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THOMAS B.  
**FORDHAM**  
INSTITUTE

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2018

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ANNUAL  
REPORT



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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As I write this, in early 2019, the federal government is shut down, the Los Angeles Unified School District is shut down, and it feels to me as if the education policy debate is shut down as well. In all three cases, the bickering continues, but forward movement has hit a wall.

It's useful, in times like these, to take a step back and remember the real and measurable progress that we've seen over longer horizons. It's been twenty years since the 2000 presidential election kicked off, focused like no other in American history on improving our schools, and "leaving no child behind." Since that time, achievement for poor and low-performing students and children of color is up two to three grade levels in math and reading. Not just high school graduation rates but also college completion rates are at all-time highs. Seven thousand charter schools now serve 3.2 million pupils, including more than a quarter of all students in dozens of urban districts. The growth of voucher and education-scholarship programs has stemmed the tide of Catholic school closures, at least in places where funding is relatively ample.

*Mike Petrilli moderates a panel with Kimberlee Sia, Robin Chait, and Joseph Hawkins during our May event, "America's Charter School Deserts: Up Close in the Washington Metro Area." (Photo credit to Jonathan Lutton.)*

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That's the good news. The bad news is that much of this progress occurred more than a decade ago, before the Great Recession trimmed the reform movement's sails and before the testing and accountability backlash removed most of the "tough" from America's "tough love" approach to its schools.

That leaves us in a time of transition, when policy wonks, education leaders, and advocates of all stripes engage in lively debates about what might come next. Over the course of 2018, we at the Fordham Institute made the case for both continuity and change. (Yes, a little like Julia Louis-Dreyfus's character in *Veep*.) Holding schools accountable for helping students make

progress toward high standards is as necessary as ever, we argued, and via several rigorous studies we shined a spotlight on how the country is doing. Expanding high-quality school choice still provides the best shot for giving poor kids a chance at upward mobility, we claimed, and we identified neighborhoods nationwide—many of them in inner-ring suburbs—where charter schools don't yet exist but could make a big difference.

At the same time, we called for a new focus on improving classroom practice—the ultimate goal of education reform, of course, but one that can often get lost in the noisy debate. And, via our Education 20/20 project, we sought to invigorate the

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**HOLDING SCHOOLS  
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STUDENTS MAKE PROGRESS  
TOWARD HIGH STANDARDS IS  
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education policy debate with fresh ideas and insights, mostly from the right side of the ideological spectrum.

We also maintained our critical work in our home state of Ohio, fighting (successfully) to defend the Buckeye State's A–F accountability system, battling (less successfully) to keep policymakers from watering down graduation requirements, and preparing for an active year in 2019, as a new governor and his team have a chance to make their own marks on education policy. Also in Ohio, we are proud to continue our work overseeing a dozen charter schools, including some of the highest performing high-poverty schools in the entire state.

In the pages that follow, we'll escort you through a deeper dive into Fordham's work and impact in 2018. Thanks, as always, for your support and encouragement.

Sincerely,





# FORDHAM'S MISSION

3 | *Backpacks stowed at one of our sponsored schools in Ohio, Dayton Early College Academy Prep.  
(Photo credit to Stephanie Henry.)*

## WE ADVANCE...

1. **HIGH STANDARDS**, strong assessments of student learning, and commonsense accountability for schools and children across the achievement spectrum;
2. **QUALITY EDUCATION OPTIONS** and high-quality school performance information for every family; and
3. A student-centered system that provides **CLEAR PATHWAYS TO UPWARD MOBILITY**, good citizenship, and successful participation in adult society.

## WE PROMOTE REFORM BY...

1. **PRODUCING** relevant, rigorous policy research and analysis;
2. **PROVIDING** “thought leadership” to policymakers, philanthropists, advocacy groups, and others through timely and persuasive commentary;
3. **ADVOCATING** sound education policies in Ohio related to standards, assessments, school choice, and other promising reforms;
4. **SERVING** as a model charter school authorizer and sharing our lessons throughout and beyond Ohio; and
5. **INCUBATING** new ideas, innovations, organizations, school models, and visionary leaders to advance educational excellence.

# NEW YORK TIMES

POLITICO EDUCATION POST

WALL STREET JOURNAL

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

THE ATLANTIC NPR

VOX CONCORD MONITOR

ACCURACY IN ACADEMIA

WASHINGTON POST

THE HILL WEEKLY STANDARD

SEATTLE TIMES THE 74

EDUCATION WEEK DAILY CALLER

SALON BLOOMBERG

INDEPENDENT WEEKLY CITY JOURNAL

CHALKBEAT GOVERNING

NATIONAL CATHOLIC REGISTER

COLUMBUS DISPATCH

+13%

WEBSITE  
VISITOR  
GROWTH



624

MEDIA  
MENTIONS



55

SPEAKING  
ENGAGEMENTS



48

PODCAST  
GUESTS



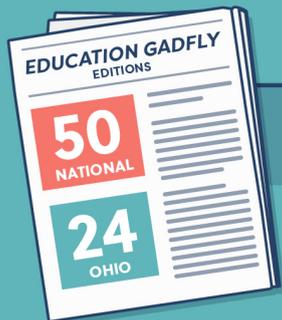
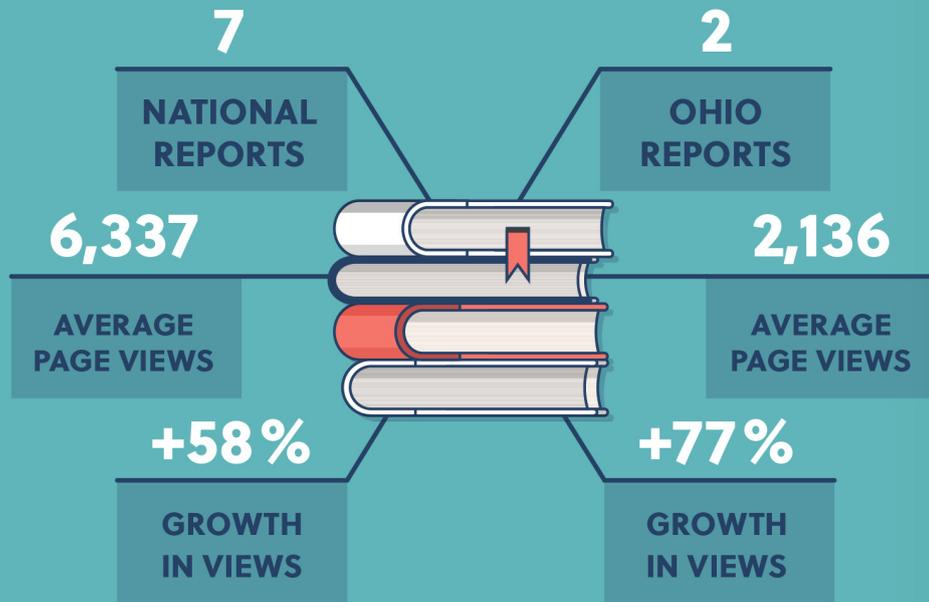
53,122

TOTAL TWITTER  
FOLLOWERS



4,857

STUDENTS  
IN SPONSORED  
OHIO CHARTER  
SCHOOLS



**+990**  
NEW SUBSCRIBERS

**511**  
BLOG POSTS



**42**  
OP-EDS



**FORBES FOX NEWS**  
MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL  
**EDUCATION NEXT**  
ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION  
**PBS NEWS HOUR CNN**  
THE DAILY TARHEEL DETROIT NEWS  
**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
US NEWS & WORLD REPORT  
RICHMOND TIMES DISPATCH  
**HUFFINGTON POST**  
USA TODAY STAR PRESS  
DETROIT NEWS BALTIMORE SUN  
**NATIONAL REVIEW**  
AKRON BEACON JOURNAL  
**CHICAGO TRIBUNE**  
SAN DIEGO FREE PRESS

# SUPPORTING QUALITY CHOICES

One of the most promising developments of the past quarter century has been the expansion of high-quality schools of choice. Charter schools and Catholic schools have been especially successful at providing an excellent education to children growing up in poverty, helping them to complete college at dramatically higher rates than their traditional public school peers. In 2018, we continued to provide quality evidence of the positive impact of schools of choice and actionable tools for those within the choice movement. We believe that all parents deserve to have a range of high-quality options, as well as reliable information with which to make the best choices for their children.

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## SCHOOL CHOICE

Fordham staff spoke at events throughout the year to promote public and private school choice reforms. Mike participated in a number of panels, including at the Magnet Schools of America conference in February, a CATO school choice policy forum in April, and the PIE Network summit in October. Also in October, Robert Pondiscio participated in a panel at researchedED in Philadelphia on parent advocacy.



*Mike Webb asks a question of our panel during July's event, "Can Charter Schools Survive Polarization and Populism?" (Photo credit to Tyler Hughes.)*



*In January, Amber Northern, Abigail Grey, and Matthew Steinberg met to discuss school discipline at our event, "School Discipline Reform: Hard Lessons from the Front Lines." (Photo credit to Jonathan Lutton.)*

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## ENGAGEMENT

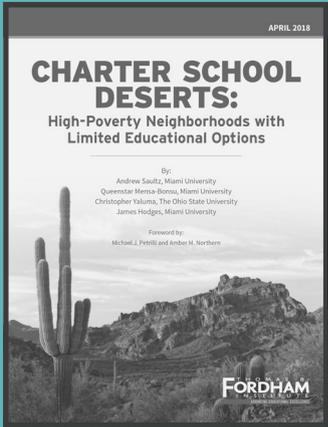
We hosted two successful choice-related events this year. To highlight our "Charter School Deserts" report, in May, we convened a panel of experts to discuss the charter school deserts located in the shadow of the Washington Monument, and examined what might be done by philanthropists, policymakers, and others to irrigate them. Then, in July, we hosted Nina Rees, Charles Barone, and Carlos Marquez to debate the role of charter schools in the midterm elections around the country, particularly in the charged races occurring in California and Colorado.

# CHARTER DESERTS

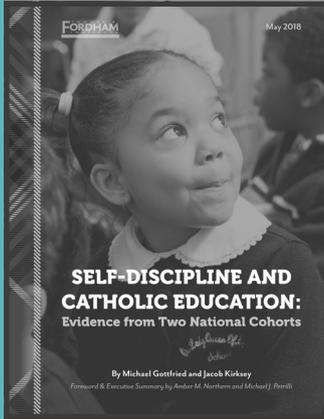
“Charter School Deserts: High-Poverty Neighborhoods with Limited Educational Options” examined opportunities for growth in the charter sector. Led by Andrew Saultz, a team of analysts studied the distribution of charter elementary schools across the country to provide parents, policymakers, and educators with information about which high- and medium-poverty communities do not have access to charter schools.

They found an average of 10.8 charter school “deserts” per state. Based on these findings, we drew two main takeaways: The charter sector needs to move beyond city boundaries, and we must address the policy and practical barriers in some states that keep charter schools from being established where they are needed. We also published five op-eds in communities that have some of the driest charter school deserts in the country.

Along with the report, we released an interactive map allowing users to locate charter school deserts in their own area. And, in December, we updated this map to also include private schools, which in some cases serve as “oases” in these deserts.



Rocketship Public Schools and the Sage International Network of Schools are using “Charter School Deserts” and its corresponding map to inform their expansion strategies.



In June, a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, "The Catholic School Difference," covered our "Self-Discipline and Catholic Education" report, arguing that self-discipline can pay dividends for students.

WHAT'S THE PROMISE OF  
#SCHOOLCHOICE?

IT GIVES #PARENTS REAL  
POWER AND MAKES THE  
NEEDS OF OUR KIDS  
A PRIORITY.

 @educationgadfly

Gottfried and Kirksey's study is the first of its kind to explore the potential effects of Catholic schooling on elementary students' self-discipline.

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## SELF-DISCIPLINE

On May 31, we released "Self-Discipline and Catholic Education," which examined whether students in Catholic schools actually exhibit more self-discipline than their peers—and, if so, what those schools can teach other public and private schools about how it can be fostered. The analysis, led by Michael Gottfried and Jacob Kirksey, found that, compared to students in other private schools or public schools, students in Catholic schools were less likely to act out or be disruptive and more likely to exhibit more self-control and more self-discipline. The findings suggest that schools that value and focus on self-discipline will likely do a better job of fostering it in children. To the extent that school choice programs can widen access to great schools that provide an academic boost and promote self-discipline—Catholic or otherwise—they deserve our eternal support.

A black and white photograph of a teacher and a student smiling and talking during lunch. The teacher is on the left, and the student is on the right. In the background, there are signs for 'KIPP COLUMBUS'. A red diagonal graphic element is in the top right corner.

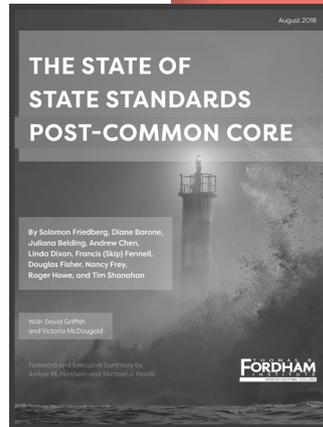
# SETTING HIGH EXPECTATIONS

We believe that all schools that are supported with public funds—whether in the district, charter, or private school sector—should be held accountable for helping their students make academic progress from year to year. The combination of rigorous state standards, high-quality assessments, aligned curricula, and transparent school report cards provides the necessary pressure and support for our system to put students on the path to readiness for college, career, and citizenship. Over the course of 2018, we have used our research and commentary to expose opportunities for improvement and highlight positive trends in the implementation of policy, including gifted programs and state academic standards. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), most states have built accountability systems that are better than ever.

Now the challenge is to make high expectations a reality at the classroom level.

# STATE STANDARDS

Eight years ago, we compared states' English language arts (ELA) and mathematics standards to what were then the brand-new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). That report found that the Common Core was clearer and more rigorous than the ELA standards in thirty-seven states and stronger than the math standards in thirty-nine states. Since 2010, a number of states have, to varying degrees, revised their standards. Released in August, "The State of State Standards Post-Common Core" focused on those that have made the most substantive changes to the Common Core or that never adopted them in the first place. By taking a close look at these states, plus a fresh look at the CCSS, the team of reviewers, led by Solomon Friedberg and Diane Barone, identified ideas that are worthy of broader adoption, as well as major mistakes that states should avoid. In conjunction with the report, we published op-eds in five states most in need of significant revisions to their standards—Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.



Tim Shanahan—a reviewer of "The State of State Standards Post-Common Core"—is now serving as a consultant to the **South Carolina** Department of Education as it revises the state's standards based on our report's recommendations.



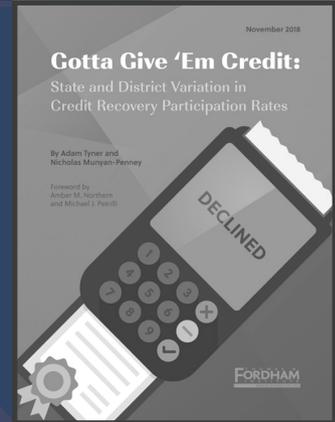
**North Carolina's** superintendent office is using "The State of State Standards Post-Common Core" to make the case for reopening the state's standards.

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## CREDIT RECOVERY

ESSA's requirement to factor graduation rates into school accountability plans provides an unintended incentive for schools to play games with graduation requirements. This underscores the need to keep credit recovery—the practice of enabling high school students to retrieve credits from courses that they either failed or failed to complete—from turning into a total end run around actual learning. “Gotta Give ‘Em Credit: State and District Variation in Credit Recovery Participation Rates,” authored by Adam Tyner and Nicholas Munyan-Penney, examined whether and where potential misuse of credit recovery may be occurring. Among the report’s findings is the troubling news that one in ten high schools with active credit recovery programs are enrolling at least 20 percent of their students in these courses. We recommend that states adopt formal state guidelines for credit recovery programs and use external assessments to hold students and schools accountable. Otherwise, the incentives to propel unprepared adolescents toward graduation will outweigh those that advance the challenging but noble work of sufficiently educating them.

The advocacy group **Students for Education Reform** circulated “Gotta Give ‘Em Credit” within their network and requested our help in their campaign to improve the credit recovery programs in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.



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**STUDENTS CANNOT ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE  
IF THEY DO NOT HAVE TEACHERS WHO CAN  
GET THEM THERE, AND TEACHERS CANNOT  
ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE FOR THEMSELVES  
OR THEIR STUDENTS IF THERE IS NO MODEL  
THEY CAN LEARN FROM.**

 @educationgadfly

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## ACCOUNTABILITY

Mike, Robert, and Chester E. Finn, Jr., were actively engaging the education community on the importance of accountability and high expectations throughout the year. In March, Mike spoke at the National Association for Gifted Children legislative conference about our report that rated state ESSA accountability plans. In May, he participated in two panels at the Education Writers Association's National Seminar—one about equity, race, and inclusion in education, and a second panel on state accountability systems in the era of ESSA. And in December, he gave a keynote on standards and accountability for the Hunt Institute's Hunt-Kean Leadership Fellows. Robert was a panelist at an event on federal school discipline directives at the Heritage Foundation, and on another panel at the Hoover Institution titled, "Are State Proficiency Standards Failing?" Finally, Checker led a breakfast discussion at the Philanthropy Roundtable's Charter Growth Summit in San Antonio about his forthcoming book on the Advanced Placement program and how schools can best serve high achievers.

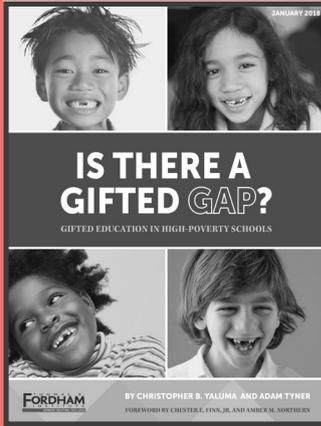
*Kristen Harper of Child Trends speaks to the audience at our January event, "School Discipline Reform: Hard Lessons from the Front Lines," with fellow panelists Laura Jimenez, Cami Anderson, Alia Wong, and Mike Petrilli. (Photo credit to Jonathan Lutton.)*

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**THIS IS NO TIME TO RUN AWAY FROM TESTS.  
IT IS NO TIME TO EMBRACE CHEAP TESTS.  
IT IS TIME TO GET TESTING RIGHT.**

 @educationgadfly

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**AS WE LOOK TOWARDS INNOVATIVE IDEAS,  
WE SHOULD NOT FORGET THE BASICS: HIGH  
#STANDARDS THAT COMMUNICATE WHAT  
KIDS NEED TO KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO,  
RICH CURRICULA, ALIGNED HIGH-QUALITY  
ASSESSMENTS, AND GREAT #TEACHERS.**

 @educationgadfly

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## GIFTED EDUCATION

Schools have long failed to cultivate the innate talents of many of their young people, particularly high-ability girls and boys from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds. To address this issue, “Is There a Gifted Gap? Gifted Education in High-Poverty Schools,” released in January, examined the extent to which access to and participation in gifted programs vary for different groups of students nationally and in each state, particularly in high-poverty schools. Authored by Adam Tyner and Christopher Yaluma, the report finds that high-poverty schools are just as likely to have gifted programs as low-poverty schools. Unfortunately, however, even when black and Hispanic students have gifted programs in their elementary and middle schools, they participate at much lower rates than their peers. Based on these results, we recommended that schools and districts:

1. Consider universal screening and other ways to streamline identification processes and make them more equitable;
2. Identify students for gifted programs using local norms; and
3. Counter bias in identifying and serving minority gifted students.

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## HIGH EXPECTATIONS

We had two excellent events focused on high expectations. In January, we hosted a lively two-part event, “School Discipline Reform: Hard Lessons from the Front Lines.” It highlighted our recent research on discipline reform, followed by a discussion on whether schools should ban out-of-school suspensions for low-level offenses. Then, following the release of the 2017 NAEP results, we co-hosted “Three Hoover Fellows on NAEP” with the Hoover Institution. Amber Northern moderated a panel with Checker, along with Eric Hanushek and Paul Peterson (see below), for a look at education reform’s progress since the 1980s, as well as what the latest NAEP scores mean for America’s future economic growth and social vibrancy.



(Photo credit to Jonathan Lutton.)

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## TOP FLYPAPER POSTS

“Why don’t districts do the easy things to improve student learning?”

— by Michael J. Petrilli

“High school reimaged (and we truly mean reimaged)”

— by Jessica Shopoff and Chase Eskelsen

“NAEP 2017: America’s ‘Lost Decade’ of educational progress”

— by Michael J. Petrilli

“Dubious move to reject Advanced Placement”

— by Chester E. Finn, Jr.

“America’s expansive gifted programming may be a facade”

— by Brandon L. Wright



# LEADING POLICY & PRACTICE

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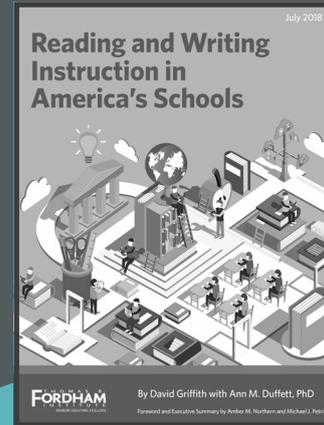
We have reached homeostasis in education policy, characterized by clearer and fairer but lighter-touch accountability systems and the incremental growth of school choice options for families, but with little appetite for big and bold new initiatives. The period of big new policy initiatives stemming from Washington or the state capitals appears to be over, at least for now. The opportunity is, for us as a field, to finish what we started: To usher in a golden age of educational practice. To implement the higher standards with fidelity. To improve teacher preparation and development. To strengthen charter school oversight and quality. To make the promise of high-quality career and technical education a reality.

So while policymakers appear to be stepping back from passing bold education policies, we cannot afford to take a break from educational improvement. In 2018, we started to take a closer look at educational practice, with an increased emphasis on what's really happening in America's classrooms. Because if we take a break from the hard work of educational improvement, if we accept another "lost decade" of academic achievement, we will be giving up on the futures of millions of kids and setting the stage for another era of top-down policies that may or may not help our schools.

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## READING & WRITING

Fordham has been consistently committed to monitoring the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. We surveyed ELA teachers in 2013, and this year we completed a follow-up survey to see how implementation has progressed in the past five years. Published in July, "Reading and Writing Instruction in America's Schools" suggests real progress in implementing state ELA standards but also real cause for concern. The analysis, led by David Griffith and Ann Duffett, finds that middle and high school teachers are asking more text-dependent questions and report that students' ability to accurately cite evidence from the text has improved, yet they have also become more likely to assign texts based on students' current reading levels. There are troubling signs on other fronts, too: fewer classic works of literature in teachers' curricula; a predilection for creative over evidence-based writing; and students' continued lack of content knowledge. The report also features seven "Literacy Lifelines" that contain practical advice for teachers who are struggling with the challenges of CCSS implementation.



The Illinois State Board of Education requested permission to reprint our "Literacy Lifelines for America's English Language Arts Teachers" as resources for the state's teachers.

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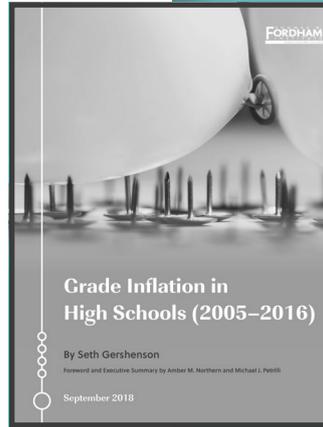
**THE UPHILL STRUGGLE TO FUNDAMENTALLY  
RESHAPE OUR COUNTRY'S #EDUCATION SYSTEMS  
REQUIRES COMPASSION, INTELLIGENCE,  
DISCIPLINE, PATIENCE, HUMILITY, AND  
—PERHAPS ABOVE ALL ELSE—PERSEVERANCE.**

 @educationgadfly

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## GRADE INFLATION

Although the vast majority of American parents believe their child is performing at or above grade level, in reality, two-thirds of U.S. teenagers are ill-prepared for college when they leave high school. “Grade Inflation in High Schools (2005–2016)” attempts to understand this disconnect by examining how easy or hard it is to get a good grade in high school today, and how that’s changed over time. Author Seth Gershenson finds that, although many students receive good grades, few earn top marks on the statewide end-of-course exams for those classes. And these end-of-course exams predict math ACT scores much better than class grades do. These findings suggest that course grades and test scores each have their place, yet parents don’t seem to value both equally. Plus, although external exams convey valuable information, educating teachers about high expectations is key. Educators can’t hold students to a high bar if they don’t have a clear vision of what excellence looks like.



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## CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Robert Pondiscio, who has been beating the drum about the need for reformers to focus on improving practice for years, continued to fight for curriculum and instruction in 2018. In June, he gave the keynote at the National Institute for Direct Instruction's annual conference in San Antonio. And in November, he participated on a panel sponsored by the *Washington Post* with former assistant secretary of education Diane Ravitch; Harvard's Graduate School of Education dean, Bridget Terry Long; and UCLA's Wasserman Dean, Marcelo Suarez-Orozco. The panel focused on what's next for education policy and practice. Senior research associate David Griffith also spoke to the DC Council on school discipline reform in January.

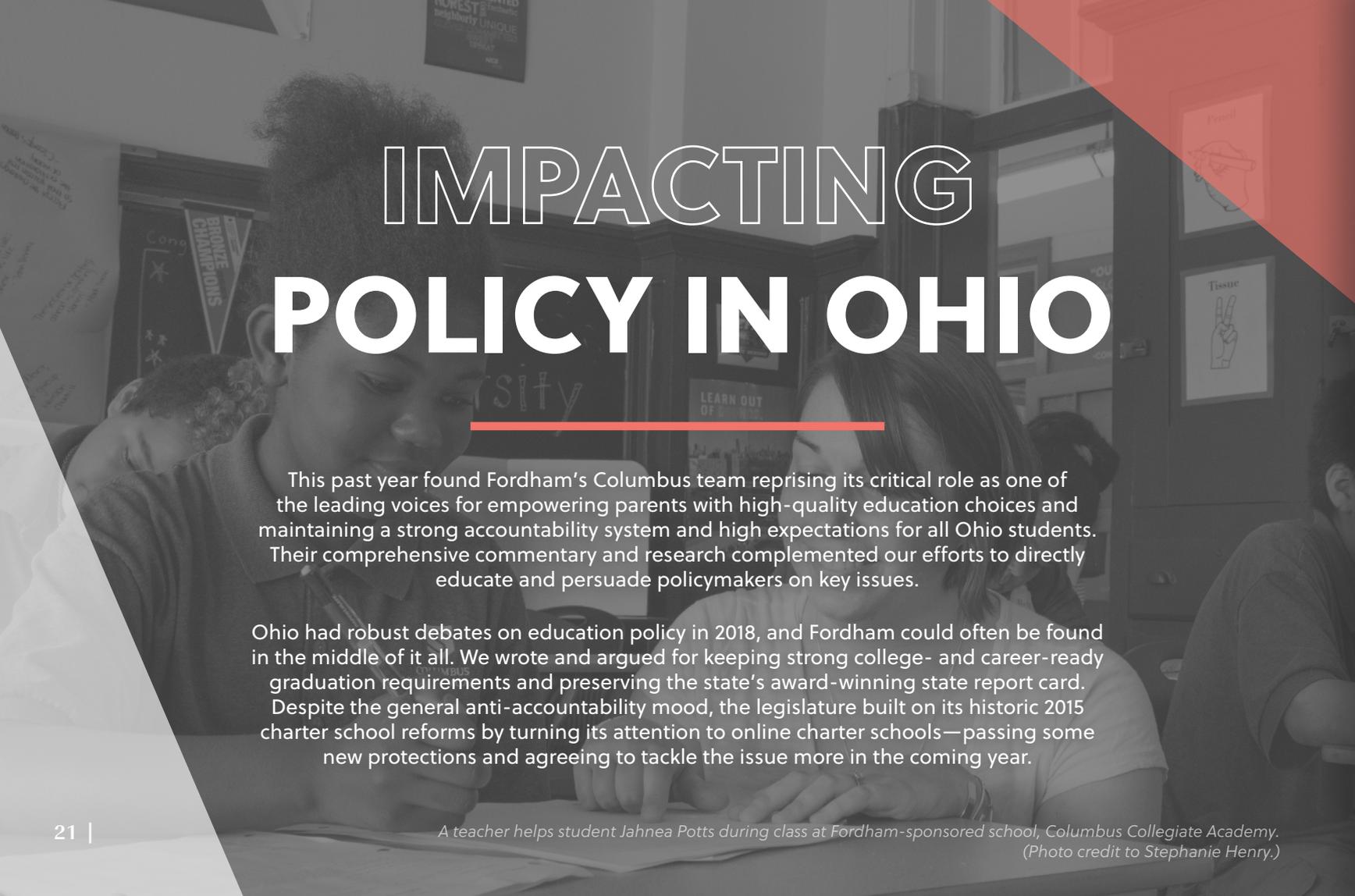


*Adam Tyner discusses the impact of grade inflation at our November event, "Grade Inflation: What Happens When Report Cards Lie," with fellow panelists Michael Hurwitz and Bailey Cato Czupryk. (Photo credit to Jonathan Lutton.)*

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## ENGAGEMENT

We discussed the findings of "Grade Inflation in High Schools" at our November event, "Inflated Grades: What Happens When Report Cards Lie." Moderated by the Education Writers Association's executive director, Caroline Hendrie, our expert panel considered whether teacher-conferred grades misrepresented actual student learning, what pressures and incentives are behind grade inflation, and what can, or should, be done to reverse it.



# IMPACTING POLICY IN OHIO

This past year found Fordham's Columbus team reprising its critical role as one of the leading voices for empowering parents with high-quality education choices and maintaining a strong accountability system and high expectations for all Ohio students. Their comprehensive commentary and research complemented our efforts to directly educate and persuade policymakers on key issues.

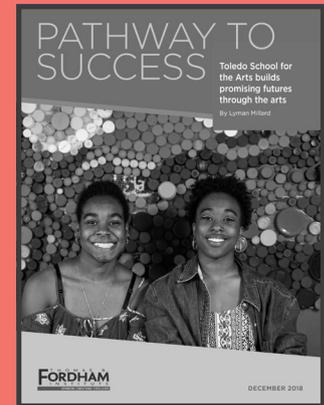
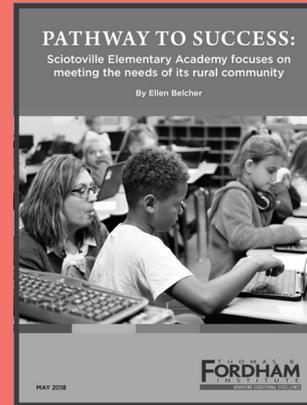
Ohio had robust debates on education policy in 2018, and Fordham could often be found in the middle of it all. We wrote and argued for keeping strong college- and career-ready graduation requirements and preserving the state's award-winning state report card.

Despite the general anti-accountability mood, the legislature built on its historic 2015 charter school reforms by turning its attention to online charter schools—passing some new protections and agreeing to tackle the issue more in the coming year.

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# PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Ohio's charter sector is often maligned, and that hides the incredible job many charter schools are doing. In 2018, Fordham published four charter profiles, each titled "Pathway to Success," highlighting the work of innovative charter schools. Sciotoville Elementary Academy is one of Ohio's few charters outside of the state's urban communities, and it illustrates what's possible when educators, families, and an entire community come together to save their school by transforming it into a public charter school. Near West Intergenerational School connects its young students to adults in the nearby area who serve as mentors and tutors throughout their schooling. Menlo Park Academy shows that creating specialized schools for gifted students can be a reality and that the charter public school model is perfectly suited for such a task. And finally, Toledo School for the Arts has been able to tap into students' interests, focusing and inspiring them to cultivate their talents in the arts—an area ignored in too many schools.

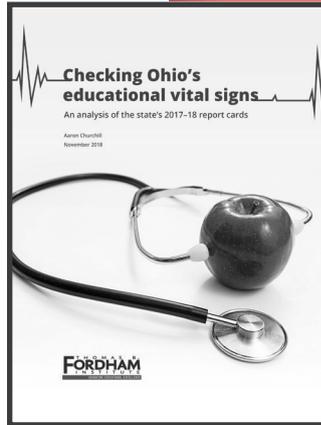


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## REPORT CARDS

Aaron Churchill, Fordham-Ohio's research director, published his annual analysis of Ohio state report card data, focusing on district and charter schools in Ohio's Big Eight urban areas. The diagnosis is stark, with only 36 percent of Ohio students able to meet the state's college- and career-ready benchmarks in math and 38 percent prepared in English language arts. And rates are even lower across Ohio's largest cities. Clearly, more treatment is needed if Ohio's students are going to leave high school poised for success in college or the workplace.

OUR POLICY TEAM MET WITH  
**102 OF OHIO'S 132**  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS



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## TOP OHIO POSTS

"Moving Ohio towards a more coherent K-16 governance model"

— by Aaron Churchill

"The myth of Ohio's 'for profit' charter school system"

— by Aaron Churchill

"LeBron's I Promise School isn't a charter, but it puts kids first—and that's all that matters"

— by Jessica Poiner

"Ohio's preliminary test results look pretty good"

— by Jessica Poiner

"Does Ohio need a revolution in school funding?"

— by Aaron Churchill

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## OHIO AND BEYOND

Fordham-Ohio continues to be sought out for its state-level expertise and policy knowledge. In August, Chad testified before a committee of the Indiana State Board of Education on ways to improve accountability for online charter schools. Chad was also invited to give presentations on school funding to a legislative task force reviewing Ohio's school funding system and the Ohio Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Chad has appeared at a number of events, including a debate on accountability for online charter schools at iNACOL's annual conference, a panel at a League of Women Voters debate discussing testing and state report cards, and a panel at ExcelinEd's national summit considering open enrollment.

*A student reviews his work alongside a teacher at Fordham-sponsored school, Dayton Early College Academy.  
(Photo credit to Stephanie Henry.)*



# AUTHORIZING CHARTER SCHOOLS

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Our charter-authorizing team, based in Dayton, oversaw twelve schools serving 4,800 students. These included some of Ohio's high-performing public charter schools and others that still struggle to produce the kinds of results we expect. In 2018, we opted not to authorize any new schools, to focus our support on our current portfolio of schools, several of them in the midst of expansions. We're committed to seeing that students in schools that we authorize receive a top-notch education, and we strive to develop and model best practices for authorizers across the nation.



## SPONSORSHIP

In 2018, we were one of twenty-one authorizers (in a state with thirty-four of them) to be rated effective by the Ohio Department of Education.

We were also honored to have been one of five sponsors recognized by the National Association for Charter School Authorizers as part of NACSA's Quality Practice Project (QPP), a three-year study that examined the portfolio outcomes of the QPP sponsors and identified what this group of sponsors did differently to achieve strong outcomes. We were recognized for our organizational and board leadership, institutional commitment to quality sponsorship, and use of professional judgment.

# CULTIVATING IDEAS & IMPACT

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Without other amazing people working at all levels to achieve education reform, our ability to influence change would be severely limited. Therefore, Fordham is proud to facilitate the proliferation of new ideas and talent within the reform community.

## PIE NETWORK

Fordham helped launch this network of state-level education reformers in 2007. We continue to serve as a national policy partner for members, helping to boost their capacity, particularly around standards, assessments, accountability, and school choice.



## EDUCATION 20/20

The Education 20/20 speaker series, co-sponsored by the Fordham Institute and the Hoover Institution, aims to refill the conservative void in the education reform conversation. It got off to an awesome start in the final third of 2018 with a lineup of seven superb speakers: Heather Mac Donald, Kay Hymowitz, Nicholas Eberstadt, Naomi Schaefer Riley, Jonah Goldberg, Ian Rowe, and Michael Barone. The new year will usher in six more events with a dozen stellar guests, to be followed, in 2020, with a book and much more.



## EEPS

The Fordham Institute and American Enterprise Institute came together eight years ago to solve the issue of policy debates lacking empirical grounding. The result was the Emerging Education Policy Scholars (EEPS), a unique program aimed at cultivating human capital within the education policy sector. 2018 was our eighth year of the program, which brings newly minted Ph.D. scholars and candidates with keen research eyes, fresh ideas, and enthusiasm for education policy to our nation's capital to meet with education-policy experts and to share exciting new directions for K–12 education research in order to better bridge the research-to-policy divide.



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## FINANCES IN BRIEF

Fordham's spending in 2018 was \$5.34 million and is projected to be about \$5.75 million in 2019. Of that, around one-third will be supported by our endowment, and the remainder will be raised from private donors. Our charter-sponsorship work is primarily funded by school fees.



## ISN'T FORDHAM ALSO A FOUNDATION?

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation is a "Type I supporting organization," controlled by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. These sister organizations are both tax-exempt public charities under section 501(c)3 of the tax code. Today, most of our work is conducted under the Institute's name, ordinarily with partial funding from the Foundation's endowment (which is approximately \$60 million).

## DOES IT MAKE GRANTS?

Fordham does make a few grants each year, but these are targeted and small. Many go toward our on-the-ground work in Ohio, where we play an active role in the state's education landscape. Recent grantees include Teach for America of Southwest Ohio, Dayton Foundation - Friends of DECA Fund, the Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges, Learn to Earn Dayton, Seton Education Partners, and the Dayton Regional STEM School.

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