater involvement. Our first venture into the evaluation of education philanthropy, *Can Philanthropy Fix Our Schools? Appraising Walter Annenberg's $500 Million Gift to Public Education*, attracted much attention and led us to

realize that other education philanthropists could benefit from a guide showing them how to get more reform bang from their philanthropic bucks. So in September 2001 we published *Making It Count: A Guide to High-Impact Education Philanthropy*, which draws in part on our own experience in this arena, both nationally and in Dayton. To further spread ideas about effective education giving, Chester Finn is helping the Philanthropy Roundtable establish an education affinity group, and TBF is supporting the work of Education Partners, a new organization aimed at advising philanthropists interested in education reform.

Other Dissemination Strategies

In addition to publishing hard-copy reports, the Fordham Foundation maintains a website (www.edexcellence.net), which serves as a lively clearinghouse of ideas about education reform, and we have e-mailed *The Education Gadfly*, a 10-page weekly bulletin of education news and analysis, to thousands of readers since May 2001. We regularly get compliments from our readers. Since 1997, we have published *Selected Readings on School Reform*, a quarterly compendium of articles (from newspapers, magazines, and journals) and essays on education reform. (This is the successor to a compilation known as *Network News and Views*, which Chester Finn and Diane Ravitch launched almost two decades ago.)

Despite tremendous interest in education reform, in 1999 there was no journal on this topic that was open to heterodox ideas and nonestablishment research, as well as being accessible to both policymakers and a lay audience. Existing magazines in the field focused on questions of education practice and pedagogy rather than questions related to changing the policies, structure, and governance of K-12 education. They also tended to be dominated by people heavily invested in the way schools now work. We thought there would be a sizable audience for a reform-oriented journal that avoided educationist jargon and academese and included lively debate, well-stated opinions, and quality research.

In fall 1999, Chester Finn and Harvard political scientist Paul Peterson began circulating a proposal to create a new journal on school reform for which they would serve as editors. It would feature short, lively articles accessible to a lay audience, accompanied by a website containing longer and more academic versions of the articles.

The journal's target audience would include policymakers and their staffs, opinion shapers, journalists, scholars, and practitioners. A top designer was hired to develop a mockup with superior graphics on high-quality paper to make the magazine appealing. To establish visibility and gain influence, it would be distributed free of charge to individuals and institutions identified by existing reform networks and mailing lists (including the Fordham Foundation's list). The initial press run was to be 10,000 copies.

This proposal was warmly received by a number of organizations. The members of the Hoover Institution's Koret Task Force on Education (which includes E.D. Hirsch, Paul Hill, Diane Ravitch, Eric Hanushek, and others) agreed to form the nucleus of its editorial board. Jay Greene of the Manhattan Institute and Marci Kanstoroom of the Fordham Foundation were added as editors; they were joined later by Frederick Hess and Martin West. The Hoover Institution and the Manhattan Institute joined us in making planning grants to develop the new magazine. Harvard's Program on Education Policy and Governance became the journal's fourth sponsor.

Initially named *Education Matters* (later changed to *Education Next*), the new journal would be published quarterly, and a typical issue would be 80 pages long. To launch and support it for an initial three-year period, we estimated a total budget of about $1.7 million. Of this, the editors and Hoover's John Raisian managed to raise about two-thirds by fall 2000, which included a total of $300,000 pledged by TBF.

The magazine debuted in January 2001. To promote it, the Hoover Institution hosted a Washington symposium at which First Lady Laura Bush served as luncheon speaker. *Education Next* has generated much

discussion, positive feedback, and "buzz" across a wide spectrum of education opinion. As it prepared to publish its fifth issue (Volume II, Issue 1) in February 2002, circulation was at 15,000, it was attracting a fair number of paid subscribers, unsolicited manuscripts were flooding in, and newsstand sales were rising.

Because there is a limit to the reach of TBF's own voice and even the impact of endeavors that we undertake with others, the best way for us to boost the audience for good reform ideas is to borrow megaphones all over town. We do this by making ourselves available to journalists, by taking advantage of speaking opportunities large and small, by testifying before Congress, by joining forces with like-minded groups on various projects, and by networking as best we can. A summary of media coverage of the Fordham Foundation during 2001 found more than 200 items (articles by, about, or quoting Foundation staff or reports). Our short-term goal is to advance well-conceived but provocative ideas and information, to avoid the twin perils of being boring and being flaky, and to leverage the resources of others to spread the word about promising school reform ideas. Our long-term goal, of course, is for those ideas to lead to actions that strengthen the education of children.

Conclusion

It is nearly impossible to measure the diffusion and impact of ideas. In a few policy areas, including those sketched in this report, we see some tangible signs that our ideas have had an impact on policy debates. While we think we've made some important contributions in the war of ideas, we are humbled by the education reform challenges that still lie ahead.

NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS *1997-2001*

I. Improving Teacher Quality

	TBF Outlay
Autonomy and Innovation: How Do Massachusetts Charter School Principals Use Their Freedom?** by Bill Triant, December 2001	$500
Personnel Policy in Charter Schools, by Michael Podgursky and Dale Ballou, August 2001	$37,300
Teach for America: An Evaluation of Teacher Differences and Student Outcomes in Houston, Texas,* by Margaret Raymond, Stephen Fletcher, and Javier Luque, published by the Hoover Institution, August 2001	$23,000
Professionalism and the Public Good: A Brief History of Teacher Certification, by David L. Angus, edited by Jeffrey Mirel, January 2001	$12,800
A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why,* a survey by Public Agenda, 2000	$100,000
Can Teachers Own Their Own Schools? New Strategies for Educational Excellence, by Richard Vedder, co-published with the Independent Institute, 2000	$20,000
Growing Better Teachers in the Garden State: New Jersey's "Alternate Route" to Teacher Certification, by Leo Klagholz, January 2000	$10,100
The Quest for Better Teachers: Grading the States, by Chester E. Finn, Jr., Marci Kanstoroom, and Michael J. Petrilli, November 1999	$46,800
Better Teachers, Better Schools, edited by Marci Kanstoroom and Chester E. Finn, Jr., co-published with the Education Leaders Council, July 1999	$65,300

The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them, Policy Statement, April 1999	$24,000
Left at the Altar: The Teachers' Union Merger and the Prospects for Education Reform, Mike Antonucci, October 1998	$8,000
Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education,* A Survey by Public Agenda, 1997	$160,000
	SUBTOTAL: $507,800

II. Strengthening Standards and Accountability

Little Sign of Backlash Against Academic Standards or Standardized Tests,* a survey by Public Agenda, 2000	$35,000
Good Science, Bad Science: Teaching Evolution in the States, by Lawrence S. Lerner, September 2000	$29,900
Politicizing Science Education, by Paul R. Gross, April 2000	$11,100
The State of State Standards 2000, edited by Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Michael J. Petrilli, January 2000	$108,900
What's At Stake in the K-12 Standards Wars: A Primer for Educational Policy Makers,* edited by Sandra Stotsky, published by Peter Lang, 2000	$2,500
Making Standards Work: A Case Study of Washington State, by Robin J. Lake, Paul T. Hill, Lauren O'Toole, and Mary Beth Celio, July 1999	$8,200
Why Testing Experts Hate Testing, by Richard P. Phelps, January 1999	$10,300
A Lot To Be Thankful For: What Parents Want Children to Learn About America,* a survey by Public Agenda, 1998	$175,000
Filling In the Blanks: Putting Standardized Tests to the Test, by Gregory J. Cizek, October 1998	$10,000
The State of State Standards 1998, by Chester E. Finn, Jr., Michael J. Petrilli, and Gregg Vanourek, July 1998	$16,000

Spending More While Learing Less: U.S. School Productivity in International Perspective, by Herbert J. Walberg, July 1998	$9,800
A TIMSS Primer: Lessons and Implications for U.S. Education, by Harold W. Stevenson, July 1998	$10,000
A Nation Still At Risk,* Policy Statement, April 1998	$3,000
State Math Standards, by Ralph A. Raimi and Lawrence S. Braden, March 1998	$28,800
State Science Standards, by Lawrence S. Lerner, March 1998	$29,200
State Geography Standards, by Susan Munroe and Terry Smith, February 1998	$29,400
State History Standards, by David W. Saxe, February 1998	$35,800
State English Standards, by Sandra Stotsky, July 1997	$30,000
	SUBTOTAL: $582,900

III. Federal Education Policy

No Child Left Behind: What Will it Take?** Papers from a conference on implementing the new ESEA, February 2002	$7,000
Rethinking Special Education for a New Century, edited by Chester E. Finn, Jr., Andrew J. Rotherham, and Charles R. Hokanson, Jr., co-published with the Progressive Policy Institute, May 2001	$132,500
Education 2001: Getting the Job Done, by Chester E. Finn, Jr., Bruno V. Manno, and Diane Ravitch, with Kelly Amis, Marci Kanstoroom, and Michael J. Petrilli, December 2000	$4,000
New Directions: Federal Education Policy in the Twenty-First Century, edited by Marci Kanstoroom and Chester E. Finn, Jr., co-published with the Manhattan Institute, March 1999	$76,200
	SUBTOTAL: $219,700

IV. Diffusion of Ideas

Making It Count: A Guide to High-Impact Education Philanthropy, by Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Kelly Amis, September 2001	$59,800
Education Next,* quarterly journal since January 2001	$320,000
The Education Gadfly, weekly e-mail bulletin since May 2001	$3,300
Can Philanthropy Fix Our Schools? Appraising Walter Annenberg's $500 Million Gift to Public Education, case studies of New York (Raymond Domanico), Chicago (Alexander Russo), and Philadelphia (Carol Innerst); afterword by Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Marci Kanstoroom, April 2000	$27,200
Selected Readings on School Reform, quarterly report since April 1997	$216,800
	SUBTOTAL: $627,100

V. Other Areas

Charters, Vouchers and Public Education,* edited by Paul Peterson and David Campbell, published by Brookings Institution Press, 2001	$40,000
Evolution of the New American Schools: From Revolution to Mainstream, by Jeffrey Mirel, October 2001	$35,000
Whole Language Lives On: The Illusion of "Balanced" Reading Instruction, by Louisa Cook Moats, October 2000	$12,100
Parochial Schools and Public Aid: Today's Catholic Schools, by Christopher Connell, June 2000	$14,700
Why Education Experts Resist Effective Practices (and What It Would Take to Make Education More Like Medicine), by Douglas Carnine, April 2000	$4,700
Strange Brew: Minnesota's Motley Mix of School Reforms, by Mitchell B. Pearlstein, January 2000	$9,700

Better By Design? A Consumer's Guide to Schoolwide Reform, by James Traub, December 1999	$52,400
Choice and Community: The Racial, Economic, and Religious Context of Parental Choice in Cleveland,* by Jay Greene, published by the Buckeye Institute, November 1999	$16,500
Why Charter Schools? The Princeton Story, by Chiara R. Nappi, October 1999	$10,100
Traditional Schools, Progressive Schools: Do Parents Have a Choice? by Louis Chandler, October 1999	$8,900
Remediation in Higher Education: A Symposium, by David W. Breneman and William N. Haarlow, with commentaries by Robert M. Costrell, David H. Ponitz, and Laurence Steinberg, July 1998	$30,000
The Tracking and Ability Grouping Debate, by Tom Loveless, July 1998	$9,000
	SUBTOTAL: $243,100

TOTAL FOR NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS, 1997-2001	**$2,180,600**

* supported but not published by the Foundation
** web-based publication

OTHER NATIONAL GRANTS *1997-2001*

(Selected grants that did not lead [or have not yet led] to publications)

I. Improving Teacher Quality

	TBF Outlay
National Council on Teacher Quality / Start-up grants for a new organization	$180,000
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey / To support policy work on behalf of alternative certification	$10,000
	SUBTOTAL: $190,000

II. Strengthening Standards and Accountability

The Textbook League / Challenge grant to support a newsletter about textbook quality	$20,000
Accountability Works / Grant to develop a consumer's guide to state standards, tests & accountability	$50,000
Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education at Southwest Texas State University / Grant to examine connections between history and geography	$11,500
	SUBTOTAL: $81,500

III. Federal education policy

Public Agenda / Grant to support a survey of parents concerning special education	$70,000
	SUBTOTAL: $70,000

IV. Diffusion of ideas

Black Alliance for Education Options / Start-up grant for a new organization focusing on education philanthropy (Education Allies)	$25,000
	SUBTOTAL: $25,000

V. Other Areas

Charter Friends National Network / To support a policy consultant	$10,000
Center for Market-based Education, Goldwater Institute / To support a conference on research about charter schools	$7,500
	SUBTOTAL: $17,500

TOTAL, OTHER NATIONAL GRANTS, 1997-2001	**$384,000**
GRAND TOTAL, NATIONAL RESEARCH (REPORTS AND OTHER GRANTS), 1997-2001	**$2,564,600**

THE DAYTON PROGRAM

Overview

In addition to a vigorous national program, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation sticks to its roots, which are firmly planted in Dayton, Ohio, home of the late Thomas B. Fordham and Thelma Fordham Pruett. There we function more as a conventional private foundation, making modest grants to worthy causes and organizations, and sometimes helping to launch new programs or activities.

Aside from limited involvement in general civic betterment projects, our work in Dayton and vicinity focuses exclusively on the transformation of elementary/secondary education, supporting projects and organizations that serve real children and that create (and improve) real schools.

In Dayton, as in TBF's national program, we strive to ensure that everything we do is based on research about what works, as well as strongly held convictions about how the world of K-12 education needs to change. Indeed, over the past five years we have sought to include a research and evaluation component in every major project we support in Dayton. It's essential, we think, to determine whether a program is succeeding, how it can be fine-tuned, and if it's worth continuing and replicating.

Background: Education in Dayton

While Dayton doesn't have the visibility of New York, Los Angeles, or Philadelphia, it shares many of the same challenges. Three decades of forced busing and middle-class flight have taken their toll. Once a city with a predominantly white and substantially middle-class population,

Dayton's population is now overwhelmingly poor. The continuing woes of the public schools have been both an impetus for and a result of the middle-class exodus: Those who could afford to move to the suburbs have done so. Families remaining in the city have watched their public schools deteriorate: By 2002, just one of Ohio's eight largest districts scored lower than Dayton on the state's report card. Dayton passed only five of the state's 27 standards in 2002 and, for the third year in a row, found itself designated an "academic emergency" district. No urban school system in Ohio has fewer children meeting state proficiency standards. The Dayton Public Schools have also seen enrollments drop from 60,000 students in the 1960s to around 21,000 today. The high school graduation rate in 2001 was a dismal 51.3 percent.

While the current Dayton superintendent and her predecessor have been imaginative and well-meaning, each has routinely been hamstrung by an ineffectual, quarrelsome, and highly political school board; by a change-averse bureaucracy; by a dearth of strong middle managers; and by a highly restrictive contract with a reform-averse teacher union.

Over the years, Dayton has had its share of earnest and energetic education reformers, and much has been tried. Some "reforms"—including some advanced by major national foundations—are generally believed to have made matters worse. Dozens of betterment schemes and models percolate throughout the system, with no real districtwide curriculum or strategy. Even within individual schools, one finds a proliferation of discrete programs, each with its own budget, staff, and outside constituencies. Fortunately, Dayton has been blessed with some reform-minded folks in the business community, the local universities, and the principal newspaper—and now on the school board itself. Unfortunately, Dayton has also been plagued by local political leaders who, most of the time, seem interested in everything *but* education.

This gloomy situation made it virtually impossible for the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (or others) to advance the wholesale public school reform that Dayton so urgently needs. There was simply no

receptivity in or around the school system. This left us almost entirely outside, working on strategies designed to aid needy children to get a better education *in spite of* the public school system. It's no surprise that such programs made us less welcome in that system's corridors. But our foremost concern was not with our popularity but with the educational well-being of children. (That's part of the freedom that comes with being a private foundation.) We hoped, too, that the competitive pressures occasioned by sizable numbers of children exiting that troubled system for brighter opportunities in private and charter schools would spur change in the system, if only for reasons of self-preservation.

We cannot be sure that the competition we helped foment led to this development, but a ray of hope gleamed through Dayton's public school cloud in November 2001, when a pro-reform slate of four new members was elected to the seven-member school board. They have promised sweeping changes.

It won't be easy. The previous superintendent departed under a hail of controversy when a state audit revealed a large, unexpected budget deficit in the district. That problem continues (though outsiders who have examined the system's finances say that millions are being spent on low-priority items). Historically, Dayton's public school system has had difficulty making tough fiscal choices and has tended to blame others (recently including the community's fledgling school choice movement) for its financial woes. Dayton has the highest per-pupil funding level of Ohio's eight large cities—more than $10,000 per pupil in revenues—yet spends less than half of its budget on instruction. It's clear that solving this school system's problems will require more than money.

Our Strategy

As a small education-oriented foundation with Dayton roots (and some Dayton trustees) but no Dayton office, how have we crafted our mission over these five years? Our overarching goal is to provide better edu-

cational opportunities for children who need them while also seeking to improve the long-term quality and performance of K-12 education throughout the community.

That's a tall order, of course, and an ongoing struggle, but evidence of activity and modest signs of progress have encouraged us. Our strategy for helping improve education in Dayton falls into five categories:

I. School Choices for Needy Children and Families —Supporting privately funded scholarships to enable low-income Dayton children to gain access to better schools.

II. Creating and Improving Community (Charter) Schools — Helping educators, parents, and concerned citizens launch and run successful community schools that provide educational options unavailable in the public system.

III. Assisting with the Reform of Public Schools — Assisting as best we can with efforts by the public school system to improve its own offerings and services.

IV. Research, Evaluation, and Community Information — Informing parents and the community about education issues and possibilities and encouraging them to demand better options for children, while also ensuring that reform programs are properly evaluated.

V. Strengthening Civil Society in Dayton — Children are not educated in a vacuum. We use some of our resources to assist local community groups to improve the city's quality of life, particularly as it bears on children.

None of this have we undertaken alone. Across the spectrum of our work, we rely on relationships and partnerships with others in Dayton to ensure that reform efforts are collaborative, appropriate, and effective.

I. School Choices For Needy Children And Families

Our largest single expenditure in Dayton these past five years has been some $2 million spent on the creation, operation, and evaluation of the Parents Advancing Choice in Education (PACE) program. In 2001-2002, PACE is assisting more than 900 low-income children to attend the private school of their family's choice. (It would also be fine with us if they attended better public schools, but most other local school systems haven't been willing to accept them—and under Ohio law they're not obliged to.)

PACE began as a local effort, but in 1999 it became the Dayton partner of the nationwide Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF), founded by Ted Forstmann and John Walton. Our Foundation's annual gift to PACE serves as Dayton's "matching dolars" for CSF. A number of local funders have also supported PACE. In 2002, PACE received about one-third of its $1.2 million scholarship budget from us, one-third from CSF, and the final third from Dayton funders.

For some time to come, we expect to work with those partners to provide needy Dayton children with scholarships to attend the school of their choice, both because children are in the program now whose education we intend to see through and because this program has many collateral benefits for the community. It's one of the most direct ways to offer low-income families better opportunities while showing policymakers that choice can reduce the achievement gap between disadvantaged and middle-class youngsters—a finding whose salience may grow if the U.S. Supreme Court okays the publicly funded voucher program in Cleveland. If there is a downside to this program, it's that demand has been far greater than the program can meet. There is not enough capacity, in either the number of scholarships or the number of available seats in local private schools, to meet the demand of parents seeking better options for their children.

II. Creating And Improving Community (Charter) Schools

In addition to PACE, our "choice" strategy has concentrated on developing successful charter schools in Dayton by helping the community take maximum advantage of a 1997 state law that allowed "start-up" charters in troubled urban school districts. Here, we are seeking to create new educational capacity for needy children in the short run while advancing the larger cause of education reform over the longer term. The charter movement has really taken off in Dayton, and these schools have proven popular.

In 2001-2002, 13 charter schools enrolled more than 4,000 children, equal to more than 18 percent of the public schools' enrollment—one of the highest percentages in the nation. In 2001-2002, these schools will receive more than $20 million in state funding, as well as additional financial support from TBF and other private donors. Dayton's charter schools are also highly diverse. Most, though not all, are off to a solid start. After just three or four years of operation, the early returns suggest that, like other school reforms, charters hold great promise but need to be held accountable for superior academic results and helped in various ways to produce such results.

We assist charter schools in Dayton in four ways. First, we support individual school developers with start-up, development, emergency, and facilities grants, normally in the range of $25,000 at a time. These grants have totaled $650,260 over five years. In order to maximize the impact of our support, we often issue them as "challenge grants" that leverage other resources. For example, we made a challenge grant of $50,000 to help launch the Colin Powell Leadership Academy in 2001. This helped the Academy to raise $100,000 from other private sources.

Second, in 2000 we launched one of the nation's first charter "incubators" to take a handful of carefully selected school development teams through a rigorous training process in order to ensure that their new

schools are well-governed, well-managed, operationally sound, and based on solid education research. All of the school developers incorporated proven education models like Direct Instruction, the KIPP Academy model, and the Core Knowledge curriculum. The incubator has now been absorbed by the Dayton Education Resource Center (ERC), described below.

Third, we support technical assistance for all interested Dayton charter schools via the Education Resource Center (ERC), which resembles those in other states and communities. When that center's first organizational home became unstable, we worked with Dayton allies to redesign a sound means of providing targeted assistance, trouble-shooting, and advocacy for local charter schools. In the end, we agreed that these services should be provided to any area school ready to embrace effective education reforms or in need of business services.

The ERC now assists individual schools with such issues as curriculum development, transportation and facility woes, state testing and student reporting requirements, state and federal legal obligations, and the need for affordable insurance. The ERC has been housed at the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce, a welcome education reform ally, which provides it with some in-kind services and administrative assistance. In the first three years of its operation, TBF expects to fund the ERC to the tune of $375,000. In late 2001, the ERC also received a $700,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education to train others in creating new school incubators and to write a guide about the incubation of schools. Through our support, in 2002 the ERC was able to leverage $75,000 from a Dayton business leader and $50,000 from another foundation, in addition to the assistance it receives from the Chamber of Commerce.

Finally, recognizing that the strength and vitality of the charter movement in Dayton depend heavily on policy and funding decisions at the state level, we helped create a statewide charter school organization, the Ohio Community Schools Center (OCSC). We cannot have a healthy crop of charters in Dayton if the state does not provide workable

ground rules and adequate financial support—and if the statewide charter movement is not in good shape. OCSC played a particularly valuable role in improving the state charter school law during the 2000 legislative session. Its leaders and staff have also worked closely with policymakers in crafting needed changes to the charter law in 2002.

Sometimes OCSC must play defense. In May 2001, the Ohio Federation of Teachers and the Dayton Education Association both sued the state, alleging that Ohio's charter program is unconstitutional. The OCSC, at our urging, has taken on the task of preparing a vigorous defense strategy for the state's charter schools. We encouraged OCSC to ask affected parents, students, and schools to seek legal status as interveners in this case. That has now happened, and the OCSC is assembling a war chest to pay for a long-term legal strategy. It has named a strategy committee to provide day-to-day leadership for that effort.

In support of the legal strategy, its associated public affairs, and the organization's general operating expenses, the OCSC has raised $280,000 from out-of-state foundations. Individual charter schools have contributed about $100,000 in donations and fees and have pledged another $370,000 over the course of 2002-2003. Since 1998, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation has provided about 20 percent ($116,500) of OCSC's total revenue, as well as considerable help with plans and strategies.

There have been a number of successes on the charter front, but we've also witnessed some frustrating problems. Some Dayton start-up schools struggle academically and also have difficulty operating as successful small businesses. At this writing, one was recently closed because of its financial travails. As a Foundation concerned about providing quality educational options for all children, we have tried to get these schools to work together on common needs and concerns, but for the most part they remain fiercely independent and competitive with one another. This fact has made it easier for the enemies of charters to attack

schools individually and harder for the schools to benefit from factors like economies of scale on purchases and business services.

III. Assisting With The Reform Of Public Schools

Our goal is better education for all Dayton children, whatever schools they attend. Because the public school system was for so long impervious to serious renewal efforts, we have primarily focused on the creation of viable educational alternatives for children who need them. We've hoped that strong charter schools would also model approaches to school effectiveness that might spill over into the regular public school sector.

When we could, we've sought more direct ways to improve the public school system in Dayton. We have helped a few individual schools to install proven curricula and effective teaching methods. We are supporting an effort by three Dayton-area schools—one public, one private, and one charter—to put into practice the nationally known Core Knowledge curriculum. We've helped bring expert speakers, analysts, and scholars to Dayton to elevate the education reform discourse, and we've met with community leaders and provided them with information about education reforms undertaken elsewhere. In truth, however, the school system's own dysfunctions limited how much reform support we could provide. We hope that the new and more reform-minded school board will enable us to do more in the near future.

IV. Research, Evaluation And Community Information

We try to evaluate all our major Dayton projects to make certain they are actually working to help children learn. We also work to help parents gain access to better information about their children's options, bringing to the larger Dayton community a better understanding of education reform—and also a greater receptivity to these reforms.

To gauge the effect of the PACE scholarship program, we supported important research by a team led by Harvard political scientist Paul E. Peterson, which also studied similar programs in New York and Washington, D.C. Peterson's study revealed that African-American children made significant academic gains when they enrolled in private schools of their choice. Dayton would not have been part of this study had not we, and the PACE board, sought for it to be included—and then helped muster the resources to pay for it. Our $70,000 for this research was joined by about $200,000 from other foundations. The results of Peterson's work—the only truly experimental data in the school choice debate—have been very influential across the country.

We have also made a concerted effort to keep a research-and-evaluation component attached to the charter movement in Dayton. We do not take for granted that charter schools are always effective. Like other schools, they should be as transparent as possible so that everyone can determine how well they're actually working. Toward this end, we have helped to underwrite an annual before-and-after student testing initiative. We've insisted that these results be shared with the public. To our $25,000 in the 2001-2002 year has been added almost $50,000 from other donors and from the schools themselves. We've helped commission a University of North Carolina researcher to analyze and interpret the 2001-2002 testing data. This will enable parents and the community to see how well—or poorly—their charter schools are actually doing. We hope that this program can serve as a template

of accountability and transparency for Dayton's private and public schools in the future.

To help parents learn about their new education options, we have supported the growth of the PACE Parent Network, which seeks to inform and empower parents. Toward this end, it has produced a *Parents' Handbook* to help parents understand the public and private choices available to them, as well as providing an in-depth checklist of ways that parents can be more effective educators of their children through more comprehensive interaction with teachers and administrators. The Parent Network has also organized several events for community leaders and parents, including two school fairs where families could investigate a wide variety of public, charter, and private school options. Before the Parent Network existed, we designed and paid for a 12-page newspaper insert on education reform in Dayton, which was loaded with information for local parents about school options for their children. This appeared as a special pullout supplement in the *Dayton Daily News.*

We have organized, paid for, and helped disseminate the results of two large community-wide surveys of attitudes toward education issues and reforms. *Education Reform in the Dayton Area* was published in fall 1998. In 2001, we supported *Dayton Education in 2001: The Views of Citizens and Parents,* a survey of parents with children in public, private, and charter schools. The purpose was to gauge how parents feel about their child's school, and how the broader public feels about various education reforms. This survey triggered much discussion in Dayton and was used as the basis for a debate among school board candidates. In addition to formal studies and surveys, we have written a number of op-ed pieces for the local newspaper and have sponsored community forums and presentations by outside education experts.

V. Strengthening Civil Society In Dayton

School reform is not our only interest in Dayton. We also want to be a responsible community citizen, willing to assist with other worthy projects that strengthen civil society and assist children. In the past five years, we've supported several such projects, including the distribution of election materials to high school students, mentoring programs for middle schoolers, the improvement of the Carillon Historical Park, and the big new downtown arts center. In several cases, these efforts have directly helped students and children living in and around Dayton. In other cases, they promise to benefit all citizens of Dayton by making the city a better place to live.

Conclusion

It's premature to declare that primary/secondary education in Dayton has turned any corners, much less to claim credit for the changes that have occurred. But we detect a level of community consciousness and energy that was not visible in 1997. We can identify numerous educational opportunities for low-income children that had not previously existed. And we see mounting reason to believe that the public school system can yet be turned around. We hope that the next five years will bring greater progress in the educational accomplishments of Dayton's daughters and sons.

DAYTON GRANTS *1997-2001*

I. School Choices for Needy Children and Families

Recipient Organization	TBF Outlay
Children's Scholarship Fund	$1,125,000
Dayton Foundation	$400,500
University of Dayton	$14,000
	TOTAL $1,539,500

II. Creating and Improving Community (Charter) Schools

A. Individual Schools

Recipient Schools	TBF Outlay
City Day Community School	$75,000
Colin Powell Leadership Academy	$125,000
Dayton Urban Academy	$51,260
ISUS Trade and Technology	$60,000
New Choices	$50,000
Omega School of Excellence	$77,400
Rhea Academy	$70,000
Richard Allen Academy	$56,600
Richard Allen Preparatory	$55,000
World of Wonder School	$30,000
	Sub-total: $650,260

B. Citywide Charter School Support and Improvement

Recipient Organizations	TBF Outlay
Alliance for Education	$100,000
Concerned Christian Men	$10,000
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce	$161,459
Dayton Foundation	$118,858
	Sub-total: $390,317

C. Statewide Charter School Support

Recipient Organizations	TBF Outlay
Great Oaks Institute	$7,500
Ohio Community School Center	$116,280
	Sub-total: $123,780
	TOTAL: $1,164,357

III. Assisting with the Reform of Public Schools

Recipient Organizations	TBF Outlay
Alliance for Education	$5,000
Core Knowledge Foundation	$10,733
Kids Voting	$8,500
Richard Gates Institute for Ed. Development	$5,000
Wright State University	$10,000
	TOTAL: $39,233

IV. Research, Evaluation, and Community Information

Recipient Organizations	TBF Outlay
Alliance for Education	$9,000
Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions	$18,500
Dayton Foundation	$22,000
Kids 2000	$5,000
University of Dayton	$80,000
	TOTAL: $134,500

V. Strengthening Civil Society in Dayton

Recipient Organizations	TBF Outlay
Aullwood Farm	$50,000
Carillon Historical Park	$100,000
Culture Works	$14,500
Donors Forum of Ohio	$1,000
Goodwill Industries Miami Valley	$500
Habitat for Humanity	$1,000
Inventing Flight	$5,000
K-12 Gallery for Young People	$1,000
Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges	$8,000
Parity 2000, Inc.	$100,000
Sinclair Community College	$10,000
St. Joseph Children's Treatment Center	$25,000

United Way	$1,000
Wright State University	$41,190
	TOTAL: $358,190

TOTAL DAYTON GRANTS, 1997-2001:	**$3,235,780**

DAYTON PUBLICATIONS

Dayton Education in 2001: The Views of Citizens and Parents, a survey comparing the views of parents with children in private, public, and charter schools	$25,000
Education Reform in the Dayton Area: Public Attitudes and Opinion, an analysis of the August 1998 findings by Anita D. Suda	$25,000
Change Takes Off! Schools in the Miami Valley, 1998	$75,400

TOTAL, DAYTON PUBLICATIONS, 1997-2001	**$125,400**
GRAND TOTAL, DAYTON PROGRAMS, 1997-2001	**$3,361,180**

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