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New York Schools Get \$51.2 Million From Gates

By DAVID M. HERSZENHORN

In the largest single private donation ever to benefit the New York City public schools, Bill Gates, the chairman of Microsoft, announced \$51.2 million in grants today to create small public high schools.

The gift, from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, will be directed to seven nonprofit groups to create 67 theme-based schools as part of a continuing effort by the city to break up large, failing high schools in favor of programs with fewer than 500 students.

At a ceremony this morning at Morris High School in the Bronx, Mr. Gates awkwardly shared the stage with an old nemesis, Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein, a former federal prosecutor who led the government's antitrust prosecution of Microsoft.

"I'm glad we're working on the same team," Mr. Gates said, drawing laughs, after being asked about his previous dealings with Mr. Klein.

The Gates Foundation gift will aid a wider effort by the city to create at least 200 small schools, most at the high school level, and to reduce the number of huge schools with thousands of students, many of which are failing and have extremely high dropout rates.

Aides to Mr. Klein said they hoped to align the creation of the new schools with other efforts to overhaul the system by assigning graduates of the city's new Leadership Academy to be principals of the small schools.

"Small high schools are a concept that has been proven to work," Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said at the ceremony. "Students at these small high schools have lower dropout rates than students in larger high schools. Also more of them get passing grades, more of them graduate and more of them go to college. That's wonderful and what we are trying to do is replicate that success and make it available to more kids."

The largest chunk of money, \$29.2 million, will go to New Visions for Public Schools, a New York group that has championed the small-school model and previously worked with the Gates Foundation to create 36 schools that opened in the last two years. New Visions will create 30 new schools in New York.

Other groups receiving money are the Institute for Student Achievement, which will create 10 schools; Replications Inc., which will create eight schools; and the College Board, which will create six schools with an emphasis on advance placement courses.

In addition, two groups, the Asia Society and Outward Bound, were awarded money to create schools in New York City and elsewhere in the United States, bringing the total amount of the Gates Foundation grants to \$66.5 million nationwide.

The Asia Society was awarded \$9.1 million to create a network of 10 international-themed schools, three of which will be in New York City. Outward Bound will get \$15.8 million to create schools with an expeditionary theme, including eight in New York.

The LaGuardia Education Fund will receive \$2 million and create two new international high schools serving recent immigrants.

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