

Annenberg told [Newton Minow](#), senior counsel of [Sidley & Austin](#), chairman of the [Carnegie Corporation](#) (1993–1997), [Annenberg Professor of Communications Law and Policy at Northwestern University](#) (1987–2003) and director of its [Annenberg Washington Program](#) (1987–1996): "Everybody around the world wants to send their kids to our universities. South America, Asia, Europe, all of them. But nobody wants to send their kids here to public school. Who would, especially in a big city? Nobody. So we've got to do something. If we don't, our civilization will collapse."^[1]

Annenberg sought recommendations on making a large gift to American public schools from his *pro bono* education advisors:^[4]

1. [Vartan Gregorian](#), president of [Brown University](#) (1989–1997), president of the [Carnegie Corporation](#) (1997–); former president of the [New York Public Library](#); former professor of [Southwest Asian](#) history, dean, and provost of the University of Pennsylvania
2. [Ted Sizer](#), founding chairman of the [Coalition of Essential Schools](#) (CES) (1984–1997), professor of education at [Brown University](#) (1983–1997); former headmaster of [Phillips Andover](#) (1972–1981); former dean of the [Harvard Graduate School of Education](#) (1964–1972)
3. [David Kearns](#), chairman of the [Alexandria-based](#) [New American Schools Development Corporation](#) (NASDC)—a 1991 school reform initiative of President [George H. W. Bush](#); former [Deputy Secretary of Education](#) (1991–1993) under Secretary of Education [Lamar Alexander](#) in the George H. W. Bush administration; former president, CEO and chairman of [Xerox](#)

On December 17, 1993, the 85-year-old Annenberg announced his five-year \$500 million "Challenge to the Nation" at a ceremony in the [Roosevelt Room](#) of the [White House](#) with President [Bill Clinton](#), Secretary of Education [Richard Riley](#), Gregorian, Sizer, Kearns, and Frank Newman, Illinois Governor [Jim Edgar](#) and Colorado Governor [Roy Romer](#) (the president, outgoing and incoming chairman, respectively, of the [Denver-based](#) bipartisan [Education Commission of the States](#) (ECS) ^{[1][5]}

Annenberg announced that he was giving \$113 million over five years to three national school reform organizations:^{[4][6]}

1. \$50 million to a new [Annenberg Institute for School Reform](#) (AISR) at Brown University that would incorporate the CES and be chaired by Sizer
2. \$57 million to the NASDC, chaired by Kearns
3. \$6 million to the ECS (chaired by Edgar and then Romer, with president Newman) to disseminate [NASDC models](#) for restructuring schools

Image Filename: "Chicago Annenberg Challenge WIKI Excerpt showing 113M to 3 School Reform Orgs, with #3 ECS to disseminate #2's model and #1 AISR, chaired by Ted Sizer Screen Shot 2017-05-04 at 1.36PM.png"