

Promoting educational excellence for **every child**



THOMAS B.
FORDHAM
INSTITUTE
ADVANCING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

President's letter

2023 was another challenging year, due to what some have called “education’s long Covid.” Student achievement is still anemic, students are still missing school at sky-high rates and misbehaving more frequently when they do attend, and—by most accounts—our system is still struggling to show much return for the \$190 billion the federal government invested in Covid recovery.

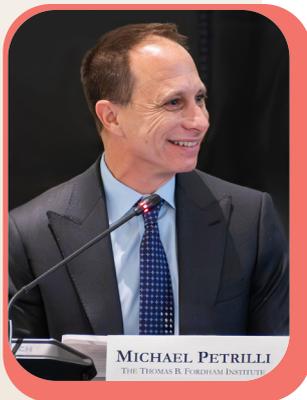
Yet there were some glimmers of hope. The Science of Reading continues to enjoy broad, bipartisan support. Charter schools “keep on keepin’ on,” as one charter advocate put it. We’re starting to hear more calls for accountability again, and not just from fellow policy wonks.

But let’s be honest: Education reform is still not in a good place.

Which is all the more reason that none of us can rest and relax. Over the past year, those of us at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute redoubled our efforts to get American education back on track—efforts that have not yet paid dividends but that, along with the work of many partners and especially front-line educators, we hope will start to bend the curve in the years ahead. Here’s a look at the year that was.

Thanks, as always, for your support, collaboration, and encouragement.

Michael J. Petrilli



Fordham's 2023 Strategic Priorities and Highlights

1 Rebuild the ed reform coalition and find solutions from left, right, and center

- **The Building Bridges Initiative**

We partnered with Democrats for Education Reform to convene education-reform leaders from across the ideological spectrum, find common ground, and issue a call to action. **192 leaders, educators, and advocates signed on to the Initiative's joint call to action.**



- **The National Working Group on Advanced Education**

We brought together two dozen experts to brainstorm and promote research, policies, and practices to better meet the needs of students with high academic potential, especially economically disadvantaged and Black and Hispanic students—resulting in two widely-viewed reports. **22,000 combined page views**

- **Science of reading in Ohio**

We advocated for legislation requiring all schools to follow the science of reading, including **\$170 million in funds** to adopt high-quality curricula, improve teacher-preparation programs, and implement professional development.



2

Expand high-quality charter schools and encourage positive competitive effects on traditional public schools



Students from DECA Prep, a Fordham-sponsored school

- **Ohio charter funding**

We fought to narrow long-standing charter school funding gaps, resulting in \$3,000 in additional per-pupil spending for high-quality charters.

- **Charter school research**

We released a study on charter schools' positive [impacts on English learners](#), and explored [competition in America's largest districts](#), garnering **43,000 total reads** and **30 mentions** in the media.

- **School turnaround**

Our charter-authorizing office supported the successful transition of the Phoenix Community Learning Center to new management by ReGeneration Schools.

3

Challenge conventional wisdom and outdated governance structures

- **“Think Again” series**

We published four policy briefs that revisited presumably “settled” debates in education, challenging them with contemporary research and up-to-date knowledge.

Over
12,500
readers per brief

- **Fighting learning loss with accountability and action**

Mike reignited the debate over the need for accountability policies with a wide-reaching *New York Times* piece.



- **Ohio governance reform**

We advocated for (and saw enacted) changes to the Buckeye State’s education-governance framework, giving the governor the power to appoint a cabinet-level director of education and workforce and increasing accountability for the academic achievement of Ohio students.

Other impacts



428 blog posts
published, with over
1.2 million readers



125 op-eds
placed in national
and local media



51 podcast episodes
produced with policymakers,
school leaders, and other guests



In partnership with AEI,
we welcomed our twelfth
cohort of Emerging Education
Policy Scholars. Twelve EEPS and
EEPS alumni made **Rick Hess's**
2023 ranking of influential
education scholars.



34 speaking engagements
at national policy events,
research conferences,
state legislative
committees, and more



**53 radio,
podcast, and TV
interviews**

What's to come?

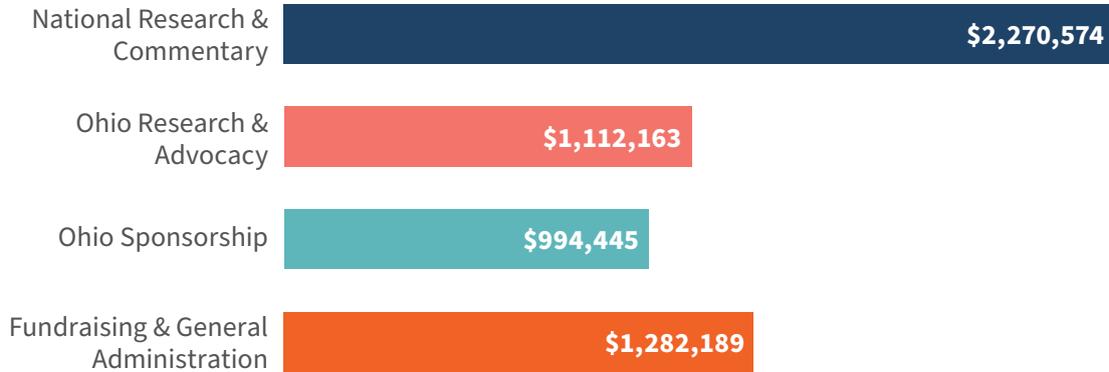
We will:

- **Continue to produce** and disseminate studies on advanced education, early literacy, accountability measures, local school boards, charter schools, and other forms of school choice.
- **Leverage** our relationships with advocacy, research, and policy organizations to continue rebuilding the bipartisan education-reform movement.
- **Generate** high-quality writing and commentary arguing for effective school reform, focusing especially on guidance for state-level policymakers.
- **Defend** high academic standards in all subject areas.
- **Advance** sound policies in Ohio related to assessments, results-driven accountability, equitable funding, school choice, and other important education reforms.
- **Continue to serve** as a model charter school authorizer, sharing our lessons throughout and beyond Ohio.



Finances at a glance

Spending in 2023 was \$5.7 million, and projected spending for 2024 is \$6.1 million. Grant funding supported 43% of our spending in 2023, 18% was funded from Sponsorship fee revenue, and the remainder was funded from portfolio earnings.



Funders

A heartfelt thank you to our funders and partners. We would not be able to achieve our mission without their critical support.

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