



KORET on EDUCATION

TRANSPARENCY • ACCOUNTABILITY • CHOICE



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STRATEGY

From the President



America's K-12 education system is broken. A number of foundations and leading philanthropists are committed to addressing its imbalances and deficits. Some foundations, like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, devote significant resources to increasing the number of students who graduate from high school with the skills needed to succeed in college and in their careers. The late great economist Milton Friedman believed that America's broken educational system lies at the heart of our nation's troubles, and directed his foundation to tackle education reform.

The Koret Foundation has implemented what we believe to be a superior strategy leading to an education reform program with impact. Specifically, we envisioned, funded, and continue to support the Koret Task Force on K-12 Education at the Hoover Institution, a results-oriented group of education leaders and scholars from a variety of disciplines; we provide the resources to conduct thorough and original research and analysis; we facilitate their opportunity to meet and discuss their work together; and we follow many of the recommendations that they ultimately develop.

The Koret Task Force is a *Who's Who* in the education arena. Based on its assessment that transparency, accountability, and choice are critical common factors in successful school systems, Koret funds charter schools that focus on measurable achievement, encouraging development and dissemination of replicable models. Grants that support school choice and programs that recruit, train, and prepare excellent teachers have also been shown to improve academic outcomes.

The fix for broken schools is not simple. It requires instilling a strong accountability system, strengthening the incentives to improve student and teacher outcomes, and making the operations of schools adequately transparent so that all interested parties can readily understand individual school performance. If we remove the obstacles that keep our schools from succeeding, our young people and our country are sure to benefit significantly.

*Tad Taube, President
Koret Foundation*



POLICY

The Koret Task Force on K–12 Education

At the center of Koret’s education strategy is the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education. This blue-ribbon panel of education policy experts convened by the Hoover Institution at Stanford University comes together several times a year to evaluate and analyze public education policy and to identify possible reforms for improving our public schools.

The Task Force’s analysis and recommendations make national news, arming policymakers with the research they need to advance the quality and productivity of K–12 education. Its views on education policy have been sought by the state legislatures of Texas, Florida, and Arkansas.

Through the Task Force, Koret funds research, evaluation, and analysis of public policy in an analytical context to identify policies that can effectively enhance the quality of K–12 education. In recognition of its accomplishments, the Task Force received the Koret Prize in April 2002.

The Koret Task Force on K–12 Education “has not only produced ideas, it’s produced action-oriented ideas.”

The Hon. George P. Shultz, Thomas W. and Susan B. Ford Distinguished Fellow, Hoover Institution

Members of the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education

“The scholars and experts and education gurus who have been assembled are a kind of *Who’s Who* in the education arena.”

Tad Taube, President, Koret Foundation

John E. Chubb

chief education officer and one of the founders of Edison Schools, a private manager of public schools, including many charter schools

Chester E. Finn Jr.

senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, chairman of the Koret Task Force, and president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute

Eric A. Hanushek

the Paul and Jean Hanna Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution

Paul T. Hill

research professor and acting dean in the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs and director of the Center on Reinventing Public Education, both at the University of Washington

Caroline M. Hoxby

professor of economics at Stanford University and director of the Economics of Education Program at the National Bureau of Economic Research, and formerly a professor at Harvard University



WHO'S WHO

Terry M. Moe

senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and professor of political science at Stanford University

Paul E. Peterson

senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Government and director of the Program on Education Policy and Governance at Harvard University

Diane Ravitch

research professor of education at New York University, Brown Chair in Education Policy at the Brookings Institution, and assistant secretary of education under President George H. W. Bush

Herbert J. Walberg

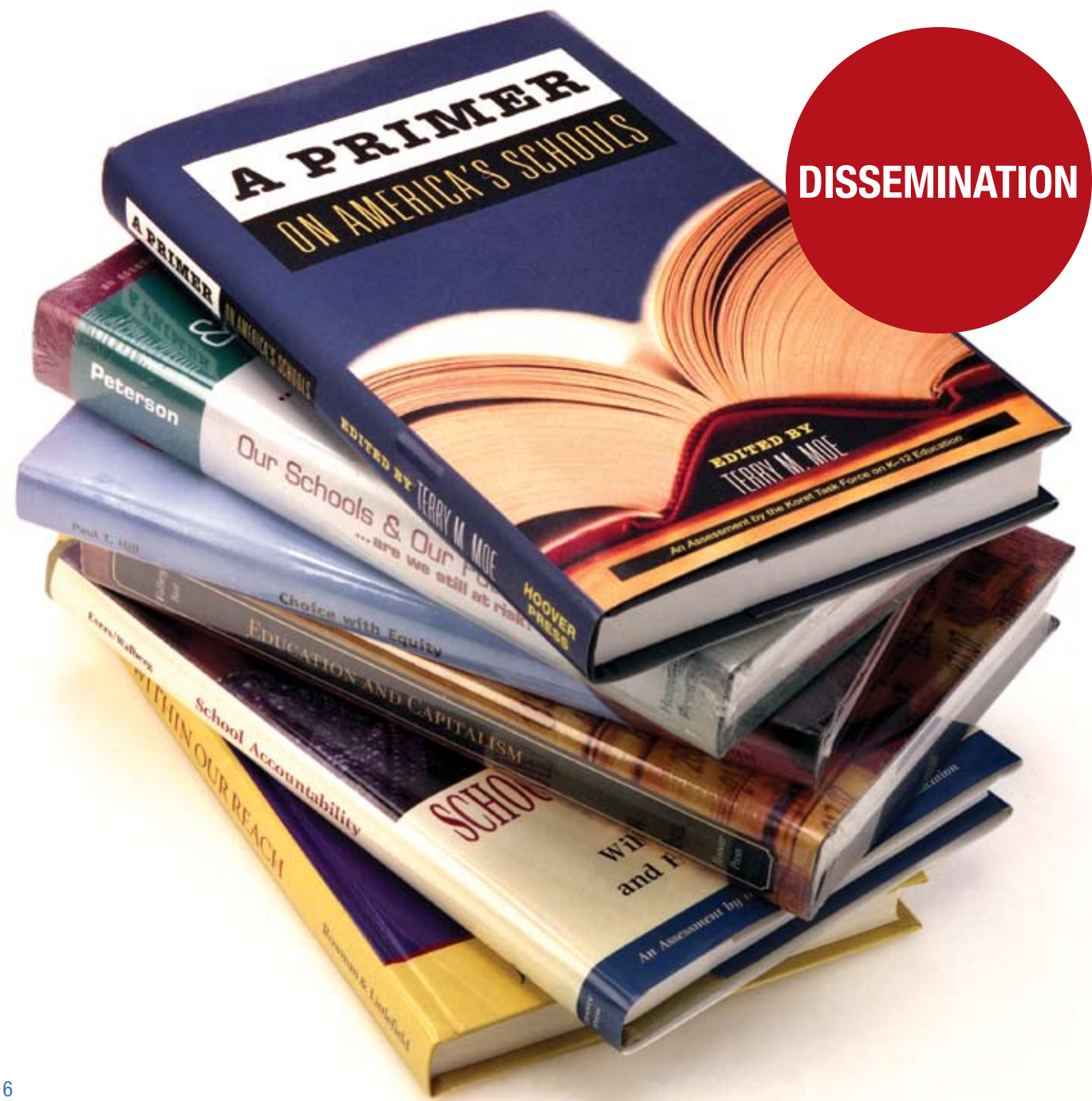
research professor of education and psychology emeritus and University Scholar at the University of Illinois at Chicago

Williamson M. Evers (on leave)

research fellow at the Hoover Institution now serving as U.S. assistant secretary of education for planning, evaluation, and policy development

E. D. Hirsch Jr. (retired)

was a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution from 1999 to 2006 and a charter member of the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education



DISSEMINATION

Koret Task Force Publications

Education Next:
A Journal of Opinion and Research
edited by the Koret Task Force
(quarterly)

A Primer on America's Schools
edited by Terry M. Moe

**Within Our Reach: How America
Can Educate Every Child**
edited by John E. Chubb

**Charter Schools Against the Odds:
An Assessment of the Koret Task
Force on K-12 Education**
edited by Paul T. Hill

**Our Schools and Our Future ...
Are We Still at Risk?**
edited by Paul E. Peterson

Choice with Equity
edited by Paul T. Hill

Reforming Education in Texas
by the Koret Task Force

Reforming Education in Arkansas
by the Koret Task Force

**Reforming Education in Florida:
A Study Prepared by the Koret Task
Force on K-12 Education, Hoover
Institution 2006**
edited by Paul E. Peterson

**Courting Failure:
How School Finance Lawsuits Exploit
Judges' Good Intentions and Harm
our Children**
edited by Eric Hanushek

**School Accountability:
An Assessment by the Koret Task
Force on K-12 Education**
edited by Herbert J. Walberg
and Williamson M. Evers

*"What we most want
to know about charter
schools isn't how they
are currently performing
against fixed standards,
but how much their
students learn while
enrolled in them ... "*
*Chester E. Finn Jr.,
Chair, Koret Task Force
on K-12 Education*

Education Next: Leading The Way

As part of its commitment to an ongoing exchange of ideas, the Koret Task Force publishes *Education Next*, a quarterly journal that presents the latest research findings on K-12 education and stimulates thoughtful discourse about contemporary education.

With articles written by the leading thinkers in education, *Education Next* offers fresh perspectives and diverse points of view on highly discussed topics. The journal reports on new research with evidence-based conclusions from prominent scholars; reviews new books on education policy; provides provocative articles on hot topics like charter schools, high-stakes tests, vouchers, and teacher unions; and features accessible and jargon-free prose.

Education Next reaches an audience of educators, academics, policy-makers, and informed readers. In addition to the Hoover Institution, journal sponsors include the Harvard Program on Education Policy and Governance, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, and the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

Winter 2004


EDUCATION next

A JOURNAL OF OPINION AND RESEARCH

The Dollar Sponge

Why school districts can't downsize

JON FULLERTON • WILLIAM OUCHI



IN THIS ISSUE:

The New Head Start, Retaining Teachers, Unearthing Testing Fraud, Autism and Inclusion, The Perils of Innovation, Giving Teachers Choice

CONTRIBUTORS: DIANE RAVITCH, JOHN KAIN, JOHN BISHOP, DENIS DOYLE, ANN DYBVIK, DAVID FERRERO, RON HASKINS, BRIAN JACOB, STEVEN LEVITT, STEVEN RIVKIN, ERIC HANUSHEK

www.educationnext.org / \$7.00

Koret Task Force Consulting

“To be open to innovation, public education needs to let people with new ideas start schools ... allow parents to move from less to more promising schools, and let money follow children wherever they go.”

*Paul T. Hill,
Koret Task Force
on K–12 Education*

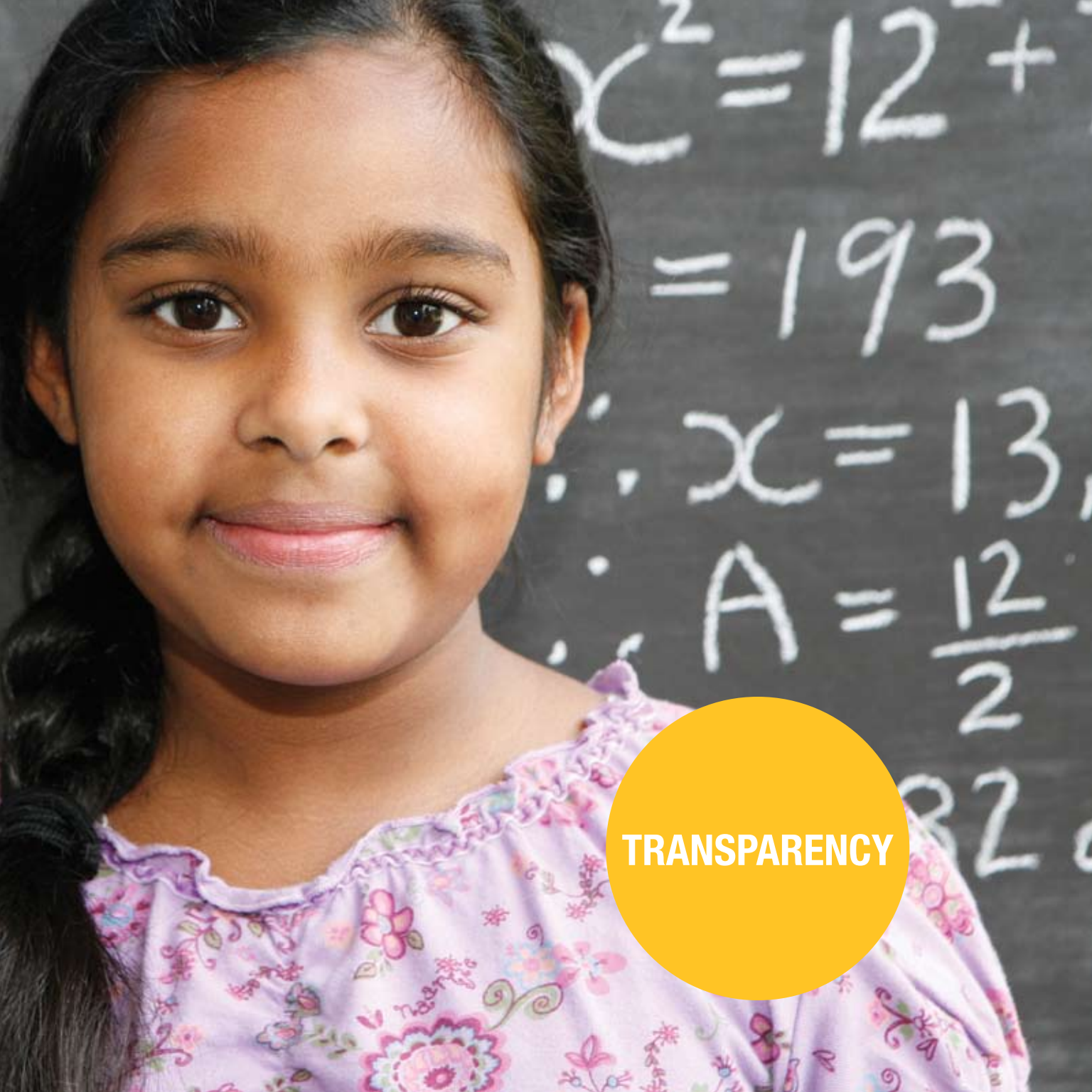
With strong policy recommendations based on empirical evidence, the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education has become an influential player in reshaping the country’s educational landscape.

- In 2006, at the invitation of Governor Jeb Bush, the Task Force agreed to undertake an objective assessment of Florida’s education policies, focusing on the most pressing issues on the state’s agenda — accountability, curriculum reform, effective teaching, school choice, and organizational change, including voluntary preschool education, class-size reduction, and more effective resource management.
- In 2005 the Task Force worked with the Arkansas state government to create a blueprint for reform in four vital areas: standards and curriculum, assessment and accountability, organization and options, and teacher quality.
- In 2004 the Koret Task Force worked with Governor Rick Perry and the co-chairs of the Texas legislature’s Joint Select Committee on Public School Finance to address key elements of the state’s educational policy including funding, school choice, teacher quality, and school leadership.

In addition to their work with these state governments, individual members of the Task Force have advised many other government and legislative organizations, including the U. S. Department of Education and the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor.



INFLUENCE



TRANSPARENCY

Education Policy

In addition to supporting individual schools and students, Koret aims to improve K-12 education by working with think tanks, research institutes, and other policy organizations to effect change at a systemic level.

The Hoover Institution strives to address big-picture issues, offering ideas with broad applications and internally consistent implications. The institution works to collect knowledge pertaining to economic, political, and social change in societies at home and abroad, as well as to understand their causes and consequences; to analyze the effects of government actions relating to public policy; to generate, publish, and disseminate ideas that encourage positive policy formation using reasoned arguments and intellectual rigor, converting conceptual insights into practical initiatives judged to be beneficial to society; and to convey to the public, the media, lawmakers, and others an understanding of important public policy issues thus promoting vigorous dialogue.

Founded in 1979, the Pacific Research Institute (PRI) is a nationally renowned, San Francisco-based free-market think tank that champions individual freedom, opportunity, and personal

“Through its vision and focused grantmaking, Koret has succeeded in shifting the education debate onto what truly works in raising the achievement of students.”

Lance Izumi, Director of Education Studies, Pacific Research Institute

Education Policy *continued*

responsibility by advancing practical, free-market policy solutions. In addition to producing what Milton Friedman called some of the most “innovative and effective” policy research in the world, the institute also aggressively markets and disseminates these ideas to policymakers, opinion leaders, and the public at large. PRI’s premiere new education research project, *Not As Good As You Think: Why the Middle Class Needs School Choice*, moves forward from its last publication, an analysis of charter school best practices called *Free to Learn*.

The **Thomas B. Fordham Institute** advances the reform of American education by engaging in solid research and provocative analysis, disseminating information and ideas that shape the debate, and informing policymakers at every level about promising solutions to pressing education problems. The institute strives to address America’s academic achievement by raising standards, strengthening accountability, and expanding education options for parents and families.

The **Center for Education Reform (CER)** works in over 40 states, advocating for high standards, accountability, and freedom of choice in education reform. The center also provides grassroots training by working with specific communities to foster positive, competitive education reforms. To support its advocacy for charter schools and parent choice in education, CER combines grassroots tactics with a sophisticated marketing strategy to reach its target audience.

The **American Enterprise Institute (AEI)** comprises 60 resident scholars and fellows, including some of America’s foremost economists, legal scholars, political scientists, and foreign policy experts. The resident faculty is augmented by a network of more than 70 adjunct scholars at universities and policy institutes throughout the United States and abroad. AEI’s education policy projects have included an examination of the No Child Left Behind Act; rather than producing a holistic assessment of the law or a simple evaluation of its complex provisions, AEI examined what these measures look like in practice, how they are being modified and implemented at the state and district levels, and what lessons policymakers might learn.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Not As Good As You Think

PRI's groundbreaking publication, *Not As Good As You Think: Why the Middle Class Needs School Choice*, offers hard data to demonstrate that financial waste and mediocre comparative academic performance are widespread and increasingly well documented in the K-12 public school system, even in so-called "good school districts." Using California schools as the representative example, the research explores how school policies in middle-class neighborhoods have harmed the education and prospects of middle-class children and led to declining relative academic performance.

Not As Good As You Think documents the discrepancy between high school proficiency and college readiness, identifies the strategic need for greater school choice, and offers tactical solutions to improve academic outcomes.





CHOICE

Charter Schools

Our charter school funding strategy starts with the assumption that competition will inspire improvement in educational achievement. By funding charter schools, we place competitive pressure on the Bay Area's K-12 public school systems, leading to sustained educational gains for all students. We target high-impact opportunities where we can promote the development, dissemination, and evaluation of effective and promising educational models in an effort to drive entrepreneurialism, choice, and market-based competition throughout the K-12 educational arena.

We also strongly support addressing student achievement in reading and mathematics before students enter high school. We have therefore funded all of the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) schools in the Bay Area.

In addition, we fund charter school policy work and resource development through grants to **Pacific Research Institute (PRI)**, the **American Enterprise Institute (AEI)**, the **Hoover Institution**, the **Thomas B. Fordham Institute**, and the **California Charter Schools Association**.

“We must be judicious and strategic in our funding choices and must retain the flexibility to rebalance our portfolio in response to new developments in the field.”
Debra England, Program Officer, Koret Foundation

Koret-funded Charter Schools

- American Indian Public Charter School, Oakland
- Gateway High School, San Francisco
- KIPP Bayview Academy, San Francisco
- KIPP Heartwood Academy, San Jose
- KIPP King Collegiate High School, San Lorenzo
- KIPP San Francisco Bay Academy, San Francisco
- KIPP Summit Academy, San Lorenzo
- Life Learning Academy, San Francisco
- Oakland Military Institute, Oakland
- Oakland School for the Arts, Oakland

RESOURCEFUL



As a way to increase its support for Bay Area charter schools and Teach For America classrooms, Koret awarded a challenge grant to DonorsChoose, an innovative organization that harnesses the power of the Internet to bring citizen philanthropists together to support specific classroom-based projects.

Public school teachers submit funding requests to DonorsChoose for classroom materials, projects, field trips, or other educational activities. Internet users can then search the site to find projects they would like to fund, and 100 percent of the money donated goes directly to that project. The Koret grant not only helps fund individual classroom projects, it also improved the DonorsChoose website search capabilities. As a result, 57 percent of the initial Koret Challenge projects, which focused on Teach For America classrooms and charter schools throughout the Bay Area, were fully funded within four weeks.



Funding requests for the Koret-sponsored projects ranged from portable microscopes for backcountry investigations to a listening center for struggling readers, art supplies, world maps, and other learning materials for classrooms from kindergarten to high school grade levels.

Improving Teacher Quality

“The most direct way to stimulate higher student achievement is to reward schools, teachers, and principals who raise it.”

Koret Task Force on K-12 Education, From Reforming Education in Texas

If we want to improve our educational system, we must ensure that all students have access to qualified, effective teachers. We work with several organizations that recruit, train, and support high-quality teachers and principals working in disadvantaged school districts. These programs also support measuring teacher effectiveness, generating research that can improve our entire educational system.



The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) is a nonpartisan research and advocacy group committed to restructuring the teaching profession based on the principle that every child deserves effective teachers. By working to improve federal, state, and local teacher policies, as well as lending greater transparency to the institutions that influence teacher quality, NCTQ seeks to improve public knowledge and build a mandate for change. The group was co-founded in 2000 by Koret Task Force chairman Chester E. Finn Jr., who currently serves on its board of directors.

Resources for Indispensable Schools and Educators (RISE) asserts that effective teachers are the key to student learning. Recognition and retention of effective teachers serving low-income communities (where high turnover of the best teachers is the norm) is therefore critical to improving educational quality. RISE works in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, and Chicago to curb the attrition rate of high-quality K-12 public school teachers by recognizing effective teachers and providing them with varied incentives to stay in the classroom.



MOTIVATED

Improving Teacher Quality *continued*

Teach For America's (TFA) mission is to build a cadre of lifelong leaders on educational issues by putting highly skilled, highly motivated young teachers into the classrooms of our most impoverished K-12 public schools. TFA functions like a domestic education Peace Corps, recruiting high-achieving college seniors from top universities and requiring a two-year commitment to teaching in inner-city or rural schools. Over the past 15 years, 14,000 college graduates have become Teach For America teachers, directly improving the lives of more than 2 million students across the nation. One-third of the program's alumni continue teaching after their two-year required commitment, and an additional third go on to work full-time in education. Today, 3,500 teacher corps members and more than 10,000 TFA alumni continue this important work. TFA alumni have gone on to create innovative programs in education, including the KIPP Academy school model and DonorsChoose, a nonprofit organization that matches citizen philanthropists with classroom projects.

New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) promotes high academic achievement for every child by helping to recruit, train, and support the next generation of leaders for our nation's urban public schools. Within 10 years, NLNS plans to grow to a corps of 2,000 new leaders annually to serve as principals to 1 million children nationwide.

Increasing Educational Opportunity

“When regular public schools must compete with charter schools, vouchers, or other forms of competition, these formerly unresponsive monopolies are forced to find ways to improve educational outcomes ... ”
Debra England,
Program Officer,
Koret Foundation

Based on the recommendations of the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education, we have worked to improve education by increasing school choice. Providing privately funded vouchers to disadvantaged students is one of the fundamental tenets of our commitment to an improved, market-based educational policy. Unlike traditional scholarships, vouchers are not tied to any one particular school or program; parents are therefore able to choose the schools that best match their children’s needs, abilities, and goals, and students are able to get the education they deserve.



MARKET-BASED

Private Voucher Programs Funded by Koret

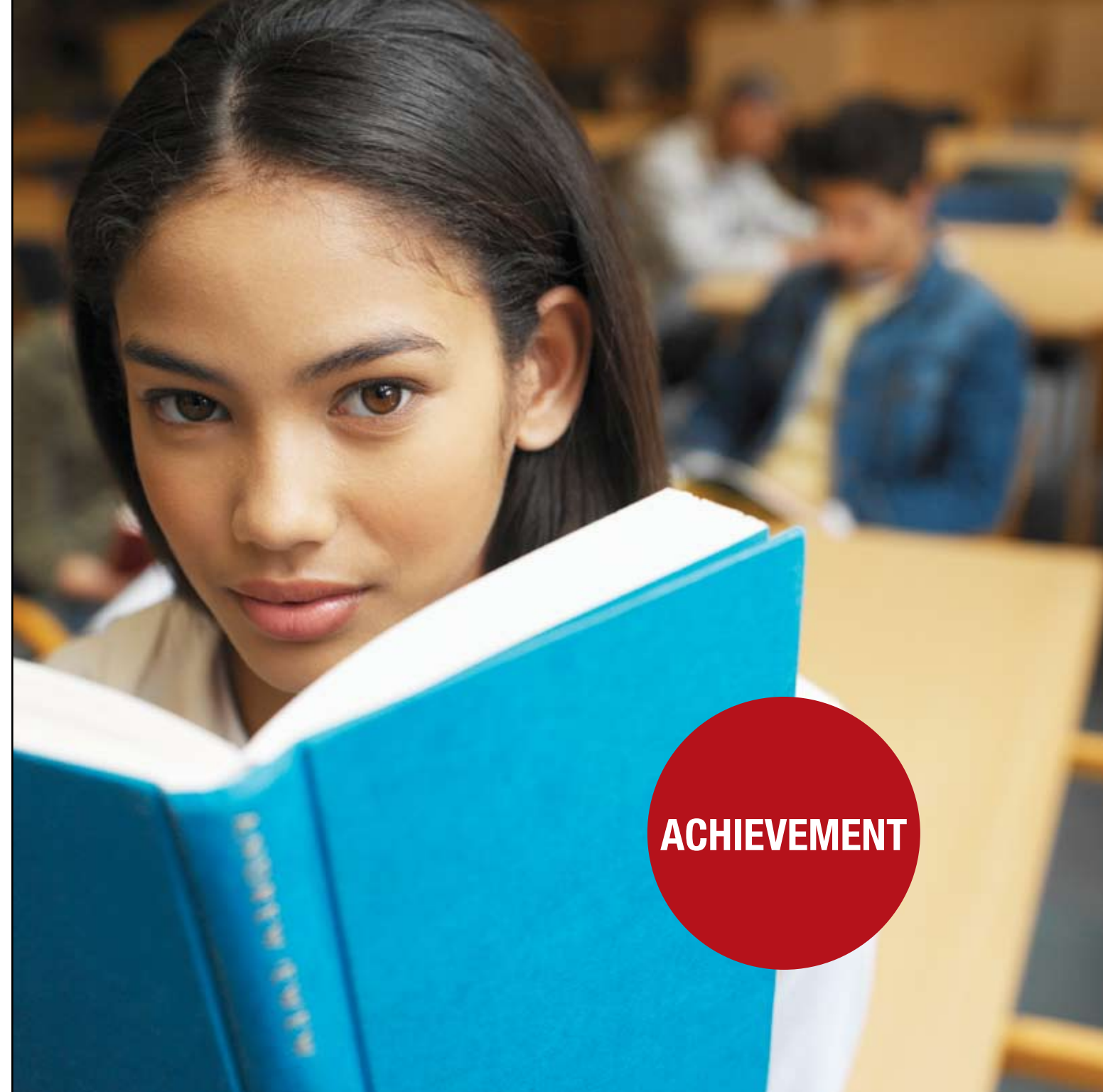
Milton & Rose D. Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice has been at the forefront of the school choice movement from its formation in 1996 and pursues an entrepreneurial and aggressive approach to developing educational choice options. Its deft ability to help build local infrastructures and develop strong local partnerships—including broad and diverse partnerships with Jewish and Catholic organizations, private schools, Democrats and Republicans—has led the *Wall Street Journal* to call the Friedman Foundation “the nation’s leading advocate of vouchers.”

The BASIC (Bay Area Scholarships for Inner-City Children) Fund awards renewable scholarships that allow children of low-income families in the Bay Area to attend private schools from kindergarten through eighth grade. Students must meet all academic and admissions requirements for their chosen schools, and parents are required to contribute at least \$500 each year toward each child’s education. This modest financial responsibility keeps parents strongly involved and invested in their children’s educational success.

Increasing Educational Opportunity *continued*

The Guardsmen Scholarship Program is a private scholarship program that aims to improve education options and experiences for low-income, at-risk youth in the San Francisco Bay Area. Students in failing public schools are eligible for up to \$2,000 each year in vouchers to attend local private schools from kindergarten through high school. Parents are required to provide at least half of their children's tuitions.

The Independent Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance for low-income students in the East Bay to attend private schools. Since its inception in 1999, the Fund has supported more than 1,000 students.



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