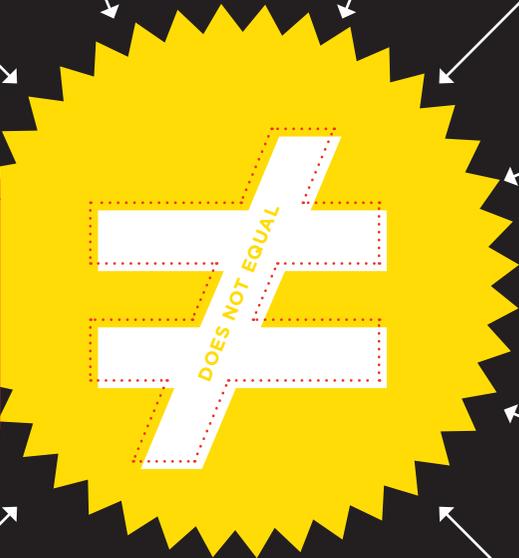


GOOD



GOOD

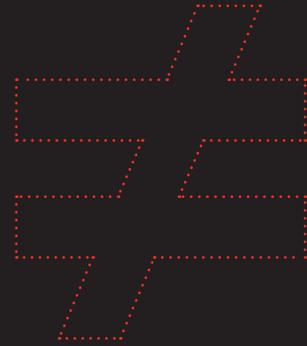
ENOUGH

2010

CONN CAN
ANNUAL REPORT



GOOD



GOOD

ENOUGH

IT ALL STARTS HERE...

2010 WAS A GOOD
YEAR FOR CONNCAN.

BUT GOOD IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

A medication that prevents Malaria for tourists is good; a vaccine that eradicates Malaria across the world is better. Building a homeless shelter is good, but creating a world where no one becomes homeless in the first place is better. Donating toys for a family in need is good, but wiping out systemic poverty is better.

Changing state policies to improve student outcomes is good. But closing Connecticut's achievement gap is better.

ConnCAN kicked off 2010 with our legislative campaign, *Our Race to the Top*. This campaign resulted in the passage of a slate of progressive education reform bills.

During the summer months, we ran the *Vote for Ed* campaign, which put the issue of Connecticut's struggling public education system front and center in the governor's race.

In the final months of the year, we partnered with DonorsChoose.org on a giving project that raised thousands of dollars for innovative public school classrooms across the state.

Indeed, 2010 was a good year for ConnCAN. In fact, it was a very good year.

But we can do better. Connecticut still has the largest achievement gap in the country. We have a lot to be proud of, but until that gap is closed, good is not good enough.

ConnCAN is proud to present you with our 2010 Annual Report: Good \neq Good Enough.

DEAR FRIENDS,

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

BRIAN OLSON'S LETTER:

EVERY CHILD DESERVES A QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION.

I have never encountered anyone who disagrees with this fundamental belief. And yet, in Connecticut, we have the worst achievement gap in the United States. So—we have to ask ourselves—where are we going wrong?

Data prove that we have the knowledge and the resources to provide a quality education to children from all backgrounds. We have scores of examples of schools that provide an excellent education to suburban kids, urban kids, kids of color, white kids, kids from low-income families and kids from the middle class.

So—if we all agree that every child should receive a great education, and if we know it can be done, we are left again to wonder: why isn't it happening?

The answer is simple: the public education system that we inherited is not designed to deliver consistent positive results for all kids. The responsibility for implementing a solution can be laid at the feet of those with the ultimate authority—our political leaders—but they need our help.

Hartford needs to re-imagine a public education system that actually delivers results for our kids. In any democracy, the process of reforming public policy begins with informing the public. This is why ConnCAN has worked hard to become a trusted, fact-based thought leader on public education issues. We constantly study the field, we convene meetings across the state, and we work with the media to shed light on the issues. Then we propose solutions. Finally, we work directly with our political leaders to help them turn ideas into enacted policies.

In this annual report, you will find a recap of the significant progress we made in 2010. Brainpower, passion and hard work by our staff and advocates across the state yielded important results in 2010. But we still haven't achieved our most fundamental goal. Every child absolutely needs access to a great public school. And we simply will not rest until that is the case.

Please continue to partner with us in this incredibly important work.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**ALEX JOHNSTON'S
LETTER:****NO QUESTION, 2010 WAS THE MOST
INTENSE YEAR OF EDUCATION REFORM
THAT WE HAVE EXPERIENCED IN
CONNECTICUT.**

From Race to the Top, to the governor's race, we've been busier than ever putting education reform front and center in the public square.

Connecticut still has a long way to go before we reach the promise of great public schools for every child. But there is a movement of education reformers today in Connecticut that just didn't exist five years ago. And this movement for reform is making real headway toward that promise.

The good news is that in the last fifteen to twenty years—thanks in no small part to entrepreneurial educators and philanthropists who have refused to accept the strictures of the inherited system—we have developed deeply

compelling evidence about how to get the breakthrough gains in student achievement that we need to compete internationally and deliver on the ultimate promise of our own democracy.

So, a vital task is to unjam the politics—so that we can create the structural conditions in which great people working together can achieve excellence at scale.

And yet, as we see an increasingly polarized debate on so many of the vital issues that we face as a nation, there's a strand of thinking in this country that says our democracy is broken—that stakeholders and interest groups have taken it captive in pursuit of their own aims—and that we're increasingly unable to solve our most important collective problems.

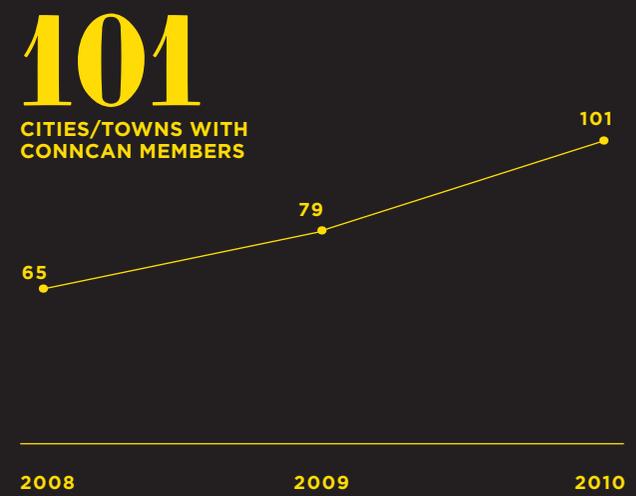
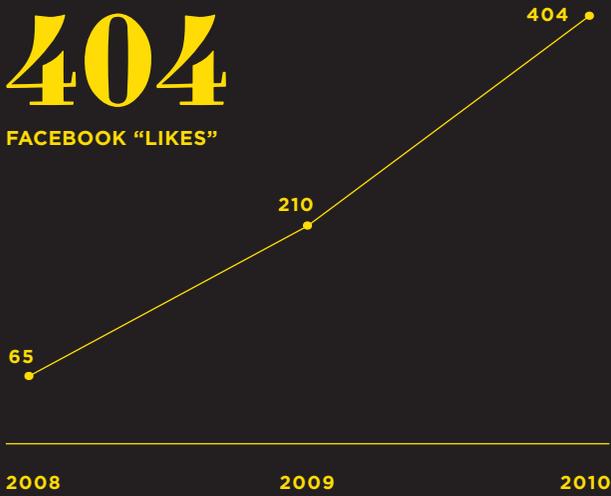
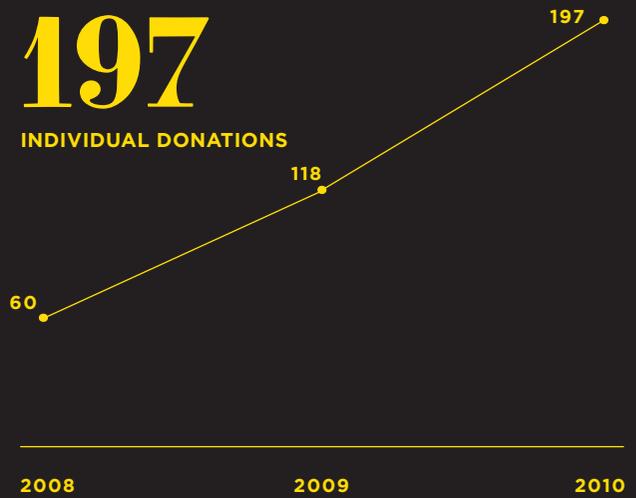
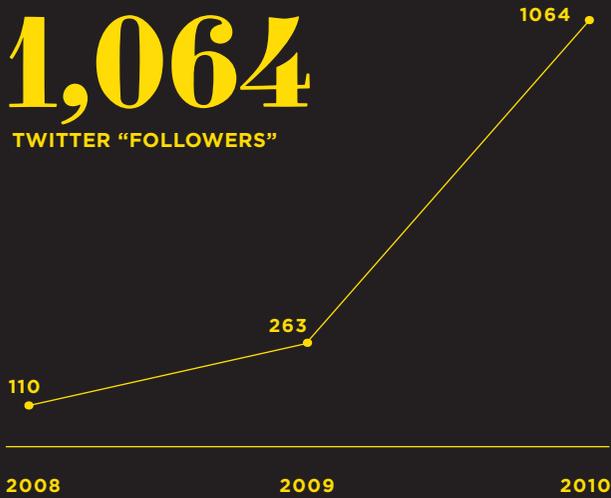
This is nonsense. Actually, there's nothing new in this complaint. In fact, Winston Churchill answered it best over seventy years ago when he said: "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others."

Our democracy isn't broken in America, or here in Connecticut. We just need to get actively engaged to make it work—and as advocates in the information age we've never had better tools to do so. And in the flat world and global economy of today we've never had a more urgent need.

So let's keep working together to put the public back in public education—it's the only way to truly deliver on the promise of great schools for all.

CONNCAN = PEOPLE

PEOPLE POWER!



GOOD VS. GOOD ENOUGH

GOOD

Our top scoring students score among the top states on national tests.

On national tests (National Assessment of Educational Progress), Connecticut 4th graders overall outperformed the national average between 2003 and 2009.¹

Three of Connecticut's largest urban districts are showing signs of progress and are outpacing the state in student achievement gains.

In 2010, ConnCAN recognized 17 Success Story schools that are proving that demographics ≠ destiny.

In 2010, Connecticut secured a total of **\$4,473,481** in federal competitive funds.⁴

NOT GOOD ENOUGH

Internationally, our students are not prepared to compete. Connecticut's top students are falling behind.

On international assessments of math, Connecticut's top-performing students are **behind 29 countries** and leading states like New Jersey and Massachusetts. Top ranked countries like Taiwan, Switzerland, Belgium, Finland and Korea score at **advanced levels** nearly four times the rate of Connecticut students. Connecticut students on average score on par with countries like Lithuania and Hungary.²

In every subject (reading, math and science) and every grade tested (4, 8, 12) the gap between low-income and minority students and their white, non-poor peers is **three grade levels**. This is the largest gap in the nation.³

There are not enough Success Stories in Connecticut. At least 120 other schools have been **chronically failing** students for 5 years or more.

Connecticut ranked **38th** out of all states in overall dollars won.

This amounts to only \$7.89 per pupil. Meanwhile, our neighboring states won billions in federal funding— from \$308.54 per pupil in New York, to \$323.90 in Massachusetts, to \$516.02 per pupil in Rhode Island.

1. National Center for Education Statistics
 2. National Center for Education Statistics; Hanushek, Petersen, and Woessmann. "U.S. Math Performance in Global Perspective"
 3. National Center for Education Statistics
 4. Education Week.

INFOGRAPHIC



OUR MISSION

"WE WILL NOT REST UNTIL EVERY CONNECTICUT CHILD, REGARDLESS OF RACE, ETHNICITY OR CLASS, HAS ACCESS TO A GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOL."

Connecticut's achievement gap—the persistent and significant disparity between the academic achievement of low-income and minority children and their white, middle-class peers—is the most urgent social and economic problem of our time. We're paying the price for our failing public schools. We have the fifth highest per-student spending in the nation, but we're getting a terrible return on that investment. We continue to have the largest achievement gap between rich and poor kids in the nation, and even our top kids are falling behind.

But in Connecticut, and the entire nation, public schools are the cornerstone of our democracy. Our future is inextricably linked to the education of our children—all of them. In the tradition of Connecticut's social movements, from the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association to Harriet Beecher Stowe and the abolitionists, ConnCAN is building a movement of concerned citizens advocating to fundamentally reform our public schools through smart public policies.

NUMBER
OF DOLLARS

won per pupil in federal competitive stimulus grants⁵

NEW YORK

\$308.54

MASSACHUSETTS

\$323.90

RHODE ISLAND

\$516.02

CONNECTICUT

\$7.89

OUR PRINCIPLES

GETTING STATE POLICY RIGHT CAN TRANSFORM THE WAY WE EDUCATE CONNECTICUT'S CHILDREN. THIS DOESN'T MEAN TRYING TO WRITE EVERY BEST PRACTICE INTO STATE LAW, BUT INSTEAD ADVANCING THREE FUNDAMENTAL, INTERCONNECTED PRINCIPLES THAT WORK

TOGETHER TO REWARD SUCCESS, PREVENT FAILURE, AND RAISE THE QUALITY OF EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN. WE ARE WORKING TOWARDS STRUCTURAL RATHER THAN PROGRAMMATIC CHANGE.

GREATER CHOICE

Achievement gaps stem from a calcified education system that stands in the way of maximizing the innovations of educators and the desires of parents. Expanded parental choice better aligns school options with diverse student needs and injects a grassroots level of accountability into the system.

GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY

Parental choice provides one important type of feedback, but it is much more powerful when connected to strong, data-driven accountability. We need to dramatically expand public awareness of school performance, ground teacher and principal evaluations in student results, and close chronically failing schools.

GREATER FLEXIBILITY

In order for greater choice and greater accountability to translate into greater student achievement, educators need to have far greater flexibility to pursue excellence. This means removing obstacles to new school creation, expanding alternative pathways for teachers and principals, letting principals make staffing and other decisions based on what's best for students and the school culture, and making sure school funding reflects the needs of students in every school.

OUR MODEL

CONN CAN PROVIDES A PLATFORM FOR CONNECTICUT CITIZENS TO SPEAK UP FOR KIDS EFFECTIVELY. PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES SHOULD BE LEADING THE REST OF THE WORLD, AND CONNECTICUT'S STUDENTS SHOULD BE AT THE FRONT OF THE PACK.

There's no question that Connecticut has some outstanding examples of excellence among its public schools, but without smart public policy, our students most in need - and even our top students—will continue to be served by a system that is mediocre at best overall.

Changing this reality requires a sustained approach to reform that suffuses state government, spreads throughout school districts, and inspires a broad community of stakeholders. Without undertaking the type of structural change we're working towards, Connecticut's worst-in-the-nation achievement gap will remain in place.

We don't build schools or train teachers. Instead, ConnCAN runs results-oriented advocacy campaigns.

THE THREE PILLARS OF OUR WORK ARE:

RESEARCH AND POLICY

ConnCAN's original research provides the timely and in-depth analysis of public education in Connecticut that provides the foundation for our policy recommendations. Our online tools, such as School Report Cards, which assign a letter grade to every public school in the state, serve as essential resources for parents and other stakeholders, and help shape the statewide conversation about public education.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MOBILIZATION

ConnCAN informs citizens through earned media, electronic communications and social networking, publications, on-the-ground community mobilization, partnerships with like-minded civic and community groups, and events. Then, we make it easy for Connecticut's growing cadre of education reform advocates to take meaningful action, both online and in person.

ADVOCACY FOR POLICY CHANGE

Grounded in our research and policy work, ConnCAN's expert staff works with our citizen advocates and key state officials to develop and enact meaningful education reform through both legislative and administrative action.





MATH

NOW FEATURING
OUR MATHLETE

N

DISPATCHES FROM THE MOVEMENT



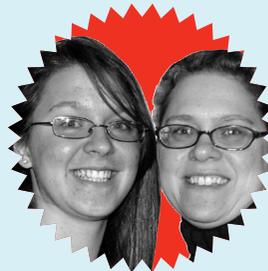
"ConnCAN is important to us because they thoroughly complete research on educational issues in a clear and objective manner in the best interest of children."

—MILLY ARCINIEGAS
President of Hartford Parent Organization Council



"As a parent in Waterbury, I was deeply concerned with the high percentage of failing schools in this city. ConnCAN has rolled up their sleeves, done the research, and then effectively partnered with people like me who want to make a positive change at the local and state level. Their hard work gives our kids hope for a better future."

—LISA CHENEY
Parent Advocate in Waterbury, Training Consultant at the Partnership for Sustainable Change



"ConnCAN is important to us not only because of the issues and the advocacy work, but because it has opened the door to allow us to be better advocates."

—ERIKA AND MOLLY HAYNES
Erika is a Parent Advocate in Windham and Molly is a magnet school student in Manchester



"ConnCAN represents the power of a handful of people coming together to make a difference. ConnCAN has not only given a voice to the educationally disenfranchised, but has provided a vehicle for other Connecticut residents to get involved. I can honestly say that the educational landscape in Connecticut is better today because of the work of ConnCAN."

—DR. MICHAEL SHARPE
CEO of Jumoke Academy and President of the Connecticut Charter School Network



"The work of ConnCAN in closing the achievement gap is essential to my work not only as a Superintendent, but also as a parent. Our children will someday inherit this public school system and it is our responsibility to ensure that system is equitable and assures success for every child."

—CHRIS LEONE
Superintendent of Torrington Public Schools



"We have watched ConnCAN deftly mobilize highly influential civic leaders as well as traditionally underrepresented families in low-income communities where children have the most to gain and lose from state and local education policies... Unfortunately, few communities have organizations [like ConnCAN] that combine an understanding of what works for kids in underresourced communities with the political savvy to influence local and state governments to act." ⁶

—WENDY KOPP
CEO & Founder of Teach for America



"ConnCAN is a beacon for education reform in the state of Connecticut, as well as a nationwide leader in child-focused education advocacy. We share ConnCAN's vision that every child is entitled to an excellent education, and that each child has something to contribute. We started the Education Leadership Forum to help cultivate awareness and grassroots activism in Connecticut's suburban communities around these ideas and the need to help children reach their full potential. ConnCAN has been an invaluable partner in this effort, demonstrating that a number of Connecticut's current education policies are a disservice to all our children. Implementing sensible state policies will allow our schools to provide the type of education that each of our children deserve. We are grateful to have ConnCAN, with its tremendous dedication and enlightened thinking, focused on Connecticut's children."

—LAURIE MCTEAGUE AND MARIANNA MCCALL
Founders of the Education Leadership Forum



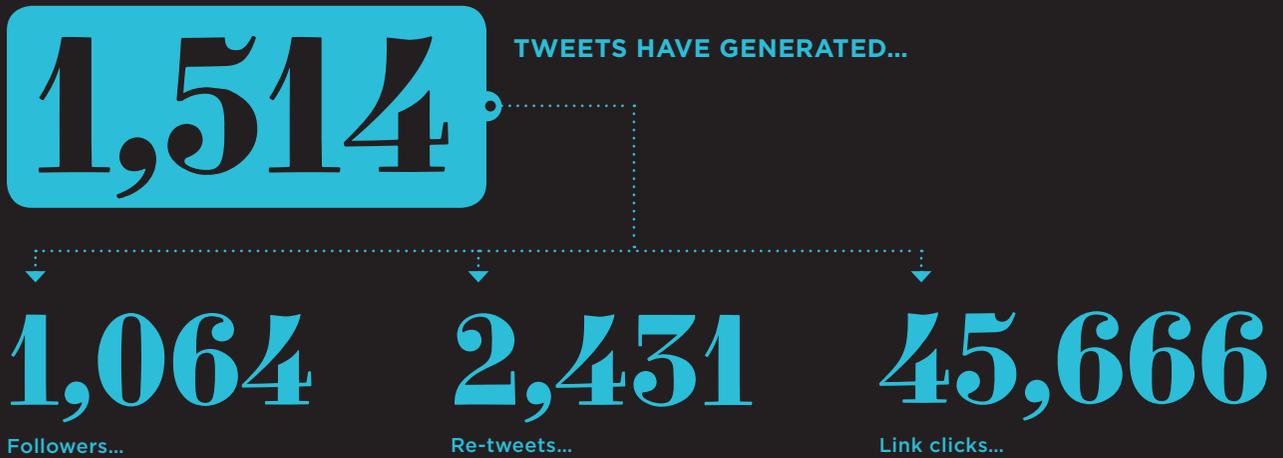
"As a parent, the quality, integrity and family-friendly information and research provided to communities of all colors and socio-economics by ConnCAN has been a resource that has helped thousands of families make informed choices regarding their child's educational needs.

ConnCAN has remained vigilant in the quest for great schools for all."

—GWEN SAMUEL
Founder of the State of Black Connecticut Alliance and the Connecticut Parents Union

6. Kopp, W. (2011). *A Chance to Make History*. New York, NY: PublicAffairs.

2010 BY THE NUMBERS



OUR PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESULTS:

91%
say we need a system that funds each child based on their learning needs at the school they actually attend

89%
say staffing decisions in schools, including teacher layoffs, should be based on a number of factors, not only seniority

82%
say we should increase the number of charter, magnet and technical schools

87%
believe school administrators should have more flexibility in using their funding in ways that meet their students' needs

6,129

PEOPLE JOINED THE MOVEMENT TO CREATE OUR...

27,789 → **45** → **12** → **12**

Member database, which received...

Education news roundups...

Research news roundups...

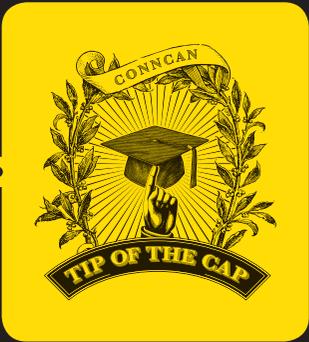
E-newsletters...

16

The number of times Alex wrote directly to our base...

17

The number of Success Story Schools



80,209 → **326,010**

Unique visitors viewed...

Pages on the ConnCAN website, including...

5

the number of state legislators receiving our Tip of the Cap award...

35,640

Visits to our school report cards...

22,101

Visits to our Vote for Ed campaign page...

100%

Candidates for Governor attending the Gubernatorial Education Forum



OUR RACE TO THE TOP



Our Race to the Top was ConnCAN's 2010 legislative campaign. We advocated for four commonsense school reforms—Measuring Effectiveness, World-Class Standards, Superstar Principals, and Money Follows the Child—designed to make Connecticut more competitive in Race to the Top, the federal government's \$4 billion

education grant competition. In January, many state officials hadn't yet heard of the competition. Over the next six months, ConnCAN played a central role in pushing through a set of reforms, bringing into existence three groundbreaking new policies:

WHAT WE GOT

MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Public Act No. 10-111 guarantees that, for the first time, every district in the state will be required to evaluate teachers based on their students' academic growth.

.....

SUPERSTAR PRINCIPALS

Public Act No. 10-111 creates a new pathway to certification so that our most talented classroom teachers can become school principals without jumping through unnecessary hoops.

.....

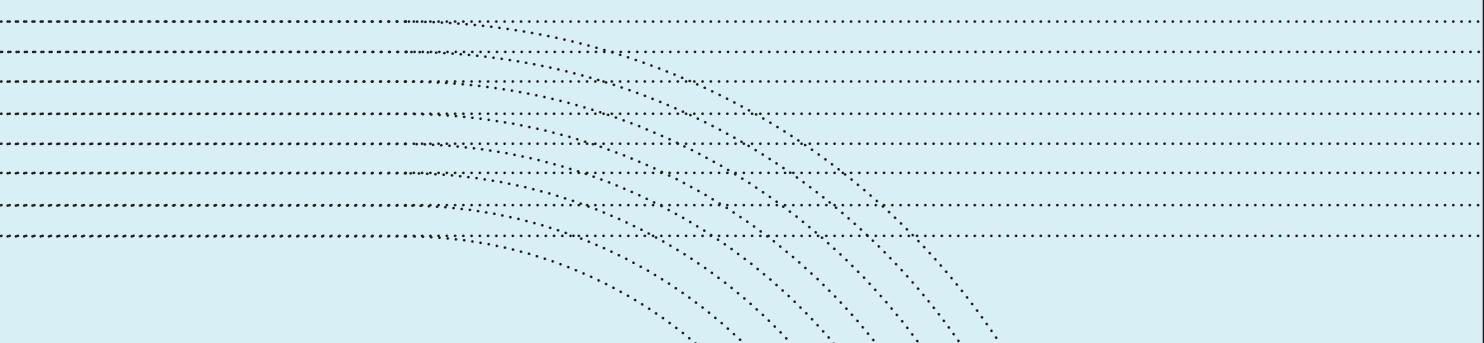
WORLD-CLASS STANDARDS

The State Board of Education agreed to adopt the Common Core Standards, creating internationally benchmarked goals to strive towards in Connecticut public schools.

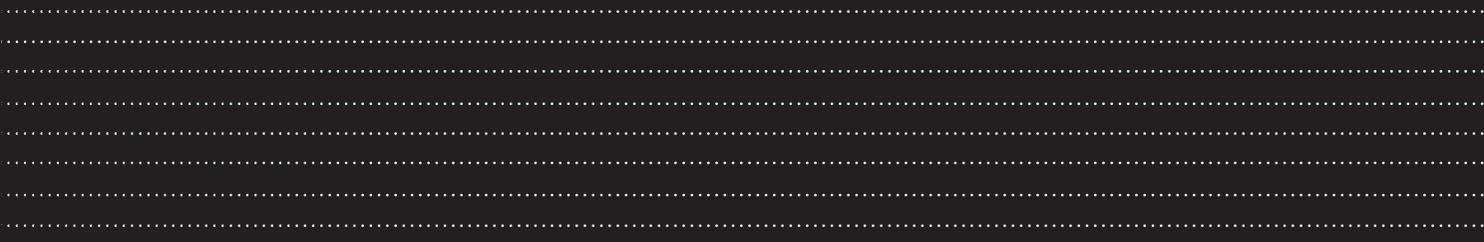
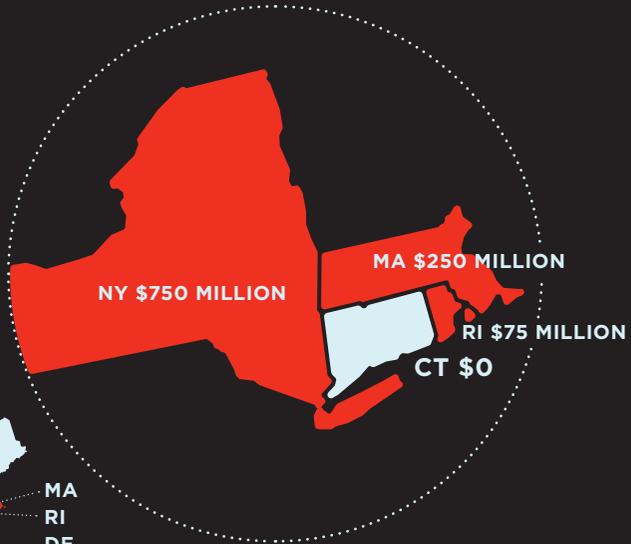
WHAT WE DIDN'T

MONEY FOLLOWS THE CHILD

Connecticut's charter school students currently receive 75 cents for every dollar that traditional public school students receive. A Money Follows the Child system would have funded charter school students equally. The Race to the Top law that was enacted lifts the caps on the number of seats allowed in our high-performing public charter schools, but it doesn't lift the much more serious constraint that comes from a lack of money for those seats.



RACE TO THE TOP WINNERS:
WHY NOT US?



CAMPAIGN TIMELINE: AND THE RACE CONTINUES...



ConnCAN obtains preliminary details about the upcoming nationwide grant competition known as Race to the Top that awards federal prize money to states that make the strongest commitment to bold education reform

ConnCAN's Government Affairs team approaches state policymakers about the process and necessary steps to ensure Connecticut is ready to compete in the Race. Many of them have not yet heard anything about Race to the Top.



ConnAd, a 501(c)(4) organization, airs its first-ever television campaign—commercials that feature the idea of a race in which Connecticut can pull ahead if it works hard enough—for two weeks at the end of the legislative session.

With the support of key champions in the legislature, the General Assembly passes an omnibus bill that incorporates three out of four of ConnCAN's reforms: Measuring Effectiveness, World-Class Standards, and Superstar Principals.

During the Money Follows the Child bill's public hearing, many citizens testify in support of the bill, and several members of the Education Committee make statements of support. Despite the bill's strong champions, we are not able to secure the support of the co-chairs of the Education Committee, and the bill dies in-committee without coming up for a vote.

CONNCAN'S OUR RACE TO THE TOP CAMPAIGN SCORES THREE OUT OF FOUR IN 2010!

ConnCAN's research effort pays off: ConnCAN becomes a leading authority on what constitutes a strong state application, and what Connecticut needs to do to compete.

Connecticut is now one of only two states in the nation that fund charter schools on a separate line item in the state budget—a situation that requires the legislature to debate and appropriate funding for each and every charter school student year after year. We desperately need bold school finance reform, and our work in this area in 2010 paved the way for resolute action in 2011 and beyond.

Connecticut still has the fifth highest per pupil spending in the country, and yet the nation's largest achievement gap persists. Our broken school finance system is a big contributor to this gap. Students are funded at wildly disparate levels in schools across the state.

Legislative hearings ensue, and ConnCAN organizes two large turnouts of more than 800 advocates at hearings devoted to *Our Race to the Top* bills, and brings up dozens of speakers to testify in support of the bills' passage.

ConnCAN leverages the power of the media attention surrounding Race to the Top with a press conference at the Capitol that coincides with the announcement of the Round 1 finalists. Connecticut is not among them. ConnCAN's message is simple: Race to the Top is a relay race, and while the executive branch dropped the baton in Round 1, the legislature still has a chance in Round 2.





The Federal Department of Education releases details about expectations and scoring. ConnCAN works to share information with state officials as it becomes available. Governors in other states are beginning to convene special legislative sessions to get a head start in the competition, but Connecticut's governor has still made no public mention of the competition.

ConnCAN decides to do the heavy lifting to take advantage of this opportunity by framing our entire 2010 legislative campaign around the competition. *Our Race to the Top* is born!

As we meet with legislators and key players in an effort to set Connecticut up for success in the federal competition, it becomes more and more obvious: despite going through the motions to apply for federal funds, Connecticut's executive branch just isn't "in it to win it" when it comes to Race to the Top.



ConnCAN provides special acknowledgement to five legislators among the many who stepped forward in support: Senator Toni Boucher, Representative Jason Bartlett, Representative Tony Hwang, Representative Chris Lyddy, and Representative Doug McCrory for leading within the rank and file on education issues. Their leadership, advocacy, and willingness to work constructively with their colleagues from across the political spectrum are vitally important to these legislative successes.

ConnCAN rings in the New Year with a robust portfolio of policy briefs and careful media plans. We're ready.

The reforms passed during the 2010 legislative season are significant victories for Connecticut's kids, and these wins are clearly due in no small measure to ConnCAN's tireless advocacy in the face of a dead political lift. But we didn't go far enough.

ROUND 2 RACE TO THE TOP WINNERS ARE ANNOUNCED—AND CONNECTICUT IS NOT AMONG THEM.



ConnCAN releases an analysis revealing that Connecticut's Round 1 application is riddled with 120 blank answers. The result is a firestorm of media attention statewide. Despite this coverage, the governor and state education leaders continue to ignore the calls for change, and ConnCAN turns its attention to the legislature.



Despite ConnCAN's private and public efforts, executive branch officials continue to demonstrate through their words and actions that the federal competition is simply not a legislative priority.

ConnCAN officially launches *Our Race to the Top* on the same day in January that the state submits its Round 1 application. Our research team analyzes other states' application from top to bottom.

VOTE FOR ED



THE “VOTE FOR ED!” CAMPAIGN, LAUNCHED IN JULY 2010, INTRODUCED CONNCAN’S IDEALIZED CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR: ED U. CATION.

Ed’s campaign platform consisted of four priorities: courageous leaders at the top, an effective teacher in every classroom, money follows every child, and a new school creation “Marshall Plan.”

Within the framework of Ed’s campaign, we defined what it would mean to have a true education reformer in the governor’s mansion, held the candidates accountable for what they said they would do about improving Connecticut’s public schools, and directed a public conversation that elevated education reform as a top priority for Connecticut’s voters.

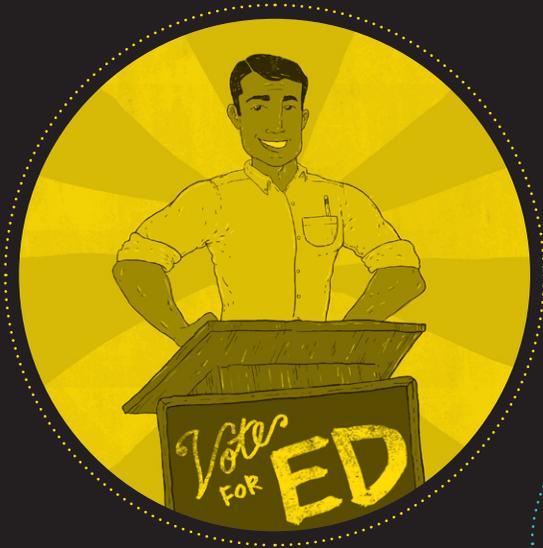
The campaign kicked off in July, when we sent the gubernatorial candidates a questionnaire about their views of public education in Connecticut in general and, more specifically, which education reform policies they would support as governor. Most of the leading candidates answered the questionnaire, and their responses were available to the public on our website so that constituents could see precisely where they stood on the issues.

On primary day in August, Ed and his campaign staff went to polling stations around the state to talk to voters, remind them about the importance of education reform, and have photographs taken with supporters, or EdHeads as we called them.

Throughout the summer, Ed hit the campaign trail and attended events all over the Nutmeg State. He went to town fairs, board meetings, panel discussions, *Waiting for ‘Superman’* screenings, jazz festivals, public schools and farmers markets. Like every other gubernatorial candidate, Ed talked to concerned citizens, handed out campaign swag, kissed babies, shook hands, and hobnobbed with celebrities. And of course, Ed spread the word tirelessly and answered tough questions via his Facebook page and weekly blog posts.

In September, ConnCAN hosted the 2010 Gubernatorial Candidate Forum on Public Education, the first multi-party forum of the general election season, in partnership with the Connecticut Mirror and NBC-30. Hundreds of Connecticut voters, policy makers, and members of the media packed into the gymnasium at MacDonough Elementary School in Middletown to hear the candidates discuss the question of how to fix our public schools—and fight over the distinction of becoming Connecticut’s “education governor.”





During other gubernatorial debates in the weeks that followed ConnCAN's Candidate Forum, education was a topic that generated heated dialogue. The candidates discussed their positions on Race to the Top, teacher evaluations, equitable student funding, and quality-blind layoffs. This type of open discourse on public education issues surpassed anything Connecticut had seen in previous gubernatorial races. Thanks to Ed, and his staffers at ConnCAN, the education platforms of Connecticut's 2010 gubernatorial candidates were among the most detailed and concrete in the nation.

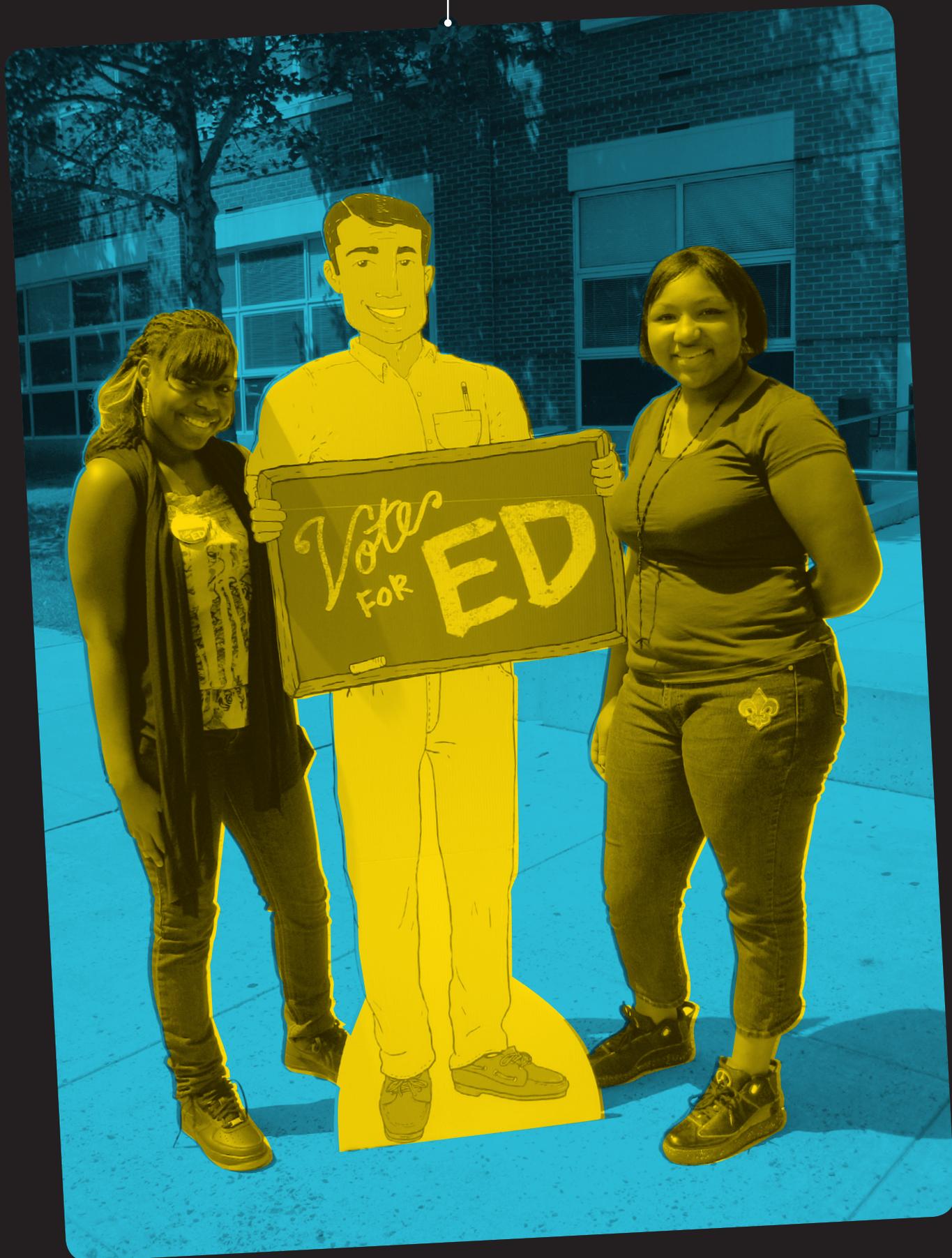
With just two weeks left before Election Day, a public opinion survey commissioned by ConnCAN revealed that large majorities of Connecticut voters were looking to the next governor to make education reform a top priority. The decisive results of our public opinion survey sent a message to all the gubernatorial candidates that their constituents were ready for dramatic changes in the way we deliver education.

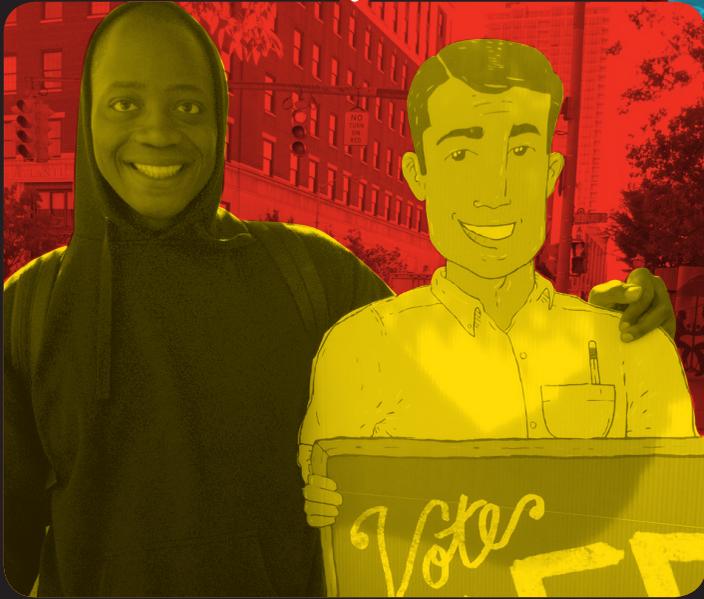
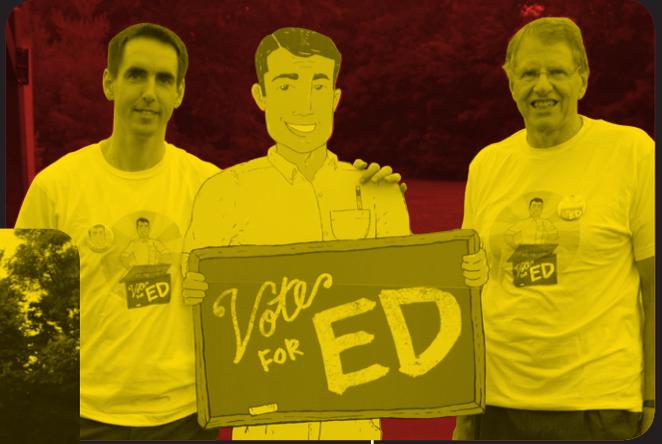
During the last weeks of October, volunteers and EdHeads distributed hundreds of lawn signs, bumper magnets, buttons, and T-shirts to voters all over Connecticut. On November 2, 2010, Ed joined his fellow gubernatorial hopefuls by visiting polling places across the state.

Ed's campaign staff braved the cold weather and spent hours outside gymnasiums and town halls, schools and community centers, talking to voters about public education and reminding them about the importance of education reform in securing our state's future.

Once it became clear that Dannel P. Malloy would become the 88th governor of the state of Connecticut, ConnCAN compiled detailed advice on what we thought Governor-elect Malloy's policy priorities should be with regards to public education. We joined the transition team's advisory group on education policy and submitted our recommendations for bold reform.

Ed U. Cation was an idealized candidate, but his presence and insistence on a conversation about the fundamental need for education reform were keenly felt statewide. Thanks to Ed's campaign, Connecticut citizens made it known that education should be a top priority, and the candidates heard them loud and clear. In fact, during his February 2011 budget address, Governor Malloy committed to fixing the state's school finance system "once and for all" and called for reforms to give school districts the flexibility they need to avoid last-in, first-out layoffs.





A GIVING PROJECT

AT CONN CAN, WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF GREAT TEACHERS. WHICH IS WHY WE'RE SUCH BIG FANS OF DONORSCHOOSE.ORG.

Founded in 2000 by a social studies teacher in the Bronx, DonorsChoose.org is a nonprofit website where public school teachers describe specific educational projects for their students, and donors can choose the projects they want to support. After completing a project, the donor hears back from the classroom they supported in the form of photographs and student thank-you letters. Requests range from pencils for a poetry-writing unit, to violins for a school recital, to microscope slides for a biology class. In the past ten years of operation, residents of 50 states and 10 countries have funded 160,751 student projects, channeling more than \$65 million in resources to over 4 million students.

In December of 2010, ConnCAN and DonorsChoose.org teamed up to launch a groundbreaking giving project that ran for the last two weeks of the calendar year.

On December 15th, ConnCAN told our base: "If you make a contribution of at least \$10 to ConnCAN before December 31st, a private donor who supports the work of both ConnCAN and DonorsChoose.org will pay for us to give you another DonorsChoose.org gift code. For \$100. This means that your \$10 gift to ConnCAN will provide another \$100 to a classroom project of your choice."

The response was dramatic. In the hours after the email was sent, dozens of donations, emails, letters and notes of support came pouring in. Many of the educators in the ConnCAN movement began forwarding the offer to their friends, families and fellow teachers. The project, in a word, went viral.

By New Years Eve 2010, ConnCAN advocates made a significant impact on public school classroom projects all over the state of Connecticut. We are proud of the role that we were able to play connecting great teachers around the state with the resources they need to take things to the next level with their students, and we can't wait to team up with DonorsChoose.org again in 2011.

LITERATURE &
PERFORMING ARTS HIST



DonorsChoose.org

Teachers ask. You choose. Students learn.

**CONNCAN ADVOCATES FUNDED PROJECTS
IN NUMEROUS SUBJECT AREAS:**

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE GYM & FITNESS

MUSIC SOCIAL SCIENCES

EARLY DEVELOPMENT CIVICS & GOVERNMENT
HEALTH & LIFE SCIENCE

ESL LITERACY SPECIAL NEEDS
APPLIED SCIENCES

WRITING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY COLLEGE & CAREER PREP MATHEMATICS

VISUAL ARTS

Honors
Teachers ask, You

\$8,100
DOLLARS RAISED FOR CT CLASSROOMS

127 → **10,456**
PROJECTS FUNDED STUDENTS IMPACTED



Choose.org
Teachers ask. You choose. Students learn.

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Teachers ask. You choose. Students learn.

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CITIES WITH
PROJECTS
FUNDED



50CAN

IT WAS THE SUMMER OF 2009. WE HAD JUST WRAPPED UP OUR *MIND THE GAPS* CAMPAIGN—GOING THREE FOR THREE—AND EDUCATION REFORMERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY BEGAN APPROACHING TO ASK,

HOW CAN I GET A
CONNCAN WHERE
I LIVE?



Marc Porter Magee, then ConnCAN's COO, got to thinking about just that question. A year and a half later, equipped with lessons learned through six years of R&D in Connecticut, he answered it with the creation of a new, independent national nonprofit dedicated to bringing ConnCAN style campaigns—and ConnCAN style successes—to states across country. It's called 50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now.

50CAN is founded on the belief that all politics are local, but locals shouldn't have to start from scratch. Its goal is to build a new national organization that can launch, manage, and support state education reform campaigns more quickly, more efficiently, and more effectively than would be possible if local education reformers were doing it solely on their own.

In 2010, with a challenge grant from the Walton Family Foundation and the generous support of the ConnCAN board and staff, Marc set the stage for 50CAN by piloting a new state campaign in Rhode Island. At the same time, he spent 2010 laying the groundwork for 50CAN's second branch in Minnesota and developing a long-term strategic plan for the national organization.

50CAN formally launched as an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit on January 1, 2011. Jon Sackler, a ConnCAN founder and board member, serves on the 50CAN board, and Alex Johnston is a 50CAN special advisor. ConnCAN is proud to have inspired and incubated what we are sure will be an education reform powerhouse with the capacity to fundamentally reform America's public schools.





REPORTS AND ANALYSIS

Before we meet with lawmakers, before we blog, before our campaign even has a name, we do our homework. Every single document that bears the ConnCAN logo has been painstakingly researched, carefully written, and intensely scrutinized by the research and policy team. As a result, ConnCAN has become a go-to source for information on public education in the state of Connecticut. We're policy nerds, and we're proud of it.

Team R&P worked hard in 2010. The team provided the type of real-time analysis that allows us to accurately track and highlight Connecticut's educational gains and losses, as the data become available. By digging into test scores, graduation rates, and federal funding figures, our research department keeps ConnCAN at the cutting edge of the education reform sector. Background information provided by ConnCAN has also helped drive the efforts of other organizations working to close the achievement gap not just in Connecticut, but nationwide.

And, of course, our research and policy team worked hard to bring Connecticut public school parents the resources that they've come to depend on each year. ConnCAN's School Report Cards allow thousands of concerned families in hundreds of districts to see how their child's school is actually performing. Our celebrated Success Story Schools are those that are leading kids out of poverty by closing the achievement gap, and getting outstanding performance results with their students no matter what challenges they bring with them to school.

But 2010 brought unique challenges to the top of the research and policy team's to-do list. We knew we wanted to tackle the issue of school finance reform even before we started working on our 2011 legislative campaign. And, in order to be successful, team R&P had an incredible amount of work to do to get us on the right path.

To tackle this challenge, ConnCAN convened a group of national experts that was tasked with focusing on a single issue: school finance reform. With the guidance of this advisory group, team R&P created a student-based budgeting simulator. The simulator is a spreadsheet the likes of which you've never seen. It models where every single public school student in the state is enrolled, how every single dollar flows from the state to districts, and how that distribution could be improved through a student-centered system. The simulator gives us an unprecedented level of detail on the way that our system of school finance actually operates. For the first time, we can see where students live, and which schools they actually attend. Outside of the state government, ConnCAN is the only entity with the capacity to model a new school finance system at such a granular level.

After declining to advance a specific legislative proposal on school finance as part of the state's Race to the Top application, the State Board of Education created an Ad-Hoc Committee in the early months of 2010 to study the byzantine Education Cost Sharing Formula and propose alternatives. Thanks to our research and policy gurus, ConnCAN was the only member of the committee to present a detailed alternative proposal that would fund students based on their needs at the schools they actually attend.

This proposal eventually formed the basis of a bill in the 2011 legislative session (for a sneak peek, flip to the Get Smart section of this report). The proposal puts forward a complete overhaul of school finance law in the state of Connecticut, and replaces an archaic and labyrinthine funding system with one that is transparent and driven by students and their needs.

Indeed, 2010 was a busy year for our research and policy department. Especially in 2010, R&P = Great.

OUR 2011 CAMPAIGN

GET SMART CONNECTICUT!

IN 2011, OUR STATE FACES A MOMENT OF EXCEPTIONAL CHALLENGE: WE HAVE A \$3.5 BILLION BUDGET DEFICIT THAT MUST BE CLOSED, AND WE MUST COME TOGETHER AND MAKE TOUGH CHOICES IF WE WANT TO COME OUT AHEAD.

WWW.GETSMARTCONNECTICUT.ORG

We have to face the truth about our predicament: will we continue to allow even our top students to fall behind and accept the worst-in-the-nation achievement gap, or will we embrace this moment of challenge and turn it into an opportunity to do better by our students and by our state?

We know that Connecticut can do better. And that's why through our 2011 legislative campaign, Get Smart Connecticut, we're offering two commonsense solutions that will provide much needed relief in our current fiscal situation:





**SPEND SMART:
FIX OUR BROKEN SCHOOL
FINANCE SYSTEM**

Education is the most important investment we make for our kids and our state's future, but it's where we're getting the worst return on our money. Despite the fact that we spend more per student than all but three other states and D.C., our highest performing students are up to a year behind students in neighboring Massachusetts, and even worse, our low-income students are further behind in Connecticut than in every other state. Our funding formula—the Education Cost Sharing formula—is an illusion that profoundly fails to fulfill its intent of providing adequate, needs-based funding for all public school students throughout the state. Connecticut needs a smarter funding system driven by student need that distributes funding consistently to the schools students actually attend.

**STAFF SMART:
KEEP THE BEST TEACHERS
IN THE CLASSROOM**

The well-documented shortages in Connecticut's education budget will almost certainly result in unprecedented teacher layoffs this spring. We should make sure that in the context of teacher layoffs, we minimize the damage to students—and that means recognizing that there is a range of effectiveness in teaching, and therefore doing whatever we can to keep the best teachers in the classroom despite budget challenges. If layoffs proceed without state intervention, they will be "quality blind," which would hurt students in districts across the state, and would hurt our most vulnerable students the most. Districts will be forced to lay off the newest teachers without regard for how well they educate students, a policy commonly referred to as "last-in,first-out." This approach could knock excellent teachers out while leaving ineffective ones in the classroom, and would cause us to lay off more teachers than we need to. In this time of fiscal crisis, we need a smarter way to approach layoffs that ends the policy of "last-in,first-out" and begins reforming binding arbitration so that future collective bargaining agreements better account for the interests of children.

TAKE ACTION

IF WE HAVE LEARNED ANYTHING IN THE PAST SIX YEARS, IT'S THAT A MOVEMENT OF COMMITTED AND INFORMED CHANGE AGENTS IS A POWERFUL THING.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT
LEARN THE FACTS
SPREAD THE WORD
TAKE ACTION
CONTRIBUTE

Join the Movement at ConnCAN.org so that we can keep you in the loop with current information, advocacy actions and great opportunities (like DonorsChoose.org gift codes!).

Learn the facts. Contact us to set up a meeting in person or to arrange an advocacy training session with ConnCAN in your community. Read our reports, get your hands on our materials, arm yourself with the facts.

Then **spread the word.** Help us build Connecticut's education reform movement by following us on Twitter, liking us on Facebook, and telling your friends to make sure they also have the tools they need to change public education in Connecticut.

Take Action. Contact your legislators and let them know why education reform is important to you. Write op-eds and letters to the editors of your local newspapers. Call and email your local news stations to ensure that your thoughts, concerns and ideas are at the forefront of the public discourse surrounding education. Our team can help! Contact our new Advocacy Associate to get going: *Jamilah.Prince-Stewart@conncan.org*.

Contribute. We can fix poverty by fixing schools. By making a tax-deductible donation to ConnCAN, you demonstrate your belief that every child in Connecticut, regardless of race, ethnicity or class, has the right to attend a great public school.

To contribute, go to:
www.ConnCAN.org/Donate

Donations can also be sent to:
ConnCAN
85 Willow Street
New Haven, Connecticut, 06511



LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!





CONNCAN = STAFF

ALEX JOHNSTON, Chief Executive Officer

Alex Johnston is Chief Executive Officer of ConnCAN. As ConnCAN's first employee, Alex launched what is now regarded as one of the nation's leading state-level education reform organizations. In the five years since, he has led ConnCAN's effort to advocate for state policies that will ensure every Connecticut child has access to a great public school. Before helping to found ConnCAN, Alex Johnston directed operations at the New Haven Housing Authority, working as a member of the management team tasked with turning the agency around from the brink of receivership. A graduate of Harvard University, Alex received a D. Phil. in politics from Oxford's Lincoln College on a Rhodes Scholarship, where he studied the impact of government funding on nonprofit service providers. Alex serves on the state commission charged with developing Connecticut's P-20 data system, is a member of the National Charter School Resource Center Advisory Board, chairs the Policy Innovators in Education Network steering committee, and sits on the New Haven Board of Education.



*JENNIFER POMALES, Deputy to the CEO

Jennifer recently graduated with a J.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Law and was admitted to the Connecticut State Bar in 2010. During law school, she interned with a Connecticut Superior Court Judge and at the Center for Children's Advocacy. She was also a teaching fellow at the UConn Law/Robinson & Cole LLP Summer Law Institute in the Law & Government Academy at Hartford Public High School. Her most recent role was with the City of Hartford, where she conducted administrative hearings and adjudicated citation disputes. Prior to law school, Jennifer worked as a Program Associate at the Connecticut Health Foundation, where she conducted research on its funding priority areas and participated in the grant review process. As a lifelong resident of Hartford, Jennifer attended Hartford Public Schools, and later earned a bachelor's degree in International Studies from American University in Washington, DC.



ANNA VARGHESE MARCUCIO, Chief Operating Officer

Anna Varghese Marcucio comes to ConnCAN after spending the past ten years in Washington, DC working on national education policy. Most recently, 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 of arts degree in political science at the University of Connecticut and received a Master of Public Policy from American University in Washington, DC.



*BRITTANY COLEMAN, Executive Assistant to the COO

Before coming to ConnCAN, Brittany earned dual degrees in Spanish and English and American Literatures, with a minor in Teacher Education, at Middlebury College in Vermont. Brittany provides ConnCAN with a wealth of administrative and organizational experience, gathered from working at the Middlebury College Career Services Office and at public schools in Boston, New York, San Francisco and Chapel Hill. In 2008, Brittany lived in Peru where she served as a volunteer for Para el Mundo and co-founded LeticiaWorks, a community engagement and development initiative. She is a native of North Carolina.



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 at Stone Academy/Goodwin College as the Director and Educator of the Business Management program. In addition to her role here, she serves on the advisory board of the Metropolitan Business Academy, the SHRM Connecticut State Council for Workforce Readiness and Development and is the 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, Director of Research & Policy

Before joining ConnCAN, Jennifer worked in Washington, D.C. as a consultant whose clients included the national Center on Innovation and Improvement. She also served as Senior Research Analyst at the American Institutes for Research (AIR), where she advised studies of Title I implementation and managed national policy centers on comprehensive school reform and supplemental educational services. 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 from Georgetown University.



ALEX SPURRIER, Research & Policy Associate

Before coming to ConnCAN, Alex was Assistant Coach of Men's and Women's Swimming & Diving at Trinity College. He worked with Achieve Hartford to evaluate the implementation of School Governance Councils in Hartford Public Schools. Alex came to Connecticut as a Teach For America corps member after earning a bachelor's degree in Economics from Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota.



REBECCA GREENBERG-ELLIS, Development Manager

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-3rd 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.



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 of Public Policy and Administration from Southern Connecticut State University. She is a lifelong resident of Wallingford, Connecticut.



NATHAN WILSON, Government Affairs Associate

Prior to his arrival with ConnCAN, Nathan spent four years building relationships within the Connecticut General Assembly. He began as an intern for a freshman legislator, which later secured him a position as the screening clerk within the Connecticut House Democrats office. Nathan later switched his interests and took a position as the legislative coordinator for the Hartford-based government relations firm, Sullivan & LeShane, Inc. Most recently, he served as the deputy campaign manager for Dan Malloy's successful campaign for governor. Nathan is a native of Canterbury, Connecticut, and a graduate of Southern Connecticut State University, where he studied Political Science.



JESSICA BLOOM, Communications & Mobilization Manager

Before joining ConnCAN, Jessica was the knowledge manager at Root Cause, a nonprofit research and consulting firm in Cambridge, MA. In this role, she shared lessons learned from partnerships with nonprofits, philanthropists, and government leaders with the broader community. Prior to serving as knowledge manager, she was a research associate in Root Cause's consulting practice, which works with nonprofits around the country to develop business plans to increase their social impact. Jessica is a graduate of Harvard University.



***SCOTT HARRIS**, Communications Associate

Before coming to ConnCAN, Scott attended the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, where he earned a double-degree in Political Science and Legal Studies. During his time in Amherst, Scott founded the Massachusetts Child Poverty Working Group, an organization that counseled low-income families on school lunch and health insurance programs. Scott has worked with organizations like the Children's Defense Fund, Healthcare for America Now and Readthebill.org. Scott is a graduate of Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven, Connecticut, right around the corner from ConnCAN's offices.



***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, Connecticut and a graduate of Yale University.



* New additions in 2011

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FINANCIALS

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' 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 16, 2010

We have audited the accompanying statements of financial position of Connecticut Coalition for achievement Now, Inc. (ConnCAN) as of December 31, 2009 and 2008 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, 2009 and 2008, 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

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

	2009			2008		
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total Restricted
REVENUE	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Contributions	1,586,562	300,000	1,886,562	1,353,432	25,000	1,378,432
Interest income	2,027	-	2,027	4,706	-	4,706
Realized loss on sale of donated securities	(87)	-	(87)	(36,051)	-	(36,051)
In-kind contributions	5,400	-	5,400	2,400	-	2,400
Other income	3,850	-	3,850	10,170	-	10,170
Net assets released from restriction	144,139	(144,139)	-	261,609	(261,609)	-
Total Revenue	1,741,891	155,861	1,897,752	1,596,266	(236,609)	1,359,657
EXPENSES						
Salaries and related expenses	1,030,758	-	1,030,758	837,320	-	837,320
Empowering parents	12,932	-	12,932	34,461	-	34,461
Driving policy change	94,436	-	94,436	70,652	-	70,652
Informing the public	199,467	-	199,467	150,205	-	150,205
Staff training and development	66,475	-	66,475	41,047	-	41,047
Occupancy	69,364	-	69,364	79,817	-	79,817
Professional fees	51,998	-	51,998	67,816	-	67,816
Travel	29,425	-	29,425	26,292	-	26,292
Equipment and maintenance	23,927	-	23,927	28,188	-	28,188
Telephone	16,867	-	16,867	10,534	-	10,534
Insurance	7,250	-	7,250	8,920	-	8,920
Office supplies	18,694	-	18,694	24,164	-	24,164
Dues and subscriptions	2,972	-	2,972	1,363	-	1,363
Depreciation expense	13,420	-	13,420	9,701	-	9,701
Miscellaneous expenses	6,383	-	6,383	5,449	-	5,449
Total Expenses	1,644,368	-	1,644,368	1,395,929	-	1,395,929
Change in Net Assets	97,523	155,861	253,384	200,337	(236,609)	(36,272)
NET ASSETS						
Beginning of year	653,873	164,139	818,021	453,536	400,748	854,284
End of year	751,396	320,000	1,071,396	653,873	164,139	818,012

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

	2009	2008
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Change in net assets	253,384	(36,272)
<i>Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash from operating activities</i>		
Realized loss on donate securities	87	36,051
Donate securities	(32,914)	(256,031)
Discount to present value on contributions receivable	(861)	(5,991)
Depreciation	13,420	9,701
<i>Changes in operating assets and liabilities</i>		
Contributions receivable	220,000	142,600
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	3,372	3,588
Prepaid expense	(4,400)	1,523
Net Cash from Operating Activities	452,088	(104,831)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Proceeds from sale of donated securities	32,827	253,900
Purchase of equipment	(22,371)	(12,902)
Net Cash from Investing Activities	10,456	240,998
Net Change in Cash and Cash Equivalents	462,544	136,167
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Beginning of year	565,862	429,695
End of year	1,028,406	565,862

THIS ≠ THE END

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED
GOOD ≠ GOOD ENOUGH,

**OUR 2010 ANNUAL REPORT.
WE ARE SO GRATEFUL FOR YOUR
SUPPORT, ADVOCACY AND PASSION.**

CREDITS

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ConnCAN Staff

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house9design.ca

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