



# Honoring Progress

An Update on the NGA Center Honor States

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This bimonthly newsletter provides information about the progress of the Honor States Grant Program, a \$23.6 million, governor-led effort to improve college- and work-ready graduation rates. Launched at the 2005 National Education Summit, this initiative includes 26 states and is supported by a consortium of eight foundations.

— Editor: Michael Hartney, Policy Analyst, NGA Center for Best Practices, [mhartney@nga.org](mailto:mhartney@nga.org)

## IN THIS ISSUE

In this issue we shine the spotlight on the oft-ignored “supply-side” of high school redesign. We begin by exploring how state policymakers are working to expand the supply of high-quality high schools by examining state efforts to bring innovative new models to scale. In particular, we highlight different approaches taken by three states to expand the supply of excellent public schools. We conclude by providing some useful resources for policymakers interested in learning more about best practices that support the replication of proven models.

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## Facts at a Glance

- In 2005, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) qualified five million students to transfer out of their low-performing schools; however, less than 1 percent of these students (65,000) found their way into a new school (NCES and *The U.S. Department of Education, Consolidated State Performance Reports on NCLB, 2006*).
- While some cite these low transfer rates as evidence that parents and students are uninterested in using public school choice, the data reveal that in the 26 states reporting complete figures to the Department of Education, a full 20 percent of students who requested a transfer were never accommodated by their local education agency (LEA) (*U.S. Department of Education, Consolidated State Performance Reports on NCLB, 2006*).
- One of the top reasons state education agencies (SEAs) gave the Department of Education for failing to accommodate these requests was the limited supply of high-performing public school alternatives. (*The U.S. Department of Education, Consolidated State Performance Reports on NCLB, 2006*).
- Despite federal language encouraging school districts to use charter schools to absorb transfer students from low-performing schools, only a handful of “receiving-schools” (out of the hundreds accepting transfers) were charter schools. A lack of charter capacity was the most frequently cited reason for the lack of charter school use. (*U.S. Department of Education, Consolidated State Performance Reports on NCLB, 2006*).
- Twenty-five states limit the number of charter schools that can exist within a state. In 10 states, “caps” are constraining growth as measured by student and parent transfer requests. (*National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Annual Report, 2005*).

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## Rising to the Challenge: Indiana, North Carolina, and New York Expand the Supply of High-Quality School Options

Since the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), policymakers are increasingly concerned about expanding the supply of excellent public schools. Although NCLB requires states to provide students in chronically low-performing schools with a high-quality public school choice option, policymakers have found implementing this requirement to be a challenge in part because of the lack of quality alternatives.

So while states have largely complied with the law’s requirement to identify schools “needing improvement,” the limited supply of high-quality schools has compromised NCLB’s public school choice provision for far too many students.



Now more than ever, the lack of high-quality public school options—or the “supply-side”—has moved front and center to many states’ high school redesign agendas.

The reality is that in some communities there are simply not enough high-quality schools to meet the demands of parents and students. Although the current shortages in supply are well documented, equally well documented is the wave of new activity across the country that has brought new high-quality models to many communities. New school brands—such as the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), Green Dot Schools, and a myriad of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) focused academies—are producing impressive results in many of the nation’s most underserved communities. If state policymakers can devise strategies that thoughtfully replicate these and other new models, these innovations can serve as a launching pad for state efforts to expand the supply of high-quality public schools.

One of the strategies policymakers can use to address supply issues begins with state efforts to expand the number of high-quality public charter high schools. In some states, legislatively imposed caps continue to serve as a barrier to supply as statutes frequently deter educational entrepreneurs who have piloted successful new models from investing in efforts to scale up their ventures.



While increasing the number of high-quality schools within a state remains the ultimate success indicator for policymakers concerned with the supply-side of high school redesign, significant attention must also be paid to a complementary issue—the capacity of the education system’s human capital. Expanding the supply of high-quality options requires that policymakers devise comprehensive strategies to expand the pool of both excellent teachers and transformational school leaders capable of leading these new models.

Despite innovative programs that rapidly train a talented school workforce—like Teach for America (TFA) and New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS)—the overall supply of excellent teachers and leaders remains far too low. For example, TFA trains a mere 3,500 teachers annually within a public-school workforce of 3 million teachers and NLNS produces about 150 new principals a year—suggesting that these innovative programs face major scaling challenges that limit their ability to impact the system more broadly.

The good news is that innovative models provide policymakers with test cases, which they can use to assess the components of state policy that either promote or inhibit new model growth. Unlike years past, when it was difficult to find more than a handful of high-performing public schools and reputable alternative teacher and leader preparation programs, today many such schools and programs exist. It is no longer necessary for policymakers to ask whether states can create excellent new models. Now the focus has shifted to how policymakers can best create the conditions that allow all kids to choose from a customized menu of public school options.

No state or policymaker as of yet has all the answers to the scaling challenge. However, several states are engaged in finding innovative ways to expand the supply of effective new models so that more students can attend high-quality high schools. Indiana, North Carolina, and New York have each embraced unique approach to replicating successful new models while maintaining consistent high expectations.

## Indiana

In the Hoosier state, Governor Mitch Daniels has elevated the supply-side of school reform to a top priority in Indiana's overall effort to enact high school redesign across the state. To address the supply issue, the governor secured matching funds to complement Indiana's NGA Honors State Grant for the purpose of seeding new model high schools throughout the state in targeted local communities.

Funds have been used to spur a community redesign process by first identifying and then replicating promising high school reform models. Indiana has maintained focus on grass roots growth by making certain that the scale up process is owned by local communities and connected to the rapidly changing needs of the state's regional economies.

Local Indiana communities began this process by studying an array of different models that promised to establish high-quality Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) high schools. After careful deliberation and with direct community-level input, 17 new models received \$50,000 planning grants to support redesign. The outgrowth has been an immediate boost in the supply of high-quality schooling options for Indiana's students with three new STEM-focused high schools and four early college high schools opened this fall.

One of the models that has opened is New Tech High. Under the New Tech High approach, technology and project based learning infuse the school's core curriculum. Another model, early college high school, offers an alternative strategy. Early college high schools encourage eleventh- and twelfth-grade students to take postsecondary courses for dual credit. In doing so, these new models provide Indiana high school students with an additional option that allows them to customize their high school education and carefully plan their transition into college or careers.



Communities receiving these new model planning grants commit to a proven model, design an evaluation process, and ultimately follow through by creating a rigorous high school environment for student success. In a survey of recent New Tech graduates, 89 percent went on to higher education; over 90 percent applied their new tech learning and experience in later education and work; and 40 percent major in STEM subjects or work in STEM professions.

Though Indiana's current models emphasize a STEM rich curriculum, the state's High School Redesign effort does not showcase one model for success, but instead prides itself on providing examples of models which best fit the needs of the students and the economic needs of Indiana's local communities.

## North Carolina

North Carolina Governor Mike Easley has utilized a multi-pronged approach to expand the supply of high-quality public schools throughout the Tar Heel state. The governor's effort began in 2003 with the launch of the *North Carolina New Schools Project* (NCNSP)—a public-private partnership between the state and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that aims to redesign high school learning opportunities in a replicable yet customized manner. At the core of the redesign process are two initiatives that expand supply: financial supports for redesigning current high schools and the creation of new Learn and Earn early college high schools.



NCNSP partners with local school districts to convert large, comprehensive high schools into several focused and customized learning communities that operate autonomously on pre-existing high school campuses. Many of these redesigned high schools embrace a curricular theme which is tied to the state's emerging high need industries (e.g. health care and life sciences). At present, the NCNSP estimates that more than 75 of these new school models will be opened within the next five years.

In 2004, building upon NCNSP's work to redesign existing high schools, Governor Easley unveiled the *Learn and Earn Early College High-quality Initiative*—a program that provides incentives for high school students to remain in school, earn their associate's degree, and ultimately enter a workforce in a high-skill job tied to the state's new and emerging industries. The program quickly evolved to provide students the chance to undertake a five-year high school program that results in both a diploma and an associate's degree. Today, more than 100 early college high schools have taken root in the state.

The final tactic in North Carolina's wholesale effort to expand the supply of high-quality schools incorporates virtual learning opportunities into the state's available menu of educational offerings. In 2002, the state legislature passed a law that led to the creation of the *North Carolina Virtual Public School* (NCVPS)—a virtual learning environment that provides online courses to students anytime and anywhere through a customized student-centered approach to learning.



Through NCVPS, students have the opportunity to take courses they are unable to take at their local community schools. For example, students who desire to take Advanced Placement (AP) courses not offered by their local public school can enroll in NCVPS to pursue AP coursework. In many cases, these virtual classrooms expose students in rural school districts to high-quality coursework otherwise unavailable to them in their isolated rural district. The common denominator of NCVPS is a philosophical commitment to expanding access in supply and customization rather than standardization in the delivery of learning content.

To ensure high-quality and consistent rigor, all state-sponsored virtual courses are taught by state-certified teachers with subject area certification and expertise. While NCVPS began as an experiment in growing a new supply of high-quality high school learning opportunities, policymakers plan to make the program available to middle school and elementary school students in the near future. Through its commitment to redesigning current high schools with new thematic models, the establishment of new early college high schools, and a widening of the virtual learning pipeline, North Carolina has embraced a multi-dimensional approach that customizes educational options for all of its high school students.

## New York

In New York, Governor Eliot Spitzer has embraced the expansion of charter schools as a prime strategy to increase the supply of high-quality options available to students. Passed in 1998, New York's charter school law limited the number of new charter schools that authorizers could approve to 100. For years, this cap persisted despite full capacity among the state's charter schools and escalating demand to enroll students in these schools. To expand charter schools and allow for successful new models to replicate, Governor Spitzer raised the charter cap from 100 to 200 in the state's 2007 budget.



Beyond doubling the numbers, the cap increase was accompanied by legislation that provides greater flexibility to charter applicants. First, the governor won a guarantee from the legislature to maintain the current level of charter funding. The bill essentially keeps current charter funding levels in place by maintaining the state's commitment to per pupil funding—an important lever given the fact that charter schools are often challenged by fewer dollars.

In addition, the state will not mandate higher cost buildings or services from charter providers to ensure that those opening new schools are not inhibited by overly cumbersome regulatory barriers. At the same time, this measure seeks to shore up the consistency in rigor and commitment to equality among all charter schools by requiring that they demonstrate a “good faith effort” to educate students with disabilities and those with limited English language skills.

In sum, Governor Spitzer's thoughtful approach to charter school expansion balances the need for maintaining quality with the need for a more flexible state policy on charter growth as new models go to scale and eventually serve more students.

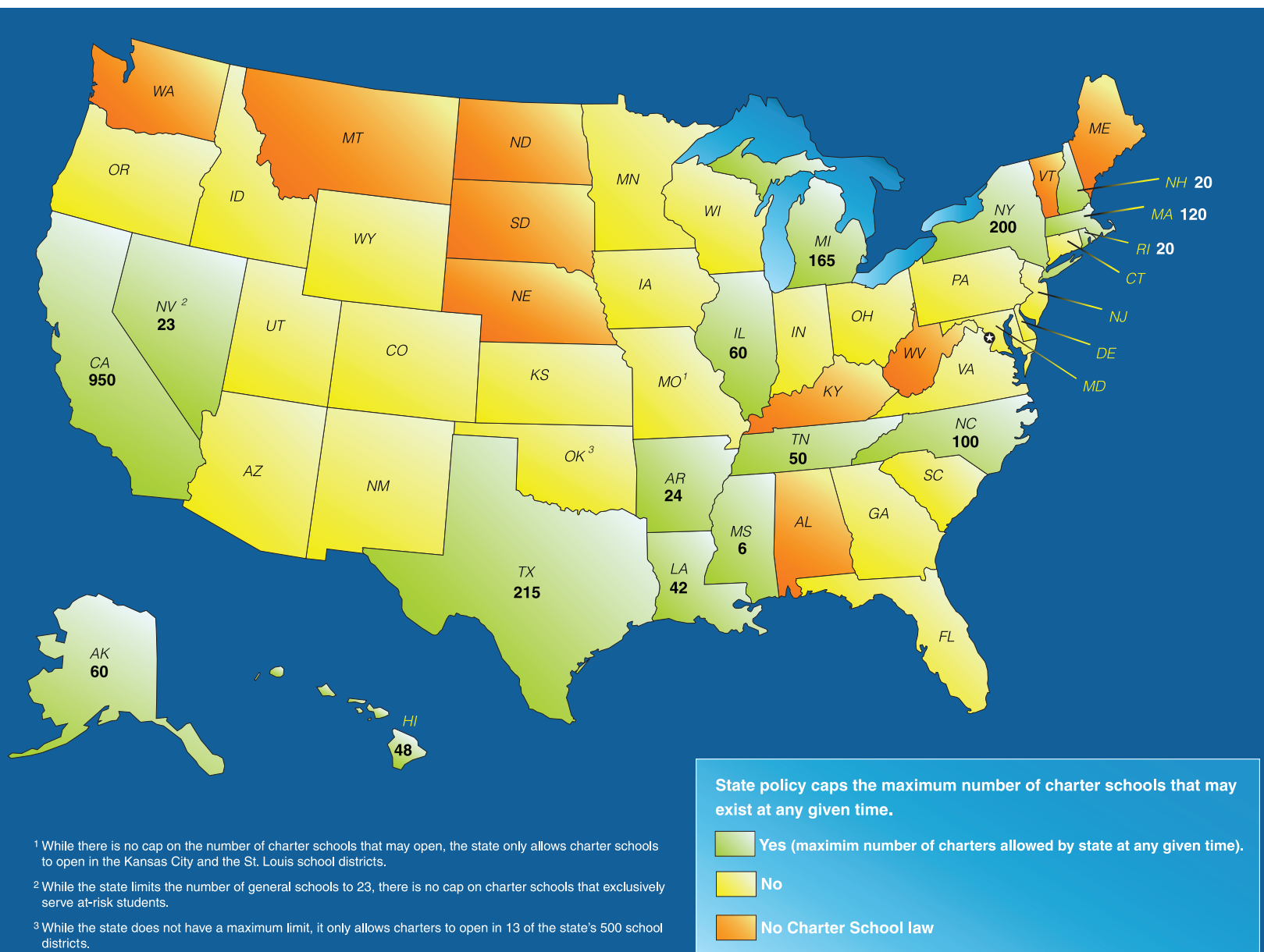
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## A Bird's-Eye View: State Policies that Affect Charter School Growth

As the New York example shows, state policy critically impacts the expansion of charter schools. Many state legislatures have placed a cap on the number of charter schools that can exist in the state at any one time—regardless of the demand for more supply or the lack of viable public school choice options needed to fill student transfer requests under No Child Left Behind.

Moreover, even in states without charter school caps, increasing the supply of charter schools can be inhibited by cumbersome authorizing procedures that require charter petitioners to navigate several hurdles before local bodies, state bodies, and independent examining boards. The map below provides an overview of state policies that cap the maximum number of charter schools authorized by the legislature.



Source: Education Commission of the States, ECS, 2006

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## EdVenture: Ted Mitchell's quest to grow high-quality schools that improve learning for all students

Ted Mitchell became CEO of NewSchools Venture Fund in the fall of 2005 after having served on New Schools' Board of Directors for seven years. Prior to joining New Schools, Mitchell served as the 12th president of Occidental College in Los Angeles. Dr. Mitchell is a national leader in the effort to provide high-quality education for all students and has long been active in California and Los Angeles educational reform initiatives. He currently chairs Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's Committee on Educational Excellence—charged with making recommendations to improve California's system of K-12 finance and governance, and is a member of the California State Board of Education. Late this summer, *Honoring Progress* spoke with Dr. Mitchell about the innovative work that education entrepreneurs are doing to bring successful new school models to scale.



**HP: There is a growing focus on scaling up successful school models, particularly in low-performing districts. What levers can state policymakers use to support this growth? What are the greatest policy barriers to bringing innovative new school models to scale?**

**TM:** *In our national work with charter school management organizations (CMOs)—which are essentially organizations who are trying to tackle this exact problem by creating aligned systems of charter schools within a specific region—we have found that the biggest challenges tend to be money and buildings. In most states, charter schools are competing on an uneven financial playing field to begin with; then, because they do not receive facilities dollars, they are forced to either fundraise extensively or carve this money out of their already-limited operating budget. Many states have experimented with tools to address these issues with policies like charter school facilities, lease aid, and bills like Proposition 39 here in California, which mandates that districts provide charter schools with access to facilities. But there is still much more to be done on this front to ensure that both state and district ecosystems are set up in a way that is receptive to starting and growing these new high-quality schools in areas that need them.*

**HP: Do policymakers focus too heavily on the demand side of the school choice equation, to the exclusion of supply issues?**

**TM:** *I actually think both sides deserve careful consideration by policymakers. On the demand side, it is clear that we need to attend to serving all students well, and also to ensuring that parents and communities have the information they need to make informed decisions about public education. One of the things that could really help here is a more thoughtful approach to the data we use to hold schools accountable. On the supply-side, more attention should certainly be paid to increasing the supply of excellent public schools in whatever form they take. Here, state policymakers can play a role on the financing and facilities fronts as I mentioned earlier, but also in working with districts to figure out how to partner with these schools in a way that meets the diverse needs of our public school students.*



**HP: What strategies can states take to ensure consistency in quality and rigor when promoting an expansion in the supply of new school models?**

**TM:** *At New Schools, our mantra is “scale with quality,” so this is a question we think about all the time. We believe educational excellence is a precursor to effective educational scale. As such, while it is important that our entrepreneurs address the sizable need in urban education, they all focus first and foremost on providing a high-quality education to the students they serve. We believe that this enables them to create powerful proof points for new academic models and entrepreneurial approaches. I would encourage state policymakers to consider charter school scale with this same lens, and support policies that emphasize measurable student progress as the yardstick by which any school improvement plans are assessed.*

**HP: When policymakers talk about scaling up successful school models there is an immediate tension between two competing interests: standardization and customization. It is clear that scaling relies on standardization to ensure consistency in rigor, while a central argument for expanding the supply of new models is the desire to customize learning for every student. In your role at NewSchools Venture Fund, how do you balance these competing interests?**

**TM:** *This is a fascinating question, and my answer to it gets to the heart of New Schools' own business model as a venture philanthropy firm. We support a diverse portfolio of education organizations for the very reason you articulated: there are so many different types of students and communities out there, and no one way to reach them all. So in order to address that, we empower individual education entrepreneurs to refine their own unique approach for reaching their target population. Within each of these organizations, we try to help them gain clarity about their goals, their theory of change, and their core academic model, so that they can provide the best possible support to the schools they run. And across that portfolio, we are aiming for a consistent set of high-level metrics for success, but we also we bring these organizations' leaders together in person and online to encourage them to learn from the myriad strategies that they are each employing.*

**HP: Finally, incubating and growing new school models requires considerable capacity to find the teachers, leaders, and supports needed. How does the Venture Fund think about, and invest in, building these capacities?**

**TM:** *You've hit the nail on the head. New Schools is currently considering that very question as a part of our investment strategy work, because we have seen so clearly in our work with CMOs that one of the primary gating factors to growth is finding sufficient human capital for these schools and organizations. We were one of the initial supporters of New Leaders for New Schools back when it was an idea by a few Harvard graduate school students, and we have learned a lot along with them over the last several years about what it takes to recruit, prepare and support principals for urban schools today. We have also been keeping a close eye on residency-based efforts that anchor preparation in the real day-to-day strategies of teaching, like the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) in Chicago and High Tech High's new teacher college in San Diego.*

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## Federal Update: America COMPETES Act Signed Into Law

On August 9, 2007, President Bush signed the *America COMPETES (Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science) Act* into law. The law is intended to strengthen innovation through research and development and improve national competitiveness in the global economy.

*America COMPETES* embraces several recommendations offered by the National Governors Association, including matching grants to states to create state preschool to college (P-16) education activities and longitudinal data systems; an expansion of rigorous and relevant high-quality coursework, including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate programs; incentives to attract and retain highly qualified science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and critical foreign language teachers; state grants for local school district math programs for elementary and secondary school students; and competitive innovation, economic stimulus and R&D grants to encourage states to accelerate regional innovation and economic growth. The law also reauthorized the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

On July 20, before Congress passed a final version of the bill, NGA sent a letter to House and Senate leadership thanking the respective chambers for passing competitiveness legislation and incorporating governors' recommendations. The letter can be read [here](#).

For more information on *America COMPETES*, contact Joan Wodiska with NGA at [jwodiska@nga.org](mailto:jwodiska@nga.org) or 202-624-5361.

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## Resource Box

Best practice research can help guide states seeking to implement policies that catalyze the growth of high-quality new model high schools. This section highlights resources for state policymakers to learn more about the emerging strategies and tactics that states are using to replicate promising models and expand the supply of quality public schools.

### *Expanding the Supply of High Quality Public Schools*

In collaboration with the NewSchools Venture Fund and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Bridgespan Group has released a report identifying two critical levers policymakers can use to determine how quickly and consistently successful school models can be replicated. Entitled, *Expanding the Supply of High Quality Public Schools*, this jointly-authored report finds that the first key lever to going to scale is the degree of managerial responsibility, support, and control an organization elects to exercise. The report finds that the second factor in successful replication efforts is closely related to the specificity of a model's school design. Finally, leadership choices about each will affect not only how quickly the model can be deployed, but the likelihood of achieving consistent high-quality results at scale. The paper concludes with examples of organizations that have chosen different approaches to replication and analyzes the various tradeoffs and outcomes that resulted.

## *High-Quality Charter Schools at Scale in Big Cities*

Authored by the Center on Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington, this paper discusses the policy barriers that inhibit the expansion of high-quality public charter schools providing recommendations on how these barriers might be removed. In addition, the report summarizes the discussions from a meeting between the National Charter School Research Project at the University of Washington and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools that occurred earlier this year which brought together charter school management organizations, school districts, and foundations. Finally, the report provides recommendations for policymakers who are interested in creating a more hospitable environment for expanding charter schools in major urban districts—strategies that support a coordinated infrastructure including concentrated investments, revised state laws, and collaborative efforts to address leadership, human resources, and other common provider challenges.

## *Educational Architects: Do State Education Agencies Have the Tools Necessary to Implement NCLB?*

This report authored by the Center on Education Policy brings to light capacity constraints facing State Education Agencies (SEAs) as they attempt to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and provide high-quality educational options to students in low performing schools. The report offers several recommendations to policymakers interested in increasing SEA capacity to implement NCLB's public school choice and supplemental services components. Among them are:

- Providing additional federal funding to enable SEAs to effectively implement NCLB;
- Structuring NCLB to include a grant program for states to rethink the mission and organization of SEAs to make them more effective leaders of school improvement;
- Requiring the U.S. Department of Education to review and enhance current efforts to assist SEAs in implementing NCLB; and,
- Amending the law to help states assist schools more effectively by allowing states to provide differentiated levels of technical assistance to schools based on the severity of the school's problems.

## *Laboratories of Reform: Virtual High- Schools and Innovation in Public Education*

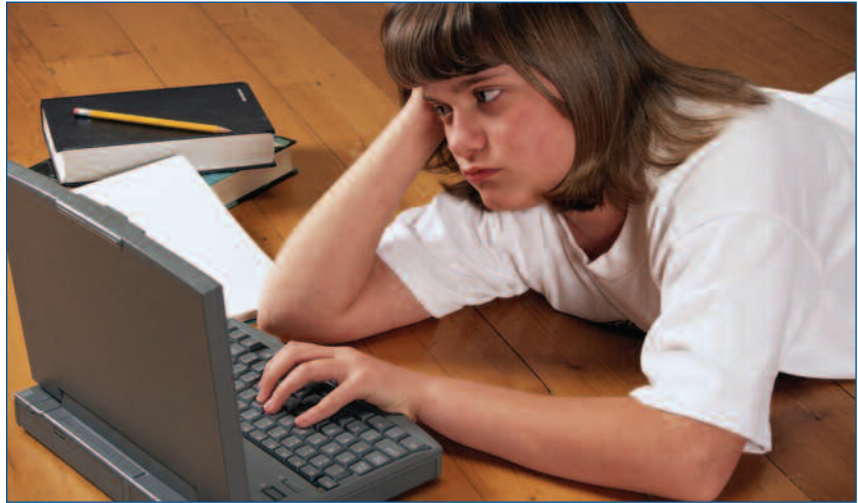
This report from the education policy research organization Education Sector discusses the rapid expansion of online learning options, better known as virtual schools. The report focuses on how state policymakers can take advantage of the portability and ease of scalability in online learning offerings to expand students' access to rigorous course content. While the report praises the innumerable benefits virtual high schools can bring about when policymakers attempt to grow the supply of high-quality schooling options, it simultaneously cautions policymakers about controlling quality so that learning remains equally rigorous for participating students.

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## Foundation Corner: The NewSchools Venture Fund

As a nonprofit venture philanthropy firm, NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF) raises funds from both individual and institutional investors and uses those funds to support promising education entrepreneurs, help them grow their organizations to scale, and connect their work with public school systems—particularly within underserved urban communities. The organization analyzes the national education landscape in an effort to find the right “ecosystem” for these types of dramatic change in key investment areas where NSVF seeks to determine how education entrepreneurs are best positioned to make a difference.



Once the Fund identifies potential ventures, a rigorous investment process occurs to scrutinize the new model’s management, its leadership team, its product, and results, as well as the market it seeks to address. When NSVF invests in an organization, it serves as an active partner by taking a seat on the board of directors and by providing ongoing management assistance to the new model’s leadership team as the replication process begins and efforts are made to grow to scale.

To maximize the impact of their education ventures, New Schools also connects the work of education entrepreneurs with one another and with the broader field through events and publications. Ultimately, NSVF’s goal is to empower the entrepreneurs they support to transform public education so that all children have the opportunity to attend a high-quality public school.

## The Bradley Foundation’s “Charter School Growth Fund”

In an effort to address the supply-side of the school choice equation, the Harry and Lynne Bradley Foundation provide strategic support to the Charter School Growth Fund (CSGF)—a philanthropic venture fund founded to significantly increase the capacity of proven educational entrepreneurs in developing and growing networks of high-quality charter schools. Through its activities, CSGF is enabling the national charter sector to grow more rapidly and provide a better quality of public education to more students than is possible through the grassroots growth of single independent public schools.

Nationally, the Charter School Growth Fund will increase the number and scale of high-quality educational options through the development and expansion of charter school management and support organizations. With a pool of \$100 million, the Charter School Fund expects to create 100,000 new permanent seats for underserved families in high-quality charter schools by the year 2015.

## **The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Sponsors Research on New Model High-Quality Schools: *High Schools for the New Millennium: Imagine the Possibilities***

This report from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation highlights the foundation's ongoing commitment to providing students with small, innovative public high schools that offer a highly personalized, rigorous education. The foundation is partnering with communities across the country to promote the transition from large comprehensive high schools to smaller focused high schools. Grants fund both the startup of new small high schools as well as the conversion of large high schools into smaller, more personalized schools or learning communities. The foundation expects these new and revamped schools will offer families greater choice within the public school system and create models that can be replicated throughout the country.

This report underscores the foundation's belief that federal, state, and local policy must change to help promote high school redesign and new model expansion. In short, the authors argue that policymakers must promote the development of a customized range of quality high school options for students. The report details the foundation's ongoing work with states, school districts, local non-profits, and partner philanthropies to ensure that high-quality schools can flourish in a supportive, accountability-based policy environment.

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## **Indicators as Incentives: 10-Year Goals Measure Progress and Draw Attention to Supply Expansion**

As part of the NGA Honor States' commitment to *Getting it Done: Ten Steps to a State Action Agenda*, each Phase I Honor States agreed to establish 10-year goals to benchmark success against their high school redesign agenda. Goals serve as a starting point for states engaged in the redesign process to set an aggressive agenda with an eye toward longer term objectives that can be measured through real data indicators.

In setting challenging goals, two states—Indiana and Minnesota—have made an identifiable commitment to increase the supply of quality high school options.

Indiana's 10-year goals commit to expanding student access to a wide array of quality high school options. Among the state's goals is a direct increase in the number of new high-quality school designs across the state, whether in redesigned existing environments or new school models.

In Minnesota, policymakers have rallied around a benchmark standard that calls for all students to gain access to a "rigorous high-quality curriculum by 2016." The state has selected their 10-year goal indicators in this area to include 100 percent of students taking the ACT prior to high school graduation and 100 percent of students achieving a score defined as "college ready" by ACT in all four subject areas (mathematics, English, biology, and social sciences). One effort to meet these goals has been the development of pilot "Lighthouse" school models.

Lighthouse schools received grants from the Minnesota Department of Education in exchange for a commitment to redesign the curricula and learning experience for every student. These high schools use grant funds to investigate how they can contribute to a broader understanding of how high schools—and the many professionals who staff them—can adapt to changing student needs and evolving societal demands. Each school has made a commitment to influence student achievement by monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of their efforts.

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## What's Next? How State Policy Can Promote an Expansion of Available Schooling Options that Serve all Students

While policymakers have focused heavily on the demand side of education, far too little attention has been paid to the supply-side. Despite a widespread adoption by states of policies that increase the educational choices available to students and families (charter schools, vouchers, public school choice, supplemental educational services, dual enrollment, and virtual educational opportunities), there has not been a sustained effort to expand the supply of quality education options.

Since all states have students struggling in low-performing schools, all states have a powerful incentive to increase the supply of high-quality schools that empower every student. To encourage education entrepreneurs to build a new supply of excellent high schools that can serve all students, states can rally around the following core policy reforms:

- 1) Provide Equitable Funding for all Education Providers:** States can encourage charter school organizers that bring new model high schools to scale by ensuring that the state's fiscal policies use the same weighted per-pupil funding for all providers.
- 2) Strengthen and Broaden Charter School Laws:** States can increase the number of high-quality charter school options available to all students by ensuring that the state's charter law does not place an arbitrary cap on the number of schools. Moreover, strong charter laws that promote growth in the supply of high-quality schools will allow for multiple entities to approve and start new schools, and ensure a navigable appeals process for rejected charter school applicants.
- 3) Reward Education Entrepreneurship:** States can support both traditional and non-traditional entities that are engaged in bringing successful new model schools to scale. To encourage innovative behavior and mitigate the obstacles that inhibit going to scale, states can implement policies that provide providers with revenue for planning, startup, and facilities.
- 4) Increase the availability of virtual course offerings:** State-sanctioning of virtual learning options can greatly expand the incentive for educational entrepreneurs to establish new virtual model classroom experiences. Policies that support growth in these online options increase the variety and depth of courses available to students, particularly among students in rural areas.

These recommendations were adapted from the existing NGA Center publication, *Providing Quality Choice Options in Education*.

The NGA Center for Best Practices is the nation's only consulting firm dedicated to governors and their key policy staff. The Center's mission is to develop and disseminate innovative solutions to public policy challenges.

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