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CENTER FOR CHILDREN  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



CHAPIN HALL  
DISCUSSION PAPER

# Pathways to School Reform: Integrating Constituency Building and Policy Work

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## Pathways to School Reform: Integrating Constituency Building and Policy Work

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For more than six years, the Chapin Hall evaluation team worked with the Donors' Education Collaborative and the DEC projects as they strove to reform public education in New York City. We had the opportunity to follow the ideas underlying the DEC Initiative from projects' earliest planning stages through implementation and development. Throughout this time, project staff and participants generously shared their many experiences with and insights into their work for social change. In addition, conversations with many city and state agency staff members, policymakers, educators, and advocates helped us better understand the political context, history, and complexity of school reform efforts and education issues. Our work would not have been possible without the support and interest of Donors' Education Collaborative members. The Evaluation Committee members, in particular, pushed our thinking and sharpened our analyses with thoughtful and incisive questions and feedback. Norma Rollins, the DEC administrative consultant, shared her knowledgeable counsel, probing feedback, and deep experience with social change efforts. Anne Clary at Chapin Hall was very helpful in bringing the report to print. She supported our bid for an award from Chapin Hall's Research and Dissemination Fund that made publication possible and she oversaw the editing and layout of the report. This has been a rich and rewarding work experience, and we thank you all.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Pathways to School Reform: Integrating Constituency Building and Policy Work* draws on the findings of Chapin Hall Center for Children's six-year evaluation of the Donors' Education Collaborative (DEC) Initiative. DEC and its initiative reflect two complementary theories about how to create sustainable systemic reform of public education in New York City. The first of these theories is that a funding collaborative can provide deep and long-term support for such reform by engaging a range of private and corporate foundations, making available a large pool of funds, and leveraging members' interests, influence, and knowledge to heighten the potential for policy impact and social change in an institutional arena that has long resisted reform efforts. Second, sustainable systemic educational reform can be achieved by projects that combine policy change strategies with efforts to build permanent, broad-based constituencies that will advocate for and monitor such reform.

## THE DONORS' EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

Founded in 1995, DEC membership has included more than 20 private and corporate New York City funders during the six-year period of the initiative. From the start, several assumptions have comprised DEC's approach to creating change:

- Outside pressure and support — particularly active, knowledgeable constituencies — are needed to create and sustain meaningful change in the education system.
- Achievement of a school system that is “more responsive to the needs of all children” demands system-wide reform based on policy change and implementation.
- The strategic joining of constituency-building, policy, and advocacy approaches, best developed through the collaboration of organizations, can create such change.
- Systemic reform requires long-term effort, and therefore DEC intentionally created an initiative with multiyear support.

## THE DEC PROJECTS

From 1996 to 2002, DEC supported the work of three projects, each comprised of collaborative work among two or more organizations. The projects were:

- **Equity Reform Project (ERP):** Worked to create a citizens' mandate in New York State for school finance reform linked to a finance equity suit brought against the state by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE). ERP involved in this effort a diverse range of organizations, including statewide education organizations; local community-based organizations; parent, teacher, and student groups; and local and statewide business organizations. As part of its constituency-building strategy, ERP created forums in New York City and in regions across the state that engaged participants in defining a "sound basic education," which the state constitution mandates be provided for every child in the state. This definition was later used in the court case and accepted by the court as the legal definition of every child's constitutionally protected educational right. ERP partners included CFE, Educational Priorities Panel, the Foundation for Citizen Education of the League of Women Voters of New York, Urban League of New York City (for two years), and Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy.
- **Parent Organizing Consortium (POC):** Aimed to build a citywide association of grassroots organizations working to promote parent-generated demand for education reform and to bring parental voices into education debates and decision-making. Member organizations focused on neighborhoods or communities of interest, such as ethnic groupings, and employed community-organizing approaches — including reaching out to and training parents and other community members, rallies, and meetings with policymakers — to engage parents in education and other institutional issues that affect individual, familial, and community well-being. Over the course of the six years, POC focused on the city level, working on issues such as school facilities and construction, class-size reduction, and low-performing schools. The Parent Organizing Consortium's full-term participants were ACORN, Community Action Project, Mothers on the Move, and Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition.
- **Transforming Education for New York's Newest (TENYN):** Sought to improve education for immigrant and English language learner students (ELL), focusing on implementation of standards, multilingual communications with parents, appropriate assessment and placement of students, and other issues. The project created research actions, local forums, informational tools such as a get-out-the-vote campaign, and other means to engage community-based and citywide groups working with immigrant populations. In this way, TENYN was able to

help build capacity in the organizations and, through the organizations, reach diverse immigrant communities across the city. Many of the organizations were direct service providers, often with little policy or constituency-building experience around education issues. In addition, TENYN worked at the city and state levels — issuing position papers, providing testimony, meeting with policymakers and their staffs, and participating in advisory committees — to help shape the public debate and decision making on education reform for immigrant and ELL students. New York Immigration Coalition was the lead partner in this project and worked with Advocates for Children.

### STUDY ANALYSIS

Based largely on field data, this paper examines how the DEC projects defined their goals and implemented their change strategies. The paper develops a comparative framework, based on the varied aims of the projects, and draws lessons regarding efforts to change policy and build constituencies, all grounded in project experiences. The two major areas of analysis focus on the projects' policy work and their constituency-building efforts.

#### DEC POLICY AND ADVOCACY WORK

Three broad similarities mark the work of the three projects as they moved toward policy goals. First, although the DEC Initiative charged the projects to create systemic reform of the New York City public school system, they all found, some sooner than others, that a focus on policy often requires reform efforts to move from local city-level arenas to the realm of state politics and policymakers. Project staff members had to create and support relationships with state-level policymakers and administrators or make links with statewide organizations and networks. Second, policy work requires the organizational capacity to look toward and act at both the state and local levels simultaneously. Finally, the policy work of the three projects reflects the understanding that policy change is not a one-step process. Instead, policy change requires solid groundwork and the ability to juggle multiple strategies, leveraging energy and influence across them. The paper discusses lessons relating to policy work and the use of data, development of systemic approaches to systemic change, creation of links between local and systemic reform agendas, and the roles of broad, legitimated constituencies in reform efforts. In addition, work on a policy issue often means maintaining focus over months and years. Effective policy work requires persistence and time. In this regard, DEC's provision of long-term support was critical to the work and achievements of these projects.

### **DEC CONSTITUENCY-BUILDING WORK**

The paper examines how each project's goals and assumptions about how to create change were pivotal in defining and shaping a range of approaches to constituency building. DEC projects include the following approaches to constituency-building work.

- **ISSUE-DRIVEN CONSTITUENCY BUILDING.** Equity Reform Project emphasized the need for broad-based engagement in defining the meaning and practices of a “sound basic education,” as well as in supporting litigation to change New York’s school finance formula.
- **COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CONSTITUENCY BUILDING.** Parent Organizing Consortium aimed to bring parent and community perspectives into education policy debates and decision making and build a citywide network of parent advocates. These efforts are part of a long-term effort to develop local leadership and organizational capacity to foster local advocacy on community issues more generally.
- **SECTOR-DRIVEN CONSTITUENCY BUILDING.** Transforming Education for New York’s Newest centered on improving the education of and creating a venue for the interests of immigrant and English language learner populations. The project’s constituency building is sector-driven and issue-oriented.

DEC constituency building has resulted in outcomes in terms of developing greater numbers and diversity of engaged stakeholders; legitimating new constituencies; institutionalizing engagement in public school reform; establishing routes to access institutional power; and creating new and expanded roles for constituents.

Lessons regarding constituency building include examinations of the critical skills and capacities that are pivotal for each of the three types of constituency building found in the DEC projects. The paper suggests that these different approaches to constituency building form the basis for understanding the various goals, target audiences, and strategies of constituency building well beyond the DEC initiative. By taking the approach to constituency building into account, funders, practitioners, and researchers can frame relevant expectations for and definitions of project success.

## DEC INITIATIVE OUTCOMES

Collectively, the DEC work has resulted in a range of significant outcomes, including but not limited to:

- Visibility and policy wins for issues regarding school facilities and overcrowding, school financing, and educational opportunities for immigrant and English language learner students.
- The ability of organizations not previously involved in education issues to critique aspects of the school system and offer credible responses.
- Development of networks of community-based groups as legitimate voices in policy reform; engagement of multiple constituencies in the complex, political arena of education finance.
- Development of informed stakeholders who are willing to act for quality, equitable education, including parents with children in chronically low-achieving schools, educators, middle-class parents, immigrant communities, high school students, and city and state officials.

The DEC projects made great strides in policy and constituency-building arenas, and the partnering reform organizations are established actors in the education reform arena. In addition, DEC projects created a foundation of education advocacy that helped shape the growth and visibility of the Alliance for Quality Education, a statewide reform coalition. Further, the funders' collaborative itself has proven to be a vital means for foundations to leverage resources and act together for equitable, quality education. By mid-2002, when this initiative ended, DEC had raised \$6 million and supported three projects for six years and four other projects for shorter periods. As the initiative wound down, several DEC members decided to renew the collaborative, asserting a sustained commitment to education reform and to collaborative funding. The continuing members invited other foundations to join with them. Together, they have reaffirmed the DEC mission, created a new initiative, raised well over \$2 million, and are now supporting six projects, most for two years.



## INTRODUCTION

The Donors' Education Collaborative (DEC) — composed of a wide range of private and corporate New York City funders — was founded in 1995.<sup>1</sup> The collaborative grant-making effort focused on fostering systemic reform of the city's school system and the development of permanent, broad-based constituencies to advocate for such reform. As of June 30, 2002, DEC completed six years of implementation support to its initial group of grantees. This exceptionally long-term support went to collaborative groups using constituency-building, policy, and advocacy strategies to achieve their goals. Collectively, the DEC work has resulted in a range of significant outcomes, including but not limited to:

- Visibility and policy wins for issues regarding school facilities and overcrowding, school financing, and educational opportunities for immigrant and English language learner students.
- The ability of organizations not previously involved in education issues to critique aspects of the school system and offer credible responses.
- Development of networks of community-based groups as legitimate voices in policy reform; engagement of multiple constituencies in the complex, political arena of education finance.
- Development of informed stakeholders who are willing to act for quality, equitable education, including parents with children in chronically low-achieving schools, educators, middle-class parents, immigrant communities, high school students, and city and state officials.

The achievements of DEC go beyond the accomplishments of the projects. DEC projects created a foundation of education advocacy in the city that aided and helped shape the growth and visibility of the Alliance for Quality Education, a statewide reform coalition. Moreover, the funders' collaborative itself, which engaged more than 20 foundations, has proven to be a vital means for foundations to leverage resources and act together for equitable, quality education.

The DEC Initiative is an important arena for examining the efficacy of combining constituency-building and policy strategies to foster school reform. From the start, the initiative identified these strategies as pivotal to creating sustainable systemic change in public education. The DEC projects developed different approaches, based on different theories of change, to their constituency building and policy work, and thus provide a comparative framework for exploring

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for a list of DEC members from 1995-2002.

the lessons of the initiative. Moreover, the initiative provides the unusual opportunity to track school reform efforts over six years, a significant time span within which to examine the processes and impacts of projects' efforts. All of these factors — the initiative-wide strategies that are employed in different ways, the long timespan of the study, and the projects' achievements — heighten the value of examining the initiative's lessons.

The paper is divided into six major sections:

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*A funding collaborative can provide deep and long-term support for reform work by engaging a range of private and corporate foundations, making available a large pool of funds, and leveraging members' interests, influence, and knowledge to heighten the potential for policy impact and social change in an institutional arena that has long resisted reform efforts.*

## I. BACKGROUND

### THE DONORS' EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE

The Donors' Education Collaborative's originating — and continuing — vision outlines goals and means that are both deep and encompassing. From its start in 1995, several assumptions have comprised DEC's approach to creating change:

- A funding collaborative can provide deep and long-term support for reform work by engaging a range of private and corporate foundations, making available a large pool of funds, and leveraging members' interests, influence, and knowledge to heighten the potential for policy impact and social change in an institutional arena that has long resisted reform efforts.
- Outside pressure and support — particularly active, knowledgeable constituencies — are needed to create and sustain meaningful change in the education system.
- Achievement of a school system that is “more responsive to the needs of all children” demands system-wide reform based on policy change and implementation.
- The strategic joining of constituency-building, policy, and advocacy approaches, best developed through the collaboration of organizations, can create such change.
- Systemic reform requires long-term effort, and therefore DEC intentionally created an initiative with multiyear support.

In order to bring these approaches and goals to life, DEC supported the work of three projects for six years, from 1996 to 2002.<sup>2</sup> These were:

- **Equity Reform Project (ERP):** Worked to create a citizens' mandate in New York State for school finance reform linked to a finance equity suit brought against the state by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE). ERP involved in this effort a diverse range of organizations, including statewide education organizations; local community-based organizations; parent, teacher and student groups; and local and

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<sup>2</sup> During this period, DEC also funded the Metro Industrial Areas Foundation for four years and, beginning in 2000, the Alliance for Quality Education, the Community Collaborative to Improve District 9 Schools, and the Least Restrictive Environment Coalition.

statewide business organizations. As part of its constituency-building strategy, ERP created forums in New York City and in regions across the state that engaged participants in defining a “sound basic education,” which the state constitution mandates be provided for every child in the state. This definition was later used in the court case and accepted by the court as the legal definition of every child’s constitutionally protected educational right. ERP partners included CFE, Educational Priorities Panel, Foundation for Citizen Education of the League of Women Voters of New York, Urban League of New York City (for two years), and Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy.

- **Parent Organizing Consortium (POC):** Aimed to build a citywide association of grassroots organizations working to promote parent-generated demand for education reform and to bring parental voices into education debates and decision-making. Member organizations focused on neighborhoods or communities of interest, such as ethnic groupings, and employed community-organizing approaches — including reaching out to and training parents and other community members, rallies, and meetings with policymakers — to engage parents in education and other institutional issues that affect individual, familial, and community well-being. Over the course of the six years, POC focused on the city level, working on issues such as school facilities and construction, class-size reduction, and low-performing schools. The Parent Organizing Consortium’s full-term participants were ACORN, Community Action Project, Mothers on the Move, and Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition.
- **Transforming Education for New York’s Newest (TENYN):** Sought to improve education for immigrant and English language learner students (ELL), focusing on implementation of standards, multilingual communications with parents, appropriate assessment and placement of students, and other issues. The project created research actions, local forums, informational tools, such as a get-out-the-vote campaign, and other means to engage community-based and citywide groups working with immigrant populations. In this way, TENYN was able to help build capacity in the organizations and, through the organizations, reach diverse immigrant communities across the city. Many of the organizations were direct service providers, often with little policy or constituency-building experience around education issues. In addition, TENYN worked at the city and state levels — issuing position papers, providing testimony, meeting with policymakers and their staffs, and participating in advisory committees — to help shape the public debate and decision-making on education reform for immigrant and ELL students. New York Immigration Coalition was the lead partner in this project and worked with Advocates for Children.

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### EVALUATION OF THE DEC INITIATIVE

Throughout the six years of DEC implementation, the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago aimed to understand the structure and dynamics of each project; to assess its progress, effectiveness, and systemic impacts; and to use the comparative perspective provided by the group of projects to develop crosscutting themes and lessons learned. Evaluation frameworks — developed annually by project staff and evaluation team members, and reviewed and accepted by DEC members — guided the assessment process. Through this process, project staff, funders, and evaluators understood and agreed upon the assessment measures for the year's work. The frameworks were both project-specific and reflected the initiative-wide emphasis on constituency building, policy formation, and advocacy.<sup>3</sup>

Fieldwork comprised the main research methodology, including interviews and observations. Primary interviewees included project staff members and critically placed outside observers who could provide some perspective on the impact of projects' work on their intended audiences.<sup>4</sup> The research also included observations of project meetings, events, trainings, and other key activities. Such observational data supplement and contextualize the interview data. The evaluation team also reviewed project-generated materials and external materials, such as media coverage, city and state budgets, and minutes of Board of Education meetings, as these were relevant and to the extent allowed by research resources. In years 5 and 6, the evaluation also followed the involvement of the three projects in the Alliance for Quality Education, a statewide coalition working toward increased education funding. This new perspective allowed an examination of projects' development and challenges as they participated in a broader reform effort.

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<sup>3</sup> These site-developed frameworks provided the lens through which the researchers sought to track operational progress, assess outcomes and thereby the feasibility and relative value of project strategies, and test the underlying assumptions about how and why change happens.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for a cumulative list of selected outside interviewees.

## CONTEXT ISSUES

The many social and political fluctuations of the six years of the initiative highlight the critical role of education advocates in providing a sustained focus on and continuity in agendas for education reform. Moreover, although there were unpredictable shifts and factors over all six years that affected the context in which DEC projects operated, those in the final year of implementation were marked and dramatic. Major fluctuations over the six years include the following:

- Economic upswing and full coffers during much of the initiative, but turning into a faltering economy, budget deficits, and service cutbacks in the last year.
- 9/11 and its aftermath, including changing political, policy, and economic concerns and environment; these changes sharply affected the final year of implementation.
- Redefined priorities in education policy debates, specifically regarding standards, testing, and accountability. At the national level, the ratification of Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994, which awarded grants to states and districts to support the development and implementation of standards-based education reforms, and in 2001, the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, which linked Title I funding to standards and testing. At the local level, changes in education policy in New York City, including the implementation of a new promotion policy and required summer school for failing students.
- Public debate about the role of market forces, competition, and private management and operations practices in public education, and the implementation of privatization, choice, and voucher experiments in cities across the country.
- Great demographic shifts in the city, including the influx of immigrant students and growth of the English language learner population.
- In New York City, changes in the mayor and chancellor's offices, and in top school board administration.
- Fights over mayoral control of the education system, total revamping of the structure and membership of the Board of Education, and, at the end of the initiative, the announcement of another new chancellor.
- Changes in the City Council, including implementation of term limits.
- Vastly over-budget school construction projects, lack of accountability, and recurring charges of corruption at the School Construction Authority and Division of School Facilities.

*Achievement of a school system that is “more responsive to the needs of all children” demands system-wide reform based on policy change and implementation.*

- The Campaign for Fiscal Equity litigation, with its highlighting of education issues throughout the ups and downs of the court proceedings.

Over the life of DEC, education and education reform moved to the center of public attention with the passions of public debate on such issues as privatization, standards, high-stakes testing, and public school finance. The DEC initiative allowed participating organizations to take advantage of this spotlight. When the spotlight shifted with the events and aftermath of 9/11, the depth of the projects enabled them to remain anchored and to work to keep education issues high on the public policy agenda.

## II. DEC POLICY AND ADVOCACY WORK

The policy interests of the three projects — Equity Reform Project (ERP), Parent Organizing Consortium (POC), and Transforming Education for New York’s Newest (TENYN) — encompass various substantive areas, including school financing, facilities and overcrowding, the implementation of standards for immigrant and English language learner students, and translation and interpretation of school information for immigrant parents. Despite these differences in content, three broad similarities mark the work of the three projects as they moved toward policy goals.

First, although the DEC Initiative charged the projects to create systemic reform of the New York City public school system, they all found, some sooner than others, that a focus on policy often requires reform efforts to move from local city-level arenas to the realm of state politics and policymakers. Project staff members had to create and support relationships with state-level policymakers and administrators or make links with statewide organizations and networks. ERP began with a state-level issue, education financing, and with the joining of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) with the Educational Priorities Panel (EPP) — and its statewide partners — the project gained a built-in means to identify and address upstate audiences, work that began in the second year of implementation. At the opposite end of the policy process, TENYN focused initially on developing particular school-level tools and testing them in two Queens school districts (four schools total). But staff found this focus mired the project in local issues and technical difficulties,

with little prospect for moving to the systemic level. Only after TENYN approached the New York State Board of Regents regarding the impact of standards implementation on immigrant students, did the project's policy work begin clearly to emerge.

Second, policy work requires the organizational capacity to look toward and act at both the state and local levels simultaneously. Thus, in working to reform the city's school system, projects had to engage local constituencies as well as develop local knowledge of the need and opportunities for reform. At the same time, issues that involve funding or multiple governance levels demand efforts to engage state-level support.

POC's work regarding school facilities is an example of this. POC made strides in its facilities policy work, entering into a coalition with the New York City Bar Association, community development corporations, and others to create and promote a means of financing and creating new facilities, which was eventually adopted by the New York City Board of Education. However, the consortium eventually moved to other policy issues because school facilities raise big money issues that can only be decided at the state level. POC felt it did not have the leverage to go to the state. Late in year 4, the consortium began directing considerable energy toward building the Alliance for Quality Education (AQE), a statewide coalition that POC felt would be able to push for policy reform at the state level. This meant a stronger AQE, but also created tensions among and loosened ties between POC and member local sites, which missed POC's ability to link sites to each other and to city-level concerns.

Finally, the policy work of the three projects reflects the understanding that policy change is not a one-step process. Instead, policy change requires solid groundwork and the ability to juggle multiple strategies, leveraging energy and influence across them. Strategies include, among others, data collection, analysis, and use; creation of tools for effective communications; negotiations with broadly varied audiences; education of policymakers; and shows of constituency concern. In addition, work on a policy issue often means maintaining focus over months and years, as in the case of TENYN's efforts to get a translation and interpretation policy in place, and even then, the funds to implement the policy were not available. Effective policy work requires persistence and time. In this regard, DEC's provision of long-term support has been critical to the work and achievements of these projects.

In the following discussion, we separate policy and constituency-building work. But it is critical to note that this distinction is largely to facilitate analysis. In prac-

*The strategic joining of constituency-building, policy, and advocacy approaches, best developed through the collaboration of organizations, can create system-level school reform.*

tice, effective policy and constituency-building strategies interact and build off each other, as can be seen in many of the policy outcomes below.

### **POLICY OUTCOMES**

A major policy outcome of the initiative is the establishment of the three project collaboratives as organizational authorities and resource hubs. At city and state levels, ERP and TENYN are viewed as accepted authorities on school finance and on immigrant and English language learner education issues, respectively. Recognition of the collaboratives — and of CFE and the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) in particular — as legitimate, credible voices on these broad policy areas has been reflected in the state legislature’s approval of one member’s decision to allocate \$10,000 in support of ERP’s Demonstration Schools Project; the Regents’ attention to TENYN, although they have not always followed project recommendations; media coverage of school financing issues, the CFE lawsuit, and the broad support of finance reform; and the inclusion of NYIC, as the organization representing immigrant perspectives, on committees of two different chancellors. Such recognition reflects projects’ achievements in both their policy work and constituency-building efforts: the presence of knowledgeable and legitimated constituencies informed and gave weight to the policy stances of the two collaboratives.

POC was recognized in some circles, most notably within the Board of Education, as representing public school parents and local, underserved communities across the city. In addition, as a founding member of the Alliance for Quality Education, POC potentially can gain similar status concerning its policy work as well, especially in the alliance’s target area of enlarging education funding and in relation to facilities, now part of AQE’s agenda.

As part of their status as organizational authorities, projects developed roles as resource hubs in networks of organizations. Recognition by other organizations and institutions has strengthened projects’ ability to frame policy questions and debates, increased their leverage with policy-makers, and increased the legitimacy of their work.

CFE, EPP, and, by extension, ERP, have combined the success of the CFE litigation with their experience and expertise to become resources

for nonprofit groups, governmental offices, legislative staff members, elected officials, and others on issues of school finance. CFE wrote and disseminated policy briefs about the evidence it presented during the trial in the New York Supreme Court, and EPP held numerous briefings for city and state legislators and administrative staff members. CFE and EPP staff members are often quoted in the media regarding school finance and budget issues. More broadly, ERP's public engagement work provides information about school finance and promotes the importance of public involvement in complicated issues of school funding.

NYIC has gained increased recognition as the principal organization addressing issues of education of immigrant and English language learner students. For example, the project took the lead in questioning the implementation of standards reform vis-à-vis immigrant students when resources are not available for adequate instruction. As such, it has become an information source, vehicle for action, and umbrella forum for a range of groups. NYIC has always played this role for its member organizations, but increasingly, the project is seen as a forum in which both member and nonmember organizations and individuals alike can debate and act upon education issues.

POC has become the primary vehicle for local communities to join in citywide parent action, and it has provided the means for parent voices to reach the policy level, first through its work on school facilities, school construction, and class-size reduction, and then as a founding member of AQE. When several small community organizing groups wanted to form a coalition to address citywide issues, they were encouraged to join POC rather than create another citywide organization. In addition, public officials at the Board recognized POC's role in representing public school parents and asked the consortium to bring that perspective to public hearings on school construction and facilities.

The continuing work of CFE, NYIC, and POC, as individual organizations and with their collaborative partners, provides the promise of sustained, ongoing, active voices and relevant policy work in these areas of school system reform.

Other, more specific policy outcomes are:

- The New York Supreme Court's decision in *CFE v. State*, which defined "a sound basic education" and included guidelines for creating a new system for financing education in New York, incorporated many of the elements that CFE put forth in its proposals to the court. ERP's public engagement process shaped these proposals.

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- Maintenance of effort legislation, although not as strong as CFE had hoped, was revised in 2002, based largely on the work of EPP. CFE issued reports to legislators about maintenance of effort legislation and about an expert panel for determining the cost of a sound basic education. Legislative leaders in both houses introduced maintenance of effort bills, and minority legislators in both houses introduced bills regarding the expert panel.
- As a member of a school facilities coalition, POC helped develop — and the Board of Education adopted — a nonprofit leasing model as an alternative to the construction of school facilities. Although ready for use, there has been little funding to support implementation of the program. However, if a group proposed to build a school using the model in an area of the city where funds are available, such as Queens, the proposal would likely be funded.
- POC identified several schools and community school districts for facilities overhauls, and these were included in the Board of Education's version of the 1999 Capital Plan, although this version was not the one that was ultimately approved for implementation.
- POC met with and gained agreement from Chancellor Levy regarding several of the consortium's "respect demands." These demands were designed to legitimize and create institutional support for the meaningful participation of parents and parent organizations in education policy. The chancellor agreed, among other things, to appoint a deputy chancellor to serve as a permanent liaison to POC and consult with POC before releasing initiatives related to the consortium's agenda. Immediately after these agreements, the chancellor appointed Deputy Chancellor Klasfeld as liaison between POC and the Board.
- TENYN had a significant role in the creation and Board adoption of a policy on translation and interpretation for newcomer parents. TENYN led the development of an initial proposal regarding the issue and advised Terri Thomson, then head of the Board's Parent Involvement Committee, who pushed for a policy and services to help meet translation and interpretation needs. TENYN also successfully advocated for a policy specifically to inform parents, in appropriate languages, of the bilingual and ESL program options available to ELL students.
- TENYN's action research project on the 2000 summer school experience of ELL students revealed that many students in bilingual or ESL

programs during the regular year were not placed in appropriate programs during the summer session. Based largely on these findings, the chancellor directed that program participation during the previous school year must guide summer school placement, as well as placement more generally.

- Project partners contributed to restoration of budget cuts in areas of project focus. Examples here include TENYN's work toward restoring the governor's \$11 million cut in ELL aid to the Assembly's proposed 2000 budget and adding \$41 million over two years. In its year 3 work, POC lent its voice to the statewide movement, eventually successful, to pressure the governor to reinstate funding for school maintenance in the 1999 state budget.
- Project partners prompted and participated in public hearings at the state level concerning project issues. Examples of such hearings include: the Senate Minority Task Force on School Aid Equity hearing to get input on how the state should fulfill its responsibility to provide a sound basic education for all children in the state, and the Assembly's hearing on ELL dropout rates and subsequent introduction, by Assemblyman Peter Rivera, of legislation seeking a safety net for ELL students, including an alternative to the Regents English exam.
- The policy interests and alternatives of CFE and POC strongly influenced the agenda of the Alliance for Quality Education, a statewide coalition of school boards, teacher organizations, advocacy groups, parent organizations, and community groups. AQE reframed its platform to intersect with CFE's court case and initial decision. Moreover, AQE's statewide and, by extension, its New York City platforms incorporate elements of POC's agenda, especially regarding facilities and overcrowding issues and solutions.

## POLICY CHANGE LESSONS

**Use of Data Is Central.** The DEC projects defined their data needs in accordance with their project goals, their strategies for gathering and analyzing necessary data, and the role that data played in their work. The ability to access and use data to identify problems and to shape possible solutions has been critical as DEC projects have worked both to establish themselves as significant actors in policy arenas and to shape specific education reforms. POC achieved progress in both these aims when it mastered aspects of the school construction challenge and helped develop — as a member of the School Construction Working Group — a nonprofit leasing model as an alternative to the construction of school facilities. The sophistication and feasibility of the proffered alternative to a knotty problem resulted in an approach that the Board of Education adopted, and signaled the group's ability to work ably on complex and pressing issues with local and citywide significance. In

*The ability to access and use data to identify problems and to shape possible solutions has been critical.*

addition, POC used data collection as a way to involve member groups in linking local issues and citywide policy. The groups canvassed their communities to identify sites for potential school buildings, highlight maintenance and repair needs, and locate gaps in the Board of Education's proposed capital plan.

TENYN had to cope with a different kind of data issue: the lack of necessary data to analyze systemic problems. Some data are unavailable because, for example, the Board of Education does not provide disaggregated statistics for relevant categories, or simply does not track particular information, or discounts critical population sectors, such as dropouts, when calculating key statistics such as graduation rates. The definition of statistical categories largely determines how raw numbers are interpreted; these numbers are often not available to outside groups to interpret on their own. One response is for projects to identify relevant data gaps and then work to fill those gaps. The TENYN report on the 2000 summer school identified and documented the problem of students in bilingual or ESL programs during the school year being placed in mainstream classes during the summer session. As a result, the chancellor mandated that bilingual and ESL enrollment must be used in determining placement in the 2001 summer session.

ERP used data to make issues of school finance accessible to general audiences and to specialists in the area, specifically, to policymakers and administrative staff involved in budget analysis and decision making. CFE produced a series of reports under the rubric "In Evidence: Policy Reports from the CFE Trial." The reports draw on the testimony and research presented in the first CFE trial. In addition, EPP, as part of its ERP effort, sponsored several invitation-only meetings to discuss the technical details of education funding, such as regional cost indexing, with representatives from a range of city and state offices involved with budget issues. CFE's reports and EPP's presentations framed financing and budget topics to provide ways of thinking about these complex issues.

Projects maintained control of data collection and data use decisions, but they frequently sought technical assistance from research institutions, specifically the Institute for Education and Social Policy. For example, ERP turned to IESP for help in designing and then analyzing a survey of teachers regarding the presence — or absence — of elements

of a sound basic education in their schools. In a similar manner, POC worked with IESP to create maps that graphically illustrate geographic patterns of low-performing schools across the city.

**Systemic Reform Requires a Systemic Approach.** Efforts at systemic reform are most effective when grounded in specific needs and analyses *and also* when framed by and integrated with policy goals. TENYN provides first a negative example of this lesson, and then a strong positive example. During the first two years of implementation, TENYN focused on developing specific tools — such as approaches to professional development — to be tested in two Queens community school districts (four schools total). The project became engulfed in details of existing tools, research of various approaches, demographics of the four schools, and negotiations with community groups, school districts, the teachers union, and local school staffs. At times, the larger vision of policy change via citywide adoption of successful tools was lost in the minutiae of tool development. In its third year of work, TENYN switched to a strong policy orientation, with a focus on joining the implementation of standards with quality learning opportunities for immigrant and ELL students. This issue was an umbrella for much of TENYN's policy work in the 1998-99 project year, providing a high-visibility vehicle that garnered attention from the Regents and State Education Department, moving the project into policy critical for its target population and focusing the project on systemic change. NYIC had not been involved in public school policy before TENYN; through the coalition's work on standards, it began to establish itself as the organizational voice on education and immigrant and ELL students.

A systemic approach also requires links between multiple strategies that can create synergy toward policy goals. ERP took a technical and arcane policy arena — school financing — and effectively developed multiple tools to explain, frame, and link everyday experiences to concepts of sound basic education and financing adequacy. At times, this meant using multiple strategies to raise the same core questions. For example, the idea that quality educational opportunities are available in some — but not all — schools informed a video that looks at specific schools. This idea eventually took a different form in the surveys of students, teachers, and parents that asked for comparisons between the elements of a sound basic education and the elements actually found in their schools. The project used the surveys and survey results to help educate participants, reinforce their commitment to reform, and contribute to the court case. After the first court case, accountability became a step toward planning the implementation of “sound basic education” across the state, an area of potential policy recommendations, as well as a means to continue constituency participation. ERP's approach knits together policy concerns and

*Efforts at systemic reform are most effective when grounded in specific needs and analyses and also when framed by and integrated with policy goals.*

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strategies in ways that highlight core issues and visibly engage constituents in a major undertaking for equity and adequacy. Such “knitting” helps propel the project’s work toward systemic outcomes. The approach differs markedly from and highlights problems of reform efforts in which the work is fragmented among vaguely linked policy concerns or the project continually adds new issues, even when previous work has not come to fruition. A disparate or changing policy focus can dilute a project’s ability to build and sustain a strong foundation of central concerns.

#### **Connection of Local and Systemic Levels Creates Synergy.**

Intentional development of a synergy between local and systemic agendas — such that local issues help shape citywide campaigns, and citywide research and issues infuse local advocacy work — is an effective way to connect policy and constituency-building work. POC addressed the challenge of making this connection in an ongoing way. In its facilities work, POC drew on local concerns with overcrowding and inadequate facilities — developed through experiences with particular schools and classrooms — and linked them with systemic concerns regarding construction and construction funding. In somewhat different ways, ERP’s constituents infused the abstract notion of “a sound basic education” with locally derived perspectives and needs.

### **III. DEC CONSTITUENCY-BUILDING WORK**

DEC projects brought to their work similar definitions of critical aspects of constituency building, including the following:

- The importance of engaging and raising stakeholder voices and perspectives to set reform agendas, to create and define the political will for reform, to foster legitimacy and credibility for the reform effort, and to effect and sustain systemic change.
- The value of reaching a range of constituencies. DEC projects target those generally not visible at the education policy level, as well as recognize the need to reach policymakers. All projects reach some target constituencies very effectively, but reaching beyond original or “natural” constituencies has demanded project creativity and effort. This has happened with all projects and their relationships with different constituencies. For example, ERP’s efforts to reach parents in underserved neighborhoods, TENYN’s strategy to reach immigrant families through community-based organizations, and POC’s cooperation with

organizations such as the New York City Bar Association.

- The need for larger coalitions and networks. Local or isolated constituencies cannot achieve systemic reform. Instead, projects worked in different ways to link groups across neighborhoods and sectors, trying, for example, to build citywide or statewide constituencies, to work with groups with different missions, orientations, and agendas, or to find common issues among groups with different ethnic, language, and cultural backgrounds.
- The importance of being able to call on engaged constituencies and networks in order to highlight political issues and to respond to crises. The value of this resource can be seen in the attention-getting march to the courthouse at the opening of the first CFE trial, POC/AQE demonstrations against budget cuts, and the large press conference turnout and subsequent media coverage of TENYN reports, especially on the high drop-out rate of immigrant and ELL students.

### THE SHAPES OF CONSTITUENCY-BUILDING WORK IN DEC<sup>5</sup>

Each project shaped its approach to constituency building to accord with its goals and assumptions about how to create change. That is, the impetus for its constituency-building work — the project's goals and assumptions — directly affected constituency-building strategies and definitions of target audiences and their roles. Different approaches also encountered different challenges. By taking the approach to constituency building into account, funders, practitioners, and researchers can frame relevant expectations for and definitions of project success. DEC projects include the following approaches to constituency-building work.

**Equity Reform Project: Issue-Driven Constituency Building.** ERP emphasized the need for broad-based engagement in defining the meaning and practices of a “sound basic education,” as well as in supporting litigation to change New York’s school finance formula. Throughout DEC implementation, the external time frame and concrete potential of the litigation created an impetus to ERP’s constituency-building efforts. In a sense, CFE and its lawsuit provided a specific and compelling public engagement focus for constituents who could see that their participation mattered. Aspects of the public engagement strategy included:

- Recruitment of a broad range of established organizations, including groups not previously engaged in education issues, as well as others already deeply involved.

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<sup>5</sup> The authors will be extending the analysis of how goals and assumptions shape constituency-building work in a forthcoming article.

- Ongoing outreach efforts and activities, including upstate, regional, and New York City presentations; meetings with business organizations, social service providers, educators and their unions, boards of education, and city and state legislators; and activities to engage target populations, such as high school students and teachers. In addition, conducting specific events geared for relevant city and state administrative specialists on technical issues such as regional cost indexing.
- Public events, such as New York City and upstate forums on finance and education, aimed to provide arenas in which constituents could join with others to make visible their common interest, gain information, and help shape critical aspects of the litigation, particularly a definition of “sound basic education” and concerns with accountability.
- Widespread and ongoing project communications — via newsletters, e-mail alerts, and reports regarding project research and campaign and litigation developments — aimed to maintain constituent interest over the long years of and multiple lulls in the litigation process. The potential of waning public interest was a major concern, and project staff spent considerable effort developing and supporting communications tools.
- Intentional and ongoing outreach to media for press, radio, and television attention to public education finance issues and specific project events in New York City and upstate.

**Parent Organizing Consortium: Community-Driven Constituency Building.**

POC aims to bring parent and community perspectives into education policy debates and decision-making. Over the life of DEC, the consortium brought together local community-organizing groups and programs to lay the foundation for a citywide network of parent advocates. Participating groups generally assert that the development of community-based constituencies has effects well beyond school reform. These constituencies are part of a long-term effort to develop local leadership and organizational capacity to foster local advocacy on community issues more generally. In joining together to form a consortium, member organizations no longer worked on issues in isolation and were able to extend their impact beyond their communities to the citywide level. The consortium also served as a forum for individual and organizational leadership development; the POC coordinator provided technical assistance to member organizations, organized meetings and retreats wherein groups learned about reform issues and conducted policy analyses, and facilitated the sharing of expertise among member organizations. All of these elements enhanced and strengthened the skills members brought to their local work and to the consortium as a whole. POC’s strategy to build a citywide network of parents included:

- Development of a consortium of community-based programs and organizations that are committed to community organizing, focus on institutional change, and work within geographically-defined, low-income communities that are often the sites of chronically underserved and low-performing schools.
- Focus on systematic development — among individuals and local organizations — of the leadership skills, knowledge, and will to advocate for school reform at both local and system-wide levels. Activities to assist this development included parent participation in strategy-planning sessions, trainings, research actions, and meetings with school administrators, elected officials, and other policymakers.
- Use of local engagement to legitimate and invigorate citywide work; at the same time, use of citywide work to develop and hone local leadership and capacity.
- Creation of links and networks among community parents, residents, groups, and local arms of faith-based, educational, and other institutions, and among organizations across the city. Such networks help community-driven reform efforts gain visibility, credibility, and “weight” in the public debate on schools and education.

### **Transforming Education for New York’s Newest: Sector-Driven Constituency**

**Building.** Overall, NYC’s policy analysis, advocacy efforts, and constituency building center on the concerns and interests of immigrant and ELL populations. TENYN follows a similar path regarding education policy: advocating among, with, and on behalf of immigrant and ELL students, their families, organizations, and communities. Immigrant and ELL students have generally been a silent population in education debates, even as their numbers and unmet needs have grown dramatically. TENYN’s constituency building, which is sector-driven and issue-oriented, included the following aspects:

- A central interest in engaging NYC board members and more broadly NYC’s more than 150 member organizations in support of an education agenda. Such support carries political clout by bringing a unified immigrant perspective — regardless of national and cultural origins — to issues of education policy and practice.
- Development of a tiered constituency-building approach. TENYN sparked NYC member organizations to support education advocacy and to engage their own grassroots constituencies, both staff and community members. At the same time, the project created vehicles — such as action research, community forums, and the 2000 voter registration drive — for use by member organizations to educate and engage their communities.

- Establishment of the project as a hub of information and umbrella for member and nonmember immigrant and ELL groups to join together on relevant and sometimes controversial issues such as bilingual education.
- Establishment at city and state levels of the legitimacy and credibility of NYIC to speak for immigrant organizations and constituencies on education issues.

Constituency-building efforts differ not only in strategies, but also in their aims and target audiences. When practitioners, funders, and researchers understand that constituency-building tactics, on one hand, and overall project goals, on the other, must be logically linked, such tasks as defining success, appropriate benchmarks and indicators, and assessing progress become much easier. If the goal is to engage parents and residents at the grassroots level — to organize a community — not only the tactics, but also the intensity and scope of work, the levels of participation, and the need for long-term perspective are much different from those needed for a public engagement effort. And the results will vary at different points in time. One lesson for future endeavors is the efficacy of sorting through constituency-building and project goals, as well as those of practitioners and funders, for a clear assessment of where each route, if successful, will lead.

### CONSTITUENCY-BUILDING OUTCOMES

DEC projects built a groundwork of community and organizational involvement in education issues and aimed to foster the broad-based, long-term continuity needed to sustain change in the sprawling, bureaucratized, and entrenched New York City school system. Aspects of this groundwork include the following:

**Greater Numbers and Diversity of Engaged Stakeholders.** DEC projects expanded the kinds and numbers of informed stakeholders with a commitment to education reform. NYIC engaged immigrant and ELL populations and organizations in education issues, fostering recognition among this sector of its stake in and responsibility to advocate on education issues. POC cultivated a sense of parents' right to participate in education policy conversations, and ERP introduced community members, teachers, students, business people, and parents to the complications of school finance.

The projects also facilitated the entry of many non-education organizations into the policy debate on major education issues. The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA), a statewide, nonprofit policy analysis and advocacy organization, had been involved in education issues, but on a piecemeal basis. Through its work with ERP, the center became involved in education finance and

other issues, and it will continue this effort, even as the work with ERP winds down. NYIC convinced its board of organizational members to include education policy in its formal agenda, thereby taking the lead in linking immigrant interests and public education.

Finally, projects have enlarged and strengthened the base of organizational participation in school reform advocacy by prompting long-term commitments to focus on education. Education has become a major policy area for NYIC and, as mentioned above, a new concern for many of its members. POC introduced some of its members, such as Community Action Project, to education organizing. Long-term and broad-based commitment to education reform can be especially strategic within the context of instability in the school system, with often-transient top administrators and changing agendas. A state-level administrator says, “[Reform] organizations tend to have longer-term investments and agendas, and might be able to be — or help promote — the stability and continuity of a reform agenda.”

**Legitimated New Constituencies.** The solid work of DEC projects — based in data collection and analysis, often centered on potential remedies as well as identification of problems, and involved in information dissemination — helped to legitimate the place of engaged constituencies in education policy arenas. This was reflected in the chancellor-appointed liaison between POC and the Board, the place of TENYN on chancellor committees, and the court’s adoption of CFE’s arguments for a sound basic education, shaped in part by constituency groups at ERP forums. New engaged and legitimated constituents, both individuals and organizations, are critical to building a strong reform effort, sustaining the monitoring, advocacy, and especially the pressure necessary for systemic change. In a dynamic fashion, a large support base also contributes to the legitimacy of a reform effort.

**Institutionalizing Engagement in Public School Reform.** Beyond engaging particular individuals and organizations in education reform efforts, DEC projects fostered the support of long-term constituencies and worked to institutionalize their role in policy reform. Steps toward sustainable reform work include the following:

- **ESTABLISHING A NEW BASIS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY.** DEC projects helped to establish a new basis for accountability. Projects employed issues of accountability as a means to sustain constituent engagement and to shift constituent focus from traditional advocacy to expanded concerns with reform implementation. The presence of informed constituencies has created an accountability that resides outside of the education system. For example, POC’s ability to identify needs and suggest

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remedies pressured the Board of Education, as it negotiated the capital budget, to recognize and respond to the consortium's recommendations; eventually the Board included several of the building sites in its 1999 capital plan. ERP has also included communities as part of the base of responsibility for education reform. After the court accepted ERP's publicly-generated definition of a sound basic education, the project engaged its constituencies in conceptualizing an accountability system to ensure the effective use of increased funding for New York's public schools. Even though the system has not been put into operation, ERP has created a statewide — and local — community primed to watch and take responsibility for the implementation of school finance reform.

- **ESTABLISHING ROUTES TO ACCESS INSTITUTIONAL POWER.** Reform efforts promoted the sustainability of their work by instituting means to access institutional power. In part, building strategic relationships with public officials resulted in such access. Projects gained credibility and respect in these relationships when they raised relevant information or potential remedies. Over time, relationships with public officials became the means by which projects communicated with and potentially influenced those with institutional power. For example, during its school construction campaign, POC gained the respect of Board officials by coupling community-based data and demands with solutions about where to build new schools and alternatives for funding them. Despite turnover in school administrations and a new chancellor who denigrated parent participation in education policy, POC was able to maintain its relationship with Board leadership at the deputy chancellor level. This line of communication allowed the consortium to secure the right of parents to access improvement plans of their children's schools and districts.

In a similar way, TENYN established an official Board of Education presence, first as a member of Chancellor Crew's Action Group and then continuing as a member of Chancellor Levy's Advocacy Task Force. The example reflects, as does the POC example above, the reality that once legitimacy is achieved, it is likely to continue. On a larger scale, ERP's constituency-building efforts introduced the notion of transparency of education funding into the public realm. Although this was part of a larger conversation about fiscal reform, the project's efforts created a route for future action, especially if changes in the budgeting process allow public view of how funding is actually allocated.

- **CHANGING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC PROCESSES.**

Establishing a new basis for accountability and creating routes to access institutional power changed assumptions — among policymakers as well as constituents — about who can participate in reform efforts. As policymakers became accustomed to the involvement and contributions of new constituencies, they came to expect that these groups would participate. Changing the context for the practice of democratic participation in this way contributes to the sustainability of reform efforts.

**New and Expanded Roles for Constituents.** DEC constituency-building efforts went beyond traditional engagement mechanisms to activities and outcomes that helped change participants' views of their roles and responsibilities.

- **RECONFIGURING ROLES.** Projects aimed to shift the dynamics and relationships between schools and their communities by changing the ways parents are involved in schools; engaging community-based organizations and institutions in education policy; making arcane issues, such as school financing and school construction, more accessible; and building the knowledge and skills of previously silent constituencies, such as poor, immigrant, or racial minority stakeholders. As discussed above, such changes entail what a state-level official calls “sustained cultural shifts” — developing new bases of accountability and new expectations about who can contribute to policymaking and how. In promoting such cultural shifts, DEC projects provided venues in which constituencies could take on deeper and broader tasks that included but went beyond advocacy. Constituents involved in ERP's Demonstration Schools Project first developed school-specific guidelines for improving education and then created corresponding accountability plans. The strategy of devising long-term, forward-looking guidelines and plans to ensure ongoing stakeholder investment in specific school reforms, engaging constituencies in sustaining the work of ERP — now *their* work — by planning and holding themselves accountable for a sound basic education in their own schools.

In addition, partnering organizations themselves developed new skills, thereby enlarging more generally the capacity of the school reform community. In providing technical assistance to stakeholder teams through the Demonstration Schools Project, CFE enhanced its own capacity to sustain constituent involvement and also “gave back” by helping constituents craft improvement plans for their own schools. In a similar manner, NYIC and Advocates for Children engaged and trained selected community-based organizations to conduct research on students' and parents' summer school experiences. Both TENYN's and CFE's efforts developed new capabilities among constituents and participating organizations, and also devised new avenues for creating change.

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*Achieving political presence, then, is not only a matter of gaining backers; it is also engaging those, such as parents, who have meaning for policy audiences.*

- **DEVELOPING POLITICAL PRESENCE.** DEC projects worked to engage constituencies that matter to policymakers, such as parents of children in public schools, upstate constituents, and the business community. In demonstrating their ability to engage one or all of these constituencies, the projects have enhanced their visibility and legitimacy. As one teachers' union official says, when a reform group has "real parents" involved, it has credibility to speak about school reform. Achieving political presence, then, is not only a matter of gaining backers; it is also engaging those, such as parents, who have meaning for policy audiences.

A variety of factors, such as public will and political climate, must converge with project efforts in order for projects to achieve meaningful presence. Still, policymakers, elected officials, journalists, school administrators, and at times the general public have turned to projects because their viewpoints, rooted in constituencies that matter, lend legitimacy and credibility. At the state level, the legislature allocated support in the 2002 budget for ERP's public engagement events. Beyond the litigation, these events raised the project's political profile across the state. In New York City, Robert Jackson, the man often identified as the person who started the CFE litigation, was elected to the city council. Mayor Bloomberg appointed Sayu Bhojwani, an ally of and former consultant for the NYIC, as the first director of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs.

POC has built political presence through its persistent focus on issues that join local groups and extend their collective impact to the city-wide level. The accumulated efforts of POC as a consortium of individual member groups and of coalitions that POC helped form compelled the Board of Education to investigate alternate methods for financing the construction of schools. In addition, Board members called on POC to campaign against impending cuts to the 1999 capital budget. The consortium's seminal involvement in the founding and creation of the Alliance for Quality Education was a way to extend its citywide political presence to the state level. AQE has become a forum in which the diverse constituencies of the DEC projects, including parents, higher education, elected officials, the teachers' union, and minority and ethnic groups, could work together. As such, AQE has offered DEC projects one mechanism for extending their influence.

## CONSTITUENCY-BUILDING LESSONS

Over the long course of implementation, DEC projects experienced first-hand the power of a broad, diverse constituency; cultivated particular constituency-building skills that meshed with their goals and objectives; and developed strategies to sustain involvement. At times, project staff members tried one route to desired ends, and then another, looking for efficient and effective strategies. In the process, they generated significant lessons about how to build constituencies for systemic reform. These are lessons that projects adopted as their own, but are more generally applicable — for other practitioners, funders, researchers, and others working for equitable, quality educational opportunities for all children. Major lessons follow.

**A Broad Constituent Base Helps Build Power.** Among DEC projects, a broad constituent base has been critical for sustaining the monitoring and advocacy necessary for system-wide change. Although project staff understood at the start the value of constituency building, they grasped the necessity of such a base as their work deepened. As a result, they intensified efforts to build and broaden constituency engagement.

ERP's work to expand the range of its stakeholder base became more urgent as staff realized that forum participants were playing an important role in shaping arguments for CFE's litigation. ERP looked broadly in identifying stakeholder sectors — from students and low-income communities, to faith-based organizations, to business — that would demonstrate wide and varied support for its efforts. Building a broad base that includes communities dispersed throughout the state, as well as powerful statewide organizations such as the New York School Boards Association, has helped ERP mount political pressure for its case. These efforts have convinced partner organizations of the importance of constituency building in pursuing system-wide reform; in addition, more traditional stakeholders, such as policymakers and school officials who are watching from the outside, have also recognized the importance, as reflected in the state legislature's 2002 support of ERP's public engagement work.

POC also saw the value of broadening its base, especially in relation to issues that require greater political leverage than it could bring on its own. These include issues that involve multiple levels of government or require an infusion of dollars, particularly when budget cutbacks make the consortium one of many voices competing for funds. This perspective underpinned POC's collaboration with the NYC Bar Association, the Board of Education, the Institute for Education and

Social Policy, and community development corporations to develop the School Construction Working Group, and the eventual founding of AQE. TENYN played a central role in bringing together multiple, at times opposing, advocacy voices in the Bilingual Education Reform Coalition, allowing members to find enough common ground to issue a joint statement during a fight over the future of bilingual and ESL programs.

More disappointing experiences have also bolstered projects' recognition of the value of engaged constituencies. In some instances, projects confronted the reality that key constituencies have not been informed systematically about or engaged in educational matters. Thus, when ERP members looked to engage parents and community residents, community-based organizations, and faith-based communities, they found neither networks nor efficient ways to reach these constituencies. When POC tried to support organizing efforts in Queens in order to expand its network of parents and when TENYN tried to develop community capacity to engage immigrant and English language learner families, they had to start with the most basic and labor-intensive tasks. Eventually, both projects found they lacked the resources to continue.

**Effective Constituency-Building Strategies Match Project Goals and Capacities.** When projects are clear about how their constituency-building strategies match their goals and skills, they are closer to achieving desired ends. Community-driven constituency-building efforts require different kinds of skills and capabilities than issue-driven or sector-driven approaches. For example, community-driven constituency building focuses on enlarging and strengthening local, frequently geographically defined, constituencies as a way to bring community voices to policy conversations. Practitioners commonly use the term “community organizing” — instead of “constituency building” — for this approach, highlighting its integration of community and individual capacity building and support for politically aware action. Issue- and sector-driven efforts, which seek to advance particular reform topics or address issues relevant for a particular population, focus at least a substantial portion of their efforts on engaging established organizations and associations. Projects that effectively employ these strategies are able to network and broker relationships among organizations that have their own histories, agendas, and aims.

The box on the next page lists some of the specific skills and capacities that pertain to each kind of constituency building.

TYPE OF CONSTITUENCY BUILDING	CRITICAL SKILLS AND CAPACITIES
<b>Community-driven efforts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to support local groups in their community-organizing efforts to recruit and engage parents and other community members.</li> <li>■ Ability to focus on capacity building (leadership development of individuals and organizations) while simultaneously addressing policy concerns.</li> <li>■ Ability to link local community-based groups to one another.</li> <li>■ Capacity to bridge local and systemic issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Issue-driven efforts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to engage a broad range of established organizations, reform efforts, and institutions around a particular policy issue.</li> <li>■ Creativity in developing engagement activities and communications strategies.</li> <li>■ Ability to connect diverse constituent interests with the reform effort.</li> <li>■ Capacity to work with and integrate the perspectives of diverse groups (from statewide associations to community organizations).</li> </ul>
<b>Sector-driven efforts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to create common ground across groups that are linked by sector, for example, immigrant students or special education students, but that otherwise may vary widely and include advocacy and social service provider groups or diverse cultural and ethnic groups.</li> <li>■ Ability to create a policy and advocacy perspective among traditional service organizations and their constituents.</li> <li>■ Capacity to devise strategies that community-based organizations can use to recruit and train parents and other community members.</li> </ul>

*Effective constituency-building strategies link the project's systemic reform focus with constituents' concerns, and create broad frameworks that make participants' work meaningful at both local and systemic levels.*

Because each constituency-building strategy requires specialized skills, DEC projects encountered difficulties when they tried to move beyond their skill base into a different arena of constituency building. In the early stages of the initiative, EPP initiated a grassroots organizing effort to engage local communities in school finance reform. Ultimately, EPP abandoned this effort and resumed its original role of conducting finance research and analysis and educating legislators, policymakers, and administrators. In part, the organization recognized its lack of the necessary resources and experience to conduct long-term, intensive engagement of constituents at the grassroots level. Similarly, NYIC decided it could not support the time-consuming and ongoing work of building organizing capacity among its member groups.

#### **Maintenance of a Constituent Base Requires Intentional Work.**

All constituency-building efforts face challenges in extending, broadening, and sustaining constituent bases, a necessary component of sustainable reform work. Critical DEC approaches to maintain engagement included strategies to: keep reform issues fresh and relevant for constituents, develop mechanisms for participation, create an infrastructure to support involvement, and initiate ways to sustain engagement over the potentially long course of reform. These strategies require intensive staff effort.

- **STAYING RELEVANT.** Effective constituency-building strategies link the project's systemic reform focus with constituents' concerns, and create broad frameworks that make participants' work meaningful at both local and systemic levels. When progress toward systemic goals bolsters local campaigns, stakeholders have an immediate incentive to stay with the systemic effort. Failure to link local work to the systemic reform effort could negatively affect a project's campaign as well as its constituent base. In 2001-2002, when POC turned its attention to the city's budget crisis, it failed to develop the means to translate members' local work on teacher quality into a citywide issue. This failure frustrated member organizations, which had pushed the teacher quality agenda locally as a POC effort and then had no way to link work in one community with that in another or to extend the campaign to the city level.

A project's constituency-building strategy determines its approach to developing critical links between project reform efforts and constituents' interests and local work. A community-driven effort can

alter its agenda to address constituents' concerns, but an issue-driven effort has to find ways to reflect concerns in its already-established campaign. Sector-driven efforts fall somewhere in between: although the project's agenda must stay focused on the target sector, the project can also deviate from its established campaign if a particularly relevant or urgent issue arises.

Making a link between systemic reform efforts and more local concerns was a challenge for all DEC projects. POC, with its community-driven strategy, struggled to develop a citywide agenda that would join the different communities, add value to all local work, and also address pressing systemic issues. Member organizations finally devised an action plan that focused on facilities and facilities financing, combining the concern of some groups about overcrowding with that of others over chronically poor school performance. When the policy context changed or the campaign became less critical at the local level, POC altered its agenda to accommodate new interests.

An issue-driven effort, on the other hand, cannot alter its agenda when constituents' interests shift, the policy context changes, or political processes stall reform momentum. Instead, an issue-driven project often has to reframe its focus in order to remain pertinent by developing new engagement activities, identifying different access points into an issue, or broadening the scope of an issue. ERP used all of these strategies to sustain engagement as the CFE litigation wound its way through the courts. The "Making the Grade" survey asked New York City teachers and parents to compare the conditions in their schools with the elements of a sound basic education; CFE used survey results to inform its litigation strategy. Ultimately, ERP broadened the conversation on school finance reform by connecting finance issues with issues of standards-based reform and accountability. The Schools Demonstration Project encouraged school-based teams to consider how funding might affect decisions and accountability within their own schools.

A project with a sector-driven strategy has more flexibility to change its reform focus than an issue-driven effort has, but less than a community-driven effort. In the aftermath of 9/11, TENYN responded to pressing issues at the local level — providing assistance in documenting instances of bias crimes and working with the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund to address threats against Muslim, Arab, and South Asian students — while also continuing to advance its education reform work.

- **STRUCTURING CONCRETE VENUES FOR PARTICIPATION.** Effective reform efforts can develop mechanisms and arenas — such as regular project meetings, work groups, action research teams, and interactions with policymakers — through which constituencies can act together in meaningful ways toward comprehensible

*Project staff had to invent ways to sustain constituent involvement through the often slow and erratic process of reform.*

goals. These mechanisms provide concrete avenues for participation that make explicit how constituents are contributing to reform endeavors. When such mechanisms are institutionalized, they contribute to the sustainability of the effort by fostering participant assumptions about their roles and providing the means to fulfill them.

For example, TENYN's education roundtables during NYC Albany advocacy days allowed parents and other community stakeholders to interact with elected officials and their staffs. Through its statewide meetings and, ultimately, its accountability projects, ERP provided participants with an entry into policy conversations on the state funding formula, which then fed into CFE's litigation strategy. At the same time, the lack of mechanisms for participation highlights their importance. Early in the project, some ERP participants voiced frustration that the project's forums did not lead to action or clear constituency roles. Similarly, TENYN's initial work with teachers allowed them to voice their job concerns and dilemmas but provided no follow-up for continued dialogue or action.

- **DEVELOPING AN INFRASTRUCTURE OF SUPPORT.** A reform effort with an infrastructure focused on supporting and sustaining involvement — instead of only recruiting people to participate in a rally, sign a petition, or attend one information session — is more likely to achieve long-term stability. DEC projects created such infrastructures when they developed the capacity to train constituents, to deepen their participation, and to link their work to systemic reform efforts.

Training can be central in fostering the ability to move from a local to a policy focus, from incremental change to systemic reform. Among DEC projects, “training” included providing substantive information about education and school system issues; building skills to articulate, advocate, and negotiate policy positions; and developing ways for constituents to utilize their knowledge and skills. POC, as a community-driven effort, devoted considerable resources toward comprehensive training of constituents to become public actors and resources for their communities. ERP and TENYN, issue-driven and sector-driven efforts respectively, did not focus on training to the same extent as POC; instead, they conducted information sessions designed to educate constituents on project issues, provide updates on the reform effort, and encourage continued participation. More generally, these trainings fostered a sense of shared purpose, built enthusiasm, and reinforced contact with constituents.

- **SUSTAINING ENGAGEMENT OVER THE LONG HAUL.** Project staff had to invent ways to sustain constituent involvement through the often slow and erratic process of reform. Engagement activities are often arenas for fostering active and consistent participation; as constituents become the voice pushing for reform, such activities integrate a project's constituency building and advocacy work. This is particularly relevant for issue-driven efforts, committed to a particular reform. Community-driven efforts were challenged to sustain the engagement of community organizations — often focused on the local level — in broader, systemic issues.

ERP faced the challenge of sustaining constituents' engagement through long periods of inactivity before the litigation came to trial and again when the state, and subsequently CFE, appealed unfavorable decisions. The project's first round of engagement activities concentrated on developing a community-supported definition of a sound basic education, an appropriate focus for involving constituents in school finance reform prior to the litigation. After the trial, ERP shifted its focus to accountability, an issue with durability and meaning beyond the litigation. ERP also capitalized on the excitement of the court trial to build enthusiasm and to initiate a series of long-term activities. For example, the Curriculum Project — which coincided with the start of the trial — was a four-day high school curriculum that raised issues of civic duty, judicial process, and educational equity, and brought students to the courtroom to witness the CFE trial. As the litigation moved out of the trial phase, CFE continued its work with students by creating a student advisory council and convening conferences for high school students across the state.

Similarly, community-driven efforts encountered the challenge of sustaining the engagement of community organizations, with their local interests, in broader, systemic issues. POC, as a community-driven effort, had to tolerate fluctuations in constituent participation in its systemic reform work. A change in local leadership, a community crisis, or a need to increase a local base can lead a community-based organization to pull back from systemic work and retrench to its local focus. Reform efforts often try to maintain a delicate balance between supporting community groups as they strengthen their local work while also ensuring that the larger reform effort has an adequate constituent base to support the systemic work.

- **USING AN EXTERNAL IMPETUS.** An external impetus — such as litigation, a budget timeline, or a legislative proposal — can impart momentum to an effort, provide critical incentive for participation, and promote a sense of project significance. An effort linked to an external impetus often carries the possibility of a public win that can generate publicity not only for the reform effort, but for its constituents as well. The impending CFE trial helped ERP's public engagement

*Reform efforts often try to maintain a delicate balance between supporting community groups as they strengthen their local work while also ensuring that the larger reform effort has an adequate constituent base to support the systemic work.*

work in all these ways. Participants attended forums, worked on the issues of a sound basic education, and followed updates because they knew that their work mattered in the short and long run. TENYN's work on standards also gained in similar ways from the looming implementation of new assessment rules. In another instance, POC used benchmarks connected with class-size reduction legislation to coordinate member groups' activities. When the legislation was due to be implemented, POC members conducted school tours and met with principals and superintendents to survey the implementation of class-size reduction efforts in their schools and community school districts. Again, alert to the reinforcement of an external impetus, ERP worked with AQE to alter its agenda to coincide with the court's findings in favor of CFE.

- **MANAGING PROJECT GROWTH.** Over the course of the initiative, each project struggled to deepen and strengthen its work while maintaining the integrity of its original goals and ideas. POC grew into its role as a consortium with ongoing city- and state-level responsibilities while at the same time incorporating new members. This growth at both ends demanded the rethinking of priorities, resource allocation, and organizational processes. It pushed POC to devise and test ways to respond to the pressures of expansion — ways that allowed the consortium to grow internally; meet state, city, and local responsibilities; and retain an organizational and historical integrity. For example, POC decided to formalize its decision-making process by giving more influence to members whose central emphasis was on community organizing. Although POC added issues to its agenda to accommodate new members, it always made sure that the additions enhanced its own established interests.

ERP also had to be deliberate about maintaining integrity in relation to its original goals. CFE's victory in the New York Supreme Court and the mass of publicity it generated thrust the organization — and the collaborative — into the spotlight. Although this presented many exciting opportunities, ERP had to be selective in choosing partners for its public engagement activities so as not to compromise its own purposes, while also practicing flexibility in order to take advantage of useful opportunities. For example, a forum co-sponsored by a New York state senator served, at his request, as an information-only session and did not include deliberations about remedies and accountability that occurred in other forums. CFE also worked with the Board of Education to create a mutually agreeable forum format. These

forums focused primarily on providing information about the court's findings and ended with a short period of conversation about accountability and remedies. At the same time, more general concerns arose. One outside observer felt that co-sponsoring a forum with a state senator was a mistake. "It is not a good idea to ally with one politician over another."

## IV. OTHER KEY ASPECTS OF DEC WORK

### BUILDING COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

The DEC initiative required the linking of three approaches to school reform — constituency building, policy work, and advocacy — and strongly encouraged collaborative work among organizational partners as the means to bring together the necessary range of expertise. All of the planning grants went to collaborative projects. In two instances, at DEC's suggestion, planning grantees moved to greater inclusiveness. POC incorporated the Community Action Project (CAP), a parent group with too little capacity to manage a project on its own, and ERP and EPP merged their efforts for reform of school finance. The experiences of the initial collaborations and the "forced marriages" provide a number of lessons about the feasibility and potential for collaborative work that is developed in response to funding support.

#### **Successful Collaboration Requires Mechanisms of Operation and Leadership.**

When members are deliberate about structuring collaborative processes, especially regarding defining and allocating tasks and decision-making and accountability, collaborative work can move forward with clarity and transparency. Who is responsible for what, which decisions are open to the group, who is the public face of the collaboration — all of these issues require deliberate decisions. Each of the collaborations developed a means to manage collaborative operations. ERP and TENYN had partner organizations that were essentially lead agencies in CFE and NYC; POC in itself was the umbrella that managed, coordinated, and executed collaborative work.

#### **Partners with Overlapping Capacity and/or Interests Work Well Together.**

It is important that partner organizations bring different skills and knowledge to the collaborative table. At the same time, sharing some common ground facilitates joint work. A balance between similar and dissimilar capacities and interests allows partners to appreciate the value and demands of both constituency building and policy work, and also to act as complementary — and not competitive — team members.

**There Will Be Collaboration Surprises and Unexpected Outcomes.** First, a common focus and agenda do not guarantee success as partners. CFE and EPP, two organizations brought together by DEC, shared a common interest in policy reform of school financing, but they eventually negotiated a partnership in which each managed separate pieces of the project. Second, in a similar way, neither the existence nor the lack of past working relationships can predict success or failure of a partnership. Community Action Project first worked with the POC partners when the project started and still remains as a founding partner. Third, there may be unforeseen successes. CFE, in a “forced marriage” with the EPP-led collaboration, gained upstate partners. Work with these partners has added perspective, credibility, visibility, and leverage to the collaborative’s work; moreover, CFE’s work with the League of Women Voters and Schuyler Center for Analysis and Action will likely continue beyond the initiative.

**Expect Collaboration Tensions.** Within each collaborative project, partners encountered some problems with each other. Deciding factors of workable collaboration seem to be: (1) whether each of the partners feels that it makes meaningful gains through collaboration that make participation worthwhile; (2) whether the partners feel they can leverage greater effect through their joint work than alone; and (3) whether a project can maintain continuity with its original goals, visions, and philosophy even as new organizations join its ranks.

Flexibility can help counter collaboration tensions. At times, a willingness to alter the structure of collaboration may lead to more productive partnerships, as in moving the collaboration between NYIC and AFC to a contract-subcontract arrangement, or creating separate but related areas of work, as CFE and EPP did. At other times, flexibility is seen in the departure of some POC members and the arrival of others, as members refined the goals and means of the consortium and as a group’s fit or lack of fit with the consortium became clear.

**Collaborating Can Alter Partner Organizations.** As partners work together on a common project, there may be internal organizational development in one or all groups. Such changes may affect substantive or strategic approaches. For example, Advocates for Children, in response to its work on TENYN, developed an organizational focus on immigrant and ELL students and created a unit to work on issues related to this population. Through its work with the ERP collaboration, SCAA began working more systematically on educational issues. As POC has evolved, its member organizations have begun to conceptualize issues at a citywide level when crafting local campaigns, and they are defining and addressing issues that link concerns across communities.

**A Project that Supports Organizational Growth Can Become a Centerpiece.** In each of the DEC projects, the initiative's goals and strategies were aligned closely with the interests of participating organizations. But in some instances, projects also became the means for stimulating organizational growth. When alignment occurred that meshed organizational and project development, both organizations and projects benefited. In these instances, projects supported organizational movement into new territory, as demonstrated by NYIC's adoption of an education agenda and CFE's linkage of public engagement and education litigation. In addition, as the work and aims of projects have helped shape future organizational agendas, projects have strengthened the probability of sustained effort after the initiative ends.

### CONNECTING PROJECTS

For the first four years of implementation, there was little *sustained* interaction among the projects, although the groups came together sporadically, for example, at ERP forums or DEC convenings. It was not until years 5 and 6, with the development of the Alliance for Quality Education, that significant and ongoing work occurred among projects, and then mainly between POC and ERP. The Institute for Education and Social Policy was a major player early on in AQE and is often the forum within which AQE partners meet.

The organizations participating in DEC are relatively small, with few staff and numerous tasks and commitments. The decision to participate in a collaborative undertaking requires organizational benefit to repay organizational effort and time. In the case of AQE, the degree of participation has varied across projects. For both ERP and POC, participation in AQE has meant the ability to extend their policy agendas, bolster support, and gain greater visibility and access to new and/or previously difficult-to-reach constituencies. In year 6, TENYN, in particular AFC, played an active role in AQE, attending meeting, encouraging constituents to participate in events, and speaking at events. But while ERP and POC have seen direct returns on their participation in AQE, this has been true for TENYN to a much lesser extent.

ERP, through AQE, has greater access to many constituencies that were difficult to reach in the early years of the project. These constituencies include parents and community organizing groups. Participation in AQE also reinforces ERP's connections with such constituencies as teachers (through the teachers' union), statewide organizations, and other organized stakeholders. Greater and broader constituency

*When alignment occurred that meshed organizational and project development, both organizations and projects benefited.*

engagement means, of course, greater visibility and leverage. In a mutually beneficial way, ERP's issues have been adopted into the AQE platform. Thus ERP (and specifically the CFE case issues) has been able to exert great policy influence on AQE while simultaneously gaining strong support for its initiatives, such as a panel of experts, and for the appeal process ahead.

POC, as the parent-organizing arm of AQE, has gained greater statewide visibility and legitimacy, as well as a new conduit for the consortium's statewide work. Like ERP, POC has had policy influence on AQE's statewide and city platforms, which incorporated several elements of POC's agenda. POC works closely now with ERP, as well as with other AQE organizational participants. At the same time, largely through the auspices of IESP's NYC Education Organizers' Network, the consortium has gained new organizational members, which it has in turn brought to the AQE table.

TENYN has been more peripherally engaged in AQE, largely because of a tension between TENYN's focus on a particular segment of the student population and AQE's broad focus on public education in general. Representatives of TENYN and AQE met to discuss the possibility of working together in more coordinated ways. However, AQE's reluctance to divert its focus from its major planks and broad audiences coupled with the reluctance of TENYN to shift its focus from immigrant students have made common work difficult. There is essentially a structural divide in goals and strategies. Given this tension, there has been little added value for TENYN's participation in AQE other than to try to protect and promote the interests of ELL and immigrant students.

## V. CONCLUSION

The Donors' Education Collaborative and its initiative made great strides in policy and constituency-building arenas. The Equity Reform Project, Parent Organizing Consortium, and Transforming Education for New York's Newest have built informed, skilled, and engaged constituencies for public school reform, created policy change in selected issue areas, and established themselves as legitimate, credible organizations that must be heard in education policy debates. Moreover, the three projects are aiming for sustained and sustainable work. In its expanded focus on accountability, CFE has engaged its constituency in thinking beyond the litigation to implementing a sound basic education. Based in large part on the New York litigation and the work of ERP, CFE also is developing ACCESS, a national project that aims to strengthen the links between school finance litigation, public engagement, and standards-based reform. POC, with its work well launched at the statewide level through its participation in AQE, hired a staff person in mid-2002 to help mend the breaks in its links with local members, reconnect them to the citywide effort, and revitalize city-level policy work. TENYN fostered NYIC's adoption of education as a major agenda item, thereby ensuring sustained organizational attention to such issues as ELL dropout rates, inflow of older ELL students into the school system, and the disparity between standards testing and the lack of quality education opportunities for immigrant and ELL students. As part of these policy interests, TENYN is well into its EMPIRE project (Equity Monitoring Project for Immigrant and Refugee Education), deepening the use of research action efforts to develop local capacity, highlight engagement in education issues, and create policy-relevant data for use in city and state debates and decision-making.

At the same time, DEC as a collaborative group of funders has asserted its sustained commitment to education reform and its ability to continue as a force in this arena. The collaborative has reached and bypassed two planned termination points, once in 2000 and again in 2002. Members decided first to extend and then renew the joint effort, determining that it has been too useful and effective to dismantle. The collaborative affords members the opportunity to concentrate and leverage resources by pooling knowledge, experience, thinking, and commitment,

as well as monies, thereby heightening the potential for policy and constituent impact. By mid-2002, DEC had raised \$6 million, supporting three projects for six years and four other projects for shorter periods. When continuing DEC members decided to renew the collaborative, they invited other foundations to join and began work to refine its mission, create a new initiative, and meet a goal of raising \$2 million more over the next three years.

DEC, and especially the DEC projects, are now established actors in the education reform arena. Yet, as they move to extend their policy and constituency-building achievements, there are challenges to consider. First, there is the work of broadening and deepening constituent knowledge and concern. This can be especially difficult in an environment where the options of reform — standards-based education, changing curricula, charter schools, new small high schools — continue to grow, along with potential contributors to failure — turnover in administrations, lack of bilingual teachers, overcrowding, high-stakes testing, budget cutbacks, and the draw of privatization. Second, there are the hurdles of moving into teaching and learning policy areas, where change is essential for thoroughgoing reform; however, educators often hold these areas closely. Third, there is the importance of creating structural and institutional supports in school systems to help translate policy changes into actual practice in classrooms and schools. In moving forward, it is useful to recall that policy reform requires multiple steps to ensure successful achievement. DEC's past and ongoing accomplishments provide strong grounding for future work in New York City and State. Moreover, the many lessons of the DEC Initiative sketch a road map for these and other efforts in their pursuit of equitable, quality education for all children.

## VI. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: DEC MEMBERS, 1995-2002

Booth Ferris Foundation  
 Robert Sterling Clark Foundation  
 Deutsche Bank  
 The Ford Foundation  
 The Greenwall Foundation  
 The Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation  
 The Edward W. Hazen Foundation  
 The Aaron Diamond Foundation  
 J. P. Morgan Chase Foundation  
 The New York Community Trust  
 New York Foundation  
 The Pinkerton Foundation  
 Charles H. Revson Foundation  
 Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
 The Rockefeller Foundation  
 Caroline and Sigmund Schott Foundation  
 Surdna Foundation, Inc.  
 Nate B. and Frances Spingold Foundation  
 The Travelers Foundation  
 H. Van Ameringen Foundation  
 Anonymous Funder

### APPENDIX B: SELECTED LIST OF INTERVIEWEES+

John Acompore, NYC Board of Education Office of English Language Learners (formerly Office of Bilingual Education)  
 Steve Allinger, NYC Board of Education, Intergovernmental Affairs \*  
 Peter Appleby, Staff, NYS Senate Education Committee \*  
 Camille Armando, Deputy Superintendent, Community School District 4  
 Carol Baker, Bank Street College of Education  
 Lisa Bang-Jensen, *Inside Albany* \*

Alex Bears, Bank Street College of Education  
 Chung-Hwa Chang, National Assoc. of Korean American Service and Education Centers  
 Helen Chin, District 24 Teacher Center  
 Michelle Contrati, District 25 Teacher Center  
 Deborah Cunningham, NYS Education Department, State Aid Work Group  
 Linda Davidoff, Consultant to Alliance for Quality Education  
 Jocelyn Dax, Education staff, NYS Ways and Means Committee  
 Rose Diamond, Senior Director, Office of Capital Planning & Development, Division of School Facilities, NYC Board of Education  
 Helaine Doran, Senior Policy Analyst for Education, Office of the Public Advocate for the City of New York \*  
 Gertrude Erwin, Director, Education Unit, Manhattan Borough President's Office  
 Sheila Evans-Tranumn, Associate Commissioner, NYS Education Department, Office of School and Community Services \*  
 Yvette Fields, Long Island Urban League  
 Dana Fiordaliso, Staff Assistant, Senator Kennedy  
 Seymour Fleigel, President, Center for Educational Innovation \*  
 Will Freedman, Public Agenda \*  
 Norm Fruchter, Director, Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University\*  
 Sherry Giles, Consultant, Public Education Association \*  
 Karen Goldmark, Chief of Staff, Office of the Deputy Chancellor for Operations and Planning, NYC Board of Education  
 Francine Goldstein, NYC Board of Education, Student Support Services  
 Lois Harr, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition\*

- Ayo Harrington, Special Assistant for Education,  
NYS Assemblyman Steven Sanders
- Bruce Irushalmi, Special Projects Coordinator,  
School District 10 \*
- Jackie Kamin, Co-chair of CPAC, Parent Advising  
Council
- Steve Kaufman, Chief of Staff, NYS Assemblyman  
Steven Sanders
- Sandra Lerner, Board of Education
- Linda Levine, Bank Street College of Education
- Harold Levy, Director, Global Compliance, Citi  
Group, NYS Regent \*
- Bob Lowery, NYS Teachers Union
- Roger Maldonado, Esq., Partner at Balber, Pickard,  
Battistoni, Maldonado, & Van Der Tuin,  
Plaintiffs' Counsel, Jose P. Case \*
- Leslie Mantrone, Director, Westchester Center for  
School/Community Partnership
- Susan Mattei, NYC Public Advocates Office
- Ellen McHugh, Parent to Parent
- Donna Meeks, Senior Education Advisor, Office of  
the Comptroller, New York City
- Lauri Mei, NYC Board of Education, Division of  
Assessment and Accountability
- Andrea Miller, Media Strategies Inc.
- Sabina Miller, Staff, School District 24
- Lauri Nikloski, *Westchester Gannet*
- Elizabeth O'Raffity, Parent Coordinator, School  
District 24
- Ann Perzeszty, Assistant to Terri Thomson, NYC  
Board of Education
- Danica Petroschius, Chief Education Advisor, US  
Senator Ted Kennedy
- Florence PuFolkes, NYC Board of Education Office  
of English Language Learners, Supervisor of Asian  
Language Bilingual Education Technical  
Assistance Center, and head of New York State  
Association of Bilingual Educators
- Louise Raymond, Queens Borough President's  
Office
- Peter Rivera, NYS Assemblyman
- Mark Robinson, Queens Borough President's Office
- Mary Scherer, Brooklyn Borough President's Office
- Karen Scharff, Executive Director, Citizen Action of  
New York
- Eric Schneiderman, NYS Senator
- David Sherman, Vice President, Educational  
Programs, United Federation of Teachers, NY, NY \*
- Tom Sobol, Christian A. Johnson Professor of  
Outstanding Educational Practice, Teachers  
College, Former NYS Commissioner of  
Education \*
- Harry Spence, Deputy Chancellor for Operations,  
NYC Board of Education
- Laura Srebniak, Education Unit, Manhattan Borough  
President's Office\*
- Howard Tames, NYC Board of Education, Human  
Resources
- Jean Thomases, Coordinator, Community School  
Connections \*
- Doug Turetsky, Director of Communications,  
Independent Budget Office (formerly Director  
of Policy and Public Affairs, United  
Neighborhood Houses)
- Rita Wade, Program Manager, NYC Board  
of Education, Office of Business and  
Community Relations
- Doreen Williams, Special Assistant for Legislative  
Affairs for NYC, Governor's Office
- Steve Williams, NYS School Boards Association
- Patricia Zedelis, NYC Board of Education, School  
Facilities

+ *Titles at the time of the interview.*

\* *Interviewed two or more times.*

## Chapin Hall Center for Children

Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago was established in 1985 as a research and development center dedicated to bringing sound information, rigorous analyses, innovative ideas, and an independent perspective to the ongoing public debate about the needs of children and the ways in which those needs can best be met.

The Center focuses its work on all children, while devoting special attention to children facing special risks or challenges, such as poverty, abuse and neglect, and mental and physical illness. The contexts in which children are supported — primarily their families and communities — are of particular interest.

Chapin Hall's work is shaped by a dual commitment to the worlds of research and policy. This requires that our work meet both the exacting standards of university research and the practical needs of policy and program development, and that we work to advance knowledge and to disseminate it.

Chapin Hall is committed to diversity not only of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and physical ability, but also of experience, discipline, and viewpoint. Chapin Hall's commitment to all children, with special attention to those experiencing or at risk of serious problems, is reflected in the range of the Center's research projects and publications. The following represent the Center's major areas of endeavor:

- Children's services, covering the problems that threaten children and the services designed to address them, including child welfare, mental health, and the juvenile court.
- Community building, focusing on the development, documentation, and evaluating of community-building initiatives designed to make communities more supportive of children and families, and the resources in communities that support the development and well-being of all children.
- Schools and learning, examining the relationship between schools and the other settings in which children learn.
- International projects, covering Chapin Hall's involvement with children's policy researchers and research centers in other countries.
- Special activities and consultations, covering a range of projects, often undertaken in collaboration or consultation with other organizations.





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