

THE 2011 CONNCAN ANNUAL REPORT  
**UNTIL IT'S  
DONE**





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85 Willow Street  
New Haven, Connecticut 06511

203 772 4017 phone  
203 404 7761 fax

[www.conncan.org](http://www.conncan.org)  
[info@conncan.org](mailto:info@conncan.org)

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## NELSON MANDELA ONCE SAID, “IT ALWAYS SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL IT’S DONE.”

**Revolutionary social movements take time.** And every meaningful civil rights movement in human history, from the abolition of slavery to women’s suffrage, had its moments of despair.

For those of us who believe that Connecticut’s public education system is in need of major repair, 2011 was a tough year. Despite the best efforts and bold intentions of ConnCAN and other like-minded individuals and organizations, the status quo ultimately prevailed.

And the status quo is unacceptable. Connecticut has maintained its worst-in-the-nation achievement gap for years. And while we have seen major increases in both education spending and the number of full-time public school employees since 2003, student enrollment and achievement have remained flat. An estimated 9,000 students in Connecticut’s Class of 2011 did not graduate – nearly enough to fill UConn’s Gampel Pavilion, home of the Huskies basketball teams. We have a serious problem on our hands, and we did not come close to fixing it in 2011.

During our 2011 campaign, “Get Smart Connecticut,” we produced and distributed valuable original research to Connecticut citizens, shored up legislative allies, and compelled the media to put a spotlight on Connecticut’s broken public education system. Our goals were ambitious, and we pushed relentlessly for a breakthrough until the very last day of the legislative session. But in the end, as we said to our advocates in our final campaign report, “we got bupkis.” Our only major win on behalf of Connecticut’s students in 2011 was stopping a bill that would have severely jeopardized any chance of ever having rigorous teacher evaluations in Connecticut. A victory to be sure, but not a significant step forward.

ConnCAN’s mission is to lead a movement that will improve educational outcomes for Connecticut’s kids. And one disappointing year will not distract, discourage or dissuade us from that mission. We have no intention of giving up. It always seems impossible until it is done.

We believe in the power of advocates, teachers, school administrators, superintendents, lawmakers, parents and families, and, most of all, students. We must work together to fundamentally improve our public education system, and we cannot wait, become weary, or give up. Now is the time to go all in.

ConnCAN is in it until it’s done – until each and every Connecticut student has access to great public schools.

# A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Charles F. Kettering once said, "One fails forward to success." As we look at the education reform movement in Connecticut, we see the truth in that adage. In past years, specific setbacks have led to significant victories for the students of Connecticut.

**WE ALL RECOGNIZE THAT 2011 CANNOT BE LABELED A VICTORY. LAST YEAR, THERE WERE NO GAINS FOR CONNECTICUT'S YOUTH. THE COALITION OF THE STATUS QUO BLOCKED REAL PROGRESS. AGAIN, WE SAW THE INTERESTS OF THE ADULTS IN THE ROOM TRUMP THE NEEDS OF THE KIDS WE ARE CHARGED WITH SERVING.**

So we use the past year to fail forward to success. We learn from our experiences. We use short-term failures to motivate future activities. And we redouble our efforts to do everything and anything to ensure that all of Connecticut's students have access to great public schools.

We know what success must look like when it comes to education reform. That vision is what has guided our work for the past eight years, and what shaped our goals for 2012. Building from the experiences of the previous year, this year we are focused on ensuring that all children have excellent educators leading their classrooms and that all students are fairly funded, regardless of the public school they choose to attend.

In years past, we have seen ConnCAN go it alone, forced to fight solo on many of the issues that matter most for Connecticut's children. Today, we are part of a large and growing coalition committed to meaningful reform and measurable student achievement. Whether advocate or educator, parent or policy maker, the voices for reform

**EDUCATION REFORM IS MORE THAN JUST AN ISSUE, IT IS A MOVEMENT. WE WILL NOT SOLVE ALL THAT AILS OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS IMMEDIATELY. BUT WE MUST CONTINUE THE FIGHT FORWARD, BUILDING ON OUR VICTORIES, LEARNING FROM OUR FAILURES, AND DEMONSTRATING AN UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO DOING WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS BEST FOR OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS.**

are getting louder and stronger. And the coalition of the status quo is truly concerned about our continued movement forward to education reform success.

We began 2012 with high hopes, as Governor Dannel P. Malloy pledged his commitment to make this year the "Year for Education Reform." We have made significant steps forward already this year, from educator evaluation to improving low-performing schools to improving funding for our schools of choice. Let there be no mistake, though, we still have much to do.

Thank you for standing with us on behalf of all of Connecticut's public school students. Together, we will continue to advocate for what is best for our kids. Together, we will continue to break the restraints of the status quo. Together, we will continue our forward progress for real reform and for success for all kids.

— **PATRICK RICCARDS**

7/23/2012

# OUR MISSION:

We dream big at ConnCAN. We expect a lot of ourselves, and for a good reason - our vision for the state of Connecticut is ambitious: Every Connecticut child, regardless of race, ethnicity or class, should have access to great public schools.



**CONNCAN IS LEADING A MOVEMENT TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR CONNECTICUT'S KIDS.**

It seems like a simple dream, and one that is indisputably worthwhile. And yet, as of 2011, we still weren't delivering on the promise of an excellent public education for every Connecticut child.

Each year, we hold ourselves publicly accountable to a set of bold and specific goals that, if achieved, will get us closer to making this dream a reality.

**BUT WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?  
HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE'VE GOTTEN THERE?**

# OUR VISION *for* CONNECTICUT

These measures of success are not modest by any means. It will take hard work, passion, and determination from ConnCAN and our base of advocates and partners. But until it's done, and every kid has access to great public schools, we will not give up.



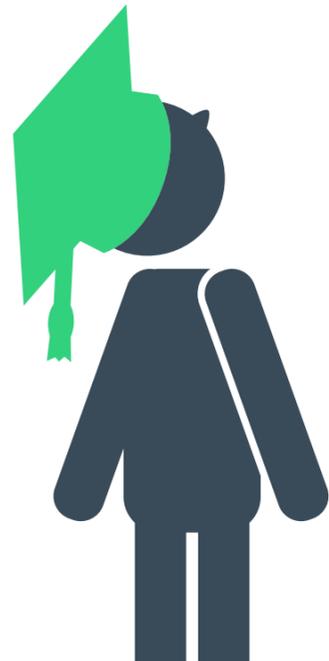
ACHIEVEMENT GAPS BETWEEN LOW-INCOME STUDENTS AND STUDENTS OF COLOR AND THEIR WHITE PEERS WILL SHRINK SIGNIFICANTLY.

MORE COMMUNITIES WILL OFFER GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR ALL CHILDREN, REGARDLESS OF RACE, INCOME, OR ZIP CODE.

OUR TOP ACADEMIC PERFORMERS WILL BE AT THE TOP IN THE COUNTRY.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES WILL INCREASE, ESPECIALLY AMONG LOW-INCOME STUDENTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, AND STUDENTS OF COLOR—AND STUDENTS WILL GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS.

COLLEGE REMEDIATION RATES WILL DECREASE AND COMPLETION RATES WILL INCREASE.



# OUR PRINCIPLES

Education policy is set by state legislatures, and getting policy right can transform the way we educate our children. To make a lasting impact, ConnCAN advances the structural changes that allow programmatic success to take root and flourish. In doing so, we advance three fundamental, interconnected principles that work together to reward success, reduce failure, and raise the quality of everything in between.

## CHOICE

More and more Connecticut parents are looking to high-achieving public schools of choice to give their children the best possible education. Giving parents greater choice among public schools, and giving educators greater autonomy to respond to their students' needs, can unlock the potential of public education to deliver sustained improvement for students over time.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

All aspects of our education system must be focused on student outcomes. During the past 20 years, Connecticut has developed state standards and implemented assessment systems. Now we need to use the information collected by these systems to expand public awareness of school performance, ground teacher and administrator evaluations in student results, and close chronically failing schools.

## FLEXIBILITY

Schools and districts that are delivering high-quality results for all students identify barriers to student success and promptly work to eliminate them. We believe that state policy should play an important role in giving local leaders and educators the freedom and flexibility they need to create, innovate, and adapt to deliver results for their students.

# AND MODEL

## THE MARRIAGE OF RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

Through the synchronized use of research and advocacy, ConnCAN has become an expert player in the state-level policy arena. Each year, we lead results-oriented advocacy campaigns that help concerned citizens speak out and change the way we educate our children.

To make sure policy change will work to help all of Connecticut's kids, ConnCAN grounds its advocacy in comprehensive research. The first stage of our work is analyzing Connecticut's public education system and learning about what's working here and elsewhere to improve student outcomes. Next, we assess the legislative landscape and set goals for maximum impact in the context of a given year.

Then we put our research to use by sharing it with parents and families, concerned citizens, education leaders, and policymakers. By disseminating our data and analysis, ConnCAN helps to define the problems in our public education system and provides policy insights to begin building a solution.

To develop our policy proposals, we draw from the wisdom of local, regional, and national partners and adapt successful models to our Connecticut context. Finally, we build a chorus of voices calling for these changes, mobilizing our base of more than 30,000 advocates, supporting local grassroots advocates, and convening a broad coalition of stakeholders to speak out on behalf of Connecticut's kids.



# CONNECTICUT BY THE NUMBERS: THE PROBLEM THAT NEEDS TO BE FIXED

**ONLY 1/3**

OF CONNECTICUT'S LOW-INCOME, AFRICAN-AMERICAN, AND HISPANIC THIRD GRADE STUDENTS PERFORMED AT GRADE LEVEL IN READING COMPARED TO 70 PERCENT OF WHITE AND NON-LOW INCOME THIRD GRADERS<sup>1</sup>

STUDIES SHOW THAT STUDENTS WHO DO NOT LEARN TO READ AT GRADE LEVEL BY THE END OF THIRD GRADE MAY NEVER CATCH UP AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO

**DROP OUT**<sup>2</sup>

LOW-INCOME STUDENTS IN CONNECTICUT

**SCORED WORSE**

THAN SIMILAR STUDENTS IN 33 OTHER STATES<sup>3</sup>

DROPOUTS FROM THE CLASS OF 2008 WILL LOSE MORE THAN

**\$1.4 BILLION**

IN LIFETIME EARNINGS BECAUSE THEY LACK A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA<sup>4</sup>

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) FOURTH GRADERS IN CONNECTICUT ARE MORE THAN

**5**

**GRADE LEVELS BEHIND**  
THEIR NON-ELL PEERS IN READING<sup>5</sup>

ELL FOURTH GRADERS IN CONNECTICUT ARE NEARLY

**4**

**GRADE LEVELS BEHIND**  
THEIR NON-ELL PEERS IN MATH<sup>6</sup>

OUR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS AND STUDENTS OF COLOR CONSISTENTLY PERFORM

**3**

**GRADE LEVELS BEHIND**  
THEIR WHITE AND NON-LOW-INCOME PEERS<sup>7</sup>

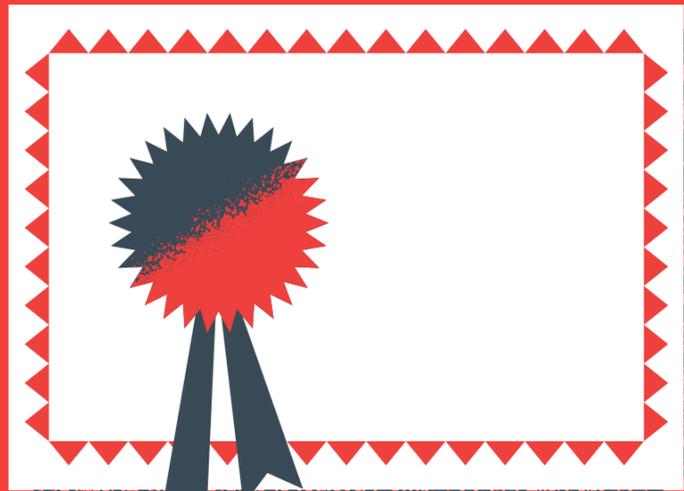
HISPANIC FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS IN CONNECTICUT PERFORM

**2**

**GRADE LEVELS BEHIND**  
SIMILAR STUDENTS IN MARYLAND<sup>8</sup>

EVEN OUR HIGHEST-PERFORMING STUDENTS

**ARE FALLING BEHIND**  
THOSE IN OTHER STATES AND NATIONS<sup>9</sup>



<p>BY 2018</p> <p><b>65%</b></p> <p>OF CONNECTICUT JOBS WILL REQUIRE AT LEAST A BACHELOR'S DEGREE</p>	<p>BUT RIGHT NOW ONLY</p> <p><b>36%</b></p> <p>OF OUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES COMPLETE AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE WITHIN 6 YEARS<sup>10</sup></p>
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OF THE STUDENTS WHO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL ON TIME,  
TOO MANY ARE NOT PREPARED FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: THE STATE SPENDS

**\$84 MILLION**

A YEAR ON COLLEGE REMEDIATION BECAUSE STUDENTS  
ARRIVE UNABLE TO DO COLLEGE-LEVEL WORK<sup>11</sup>

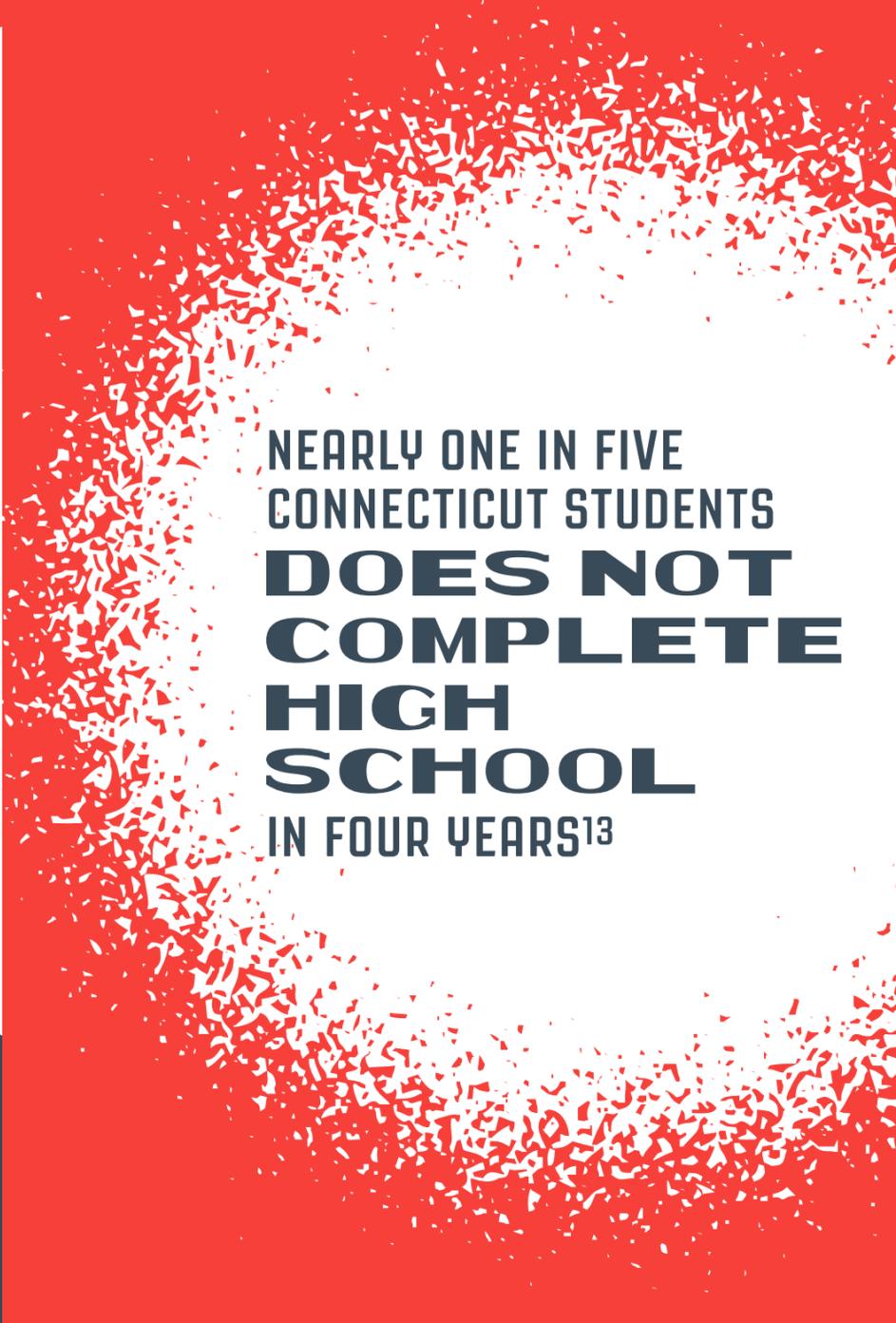
**24.7**  
PERCENTAGE  
POINTS

BETWEEN  
HISPANIC & WHITE  
STUDENTS

**20.0**  
PERCENTAGE  
POINTS

BETWEEN  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
& WHITE STUDENTS

**THE  
HIGH SCHOOL  
GRADUATION  
RATE GAP<sup>12</sup>**



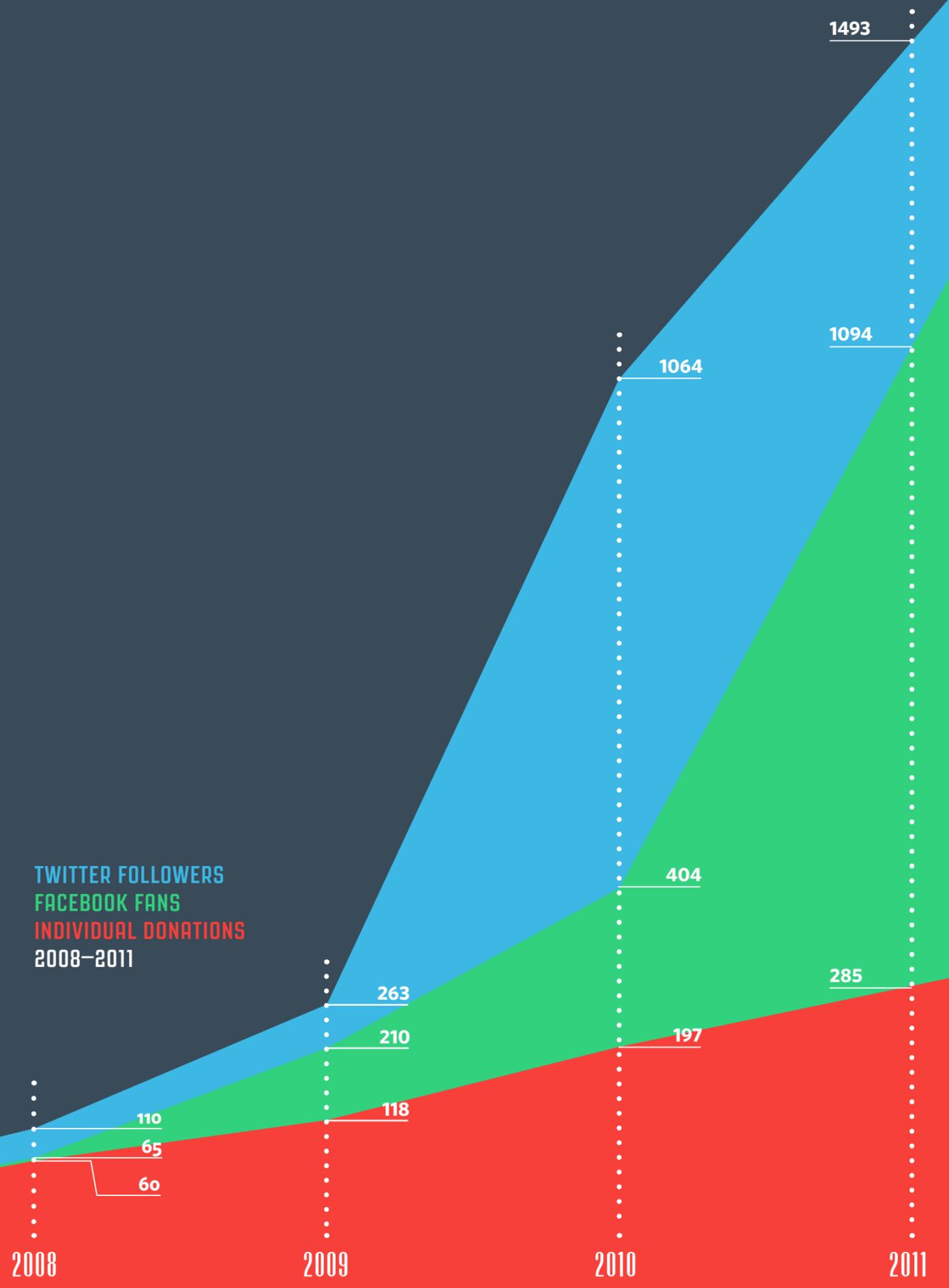
NEARLY ONE IN FIVE  
CONNECTICUT STUDENTS  
**DOES NOT  
COMPLETE  
HIGH  
SCHOOL**  
IN FOUR YEARS<sup>13</sup>

# CONNCA BY *the* NUMBERS

2,092 PEOPLE ADDED  
TO CONTACT DATABASE



TWITTER FOLLOWERS  
FACEBOOK FANS  
INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS  
2008-2011





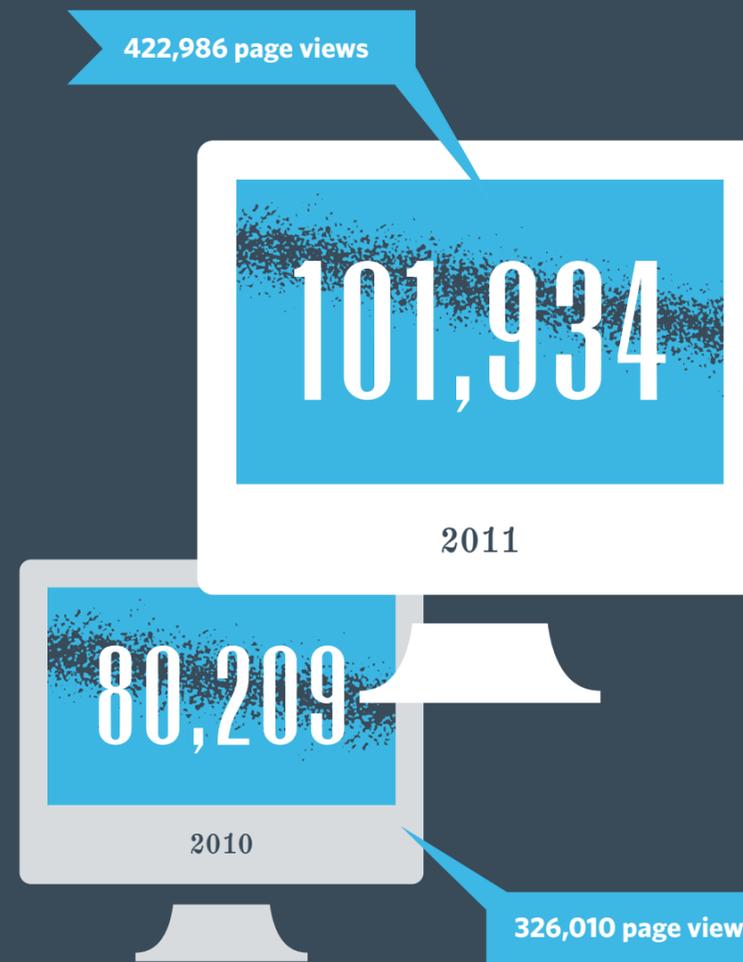
SCHOOL REPORT CARD HITS ON WEBSITE



SCHOOL REPORT CARD HITS ON DAY OF 2011 LAUNCH  
**36,510**



NUMBER OF UNIQUE VISITORS TO CONNCAN.ORG



NUMBER OF TIMES CONNCAN WAS MENTIONED IN THE PRESS  
**71**

TOTAL TOWNS & CITIES IN CT



TOWNS AND CITIES CONTAINING CONNCAN CONTACTS





**1/20** ConnCAN launches the "Get Smart Connecticut" campaign and introduces our 2011 goals.

- End last-in, first-out teacher layoffs
- Overhaul the archaic school finance system
- Improve teacher evaluations
- Implement a common chart of accounts between school districts

Color Key

ConnCAN

Connecticut

# CONNCAN

LATE  
JANUARY

Citing the state's budget difficulties, the Education Committee will not raise a bill regarding school finance reform.

2/4

ConnCAN's new 30-second TV advertisement, "Tough Choices," appears on broadcast and cable television across the state.



2/16

Governor Malloy says in his budget address to the Connecticut General Assembly that districts "should be given the flexibility they need to retain new, talented teachers." He also calls out Connecticut's broken school finance system, saying "we need to fix this formula once and for all."

3/24

The Appropriations Committee holds a seven-hour public hearing on S.B. 1195, with hundreds of advocates in attendance. More than 80 individuals give inspiring, supportive testimony.

3/16

The co-chairs of the Appropriations Committee introduce Senate Bill 1195, An Act Concerning School Finance Reform, which draws from ConnCAN's proposal for overhauling Connecticut's funding system.

3/1

The Education Committee releases a teacher evaluation bill in consultation with the American Federation of Teachers-CT. Senate Bill 1160 is born.

## 2011: A YEAR IN REVIEW

4/7

Founding CEO Alex Johnston announces his decision to leave ConnCAN at the end of 2011. Our Board of Directors begins the hunt for ConnCAN's new CEO.



5/3

ConnCAN launches its "Celebrate Extraordinary Teachers" campaign in partnership with DonorsChoose.org. ConnCAN members supported 77 innovative classroom projects across the state, and directly impacted 4,255 students!

4/20

Alex Johnston and Jennifer Alexander (Research & Policy Director) lead a bipartisan legislators-only briefing about the details of student-based budgeting.

5/25

ConnCAN, standing with parents and superintendents, holds a press conference calling on the legislature to end to last-in, first-out layoff practices in Connecticut.

5/31

The General Assembly passes a bill that creates a task force to study the current school funding formula and increases charter school funding by \$100 per student. The hope for an overhaul of Connecticut's school finance system dies here for 2011.



12/31

ConnCAN puts to rest a year of hard work and few wins. But we feel hopeful about 2012: the “year for education reform.”

12/21

Paul Vallas is named acting superintendent of Bridgeport public schools, bringing his reform experience from Chicago, Philadelphia, and New Orleans to Connecticut.



12/20

Governor Malloy sends a letter to the Connecticut General Assembly, introducing his six principles for education reform and encouraging policymakers to take decisive action in the 2012 legislative session.

11/3

ConnCAN hosts its first annual Block Party! Donors, advocates, partners, and friends come together to bid farewell to Alex and to welcome Patrick. Commissioner Pryor is the keynote speaker and highlights the importance of addressing our state’s achievement gap.



12/1

ConnCAN releases school and district Report Cards for the 2010–2011 school year. The Report Cards receive 36,510 hits on the first day, setting a new record and temporarily crashing [www.conncan.org](http://www.conncan.org).

12/14

As an end-of-year gift to supporters, ConnCAN releases our “Building a Movement” video to outline our mission, vision, and organizational goals. Watch it here: [www.conncan.org/learn/videos](http://www.conncan.org/learn/videos).



11/1

Results are in from the National Assessment of Educational Progress: Connecticut’s achievement gap has grown on nearly every measure, and overall student performance is stagnant. See pages 12–13 for more statistics.

10/6

After a seven-month search, ConnCAN’s Board of Directors announces Patrick Riccards as our new CEO! Check out his bio on page 30.



9/29

ConnCAN releases an issue brief on Connecticut graduation rates, and the numbers are alarming: Nearly one in five high school students does not graduate on time, and we have persistent graduation gaps by race. See page 12 for more statistics from this brief.



8/15

Leadership of the General Assembly appoints the first six members, and Governor Malloy appoints the final six members, to the new Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Formula Task Force.

8/17

Governor Malloy addresses superintendents: he will tackle a host of education issues in 2012, including a flawed school finance system and a seniority system that protects consistently ineffective teachers.



9/7

Stefan Pryor, former Deputy Mayor of Newark, NJ, is announced as Connecticut’s new Commissioner of Education.

7/13

CMT and CAPT scores are released: despite incremental gains across all subjects and grades tested, Connecticut still has significant achievement gaps for low-income, African-American, Hispanic, and English Language Learner students. See page 12 for more statistics.



7/7

Former Hartford school Superintendent Steven Adamowski is appointed as “special master” supervising Windham Public Schools.

6/9

Governor Malloy addresses the General Assembly at the close of the 2011 legislative session: “...much more needs to be done, and I hope education reform will be the focus of the 2012 legislative session.”

6/1

An amendment to end last-in, first-out layoffs is defeated in the Senate. Again, the status quo prevails.

6/7

The co-chairs of the Education Committee draft a new amendment to S.B. 1160 that jeopardize the chances of ever having rigorous teacher evaluations in Connecticut. The amendment waits in queue to be called at the will of the chairs.

ConnCAN does something we’ve never done before: We ask our base of advocates to urge a “no” vote on S.B. 1160.

The legislature strips S.B. 1160 of all teacher evaluation language, does not call the damaging amendment, and passes the bill. Nothing happens in 2011 to improve teacher evaluations.

In 2011, ConnCAN brought together a core group of superstar advocates who work tirelessly to build up the education reform movement in their communities. These men and women come from different towns and different backgrounds, but they are united in their pursuit of educational equity for all of Connecticut's kids. They come together to share their experiences, spread their courage, and set strategies for success across the state.

# SPOTLIGHT ON ADVOCACY CAPTAINS

**MILLY ARCINIEGAS**  
Hartford | Hartford Parent Organization Council

**DARRELL BROOKS**  
New Haven | Greater New Haven NAACP

**JACK BRYANT**  
Stamford | Stamford NAACP

**LISA CHENEY**  
Waterbury | Parent

**JEANNETTE ESTRELLA**  
Bridgeport | Board Member, Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders

**LAURA LILLIAN DICKERSON**  
Norwich | Greenville Family Zone

**GEORGE GIANAKAKOS**  
Bridgeport | Bridgeport Public Schools

**TIFFANY HALEY**  
Middletown | Middletown Public Schools

**SUSAN HARRIS**  
Wallingford | Parent

**ERIKA HAYNES**  
Windham | Parent

**SUE HAYNIE**  
Norwalk | Norwalk Board of Education & RED Apples

**HOWIE HORVATH**  
West Haven | Former Chair, West Haven Board of Education

**KANICKA INGRAM**  
New Haven | Greater New Haven NAACP

**CLAUDE JOHNSON**  
Greenwich | BlackFives.com

**SONIA MAÑJON**  
Middletown | Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

**JAMES MCNAIR**  
Colchester | Former Member, Colchester Board of Education

**Laurie McTeague**  
Wilton | The Education Leadership Forum

**NANCY MORGAN**  
Westport | Mocha Moms, Inc.

**DOREEN RICHARDSON**  
Windsor | Windsor Board of Education

**LAUREN ROSATO**  
Norwalk | Norwalk Education Fund & RED Apples

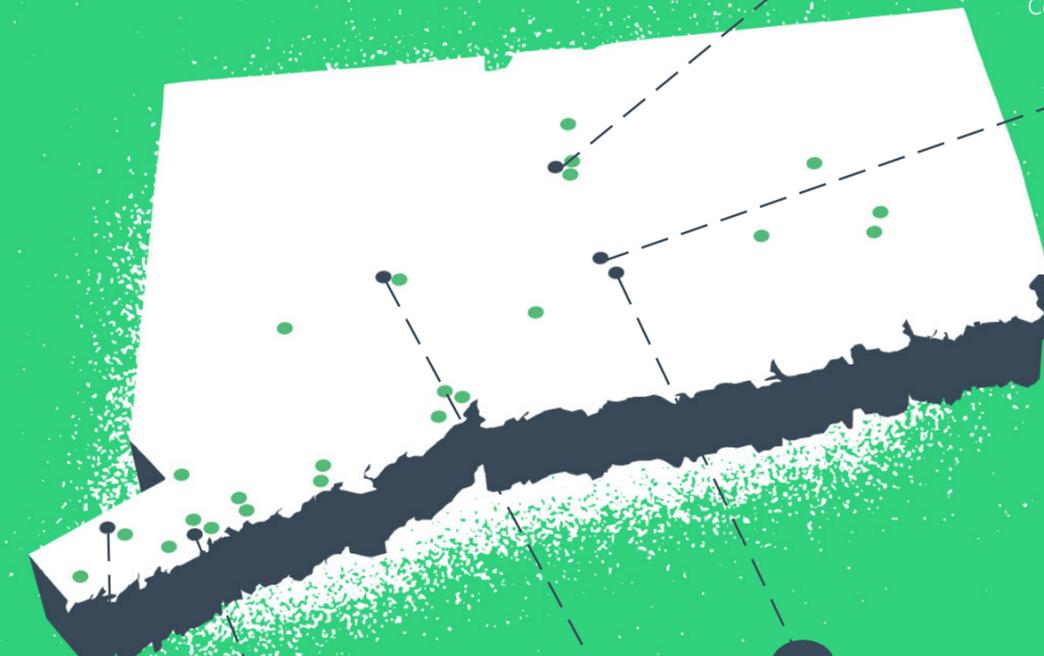
**KATHY SAINT**  
Southbury | Schwerdtle Stamp Company

**LISA THOMSON**  
Norwalk | RED Apples

**RON WARD, JD, MAT**  
Norwich | Greenville Family Zone

These advocates engage with ConnCAN in their individual capacities, and their inclusion here does not imply endorsement of their respective organizations.

## ADVOCACY CAPTAINS ARE IN THIS UNTIL IT'S DONE BECAUSE...



**WE CAN NO LONGER JUST ACCEPT THE STATUS QUO. WE MUST HAVE THE COURAGE TO PLACE CHILDREN FIRST.”**  
Milly Arciniegas | 3/2/2011  
ConnCAN Blog

**WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION. IN ORDER TO ENSURE OUR STUDENTS' SUCCESS AND CLOSE CONNECTICUT'S MASSIVE ACHIEVEMENT GAP, WE NEED TO SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS TOO.”**  
Tiffany Haley | 5/25/2011  
ConnCAN Blog

**WE'VE BEEN CAUGHT UP IN THIS DEBATE FOR YEARS AND YEARS NOW. WHILE WE DEBATE, OUR CHILDREN SLIP FARTHER AND FARTHER BEHIND.”**  
Lisa Thomson | 5/16/2011  
Testimony on Senate Bill 1160

**FOR TOO MANY STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY IN LARGE URBAN CITIES AND LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS, THE PROMISE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IS STILL A DISTANT DREAM. I KNOW WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS. WE HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE.”**  
Sonia Mañjon | 10/11/2011 | ConnCAN.org "Tell Your Story"

**EDUCATION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT INVESTMENT WE MAKE IN OUR STATE'S FUTURE, BUT IT'S WHERE WE'RE GETTING THE WORST RETURN ON OUR MONEY. WE CONTINUE TO HAVE THE LARGEST ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN THE COUNTRY. THERE HAS GOT TO BE A CHANGE.”**  
Jack Bryant | 3/24/2011 | Testimony on Senate Bill 1195

**AS A PARENT, I HAVE POWER. I CAN MAKE THE CHOICE TO CHANGE WHAT ISN'T WORKING AND IN THE PROCESS SHOW MY CHILDREN THE IMPORTANT LESSON OF DEMOCRACY IN ACTION. I CAN BE A CATALYST FOR POSITIVE CHANGE.”**  
Lisa Cheney | 12/5/2011 | ConnCAN Blog

# the YEAR FOR EDUCATION REFORM



## 2012 CAMPAIGN PREVIEW

In 2010, long before what would prove to be the most ambitious, grueling, and disappointing legislative session in ConnCAN's history, we hosted a forum on education with Connecticut's gubernatorial candidates. We asked them difficult questions about the problems with our state's education system, and about their plans to fix it. One candidate told the audience about his personal history with learning disabilities, and about being told when he was young that he would never succeed in school. He said that Connecticut needed a strong governor to fix its public education system. He said, "I want to be your education governor."

The State of Connecticut elected that candidate, Dannel P. Malloy, governor in November 2010. As you read in the 2011 timeline (poster attached), Governor Malloy told the Connecticut General Assembly in his first budget address that our state's education funding system needed to be overhauled. "It's broken," he said, "and we all know it." He called our state's worst-in-the-nation achievement gap "intolerable," and said that school districts should be given the flexibility to retain their new, talented teachers.

But for many reasons, including Connecticut's rising unemployment rate and a \$3.3 billion state budget deficit, Governor Malloy and the Connecticut General Assembly did not act on these good intentions in 2011. At the close of the legislative session, as the coalition of the status quo chalked up another year of victory, hundreds of thousands of Connecticut's students languished in failing schools. Many schools continued to receive inequitable funding. And our teachers continued to be laid off due to budget cuts with no consideration paid to their effectiveness in the classroom. ConnCAN did not achieve its policy goals – and more importantly, we did not improve educational outcomes for Connecticut's kids.

In 2011, we failed. We were tired, frustrated, and disappointed. In 2011, it seemed impossible.

But at midnight on June 8th, when the closing gavel struck at the Capitol and signaled an end to the legislative session, Governor Malloy stood before the Connecticut General Assembly for a second time. He recalled his words from February, reminding legislators of the work left undone and the issues left unresolved, and he stated explicitly that education reform would be the focus of the 2012 legislative session. From the darkness of our failure, we began to see a glimmer of hope.

As the ConnCAN staff gathered that summer to reflect on our mistakes and set strategies for the future, Governor Malloy

took steps to make 2012 the year for education reform. He nominated Stefan Pryor as Connecticut's commissioner of education. He met with superintendents from across the state, telling them "we've got to do a better job" and promising to lead by example. He wrote an open letter to the Connecticut General Assembly, outlining six core principles to define his work on education reform. He brought together educational stakeholders from across the state for a summit called "2012: The Year for Education Reform." And when he returned to the podium for his next budget address, he did not mince words.

"No one should doubt my resolve: I am determined to fix our public schools. I do not think it will be easy, nor do I think it will happen overnight. But it will happen. It must happen."

In February 2012, Governor Malloy introduced the most far-reaching, comprehensive education reform package ever proposed by a Connecticut governor. Just as in 2011, ConnCAN gathered a growing coalition of passionate advocates and partner organizations. Just as in 2011, many of you wrote and testified and rallied in support of transformative policy change. Just as in 2011, the opposition attempted to undercut negotiations and mislead the public. But in 2012, everything was different. In 2012, we had an administration and a group of families, educators, advocates, and lawmakers who were deeply committed to this fight – until it was done.

**SENATE BILL 458, NOW SIGNED INTO LAW AS PUBLIC ACT 12-116: AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION REFORM, WAS CERTAINLY A BREAKTHROUGH. THIS LAW WILL MEAN REAL CHANGE FOR CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS – AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, REAL CHANGE FOR CONNECTICUT'S KIDS. BUT IN MANY WAYS IT DIDN'T GO FAR ENOUGH, AND IMPLEMENTING THESE CHANGES WILL BRING A WHOLE NEW SET OF CHALLENGES. THE FIGHT IS FAR FROM OVER, AND WE'RE IN THIS UNTIL IT'S DONE.**

Follow our work at [ConnCAN.org](http://ConnCAN.org) and stay tuned for our 2012 Annual Report for the full details of the 2012 legislative session.



**PATRICK RICCARDS**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Patrick came to ConnCAN with more than 20 years of communications and political strategy experience under his belt. He is a tireless advocate for kids, and has transformed the work of countless organizations and campaigns over the past 20 years. From the National Reading Panel, to New Leaders for New Schools, to the National Governors Association, to the American Federation of Teachers, Patrick has been integral in building public support for issue-based organizations, especially those working to improve public schools across the country. Most recently based in Virginia as CEO at Exemplar Strategic Communications, Patrick has provided expert consulting on leadership, policy, research, and communications for a range of organizations focused on public education and other issues. Patrick is already a well-known personality in the education blogosphere thanks to his blog, Eduflack. In 2009, he was a recipient of PRWeek Magazine's prestigious "40 Under 40" award for top communications professionals in the country, and in September 2011, Bulldog Reporter named him the nation's Non-Profit Communications Professional of the Year. Patrick has served as Executive Director of the Pennsylvania STEM (science-technology-engineering-math) Initiative, focusing on expanding STEM opportunities for all students, particularly those from historically disadvantaged populations. He has also served as Chairman of the Falls Church (VA) School Board.

**ANNA VARGHESE MARCUCIO**  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Anna came to ConnCAN after spending 10 years in Washington, DC working on national education policy. Before coming to ConnCAN, Anna served as Legislative Director for the American Federation for Children (AFC), an organization that worked with state partners to enact, strengthen and defend school choice programs for low-income children. Prior to joining AFC, Anna was the Vice President for External Affairs at the Center for Education Reform. Anna's first experience working in education reform was as a member of the Eastern Recruitment team at the national office of Teach for America. Anna grew up in Connecticut and received a bachelor's degree in political science at the University of Connecticut and received a master's degree in public policy from American University in Washington, DC.



# the CONNCAN TEAM

**LISA WHITFIELD**  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOR HUMAN RESOURCES & OPERATIONS

Lisa Whitfield is one of ConnCAN's longest-serving education reformers, joining the organization in its infancy in 2005. Before coming to ConnCAN, Lisa worked in management for the corporate and legal sector for many years, and was the Director and Educator of the Business Management program at Stone Academy/Goodwin College. In addition to her role at ConnCAN, she serves on the advisory board of the Metropolitan Business Academy, the SHRM Connecticut State Council for Workforce Readiness and Development and is past President of the PTO at Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven, Connecticut. She has consulted on the topics of leadership, business management, and professional development. She is a graduate of the University of New Haven and is seeking her MBA in Business Policy & Strategic Leadership.



**JENNIFER ALEXANDER**  
VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH & PARTNERSHIPS

Before joining ConnCAN, Jennifer worked for 12 years in Washington, DC on issues of school improvement, school choice, and family engagement. Her work focused on connecting research to policy and practice. She was an independent consultant and served as Senior Research Analyst at the American Institutes for Research (AIR), where managed national policy centers on comprehensive school reform and supplemental educational services and advised national studies of Title I implementation. Jennifer also worked on the Redesigning Low-Performing Schools Initiative at the American Federation of Teachers. She has written numerous research, policy and technical assistance tools. A Connecticut native, certified teacher and mother of two young children, Jennifer is a graduate of Peabody College at Vanderbilt University and received a Master of Public Policy degree from Georgetown University.





**KARA RYNECKI**  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE CEO & COO

Before joining ConnCAN, Kara worked as a Campaign Executive at United Way of Greater New Haven working to build relationships and raise funds for the greater New Haven community. During her time at United Way, she also served as a Community Impact Assistant where she played a supporting role in the implementation of Boost!, a key program in the New Haven School Change Initiative. Most recently, she was a Development Intern at ConnCAN, assisting the Director of Development in fundraising for the 2011 fiscal year. Outside of work, Kara has a love for animals and volunteers weekly at the shelter for the Greater New Haven Cat Project, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of stray, feral and abandoned cats. She has a B.A. in History from Southern Connecticut State University.



**ALEX SPURRIER**  
SENIOR ASSOCIATE, RESEARCH & POLICY

Before coming to ConnCAN, Alex was a Teach For America corps member and worked with Achieve Hartford! to evaluate the implementation of School Governance Councils in Hartford Public Schools. He earned his bachelor's degree in Economics from Bethel University and his master's degree in Public Policy from Trinity College. A native of Minnesota, Alex currently resides in Branford, where he coaches youth lacrosse and is part of a master's swim team.



**YAMUNA MENON**  
RESEARCH & POLICY ASSOCIATE

Yam started at ConnCAN as a Research and Policy Fellow before becoming an Associate in 2012. Before ConnCAN, Yam received her B.A. from Johns Hopkins University and spent her next years in Connecticut LGBT advocacy, including successfully campaigning for marriage equality as a Community Organizer for Love Makes a Family. She received her JD from the University of Connecticut School of Law, where she served on the Law Review, Moot Court Board, and as President of the Student Bar Association. She is licensed to practice in Connecticut and Massachusetts.



**JESSICA STRAM**  
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Jessica began her journey with ConnCAN as a Fellow, back in September 2007. She worked her way up through the ranks to the position of Government Affairs Director, after contributing to two successful legislative campaigns. Prior to ConnCAN, Jessica served as a public policy intern for GLSEN in Washington, DC. She earned her bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Connecticut, and her master's in Public Policy and Administration from Southern Connecticut State University. She is a lifelong resident of Wallingford, CT.



**REBECCA GREENBERG-ELLIS**  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Before joining ConnCAN, Rebecca worked as a furniture buyer for Pottery Barn. In this role, she served on the Sustainable Development Leadership Team and introduced socially and environmentally responsible product offerings. Previously, she was part of an international franchise start-up within Gap Inc. In addition to her work in corporate retail, Rebecca has a background in public education, having worked in K-3 grade classrooms in Santa Barbara, CA. Rebecca has also consulted for fair trade and economic development organizations. She is a regular contributor to several green business websites and blogs. Rebecca holds an MBA in Sustainable Management from the Presidio Graduate School in San Francisco, CA.



**BRITTANY COLEMAN**  
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

Brittany first worked with ConnCAN as our intern during the summer of 2010. After earning dual degrees from Middlebury College and completing the teacher preparation program, she returned to us full-time as Executive Assistant to the COO. In January 2012, Brittany was thrilled to transition into the role of Development Associate. She brings to ConnCAN a diverse set of experiences with educational non-profits 826 Valencia, REACH Prep, and QuestBridge, as well as public schools in Boston, New York, San Francisco, Chapel Hill, and Máncora, Peru. Brittany is a native of North Carolina and a proud graduate of its public school system.



**JAMILAH PRINCE-STEWART**  
ADVOCACY ASSOCIATE

Before joining ConnCAN, Jamilah was the Placement Manager for Hartford Youth Scholars Foundation, an academic-enrichment program that aimed to increase the college attendance rate in the city of Hartford by placing students at independent secondary schools. Prior to that, Jamilah interned at the Dixwell-Yale Community Learning Center and volunteered for Breakthrough New Haven. Jamilah is a native of New Haven, CT and a graduate of Yale University.

**MICHAEL SHULANSKY**  
COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE

Mike joined the ConnCAN team in the fall of 2011 as our Research & Policy Fellow. After helping to prepare school report cards, a Field Guide to Public Education in Connecticut, and other research materials, he transitioned into the role of Communications Associate. Before working at ConnCAN, Mike earned his B.A. in Economics from Hofstra University. He also spent a year at Quinnipiac University School of Law and was a legal intern for the United States Senate. Mike is a proud resident of West Hartford, CT.



# LEADERSHIP

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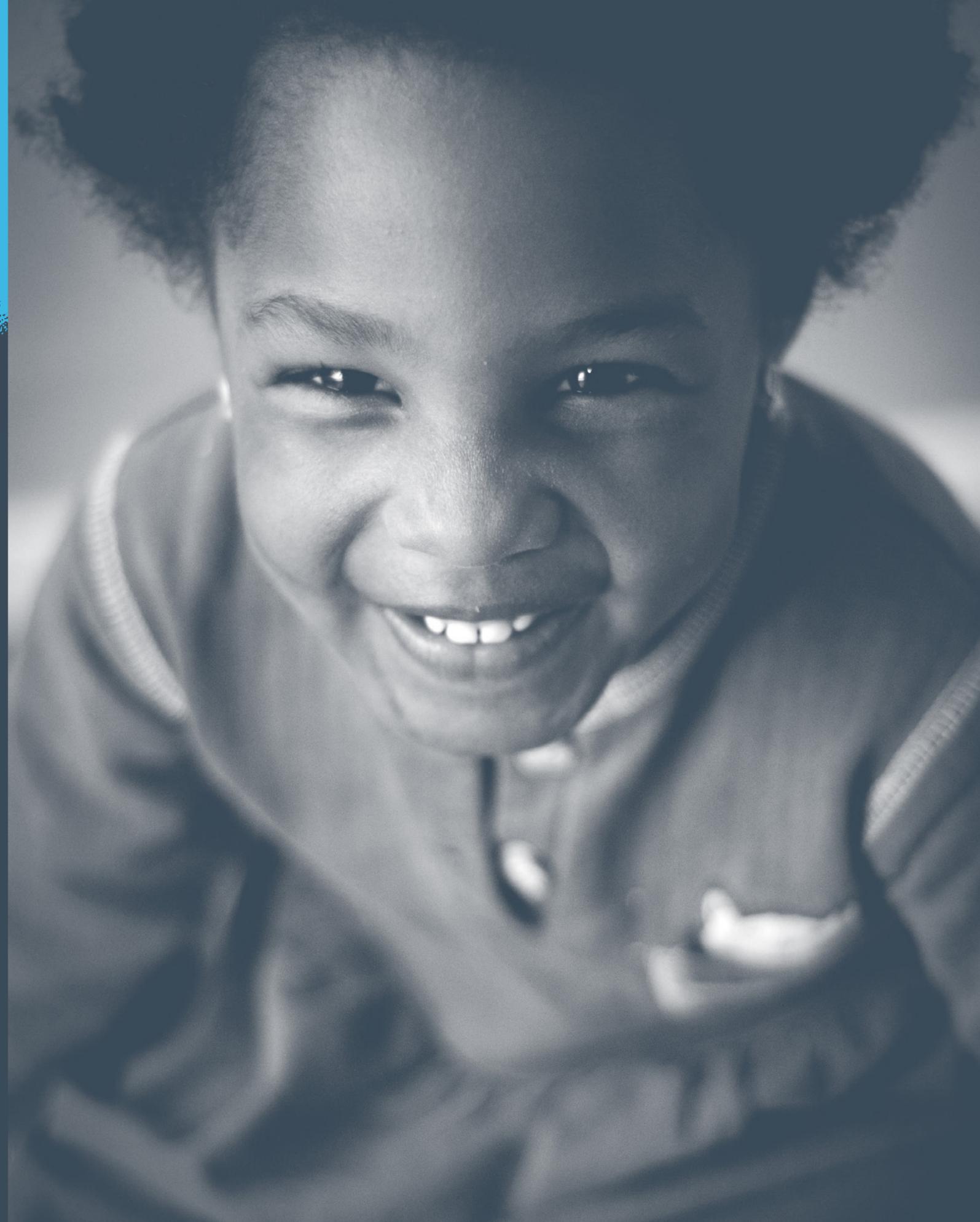
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*Thank You!*

# CONTRIBUTORS





# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

O'Connor Davies Munns & Dobbins, LLP  
Accountants and Consultants  
One Stamford Landing, Stamford,  
Connecticut 06902

To the Board of Directors  
Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now, Inc.  
September 21, 2011

We have audited the accompanying statements of financial position of Connecticut Coalition for achievement Now, Inc. (ConnCAN) as of December 31, 2010 and 2009 and the related statements of activities, and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of ConnCAN's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes consideration of internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of ConnCAN's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now, Inc. as of December 31, 2010 and 2009, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years the ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

*O'Connor Davies Munns & Dobbins, LLP*

# STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	2010			2009		
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
<b>REVENUE</b>						
Contributions	\$2,713,114	\$102,500	\$2,815,614	\$1,586,562	\$300,000	\$1,886,562
Other income	\$29,762	–	\$29,762	\$3,850	–	\$3,850
Interest income	\$1,631	–	\$1,631	\$2,027	–	\$2,027
Realized gain (loss) on sale of donated securities	\$4,354	–	\$4,354	(\$87)	–	(\$87)
In-kind contributions	\$2,400	–	\$2,400	\$5,400	–	\$5,400
Net assets released from restriction	\$320,000	(\$320,000)	–	\$144,139	(\$144,139)	–
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$3,071,261</b>	<b>(\$217,500)</b>	<b>\$2,853,761</b>	<b>\$1,741,891</b>	<b>\$155,861</b>	<b>\$1,897,752</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>						
Salaries and related expenses	\$1,487,232	–	\$1,487,232	\$1,030,758	–	\$1,030,758
Empowering parents	\$18,407	–	\$18,407	\$12,932	–	\$12,932
Driving policy change	\$37,859	–	\$37,859	\$94,436	–	\$94,436
Informing the public	\$301,015	–	\$301,015	\$199,467	–	\$199,467
Grant made	\$122,132	–	\$122,132	–	–	–
Staff training and development	\$37,268	–	\$37,268	\$66,475	–	\$66,475
Occupancy	\$72,463	–	\$72,463	\$69,364	–	\$69,364
Professional fees	\$81,562	–	\$81,562	\$51,998	–	\$51,998
Travel	\$68,910	–	\$68,910	\$29,425	–	\$29,425
Equipment and maintenance	\$51,100	–	\$51,100	\$23,927	–	\$23,927
Development	\$75,210	–	\$75,210	–	–	–
Telephone	\$26,208	–	\$26,208	\$16,867	–	\$16,867
Insurance	\$8,281	–	\$8,281	\$7,250	–	\$7,250
Office supplies	\$37,969	–	\$37,969	\$18,694	–	\$18,694
Dues and subscriptions	\$7,708	–	\$7,708	\$2,972	–	\$2,972
Depreciation expense	\$18,046	–	\$18,046	\$13,420	–	\$13,420
Miscellaneous expenses	\$9,420	–	\$9,420	\$6,383	–	\$6,383
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,460,790</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>\$2,460,790</b>	<b>\$1,644,368</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>\$1,644,368</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$610,471</b>	<b>(\$217,500)</b>	<b>\$392,971</b>	<b>\$97,523</b>	<b>\$155,861</b>	<b>\$253,384</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>						
Beginning of year	\$751,396	\$320,000	\$1,071,396	\$653,873	\$164,139	\$818,012
End of year	\$1,361,867	\$102,500	\$1,464,367	\$751,396	\$20,000	1,071,396

# STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS

	2010	2009
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Change in net assets	\$392,971	\$253,384
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash from operating activities		
Realized (gains) losses on donated securities	(\$4,354)	\$87
Donated securities	(\$437,843)	(\$32,914)
Discount to present value on contributions receivable		–
(861)		
Depreciation	\$18,046	\$13,420
Changes in operating assets and liabilities		
Contributions receivable	(\$165,945)	\$221,558
Other receivables	(\$25,500)	–
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$68,140	\$3,372
Grant payable	\$99,325	–
Prepaid expense	\$4,000	(\$4,400)
<b>Net Cash from Operating Activities</b>	<b>(\$51,160)</b>	<b>\$453,646</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Proceeds from sale of donated securities	\$442,197	\$32,827
Purchase of equipment	(\$18,777)	(\$22,371)
<b>Net Cash from Investing Activities</b>	<b>\$423,420</b>	<b>\$10,456</b>
<b>Net Change in Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	<b>\$372,260</b>	<b>\$464,102</b>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>		
Beginning of year	\$997,256	\$533,154
End of year	\$1,369,516	\$997,256

THANK YOU FOR READING **UNTIL IT'S DONE**, OUR 2011 ANNUAL REPORT. WE'RE IN THIS UNTIL IT'S DONE BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT, HARD WORK, COMMITMENT AND PASSION. AND BECAUSE EVERY CONNECTICUT CHILD DESERVES ACCESS TO GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Editors  
**Rebecca Greenberg-Ellis**  
**Brittany Coleman**

Student Portraits  
**alisonslattery.com**

Printing  
**GHP Media**

Staff Photography  
**Kelly Jensen**

Art Direction and Design  
**house9design.ca**

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CONTRIBUTIONS CAN ALSO BE SENT TO:  
CONNCAN, 85 WILLOW STREET, NEW HAVEN, CT, 06511



**SOURCES**

1 Connecticut State Department of Education. 2011 CMT Results. Available at <http://www.cmtreports.com>

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Send an email to:  
[jamilah.prince-stewart@conncan.org](mailto:jamilah.prince-stewart@conncan.org)

WE'RE BUILDING A MOVEMENT AND WE WON'T STOP UNTIL ALL CONNECTICUT STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS.



85 Willow Street  
New Haven, Connecticut 06511

203 772 4017 phone  
203 404 7761 fax

[www.conncan.org](http://www.conncan.org)  
[info@conncan.org](mailto:info@conncan.org)