Message from Jennifer Esterline, Project Founder

Dear Grantmakers,

As we begin the new year, I want to take time to reflect on the tremendous successes and very real impact the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium (TEGAC) has achieved thus far. TEGAC was created in 2012 in response to huge cuts to Texas public schools during the 82nd legislative session. Concerned about the impact these cuts would have on public education and the ability of public/private partnerships to continue to fund innovation and improvement in schools, a diverse group of foundations throughout Texas joined together behind a common mission: to promote, protect and improve public education. The Consortium’s goal was to accomplish this mission by partnering with policymakers, the media, the business community, academics, advocates, parents and others to ensure the broadest dissemination of its work.

Over the past year, the Consortium has advanced those goals and accomplished so much more. The Consortium has grown in size and scope from a handful of local foundations in Austin to 24 private, corporate and community foundations representing almost every part of Texas — a truly historic partnership. We supported the release of groundbreaking and critical research that helped to educate policymakers and the public about the 2011 budget cuts and played a meaningful role in the restoration of some of the cuts in 2013. We convened the largest ever gathering of Texas philanthropists at the Texas Capitol in February of 2013 and traveled thousands of miles across Texas to talk to more than 80 private, corporate and community foundations, as well as other public education policy experts, about the recent changes to public education policies and their impact on Texas’ five million public school students.

This annual report illustrates the ways in which the Consortium continues to further its mission by sharing information, inspiring collaboration, and encouraging participation in an effort to protect and improve public education in Texas. Education grantmakers have a role and a responsibility in public education advocacy. Philanthropists must be considered a resource and thought partners to policymakers as they make critical decisions that affect five million Texas students. The stakes for all Texans are simply too high to stand on the sidelines.

The Consortium was created to aggregate capital for maximum impact. Alone we are just one, but together there is incredible potential for major impact in 2014 and beyond. Our efforts to protect, promote and improve public education face many challenges, but the Consortium remains committed to the task ahead.

Thank you for your continued support,

Jennifer Esterline
TEGAC Leadership Committee

The Consortium’s Leadership Committee plays a critical role in shaping and guiding the future strategy of TEGAC. Members participate in quarterly conference call meetings, plan and participate in the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Day at the Capitol during legislative sessions every odd year and contribute expertise and ideas to the current and future work of TEGAC. Furthermore, because the Consortium does not have a formal board, the Leadership Committee handles many of the responsibilities normally managed by a board of directors.

The following members serve on the Leadership Committee:

| Caroline Sabin, Executive Director, Powell Foundation (Houston) | Victoria Rico, President and Trustee, George W Brackenridge Foundation (San Antonio) |
| Beau Ross, President and Founder, Kathryn and Beau Ross Foundation (Austin) | Janet Harman, President and Founder, KDK-Harman Foundation (Austin) |
| Bruce Esterline, Vice President for Grants, Meadows Foundation (Dallas) | Linda McDavitt, President, Genevieve and Ward Orsinger Foundation (San Antonio) |
| Mark Williams, Trustee, KDK-Harman Foundation (Austin) | Amanda Cloud, Senior Program Officer, Simmons Foundation (Houston) |

In addition, the following subcommittees have been established to help support TEGAC staff:

**Membership/Fundraising Sub-Committee:** The Membership/Fundraising Sub-Committee is responsible for supporting staff in soliciting new members and raising annual revenue for the Consortium’s operations and special projects, to be determined by the entire Leadership Committee at the appropriate time.

**Finance Sub-Committee:** The Finance Sub-Committee is responsible for providing financial oversight to the Consortium by reviewing and approving the annual budget, as well reviewing TEGAC balance sheet and actual vs. budget reports at each quarterly meeting.
Mission Statement

The Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium is a geographically and politically diverse Consortium of private, corporate, and community foundations working together to promote, protect and improve public education in Texas.

TEGAC History and Rationale

Philanthropy has always been a critical partner to the State of Texas. Foundation grants provide seed funding for innovation and quality improvement in our communities. Some of the most exciting things in public education have come about as a result of the state and foundations working together. Cuts to Texas public schools made during the 2011 Texas Legislative Session totaled nearly $5.4 billion with a $4 billion cut to the Foundation School Program and a $1.4 billion cut to “discretionary grants.” These discretionary grant dollars are often used by school districts to leverage private and foundation dollars on to school campuses. These large cuts to the state budget in 2011 weakened, and in some cases, eliminated many of these public-private partnerships.

At the same time, demand for scarce foundation dollars continues to rise as community groups see their revenues eliminated from school district budgets. Increasingly, public and private dollars are now targeted toward propping up basic educational services, instead of seeding innovation and research and development. At the same time, nonprofits—also reeling from cuts—are placing increasing demands on private philanthropy.

In 2011, the KDK-Harman Foundation surveyed over 60 Texas foundations to assess awareness of and response to the state’s cuts to public education, as well as grantmakers’ experience and interest in making grants toward education policy and advocacy. Not surprisingly, education grantmakers across Texas had been paying careful attention to the state’s budget debate and were deeply concerned about its impact.

The KDK-Harman survey went deeper and also asked foundations about their participation in and funding of advocacy-related activities. More than half of respondents reported that their foundations were indeed participating in advocacy – either through direct grantmaking or staff and trustee engagement with policymakers, and in some cases, both. They also expressed a strong interest in better understanding the role of private grantmakers in education policy and advocacy.

The 2011 survey found that foundations care about the budget but overwhelmingly are not making advocacy grants or using their staff and trustees to directly engage policymakers. This paradox can be explained, in part, by the fact that even though private foundations are allowed to participate in the
advocacy arena, many foundation trustees and staff are still unfamiliar with the IRS regulations and, therefore, do not engage in advocacy. In fact, there are many types of non-lobbying advocacy in which private foundations may legally participate.

In response to these cuts and the survey findings, a geographically and politically diverse consortium of foundations joined together to promote, protect and improve public education in 2012. The Consortium was designed to be a forum and serve as a focal point for organizing philanthropic efforts. By creating a consortium of funders focused on public education policy and advocacy, Texas grantmakers can pool their resources to increase impact on public policy. Not only will dollars go farther, but donors and trustees will have the strength of numbers. Aggregation includes money, knowledge, and relationships, and the Consortium model maximizes all of these.

The Consortium brings together the state’s most innovative and forward-thinking philanthropists. The focus of the effort is to protect the investments of education grantmakers by ensuring the long-term viability of public/private partnerships between foundations and the State of Texas. The Consortium also focuses on ensuring that legislators consider education grantmakers to be a resource to policymakers around education policy, informing policymakers about what works in public education to ensure every child has access to a quality education.

There is no wrong way for education grantmakers to engage in advocacy, only the manner most comfortable and productive for their trustees. Based upon its survey of education grantmakers, conversations with numerous foundation trustees and staff, and extensive research, the Consortium has created an approach that has a place for every Texas grantmaker, regardless of experience in advocacy and public policy.

In crafting its approach to facilitate philanthropic involvement in education policy, the Consortium created a clear and concise strategy for combining the resources and talents of education grantmakers in Texas. Since its inception, the work of the Consortium has included:

**STRATEGY 1**: Provide Objective Data on the Impact of Budget Cuts

**STRATEGY 2**: Mobilize Foundation Trustees beyond Direct Grantmaking

**STRATEGY 3**: Make Grants with an Emphasis on Public Awareness and Outreach

Philanthropists are welcome in policy debates. Policymakers want to hear from philanthropy – particularly from the benefactors and trustees of foundations. Foundation leaders working to make grants in the field of public education should consider themselves to be a resource for Texas policymakers. It is our responsibility as funders who know what works in public schools to speak up as advocates and thought leaders in public education.
All members listed below have contributed a minimum of $5,000/annually and are eligible to serve on the Consortium Leadership Committee.

KDK-Harman Foundation (Austin)  Laura and John Arnold Foundation (Houston)
MR and Evelyn Hudson Foundation (Dallas)  RGK Foundation (Austin)
Meadows Foundation (Dallas)  Ewing – Halsell Foundation (San Antonio)
Genevieve and Ward Orsinger Foundation (San Antonio)  Tapestry Foundation (Austin)
Powell Foundation (Houston)  The Dallas Foundation (Dallas)
George W. Brackenridge Foundation (San Antonio)  Sid Richardson Foundation (Ft. Worth)
Beau and Kathryn Ross Foundation (Austin)  Webber Family Foundation (Austin)
Simmons Foundation (Houston)  Andy Roddick Foundation (Austin)
San Antonio Area Foundation (San Antonio)  Amarillo Area Foundation (Amarillo)
Trull Foundation (Palacios)  United Way of Metropolitan Dallas (Dallas)
Wright Family Foundation (Austin)  Bernard & Audre Rapoport Foundation (Waco)
Rainwater Charitable Foundation (Dallas)
Still Water Foundation (Austin)

Foundations who are part of the Consortium represent all parts of the state and range in size from small private family foundations to large community foundations in major cities.
What Are The Benefits Of Membership?

Foundations that join the Consortium receive:

- Weekly legislative and policy updates during the legislative session; quarterly updates during interim period
- On-going training on the legal parameters of foundation and nonprofit advocacy
- Participation in the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Day at the Capitol in February 2013 and 2015
- Participation in a variety of policy work groups during the 2013-2014 Interim Period leading up to the 2015 Legislative Session
- Participation in various other learning opportunities on public education policy issues during the interim and during legislative sessions
- Media related exposure (if desired)

Additionally, members can self-elect to be involved in developing the Consortium's strategy by participating in the TEGAC Leadership Committee.
Consortium Achievements

Comprehensive Statewide Assessment on Impact of Budget Cuts

The first collaborative project through the Consortium was an objective and thorough exploration of how $5.4 billion in cuts to public education impacted Texas schools and students after the 2011 legislative session. Member foundations from across Texas pooled their funds to commission a Houston-based nonprofit, Children At Risk, to undertake a year-long, mixed-methods statewide study to objectively assess how budget reductions impacted public schools – for better or for worse. Hundreds of school districts responded to the voluntary survey. What the first year of research found is that every school district responded to the cuts differently, but some general themes emerged across districts.

The survey data and supplemental interviews demonstrate effective stewardship in uncertain times, as well as areas for improvement. Given the cards they were dealt, the majority of superintendents minimized immediate impact on classroom instruction. Many anticipated steep reductions and took early steps to implement cuts as smoothly as possible. However, despite all of this creativity, state cuts had a profound impact on local instruction. The research found that districts were forced to cut the very evidence-based practices that have been proven to work to improve student outcomes. Many of these best practices originated in successful public/private partnerships between the state and philanthropy.

Key Findings Included:

- School districts found ways to do more with less. Texas school districts did everything from selling ads on the sides of school buses to raising local taxes. Many superintendents planned ahead for the cuts and adjusted spending and staffing accordingly.

- School districts cut many of the things research shows work best, particularly for low-income children. Foundations have long partnered with the state to promote research-based best practices. Pre-kindergarten, science labs, teacher development, after-school mentoring, counseling, and extra help for struggling readers were all cut. Fast-growing school districts used teacher attrition instead of layoffs to reduce costs – meaning bigger class sizes in all grades and subjects, including math and science.

- In many cases, districts used one-time sources of funding to pay for ongoing costs like teacher salaries and protecting full day pre-K programs. While commendable, these measures are not sustainable. Districts are burning through their reserves and contingency plans and many communities are prohibited from raising local taxes to replace dollars cut by the state.
A major goal of the statewide assessment project with Children At Risk was not only to produce objective data, but also to put that information into the hands of policymakers, parents, the media, educators, and others. These important research findings were summarized in four separate publications, including a parent’s guide and a smaller study of the impact of budget cuts on education-related nonprofits. The report received extensive press coverage, including three articles in the New York Times and feature articles in the Texas Tribune, Dallas Morning News, Houston Chronicle, Austin American Statesman, San Antonio Express, Daily Kos, and Texas Observer.

Data on the impact of the cuts was disseminated through social media, the Children At Risk website, press conferences in San Antonio, Houston, Dallas and Austin, and 11 separate advocacy awareness events across the state. The findings were shared with over 80 state legislators during personal visits, a presentation to the entire Senate Democratic Caucus, and two separate emails to every state legislator in September 2012 and February 2013. Finally, the Consortium authored three separate editorials in major newspaper publications throughout the 2013 legislative session.

This research remains the only objective source of data on the impact of the budget cuts anywhere in the state. The statewide assessment, in conjunction with the advocacy work of Children At Risk and individual Consortium members, contributed in no small part to the partial restoration of the cuts made by legislators during the 2013 session.

2013 Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Day

In 2011 and again in 2013, the Consortium convened over 100 foundation representatives at the Capitol in Austin to discuss current public education topics, specifically as they relate to public education policy, during the legislative session. These meetings take place every other year near the beginning of the legislative session and constitute the largest gathering of private philanthropy at the Texas Capitol in the history of the state on any public policy issue.

The Consortium is non-partisan and does not take an ideological perspective. During the 2013 Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Day, presentations included remarks from Republican and Democratic state senators and representatives, policy research experts from the Center for Public Policy Priorities and Texas Public Policy Foundation, Texas Education Agency Commissioner Michael Williams, Raise Your Hand Texas, and Texans Deserve Great Schools. The advocacy days also include private meetings with the House and Senate Chairs of Public
Education to discuss issues of concern and mutual interest between legislators and education grantmakers. Finally, the days always include ample time for foundation staff and trustees to make individual meetings with their legislators.

With every new legislative session, these events grow in size and importance, and recent surveys to the Texas foundation community indicate that foundations are interested in the Consortium hosting an education grantmaker advocacy day every year, including the critically important off-session years.

**TEGAC 2013 “Follow Up Friday” Series**

Beginning in spring 2013 during the legislative session, the Consortium began hosting a series of regional “Follow Up Friday” meetings across the state to continue the discussions started during the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Day at the Capitol in February. In these meetings, local expert panelists had an opportunity to reflect and explore the local impact of the policy decisions happening at the Capitol with local foundation leaders. These public education topics included: (1) accountability and assessment; (2) teacher and principal quality; (3) school finance/budget; (4) early childhood education; and (5) charter school expansion and quality. Between April and November of 2013, the Consortium met with over 80 foundations in meetings in Austin, Dallas, San Antonio, Houston, Amarillo, Far West Texas, the Gulf Coast, El Paso, and Waco to discuss the local impact of statewide public education legislation on communities across the state. The meetings were hosted in collaboration with a local foundation partner in each city and gave foundation leaders an opportunity to explore the local impact of public education legislation that passed during the 2013 Texas Legislative Session and in some cases to interact with key policymakers.

**Ongoing Outreach**

Fall 2013 was a busy time for the Consortium. In October, the Consortium presented at the Grantmakers for Education conference in Houston, the Texas Lyceum conference in Dallas, and the Independent Sector conference in New York City.

Interest in the Consortium is also growing outside of Texas. The Consortium is now busy scheduling meetings in Washington, DC with media, the United States Department of Education, Association of Small Foundations, Alliance for Justice, the Chronicle of Philanthropy, and the Texas delegations to the United States Senate and House of Representatives.
Next Steps for the Consortium
Interim Period and 2015 Legislative Session

During the critical interim period between legislative sessions, the Consortium continues to closely monitor and evaluate the new laws that were implemented last session. Looking ahead to the next legislative session, the Consortium will ensure that private grantmakers continue to have a voice at the table to ensure that the needs of all five million Texas students are being met.

Interim Charges for 2015 Texas Legislative Session

After months of conversations and the participation of hundreds of individual philanthropists and more than 80 Texas foundations, the Consortium submitted interim charges to the education committees of the Texas Legislature in October 2013. Interim charges represent the Lieutenant Governor’s and Speaker’s priorities for the work of the Texas Senate and House of Representatives in the eighteen months between legislative sessions. The Consortium requested that the state’s leadership ask legislators to:

1. Monitor implementation of House Bill 5 and opportunities to improve parent outreach and education about changes to the high school curriculum.
2. Monitor implementation of Senate Bill 503 and examine opportunities to improve access to and the quality of expanded learning opportunities for Texas students.
3. Examine opportunities for improving access to and quality of pre-kindergarten programs, including opportunities to maximize existing resources and leverage additional local and federal support.
4. Examine opportunities to improve the quality of and support for public school administrators and teachers.

The January release of some of the Lieutenant Governor’s education interim charges confirmed that the Consortium and its members are on the right track. The Lieutenant Governor’s direction mirrored the Consortium’s interest in ensuring the effective and thoughtful implementation of big legislation passed in 2013. Of particular interest is an interim charge related to implementing the massive House Bill 5 and its sweeping changes to how high schools move students toward graduation.
**Policy Work Groups**

In alignment with the interim charge recommendations, and in collaboration with our member foundations and other philanthropists and community partners, the Consortium is currently in the process of forming policy work groups around a few key education policy issues. These work groups will spend the next 12 months exploring specific policy priorities and providing objective data to inform recommendations on best practices and policies moving into the next legislative session to protect and improve public education in our state.

1. **House Bill 5** – Parent engagement regarding changes to Texas high school curriculum
2. **Senate Bill 503** – Expanded Learning Opportunities Council
3. **Pre-Kindergarten** – Quality and Access

The Consortium has asked foundations interested in supporting one or more of these work groups to invest in the education priorities listed above as either a Seed Funder (an investment of at least $50,000) or Partner Funder (an investment of at least $10,000). The Consortium’s goal is to secure funding from foundation Partners to match the contribution of the Seed Funder. All funds are considered grants and managed by the Austin Community Foundation.

Each work group will explore one of these specific policy areas. Objective research will be gathered and recommendations on best practices and policies will be made and approved by participating foundations. Mini-grants of approximately $10,000 will be given to non-traditional allies to promote these specific policy recommendations to the public, the media, educators, policymakers, and other philanthropists in advance of the 2015 Texas Legislature.

The Consortium will partner with participating foundations to redistribute 100% of these funds in a targeted advocacy effort that will include politically balanced research, the creation of no-cost and non-controversial policy recommendations, and support of effective, balanced advocacy organizations to convey those recommendations to policymakers.

**Policy Work Group Update as of December 31, 2013**

With 2013 behind us, the Consortium is very proud to report great progress on all three policy work groups. The status of these groups is as follows:
• **Pre-K:** The purpose is to educate the public, media, and legislature about best practices for maximizing existing public and private resources and expanding local and federal support for pre-kindergarten in the state of Texas. This group currently has seven foundation partners: Meadows Foundation, Still Water Foundation, Dallas Foundation, Rainwater Charitable Foundation, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, the Powell Foundation, and the Houston Endowment. The Consortium has commissioned Children At Risk to develop and implement a research report on the most effective school district strategies for delivering pre-kindergarten services amid budget cuts with policy recommendations for legislative action concerning: full-day pre-kindergarten; pre-kindergarten class sizes and ratios; creative methods of finance utilizing existing funding streams; opportunities for expansion with supplemental local and/or federal funds.

The study, the State of Pre-K: Realities and Opportunities in Texas, will survey all 1100 school districts in Texas and will conduct in-depth interviews with innovative school districts to assess current access to public Texas pre-kindergarten programs and make recommendations for increasing pre-kindergarten programs statewide based upon local best practices. Children At Risk will produce a report for parents, school districts, the media, and policymakers that will outline the state of pre-kindergarten in Texas and serve as a tool kit for Texas districts. This report will provide recommendations of creative solutions for districts to work with under current policies, and examples of policies for Texas legislators to look to for ways to promote pre-kindergarten during the 84th Legislative Session. Capitol meetings are already underway to ensure the report includes the interest of members of the Texas Legislature.

• **House Bill 5:** The House Bill 5 policy work group is critically important given big changes to current high school graduation requirements, and its fast approaching timeline for implementation. The incoming freshmen in fall 2014 will be impacted by new graduation requirements, so time is of the essence. The work group will produce a report detailing best practices from across Texas for educating students and parents about House Bill 5’s new graduation requirements and offering recommendations for school districts and the Texas Legislature to increase parent engagement. It will also include a tool kit for school districts to effectively educate parents and students about the changes.
To date, the HB 5 work group has two foundation partners committed: the Trull Foundation in Palacios and the Wright Family Foundation in Austin. The Consortium is busy identifying a third seed funder to implement this work group. Conversations are ongoing with potential research partners, including the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

- **Expanded Learning Opportunities:** This work group will provide policy recommendations to the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Council that was created during the 2013 Legislative Session. By supporting the Council, the Consortium increases the likelihood that good information about evidence-based best practices is highlighted. Because the Council is also a broad and influential group of stakeholders whose input is statutorily required to be delivered to the Texas Legislature, its recommendations will have substantial clout. The Council is also the first advisory board with a specific statutory requirement to include a representative from philanthropy.

The work group will produce a report offering a demographic profile of Texas students, analysis of currently available expanded learning opportunities, and policy recommendations for consideration by the Council and the Texas Legislature. The KDK-Harman Foundation has committed $50,000 as the seed funder for this work group.

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**Texas Tribune Partnership**

Each of the Consortium’s policy work groups will include a grant to support the development of the Texas Tribune’s new Public Education Vertical Newsletter, a weekly digest of news and information exclusively dedicated to public education in Texas. The Tribune’s newsletter will serve as the primary source of objective data on public education policy and issues from across the state.
Implementing the Recommendations

Policy change takes many forms. Sometimes legislation will be needed to expand access to quality education. However, in many instances, simply partnering with the Texas Education Agency, conducting outreach to parents, and spreading district best practices can achieve big results.

The Consortium views advocacy in the broadest sense of the word and will work to ensure that the policy recommendations are implemented across school districts and state government. Targeted dissemination of the recommendations via advocacy partners will ensure that requests for improved services come from all corners.

Grantmaker Advocacy in Action:

Consortium Work Group Strategy Model Explained

Foundation becomes a Work Group Funder **(by October 2013)**
(For example: support for pre-kindergarten advocacy)

↓

Participating foundations determine focus **(by December 2013)**
(Selection of specific pre-kindergarten policy to be addressed)

↓

Evidence-based policy recommendations produced **(by June 2014)**
(Contract with credible academic or other to conduct or compile politically relevant and objective research)

↓

Foundations select diverse partners to promote policy recommendations **(by August 2014)**
(advocacy and administrative mini-grants)

↓

Texas Legislature and policymakers respond to revenue neutral proposals **(2015 Legislative Session)**

↓

School districts implement new statutes
## Resources and Financial Management

### TEGAC Operating Budget: January 2013 – December 2013

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<th>Revenue</th>
<th>$125,000</th>
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| Total Expenses                 | $125,000 |
| Total Revenue                  | $125,000 |
2014 will be a big year for the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium because the Consortium’s members recognize the importance of the interim period between Texas legislative sessions. Through the policy work groups, the Consortium will provide a variety of opportunities for grantmakers to participate in learning opportunities and policy discussions during 2014 and 2015.

Three Capitol events to brief legislative staff on the Pre-K project have already been scheduled in 2014. The purpose of these Capitol events is to provide data and best practices on Pre-K to legislative staff in preparation for the 84th Legislative Session.

Research about what’s happening in Texas public schools matters. The Consortium’s focus on providing good data about Texas public education is the backbone of our success thus far. In a very short time the Consortium has become a trusted partner among legislators, policymakers, and state agency staff. Our objective and outcomes-focused work is appreciated.

Thank you for your investments in the Consortium and in the future of Texas. Alone, no philanthropy can change the world. United across communities and hundreds of miles, the members of the Consortium are proving that education grantmakers working together can change Texas.

Wishing you a very happy 2014!