

# PROPOSAL TO THE WALTON FAMILY FOUNDATION: PLANNING A FISCAL EQUITY CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL LEADERS

## I. Purpose of the Grant, Goals, Activities and Anticipated Results

### Statement of Need/Executive Summary

The Center for Education Reform is seeking a grant in the amount of [REDACTED] to help charter school activists in states plan and orchestrate an attack on the problem of fiscal inequity. [REDACTED]

At the end of this planning effort, we will be able to present state-supported plans, which will outline a clear path for achieving fiscal equity for charter schools in at least five states.

The planning period was set from January 1 of this year through June 30 because our team has already begun and work is underway on legal development and background. If invited to submit the state plans at the end of this effort, we would seek to have the finals submitted by the end of the planning period, June 30.

### Background

The Center for Education Reform (CER) requests support for planning time to enable us to strategically identify the need, opportunity and success factors in each state.

We have identified at least nine states with great potential for a multi-pronged effort aimed at achieving fiscal equity, based on prevailing circumstances. The factors we have identified that would make these states ripe for evaluation are as follows:

- \* Potentially strong legal basis for equity lawsuit;
- \* Strong basis of public support or engagement for public charter schools;
- \* Strong relationships with local charter activists or potential based on previous collaboration;
- \* CER has additional activists already entrenched in state;
- \* Law remains weak and unclear on funding;
- \* Educational environment necessitates more and better choices for children.

Because the proposed planning requires coordination with people on the ground in each state we have targeted, we will reach out to the state charter activists to form alliances to strengthen our ability to be successful and maximize our potential contributor's funds. We will seek to forge alliances with groups that the Walton Family Foundation has

supported. The planning period will involve traveling to each of the targeted states so that we can learn about the potential of legislative and legal efforts in each state, and discuss and review ideas and plans with their leaders.

Finally, we need time to work with these allies to assess realistically the anticipated results and come up with a coordinated plan that is going to work.

We will develop criteria to help identify all of the right players in the states, and continue to analyze the legal relevance of the state's constitution.

We have to evaluate each state based on additional legal analysis to ensure any case can be made with the strongest foundation. We will have to evaluate the media environment, and legislative voting and history on public charter schools. Based on these and additional factors – such as strength of school activists, quality, potential of local activists to support core partners – we will solidify the target states, and may potentially drop or add some during the planning phase.

CER is uniquely suited to this task for the following reasons:

**Legal Expertise:** Have already established relationships with a law firm that has agreed to work with CER directly on lawsuit development. A dedicated team at CER has been working with attorneys at the law firm of Sonnenschein, Nath and Rosenthal in studying the equity issue in charter schools for nearly a year. CER itself has been particularly focused for the last three years on the ways in which laws are impacting charter school finances.

**Research Expertise:** The Center has amassed a large research base to help us determine how the implementation of individual state charter laws are affected by various fiscal and spending provisions. The organization has in house expertise on how to assess laws.

**Track Record:** CER has the agility and persuasive attitude necessary to take on a multi-state campaign in pursuit of fiscal equity, and will move aggressively to tackle all approaches.

**Relationships:** The organization has access to dozens of credible grassroots activists in our database that we can mobilize to support our state allies in the fiscal equity campaign.

### Specific Activities/Strategies

*Preface:* The goal of this project is to develop state plans for achieving fiscal equity. However, the contents and specificity of each plan will be directly dependent on the results of our collaborations with local allies in each state.

In addition, while similarities in all states unite this effort, we cannot at this time offer complete details for each of the strategies because we will be heavily depending on what we learn in our explorations with state leaders. However, based on the last several months of research and development, the following general plans will guide us in formulating each of the strategies and tactics we are interested in pursuing to impact fiscal equity for public charter schools in each of the finally selected states:

### Strategy 1

Identify leaders in each of the following states: (Those in parenthesis are proposed first-calls. Those in bold represent strong relationships currently)

- Connecticut (**ConnCAN**)
- Florida (Florida Consortium)
- Georgia (**Georgia Association**)
- Missouri (**Missouri Charter Association** – in development)
- New Jersey (**E3**)
- New York (Upstate – **various**)
- Washington DC (**DCPSCA**)
- Ohio (Emerging coalition)
- Wyoming (**Wyoming Resource Center**)

### Strategy 2

Legislative — To ensure that legislatures act on fiscal inequity, we will outline a plan with objectives such as: supporting local leaders to create comprehensive advocacy plan, conducting briefings, drafting issue papers, initiating policy discussions and debates, and providing testimony.

### Strategy 3

Judicial — CER will support lawsuits in several of the targeted states that are determined to have a strong constitutional foundation for an equity battle. We will invite national partners to file amicus briefs. Together with state allies, we will work to sign on plaintiffs, and work with local law firms/public interest law firms to support firm of record in all efforts relating to lawsuits.

### Strategy 4

Educating the Public – CER will develop a companion communications strategy that involves drafting and managing press relations for our partners to issue, media training for local leaders, helping to identify, place and raise money for advertising, conducting viral marketing strategies that educate the public, raising visibility of the issue, making public charter schools a household name.

### Strategy 5

Identification of other Strategies to integrate and grow knowledge, support judicial and legislative awareness will include tactics such as rallies, letters to editor, small parent meetings, letters to legislators, special newsletters, coordination with charter schools and their parents, business and civic group outreach. *-Karen*

## Anticipated Results

We are seeking as a primary result the development of first draft plans by mid-May for each state, using the components noted above.

As part of this process, we will develop quantifiers to measure results. We have preliminarily identified the following results for each strategy but we cannot define more comprehensively how much we can do or how far we can go until we develop plans for each state.:

**Legislative** -- Change funding language in laws to ensure identical flow of dollars to charter schools

**Lawsuit** – Create visible lawsuits in multiple states to establish and affirm fundamental rights for equitable funding

**Public Opinion**– Increase and solidify public support for public charter schools and educational equity

**Grassroots** — Develop 2-3 permanent support groups for each state

## II. Sustainability

### Plan for Sustaining this Project After the Grant Period

The Center is currently engaged in talking to new and existing funders about their interest in supporting specific state efforts. We are making this effort the focal point of our work for the next three years, and all of our supporters or potential supporters are being invited to support this work as it evolves.

In addition, there are several new business opportunities being explored to help grow and sustain the fiscal equity effort as well as all CER general operations:

- E-Commerce – CER is developing an on-line store to market not just our products, but those of allied groups and grassroots organizations, smaller curriculum and book publishers, and children’s products, as well as potentially helping launch school-based fundraisers with specialized products.
- Fee for Service – CER has entered into in the last twelve months five fee-for-service contracts with organizations seeking additional or more specialized research that is driven by expertise and access to data. Along with Building Hope, ABCTE, Edison and M-Space, CER has attracted nearly \$100,000 in additional revenues for the year and there is interest among other organizations in seeking similar fee-for-service contracts.

### Evidence that this Project has Organizational Support

The Board of Directors and executive staff members have been part of the ongoing effort to develop and monitor the target states initiative plan. At the last CER Board meeting on March 16, the president fully briefed CER’s board about the ongoing effort to create a plan that would be proposed to the Walton Family Foundation. Feedback and approval for moving forward was given.

To ensure ongoing involvement, CER conducts monthly Executive Board meetings delivering oral and written development reports, major millstones and accomplishments, and discuss pertinent risks and issues on major programs. Our entire board meets twice a year where in-depth financial, metric performance, fundraising activities, and estimate verses accruals are discussed.

All executive staff meet weekly to review and problem solve program progress, issues and risks. Program obstacles that cannot be resolved by the executive staff are escalated to the President before impacting budget, schedule, and or performance benchmarks. Special program meetings are called when alternative program measures, issues and or risks need to be communicated to the extended program team. The President makes the decision whether or not the proposed alternative program solution requires Executive Board review and feedback.

### III. Organizational Management and Background

#### Staff Key to this Project and their Responsibilities

**Jeanne Allen**  
President

Establishes and manages tone, vision, relationships, networks and contacts; serves as primary spokesperson to media and lawmakers, and develops relationships with funders and influencers on local, state and national levels. Writes and edits personalized communication, manages board and senior staff.

**Terry Rauh**  
Chief Operating Officer

Manages all operations, financial and record keeping, staff oversight, project management, new business development and strategic planning. Provides CEO with necessary operational support and directs all administrative functions.

**Kevin Chavous**  
Distinguished Fellow

Provides expertise and influence in states and communities; communicates through print, broadcast and in person speeches messages that articulate Center's work and vision. Coalesces state partners.

**Dan Kidder**  
Vice President, Communications and Marketing

Directs all outreach of CER programs and service and develops and sustains public awareness program and all collateral materials that communicate CER data, information, messages and programs. Trains and cultivates media contacts nationally and in states. Writes and places opinion pieces that fit with mission.

**Cindy Boyd**  
Deputy Director of External Affairs

Ensures that programs put into place in states are accurately implemented in a timely way. Maintains coordination with state and local partners; solicits new grassroots affiliates.

**Kara Hornung**  
Associate Director of Communications, Outreach

Manages grassroots, school-based and parent outreach programs, and develops forums and tools to support these programs.

## Management Staff and Tenure in their Positions

**Jeanne Allen**

President, 12 years

Establishes and manages tone, vision, relationships, networks and contacts; serves as primary spokesperson to media and lawmakers, and develops relationships with funders and influencers on local, state and national levels. Writes and edits personalized communication, manages board and senior staff.

**Terry Rauh**

Chief Operating Officer, 5 months

Manages all operations, financial and record keeping, staff oversight, project management, new business development and strategic planning. Provides CEO with necessary operational support and directs all administrative functions.

**Michael Musante**

Sr. Consultant, Acting Vice President of External Affairs, 4 years, 5 months

Supervision of CER partners and specific state activities relating to charter laws and regulations.

## Board of Directors

**Jeanne Allen**

President, The Center for Education Reform  
Washington, DC

**John Chubb**

Founding Partner and Chief Education Officer, Edison Schools, Inc.  
New York, NY

**John Danielson**

CEO, Chartwell Education Group  
Darien, CT

**Donald Hense**

Chairman, Friendship Edison Public Charter School  
Washington, DC

**Gisele Huff**

Executive Director, Jaquelin Hume Foundation  
San Francisco, CA

**William J. Hume (Chairman Emeritus)**

Chairman, Basic American, Inc.  
San Francisco, CA

**Robert Johnston**

Founder and President, Johnston Associates, Inc.  
Princeton, NJ

**Lewis C. Solmon**

Senior Advisor, Milken Family Foundation  
Santa Monica, CA

**William R. Steinbrook, Jr.**

President, The Challenge Foundation  
Plano, TX

**Alex Troy**

Founder, Troy Capital, LLC  
Greenwich, CT

**Judith West**

President, WESTCO  
New York, NY



## IV. Evaluation

### Plans for Evaluation, including Measurable Outcomes

- Evidence of five or more strategic partnerships in target states;
  - Identify, meet with, and align allies in at least five states.
- Document five or more specific state plans to combat fiscal equity issues;
  - Work with all target state allies to develop strategies and measurable plans to support equity-based lawsuits.

### How Evaluation Information will be Gathered

Specific timelines and outcomes will be outlined in CER's executive management system, called the Aggregate Product Plan.

### How Evaluation Results will be Used and/or Disseminated


The Evaluation results will be used to guide any additional activity CER undertakes to conduct activities in states, whether or not CER is asked to submit plans for implementation funding. The results will also be used to seek additional partners.

On a general basis, evaluations are ongoing of every CER program effort. CER conducts monthly Executive Board meetings; delivering oral and written development reports, major milestones and accomplishments, and to discuss pertinent risks and issues on major programs. Our entire board meets twice a year where in-depth financial, metric performance, fundraising activities, and estimate verses accruals are discussed.

CER will provide detailed analysis of results on a yearly basis to our Board, select funders and to partners involved in each state activity. Our program successes and lessons learned may also be shared with new prospective donors and leaders in various target states. Periodic reports will be developed and distributed to the Walton Family Foundation annually.

### Person(s) Involved in the Evaluation Process

CER President, Jeanne Allen, and Chief Operating Officer, Terry Rauh, will be involved in ongoing management and evaluation of the program throughout its tenure. We will also involve state partners in independent reviews submitted each year. Executive Committee and Board will evaluate program objectives on a bi-annual basis.

Jeanne Allen  


Terry Rauh  
