



## PRIVATE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN OTHER STATES

By: John D. Moran, Principal Analyst

### ISSUE

Provide examples of private funds or in-kind support for public education from foundations or businesses in other states.

### SUMMARY

There are various types of private funding or in-kind support for public education. This report focuses on the following:

1. large foundations,
2. school district-specific foundations, and
3. corporate or business support for career-related programs.

While this report focuses on funding available in other states, we also include examples of such resources in Connecticut, where appropriate. The Education Commission of the States (ECS) provided research for this report, particularly on school district-specific foundation grants.

### LARGE FOUNDATIONS

#### *Large Grants*

This report provides a small sample of existing educational giving as educational philanthropy in the United States is vast. In addition to the examples included below, please refer to Edutopia's (i.e., the George Lucas Educational Foundation's website) "[Big List of Educational Grants.](#)"

***Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.*** This foundation supports a variety of global initiatives and programs. With respect to education in the United States, the foundation gives considerable funding and policy attention to programs in its home state of Washington. The foundation has invested more than \$1 billion in various



projects in the state including education, homelessness reduction, and efforts to support families in need. The foundation seeks partners from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The following are a few examples of its activities:

1. provides funds for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington Education Association, and Education Service District 113 to create a web-based tool to manage the state's new teacher and principal evaluation project;
2. provides grants to a number of school districts to support their preschool through third grade alignment with improved and better coordinated instruction; and
3. provides funds for many of the institutions and organizations participating in the Road Map Project to better coordinate the different stages of education in the South Seattle and South King County region from pre-K to college (e.g., one initiative funds school districts in South King County to improve their parent engagement efforts).

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at:

<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/US-Program/Washington-State>

**Buffett Early Childhood Fund.** This foundation, an offshoot of the Sherwood Foundation, is led by Susan A. Buffett, billionaire Warren Buffett's daughter. It focuses exclusively on early childhood research, science, and practice. In 2015, it awarded more than \$23 million to various projects around the country and in its home state of Nebraska (in-state projects received \$15.3 million of the \$23 million). Examples of its recent projects include:

1. funding 21 Educare Early Childhood schools in 13 states and the District of Columbia, which focus on addressing the needs of the child and his or her family at the earliest possible opportunity, through, among other things, building parents' ability as leaders and nurturers for the benefit of their children and their community;
2. providing a number of specific grants and other support to programs in Nebraska including funding Early Childhood Support, a program of early childhood specialists who provide professional development and training to 13 different early childhood programs in the state; and
3. supporting the First Five Fund's national campaign to engage the public and policymakers to expand their understanding that the first five years of life are every child's first five years of learning (it is also supported by other major foundations including Gates, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and others).

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at: <http://buffettearly.org/>

**Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.** This foundation serves the 29-town greater Hartford region and provides grants to support programs in a variety of areas, including education. In 2015, it awarded \$10 million in grants for education projects. Grants in other areas, such as family and social services, arts, and summer programs may also include components that support educational goals.

In January 2016, the foundation announced a \$390,000 grant to the Windsor Public School District to establish a new Office of Family and Community Partnerships to develop families, school staff, and community partners' knowledge and skills to better partner to improve student achievement. Key components of this initiative are implementing a new teacher and parent partnership model, expanding the existing student-led parent conferences, and a new home visitation initiative.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at: <http://www.hfpg.org/>

**Lincy Foundation (now the UNLV's Lincy Institute).** This foundation, established by Las Vegas billionaire developer, Kirk Kerkorian, has funded numerous charities and programs in Nevada for over 20 years. In February 2011, the foundation closed and part of its funding was used to create the Lincy Institute at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Its remaining assets were transferred to the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) to help establish "the Dream Fund," a donor-advised fund that provides grants for a variety of education, community, and health programs in California.

The foundation has supported various education initiatives throughout its 20-year operation. For example, in 2007, the Nevada legislature created the Empowerment Schools Program that required school districts to designate some of their schools as empowerment schools, which are given greater autonomy to operate and greater stakeholder input. The program's state funding was drastically reduced a few years later due to the national recession and state budget crisis, but the Lincy Foundation provided \$14 million to replace the lost state funds. The program, which has since been modified, is now known as Innovative Schools.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at:

<https://www.unlv.edu/lincyinstitute/foundation>

**Pew Charitable Trusts/Pew Fund for Health and Human Services.** The Pew Trusts, an internationally known philanthropic organization, has focused much of its social services and education giving on its hometown of Philadelphia and the surrounding eastern Pennsylvania area. The Pew Fund for Health and Human Services reports that over the past 25 years, it has awarded approximately \$207 million to more than 320 nonprofit organizations in Philadelphia and the

surrounding counties. This giving is typically provided to nonprofit organizations, and not to a school or a school district, although it may be used for purposes that will help public education, such as social services for at-risk or low-income youth.

For example, in March 2016, the foundation announced that it would provide \$8.6 million over three years to 45 Philadelphia-area organizations to help low-income children and families in five areas, including high-quality early education and child care, early intervention services to address behavioral and academic problems, and the expansion of quality after-school programs. The funds are pledged to a wide range of institutions and agencies including teen-outreach programs, hospital foundations, early child care programs, enrichment programs for middle school and high school age youth, and an after-school tutoring program.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at:

<http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/supporting-the-greater-philadelphia-area/health-and-human-services>

**Walton Family Foundation.** This foundation was created by WalMart multinational retail chain founders, Sam and Helen Walton. It has given considerable grants in a variety of areas including education, the environment, and various projects in their home state of Arkansas. In education, the foundation focuses its efforts on public charter schools.

For example, the foundation has invested more than \$385 million in charter school start-ups since 1997. It provides support to larger charter management organizations as well as small, independent charter operators seeking to implement new ideas. Grants are provided directly from the Walton Family Foundation or through one of their partners (i.e., the Charter School Growth Fund or Knowledge is Power Program), who have been designated to act on the foundation's behalf. Its strategy is to focus on 13 school districts and states in order to have the biggest impact. This list does not include Connecticut, but does include Boston Public Schools, Los Angeles Unified School District, New York City, District of Columbia Public Schools, and any district in Arkansas or Oklahoma.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at:

<http://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/>

## **Small Grants**

**National Education Association (NEA) Foundation.** The country's largest teachers union's foundation provides grants of up to \$5,000 for teachers in two areas: (1) student achievement and (2) learning and leadership. The foundation has given over \$7 million to nearly 4,500 educator projects over the last 10 years. As of February 2, 2016, all teacher grant applicants must be NEA members (in Connecticut this means being a member of the Connecticut Education Association). The foundation is supported by union dues and donations from individuals, corporations, and other foundations.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at:

<http://www.neafoundation.org/pages/grants-to-educators/>

**Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation.** This foundation's Toolbox for Education Program has donated over \$49 million to more than 11,000 schools and parent-teacher groups across the country. Grant recipients receive awards of up to \$5,000 for improvement projects such as gardens, playgrounds, and outdoor classrooms. Four Connecticut schools were on the spring 2016 list of grant recipients that includes more than 500 schools.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at:

<http://www.toolboxforeducation.com/>

## **SCHOOL DISTRICT-SPECIFIC FOUNDATIONS**

To offset the volatility of state funding for public education, many local schools and school districts, both in Connecticut and around the country, have formed foundations to raise private funds to support public education. The amount of money raised by school-supporting charities increased by 348% between 1995 and 2010 and schools and districts increasingly rely on these private donations, according to [\*Nonprofit Quarterly\*](#).

However, using private donations to supplement state and local funding of public education programs can increase the inequity between different schools and districts within a state. Some states have received pushback when they have tried to pool resources from wealthier areas to redistribute them to areas with more need.

The following, compiled by ECS, are examples of fundraising foundations at the district level, where resources are pooled from the individual school level and redistributed across the district.

## **Denver**

The Denver Public Schools system established the Denver Public Schools Foundation to conduct high level fundraising and financial support for Denver public schools to help make up for lost state aid. In the 2014-15 school year, the foundation gave more than \$15 million to support system-wide programs and test innovative practices to improve the academic achievement of Denver public school students.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at:

<https://dpsfoundation.org/>

## **New York City**

When Michael Bloomberg was mayor of New York City, he turned the Fund for Public Schools, which serves as a fundraising mechanism for the city's public schools, into a highly successful fundraising operation. Under Bloomberg's direction and Caroline Kennedy's management, the fund benefited from these leaders' personal connections to other wealthy donors and corporations in the city. Under Bill de Blasio's mayorship, the fund has raised approximately half of what it raised under Bloomberg (\$18 million versus \$29 million). Such a shortage in fundraising can create problems for a school district if certain programs were dependent upon the continued high level of fundraising.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at:

<https://www.fundforpublicschools.org/>

## **Philadelphia**

Philadelphia's model centers on forming partnerships between the school district and community members. The Support Our Schools campaign encourages community partners to support the Philadelphia School District through financial, human, and material resources. The fund raised over \$120,000 in 2015.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at:

<http://www.philaedfund.org/get-involved>

## **Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District**

In 2011, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education voted to prohibit individual school parent-teacher associations from raising money to hire personnel and block them from funding programs and services eliminated in the wake of state budget cuts. The Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation now

pools the money raised at the individual schools to reduce inequities across the district. This centralized funding method has already been adopted at the district-level in many communities across the country.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at: <http://smmef.org/>

## **CONNECTICUT SCHOOL DISTRICT-SPECIFIC FOUNDATIONS**

As is found around the country, a number of communities in Connecticut have formed their own foundations to raise money through events, donations, and business or other sponsors to help support their community's school district. Below we list a few examples of these foundations. The [Connecticut Consortium of Education Foundations](#) provides additional information and a list of local education foundations in the state. The consortium also serves as a clearinghouse and resource for foundation board members and others.

### ***New Britain High School Foundation Fund***

This foundation's purpose is to (1) promote, support, and enhance quality educational opportunities for New Britain High School students and (2) establish scholarships for students pursuing further education after graduation. It works in partnership with the Community Foundation of Greater New Britain to manage more than \$500,000 in assets and assist in fundraising. The fund primarily gives scholarship awards to graduating seniors who are pursuing higher education.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at: <https://cfgnb.org/new-britain-high-school-foundation-fund/>

### ***Stamford Public Education Foundation***

This foundation, which received its 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax status in 2000, supports a number of programs in Stamford public schools, including mentoring, math tutors for high school students, literacy nights for elementary school students, and book giveaways.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at: <http://spefct.org/>

### ***Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools***

This foundation awarded more than \$1.3 million to various programs in the district over the last 19 years. Recent awards include \$9,200 to Morley Elementary School for its 21<sup>st</sup> Century Citizens and Artists Global Communication Project, which will establish a partnership with a sister school in Haiti.

For additional information, visit the foundation's website at: <http://www.fwhps.org/>

## **CORPORATE OR BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR CAREER-RELATED PROGRAMS**

### ***P-Tech/CT ECO***

In Connecticut, New York, and Chicago the P-Tech model is a partnership between high schools, higher education, and businesses to help students obtain college credit and career skills and experience before they finish high school. P-Tech (or Early College Opportunity (CT-ECO) as it is known in Connecticut) was first developed by IBM to partner with high schools to educate and mentor students for jobs in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. In many cases the students finish high school with an associate's degree from the community college. Some go on to four year schools and others enter the workforce after high school. The business partners must come from a growth industry that is experiencing a skills gap in its workforce.

While this program does not require the private sector to provide monetary support for the public high school, business partners are required to (1) designate one person from the industry to administer the program's business component and (2) recruit mentors from the business partner to provide one-on-one mentoring with each student in the program.

In 2014, Connecticut established its first P-Tech program in Norwalk called [Norwalk Early College Academy](#). The program, which is a partnership between Norwalk Public Schools, Norwalk Community College, and IBM, has 160 student participants, each of whom have an IBM mentor. Mentors advise between one and three students, according to Tracy Ariel, the Board of Regents' director of advanced manufacturing and CT-ECO programs.

For additional information, visit the program's national website at:

<http://www.ptech.org/>

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