

DONORS'
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COLLABORATIVE

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The Donors' Education Collaborative in The New York Community Trust Gives \$740,000 to Support Students, Parents, and Teachers Advocating to Improve Their Schools

With school funding uncertain, one of nation's oldest funder collaboratives bolsters those seeking help for underserved students

New York (January 16, 2018)—With federal and state funding for schools under siege, a leading group of education funders is committing three-quarters of a million dollars to help students, teachers, and parents advocate for their needs from City Hall to the State Capitol.

The \$740,000 in new nonprofit grants by the Donors' Education Collaborative in The New York Community Trust will help kick off education advocacy campaigns statewide. The nonprofits will press policymakers to expand access to good schools; create diverse, supportive, and inclusive environments for all students; and work to ensure that schools have the funding they need.

"New York City's public schools have improved over the last two decades, but progress has been uneven. These initiatives will address long-standing disparities in opportunities and outcomes for students of color, those learning English, students with disabilities, and those from poor families," explained **Shawn V. Morehead, program director for education at The Trust and co-chair of the Donors' Education Collaborative**. "The campaigns will have the added benefit of encouraging students to advocate for what they believe in."

Nicole Rodriguez Leach, head of education at the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation and co-chair of the collaborative, said, "We know that all students thrive in well-resourced, challenging, diverse, and inclusive schools, and the opportunity to learn in these environments should be available to all."

The Donors' Education Collaborative draws on money from seven foundations and is overseen by The New York Community Trust, a leading community foundation. These foundations are: Catherine and Joseph Aresty Foundation, The Morton K. and Jane Blaustein Foundation, Booth Ferris Foundation, Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, Fordham Street Foundation, The New York Community Trust, and Schott Foundation for Public Education

Following is a list of projects the new grants support:

[Access](#)

Advocates for Children of New York will bring together parents, students, and advocates to demand more accessible public schools for students and their family members with physical disabilities.

“Students with physical disabilities are excluded from many schools in New York City because of physical barriers and lack of information,” explained Maggie Moroff, special education policy coordinator at Advocates for Children. “We’re very excited to receive support to advocate for changes that will improve their lives and those of their families.”

The New York Immigration Coalition and **Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project** will lead immigrant communities in a campaign to give newcomers better access to good high schools.

Executive Director of the New York Immigration Coalition Steve Choi said, “We are thrilled by DEC’s support for *‘Our Children, Our Choices’* campaign, which will tackle systemic issues facing English Language Learner (ELL) students at Family Welcome Centers. This groundbreaking campaign aims to ensure that ELL students are properly matched to quality schools equipped to meet their educational needs.”

Diverse and Supportive School Environments

Dignity in Schools Campaign–New York (DSC-NY) will unite students, parents, educators, and advocates as they continue to press New York City to stop suspending students and instead find more constructive ways to handle student misconduct.

Shoshi Doza, campaign manager for the Dignity in Schools Campaign–New York, said, “We know that restorative practices, when committed to and implemented holistically, work to build community, prevent conflict, and promote safe and positive learning environments. DSC-NY will continue to work diligently to ensure that the necessary funding is allocated to support all New York City schools in adopting restorative approaches to discipline.”

Make the Road New York’s youth leaders will press to end policing in schools, particularly for immigrant students, and increase support for students who are struggling.

“Young people walk into school every day to learn and grow, not to be criminalized and placed on a path to prison or deportation,” said Kesi Foster, lead organizer with Make the Road New York. “The youth leaders of Make the Road New York are fighting every day to put an end to policing of students in their schools and in schools across the city.”

New York Appleseed and **IntegrateNYC** will build student leadership in the movement for more integrated schools.

Matt Gonzales, director of the School Diversity Project at Appleseed, said, “New York Appleseed and IntegrateNYC are honored to continue our partnership with the Donors’ Education Collaborative as we work to reduce educational segregation in New York City. All 1.1 million students deserve access to diverse, equitable, and inclusive schools.”

New York City Coalition for Educational Justice will lead communities of color in an initiative to combat cultural and racial biases in the schools.

Coalition Coordinator Natasha Capers said, “This support from the Donors’ Education Collaborative will allow CEJ, the NYU Metro Center, and the New Settlement Parent Action Committee to work

together to advance culturally responsive education as a lead part of New York City's public education agenda. This support will go a long way toward eliminating cultural, racial, and other forms of bias in NYC schools and building stronger curriculum and school environments to support diverse students.”

Fair Funding

Alliance for Quality Education will advocate to ensure that schools with many students in poverty, with disabilities, or learning English get the funding they need.

“This grant will allow us to create greater public awareness and engagement, and support the development of grassroots parent leadership on behalf of educational equity and opportunity in New York City,” said Billy Easton, Executive Director of the Alliance for Quality Education. “It will also support our efforts to engage with the New York State Board of Regents around the development and implementation of an Equity Index to show the true educational inequity that exists, based on income, race, language, and ZIP code.”

The Donors’ Education Collaborative is a fund managed by The New York Community Trust

The Collaborative was established in 1995 by local and national foundations to improve New York City’s public schools. Its members pool funds to give grants that support advocacy and organizing to make the school system better for *all* students—particularly those facing the greatest challenges. It believes that effective and lasting reform is grounded in research and carried out in partnership with parents, students, educators, and community members. With this grantmaking strategy and an understanding that sustainable change takes time, the Collaborative’s investments of more than \$18 million over the past two decades have had a major influence on public education in New York and beyond.

The New York Community Trust

The New York Community Trust connects past, present, and future generous New Yorkers with vital nonprofits working to make a healthy, equitable, and thriving community for all. It is a public grantmaking foundation dedicated to improving the lives of residents of New York City, Westchester, and Long Island. Visit us at nycommunitytrust.org.

For more information about the Donors’ Education Collaborative, please contact Gisela Alvarez, (917) 538-3117, gkalvarez1@gmail.com.

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