A PARENT GUIDE TO
THE BROAD FOUNDATION'S TRAINING PROGRAMS
AND EDUCATION POLICIES

The question I ask is why should Eli Broad and Bill Gates have more of a say as to what goes on in my child's classroom than I do? – Sue Peters, Seattle parent

In recent months, three prominent school district superintendents have resigned, after allegations of mismanagement, autocratic leadership styles, and/or the pursuit of unpopular policies.

All three were trained by the Broad Superintendents Academy: Maria Goodloe-Johnson (class of 2003) of the Seattle school district, LaVonne Sheffield (class of 2002) of the Rockford, Illinois school district, and Jean-Claude Brizard (class of 2008) of the Rochester New York school district.

Brizard resigned to take the job as CEO of Chicago schools, but his superintendency in Rochester had been mired in controversy. Another Broad-trained Superintendent recently announced his resignation: Tom Brady of Providence, Rhode Island.

Three more Broad-trainees have been recently placed in new positions of authority: John Deasy (class of 2006), as Superintendent of the Los Angeles United School District, John White (class of 2010), Superintendent of the Recovery School District in New Orleans, and Chris Cerf (class of 2004), New Jersey's Acting Education Commissioner. Tom Boasberg was appointed Denver's Superintendent in January 2009, shortly after taking an "Intensive" training at the Broad Academy.

This summary is designed to help parents and other concerned citizens better understand the Broad Foundation's role in training new superintendents and its other "reform" activities, and how the foundation leverages its wealth to impose a top-down, corporate-style business model on our public schools. It is time for communities to become aware of how this major force works.

What is the Broad Foundation?

The Edythe and Eli Broad Foundation engages in venture philanthropy in four areas: education, medical research, contemporary art, and civic projects in Los Angeles. The foundation was established in 1999 by billionaire Eli Broad (b. 1933) who made his fortune in real estate and the insurance business.

A closer look at the Broad Foundation's "investment" in education

The Gates Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation, and the Broad Foundation form a powerful triumvirate. The combined net worth of the three families who operate these foundations is $152 billion. By strategically deploying their immense wealth through training school leaders, financing think-tank reports, and supporting "Astro Turf" advocacy groups, these three foundations have been able to steer the direction of education reform over the past decade.

The Broad Foundation is the least wealthy of the three, but has still spent nearly $400 million on its mission of "transforming urban K-12 public education through better governance, management, labor relations and competition." *But what does that actually mean?*

The signature effort of the Broad Foundation is its investment in its training programs, operated through the Broad Center for the Management of School Systems and the Broad Institute for School Boards. The Broad Center for the Management of School Systems is the larger of the two and consists of two programs: the Broad Superintendents Academy and the Broad Residency in Urban Education.

The Broad Superintendents Academy runs a training program held during six weekends over ten months, after which graduates are placed in large districts as superintendents. Those accepted into the program ("Broad Fellows") are not required to have a background in-education; many come instead from careers in the military, business, or government. Tuition and travel expenses for participants are paid for by the Broad Center, which also sometimes covers a share of the graduates' salaries when they are appointed into district leadership positions. The foundation's website boasts that 43 percent of all large urban superintendent openings were filled by Broad Academy graduates in 2009.

The Broad Superintendents Academy's weekend training course provides an "alternative" certification process which has come to supplant or override the typical regulations in many states that require that individuals have years of experience as a teacher and principal before being installed as a school district superintendents.

The Broad Residency in Urban Education is a two-year program, during which individuals with MBAs, JDs, etc. in the early stages of their careers are placed in high-level managerial positions in school districts, charter management organizations, or state and federal departments of education. The Broad Center subsidizes approximately 33 percent of each Resident's salary.

For financially struggling school districts, the Broad Foundation's offer of trained personnel or services for a free or reduced cost is extremely appealing, and creates a "pipeline" of individuals with the same ideology who can be installed in central office positions.

The Broad Institute for School Boards provides three training programs for elected school board members and non-Broad-trained superintendents conducted in partnership with the Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS). The Institute trains new board members at a one-week summer residential setting. Its Alumni Institute is an advanced course for experienced school board members. The third program, Reform Governance in Action, is by invitation only and provides "a long-term, training/consulting partnership program to selected large, urban districts." The Broad Foundation underwrites 80 percent of all program costs through a grant to CRSS.

The "Broad Prize for Education" is an annual monetary award which is designated for college scholarships; it is given to the urban school district which the foundation deems as the most "improved" in the country. The selection process is sometimes seen as more political than based on actual results.

The Broad Foundation also supports a broad range of pro-charter school advocacy groups, as well as alternative training programs for non-educators who want to work as teachers and principals (Teach for America, New Leaders for New Schools).

In addition, the foundation offers free diagnostic "audits" to school districts, along with recommendations aligned with its policy preferences. It produces a number of guides and toolkits for school districts, including a "School Closure Guide," based on the experiences of Broad-trained administrators involved in closing schools in Boston, Charleston, Chicago, Dallas, Washington, D.C., Miami-Dade County, Oakland, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Seattle.

The foundation finances the Education Innovation Laboratory, run by Harvard economist Roland Fryer, which carries out large-scale experiments in schools districts, focused on teacher pay for performance and rewarding students for good test scores and grades. So far, these trials have failed to demonstrate positive results.

The foundation provided start-up funding for Parent Revolution (formerly the Los Angeles Parent Union), the group which developed the "Parent Trigger" legislation, designed to encourage the conversion of public schools to charter schools. Broad has also has given large amounts of money to Education Reform Now, a pro-charter school advocacy organization.

Eli Broad has said he "expects to be a major contributor" to Students First, former D.C. Chancellor Michelle Rhee's organization that advocates for the expansion of charters, vouchers, and an end to seniority protections for teachers. And journalist Richard Whitmire, author of "The Bee Eater," an admiring biography of Rhee, expressed his gratitude in the book to Democrats for Education Reform, a pro-charter lobbying organization, for serving as the "pass through" for funds from the Broad Foundation which allowed him to "invest everything in book research."

The foundation provided start-up funds to New York City's Leadership Academy, which trains individuals to serve as principals in the city public schools, several of whose graduates have been accused of financial misconduct, as well as arbitrary and dictatorial treatment of teachers, students and parents.

The foundation also helps sponsors media events (a PBS series on the "education crisis" hosted by Charlie Rose, the series Education Nation on NBC, etc.). These programs help promote for Eli Broad's vision of free-market education reform.

In addition to using his foundation to effect change to American public education, Eli Broad has made personal campaign contributions to candidates who are favorably disposed to his preferred policies, even down to the local school board level. In this way, he has helped influence the selection of superintendents who are aligned with him ideologically, even though they may not be Broad Academy graduates.

For instance, Broad contributed to the campaigns of school board candidates who supported former U.S. Assistant Attorney General Alan Bersin's appointment as superintendent of San Diego's school district. A 2006 Vanity Fair article by Bob Colacello reported that "Broad believes reform must come "the top down" and that his foundation "plans to virtually take over the Delaware school system in 2007, pending approval from that state's legislature."

In 2003, Joseph Wise (class of 2003) was installed as superintendent of Christina School District, Delaware's largest. In 2006, Wise was succeeded by Lillian Lowery (class of 2004), who served until 2009 when she was appointed as the state's Secretary of Education. Two Broad Residents work under Lowery at the state level. Another Broad superintendent, Marcia Lyles (class of 2006), replaced Lowery as superintendent of Christina School District.

Along with Bill Gates, Broad contributed millions of dollars to the campaign to extend mayoral control of the public schools in New York City under Michael Bloomberg. Among the leaders he is close to and has personally advised behind the scenes are former NYC Chancellor Joel Klein, former D.C. Chancellor Michelle Rhee, AFT President Randi Weingarten, and US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

How the Broad Foundation affects public school families

Broad and his foundation believe that public schools should be run like a business. One of the tenets of his philosophy is to produce system change by "investing in a disruptive force." Continual reorganizations, firings of staff, and experimentation to create chaos or "churn" is believed to be productive and beneficial, as it weakens the ability of communities to resist change.

As Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, a proponent of this philosophy has said, *"…we can afford to make lots more mistakes and in fact we have to throw more things at the wall. The big companies that get into trouble are those that try to manage their size instead of experimenting with it*."

A hallmark of the Broad-style leadership is closing existing schools rather than attempting to improve them, increasing class size, opening charter schools, imposing high-stakes test-based accountability systems on teachers and students, and implementing of pay for performance schemes. The brusque and often punitive management style of Broad-trained leaders has frequently alienated parents and teachers and sparked protests.

Several communities have forced their Broad-trained superintendents to resign, including Arnold "Woody" Carter (class or 2002), formerly of the Capistrano Unified School District; Thandiwee Peebles,(class of 2002), formerly of the Minneapolis Public School District; and John Q. Porter (class of 2006), formerly of the Oklahoma City Public School District.

A number of other Broad-trained superintendents have received votes of "no confidence" from the teachers in their districts, including Rochester's Jean-Claude Brizard (class of 2008), Seattle's Maria Goodloe-Johnson (class of 2003); Deborah Sims (class of 2005) while Superintendent of the Antioch Unified School District (CA); Matthew Malone (class of 2003) while Superintendent of the Swampscott School District (MA); and most recently, Melinda J. Boone (class of 2004) Superintendent of the Worcester Public Schools (MA).

The Oakland Unified School District (CA) experienced a series of three consecutive Broad-trained, state-appointed administrators over a period of six years. The first, Randolph Ward (class of 2003), aroused huge protests with his plans to close schools and even hired a personal bodyguard for the duration of his tenure. Ward was followed by Kimberly Statham (class of 2003), and Vincent Mathews (class of 2006), all of whom left the district in financial shambles. A civil grand jury found that

> *"….the district was hampered by continuous staff turnover, particularly in the area of finance, numerous reorganizations and a succession of state administrators...After nearly five years of state management, OUSD's budget remains unbalanced and the district's future is unclear."*

Joseph Wise (class of 2003), formerly Superintendent of the Duval County Florida Public Schools, was found to have spent thousands of dollars on personal purchases while a superintendent in Delaware, before being fired by his Duval post in disgrace. While a finalist for the post of Superintendent in Washoe County in Nevada, Kimberly Olson (class of 2005) pled guilty of having engaged in war profiteering when she was a colonel in Iraq.

Chris Cerf (class of 2004), the acting New Jersey Education Commissioner, has been criticized for not identifying his involvement in a consulting firm which developed an secret plan to turn many Newark public schools over to charter operators. The Broad Foundation acknowledged that it put up $500,000 to pay for the plan. Deborah Gist (class of 2008), Rhode Island Commissioner of Education, has supported the firing of all teachers in Central Falls and more recently in Providence, and is aggressively fighting seniority protections for teachers.

General Anthony Tata (class of 2009), has been embroiled in controversy for dismantling Wake County's desegregation plan. John Covington (class of 2008), Superintendent of Kansas City Schools, has announced his intention to close half the schools districts in the city. Robert Bobb (class of 2005), the Emergency Financial Manager of the Detroit Public Schools, recently sent layoff notices to every one of the district's 5,466 salaried employees, including all its teachers, and said that nearly a third of the district's schools would be closed or turned over to private charter operators. At a recent town hall which Bobb had called so he could go over his plan, angry students, parents, and teachers drove him from the meeting. He was escorted out by his six bodyguards.

Conclusion

Eli Broad is a wealthy individual, accountable to no one but himself, who wields vast power over our public schools. Parents and community members should be aware of the extent to which the he and his foundation influence educational policies in districts throughout the country, through Broad-funded advocacy groups, Broad-sponsored experiments and reports, and the placement of Broad-trained school leaders, administrators and superintendents.

Parents Across America considers Broad's influence to be inherently undemocratic, as it disenfranchises parents and other stakeholders in an effort to privatize our public schools and imposes corporate-style policies without our consent. We strongly oppose allowing our nation's education policy to be driven by billionaires who have no education expertise, who do not send their own children to public schools, and whose particular biases and policy preferences are damaging our children's ability to receive a quality education.

For more information on the Broad Superintendents and Residents

Maps showing where some of the Broad superintendents and residents are currently employed can be found on the Broad Foundation's website: Broad Superintendents Academy Fellows and Broad Residents, as well as links to more information about them.

The only complete list of Broad Superintendent trainees is provided on The Broad Report website, created by Sharon Higgins, a founding member of Parents Across America.

Additional Reading

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Tough, Paul (editor). “How Many Billionaires Does It Take to Fix a School System.” *New York Times* 09 March 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/09/magazine/09roundtable-t.html?_r=2

Video: “Parents Across America speak out about corporate interests in education.”

View the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation grants on the IRS Form 990s at the National Center for Charitable Statistics or GuideStar. The foundation’s Federal Employer ID Number (EIN) is 954686318.