



AUSTIN ED FUND 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEAR FRIENDS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION,

Community support is at the heart of high-quality public education. Thank you for valuing and supporting needs and innovation in Austin ISD. With your help, Austin Ed Fund had its most successful year of public and private investments in our schools, teachers and students.

In 2019, our teacher grant programs awarded over **\$197,644**, the largest amount ever given. These projects included support and innovation at the elementary, middle and high school levels focused on literacy, STEM and whole child. The funded projects included support of single classrooms all the way to entire communities and included anything from unique field trip experiences to classroom materials.

In 2019, the Austin Ed Fund facilitated over \$5M in investments of our teachers, students and district-wide programs, impacting all 80,000+ students and 5,000+ teachers in Austin ISD.

The 2019 Austin Ed Fund Inspire the Future Luncheon raised over \$300,000, our largest event yet with 112 sponsors and 500 attendees. The growth of the Ed Fund is exciting and needed. Our work is not possible without you. Thank you for helping the Austin Ed Fund dream big and inspire and impact thousands of students every day.

WARM REGARDS,



Michelle Wallis
Executive Director



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OUR REACH IN 2019

- Innovation Grant Winners (IG)
- ▲ Student Opportunity Fund Winners (SOF)
- ★ Winner of both IG & SOF



Austin Ed Fund's campus-based grant programs inspire educators to dream big on behalf of their students.

Innovation Grants

Awarded to support enriching and innovative teacher-generated projects.

\$120,002

Student Opportunity Fund

Awarded to support educational enhancement on campuses with more than 70% economically disadvantaged students.

\$77,642

INNOVATION GRANT WINNERS

- AISD Early Childhood Department
- Allison Elementary School
- Austin High School
- Blazier Elementary School
- Bowie High School
- Brooke Elementary School
- Casey Elementary School
- Cunningham Elementary School
- Dawson Elementary School
- Dobie Pre-K Center
- Dawson Elementary School
- Graham Elementary School
- Kealing Middle School
- Maplewood Elementary School
- Martin Middle School
- Mathews Elementary School
- McBee Elementary School
- Navarro Early College High School
- Northeast Early College High School
- St. Elmo Elementary School
- Summitt Elementary School
- Travis Early College High School

STUDENT OPPORTUNITY FUND WINNERS

- AISD AVID Department
- Akins Early College High School
- Becker Elementary School
- Blazier Elementary School
- Brooke Elementary School
- Casey Elementary School
- Dawson Elementary School
- Dobie Pre-K Center
- Dobie Middle School
- Eastside Memorial Early College High School
- Harris Elementary School
- LBJ Early College High School
- Martin Middle School
- Paredes Middle School
- Perez Elementary School
- Rodriguez Elementary School
- Sadler Means Young Women's Leadership Academy
- Sanchez Elementary School
- St. Elmo Elementary School
- Travis Early College High School
- Walnut Creek Elementary School
- Widen Elementary School

OUR 2019 GRANT PROGRAMS

131

Requested Projects

\$706,249

Amount Requested

50

Funded Projects

\$197,644

Amount Funded

% FUNDED PROJECTS BY GRANT TYPE

INNOVATION GRANTS

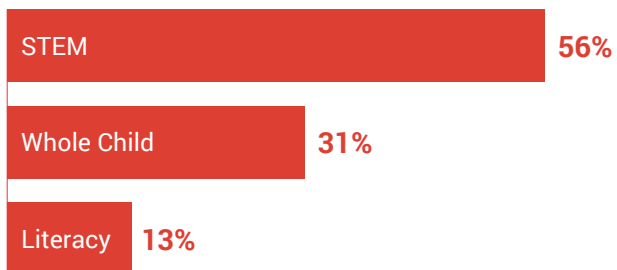
61%

39%

STUDENT OPPORTUNITY FUND

% FUNDED PROJECTS BY FOCUS AREA

INNOVATION GRANTS

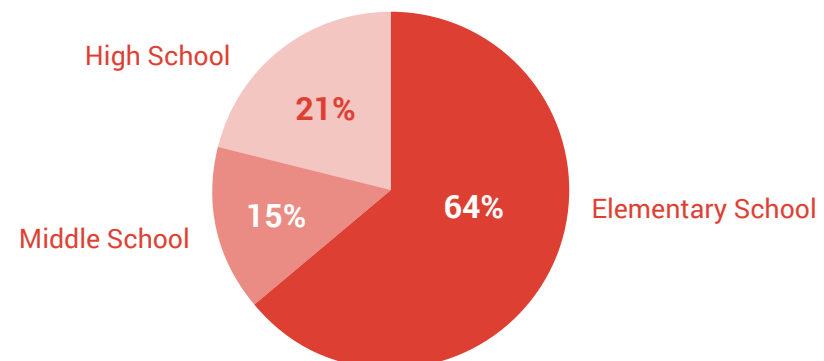


% FUNDED PROJECTS BY FOCUS AREA

STUDENT OPPORTUNITY FUND



% FUNDED PROJECTS BY LEVEL





OUR SPONSORED PROJECTS

Austin Ed Fund has successfully served as a catalyst and facilitated over \$27 million to support Austin ISD strategic priorities and initiatives since 2001. The Austin Ed Fund continues to build relationships with funding partners and develop programmatic and fundraising objectives aligned with AISD's strategic needs. In partnership with individual donors and private and corporate foundations, the Austin Ed Fund continued to support a variety of initiatives in 2019, such as:

WHOLE CHILD

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

AISD continues to be a national leader in the growing movement to develop emotionally resilient children. With the leadership of several foundations, including Buena Vista Foundation, Klein Foundation, NoVo Foundation, St. David's Foundation and Tapestry Foundation, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is being implemented across the district. Taken together, these funders have contributed more than \$10M since 2010

in support of AISD's SEL initiative. Because of SEL, academic success is increasing, behavioral referrals are decreasing and school communities are becoming stronger and more engaged.

Additional philanthropic investments in SEL include:

TBRI/Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics

AISD is on the cutting edge of the application of brain-based, trauma-informed approaches in the field of education. With support from the Buena Vista Foundation, LSG Charitable Foundation and Tapestry Foundation, the district hired a staff position to coordinate the implementation of these approaches in AISD. Other supporters include the Kozmetsky Foundation and Casey Family Programs.

PALS

Grant and Margo Thomas and the Kabacoff Family Foundation generously support the Austin PALS (Peer Assistance Leadership & Service), a youth empowerment and cross-age peer mentoring program that has served thousands of AISD students since it was founded in 1980.

SEL-Focused Professional Development

In 2019, the Covalent Foundation supported staff teams from eight AISD middle schools to attend training on RULER, an evidence-based approach to implementing SEL, developed at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.

Human-Centered Design Project

With support from the NoVo and St. David's Foundations, the district began engaging in a multi-year human-centered design process in 2019 that intentionally re-designs AISD's multi-tiered system of social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health supports and will ultimately create an overarching framework for a contemporary, evidence-based model to support student social and emotional health in AISD. We have partnered with a firm specializing in design thinking to guide the creative, problem-solving process that cultivates innovation and supports participants in the development of thoughtful, effective solutions.

DATA INTEGRATION

Service Provider Partner Data Integration

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation has supported AISD's efforts to better integrate data across community entities to create a comprehensive view of student success. Begun as a pilot, AISD has built an interface for external service providers into the district's electronic case management system (eCST), so that partners and AISD leaders can better understand all of the services students are accessing, which programs or combinations of services are most effective, and where to place services in the future.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

Central Kitchen Pilot

St. David's Foundation awarded a grant to the Austin Ed Fund for AISD to pilot a small-scale,

centralized production kitchen and distribution center. The pilot will inform the development of a master plan to create a large-scale production kitchen, storage and distribution center to ultimately serve the district's 80,000 students—more than half of whom live in economically disadvantaged households and rely on their schools for up to three meals a day.

Innovative Dining Pilot and Strategic Procurement

The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation awarded the Austin Ed Fund a grant for AISD to pilot distributed dining models on two high school campuses (including a "C-Store" or grab-and-go one-stop healthy meal shop, quick cafes, vending machines), and to improve food quality through increased capacity for strategic procurement.

Culinary Garden and Teaching Kitchen at Cunningham Elementary

The Emeril Lagasse Foundation awarded

Cunningham Elementary School via the Austin Ed Fund a grant to implement the Emeril's Culinary Garden & Teaching Kitchen program. Funds have supported the construction of a teaching kitchen and expansion of cooking and gardening programming, in collaboration with nonprofit partner, PEAS (*Partners for Education, Agriculture and Sustainability*).

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Beginning in July 2018, Ascension Seton/Dell Children's provided a three-year grant via the Austin Ed Fund, \$136,271 each year, to support district-wide implementation of GoNoodle, a provider of movement and mindfulness videos and games for children at school and home.





EARLY CHILDHOOD

Pre-K Expansion

Beginning in 2016, thanks to the Buena Vista Foundation, Cullen Family Charitable Foundation, KLE Foundation, LSG Charitable Foundation, Tapestry Foundation and the United Way of Greater Austin, AISD expanded Pre-Kindergarten to serve three-year-olds. Since then, more than 1,000 students have been enrolled in classrooms across 38 campuses.

Early Childhood Fellowship and Strategic Plan

The inaugural AISD Early Childhood Learning Fellowship was initiated, with support from the Buena Vista Foundation, LSG Charitable Foundation and Tapestry Foundation. The Fellowship gathered a cohort of district leaders to deepen knowledge of cutting-edge research and practices in the field of early childhood; understand the current landscape of early childhood education locally and nationally, and enhance AISD's strategic vision and goals for early childhood.

Pre-K Enrollment Project

Austin Ed Fund staff provided support to improve the Pre-K enrollment process, a sometimes cumbersome process that is further complicated by the funding streams and policies governing early childhood. Working with a firm specializing in human-centered design, this project resulted in recommendations to improve the process and allow more families to enroll their three and four-year-olds in Pre-K.

Exploration of Home Visiting Program

In the Summer and Fall of 2019, AISD explored implementing a home visiting program that would use an evidence-based early literacy, parenting, and school readiness model that addresses the achievement gap in kindergarten readiness head-on by providing disconnected, low-income families with young children with the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to build school readiness where it begins: the home. Funded through a planning grant from the St. David's Foundation, the home visiting program would serve 2 to 4-year-olds and their families and leverage the district's successful Families as Partners program and its Parent Champions to serve as home visitors.

COLLEGE & CAREER

Career Launch

Partnerships with Austin Community College, and corporate partners including Dell, IBM and Seton Ascension have helped build AISD's Career Launch program. Career Launch is a collaborative initiative that provides high school students with career-specific training and education, internships and coursework for college credit.

Industry Partnerships

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation has supported the development of the district's strategy around industry partnerships, specifically to assess the needs of campuses, develop systems and infrastructure centrally that can support robust industry partnerships, and develop a more holistic approach to corporate engagement – all in service of providing more awareness, exposure and experiences to our students that will prepare them for college, career and life.

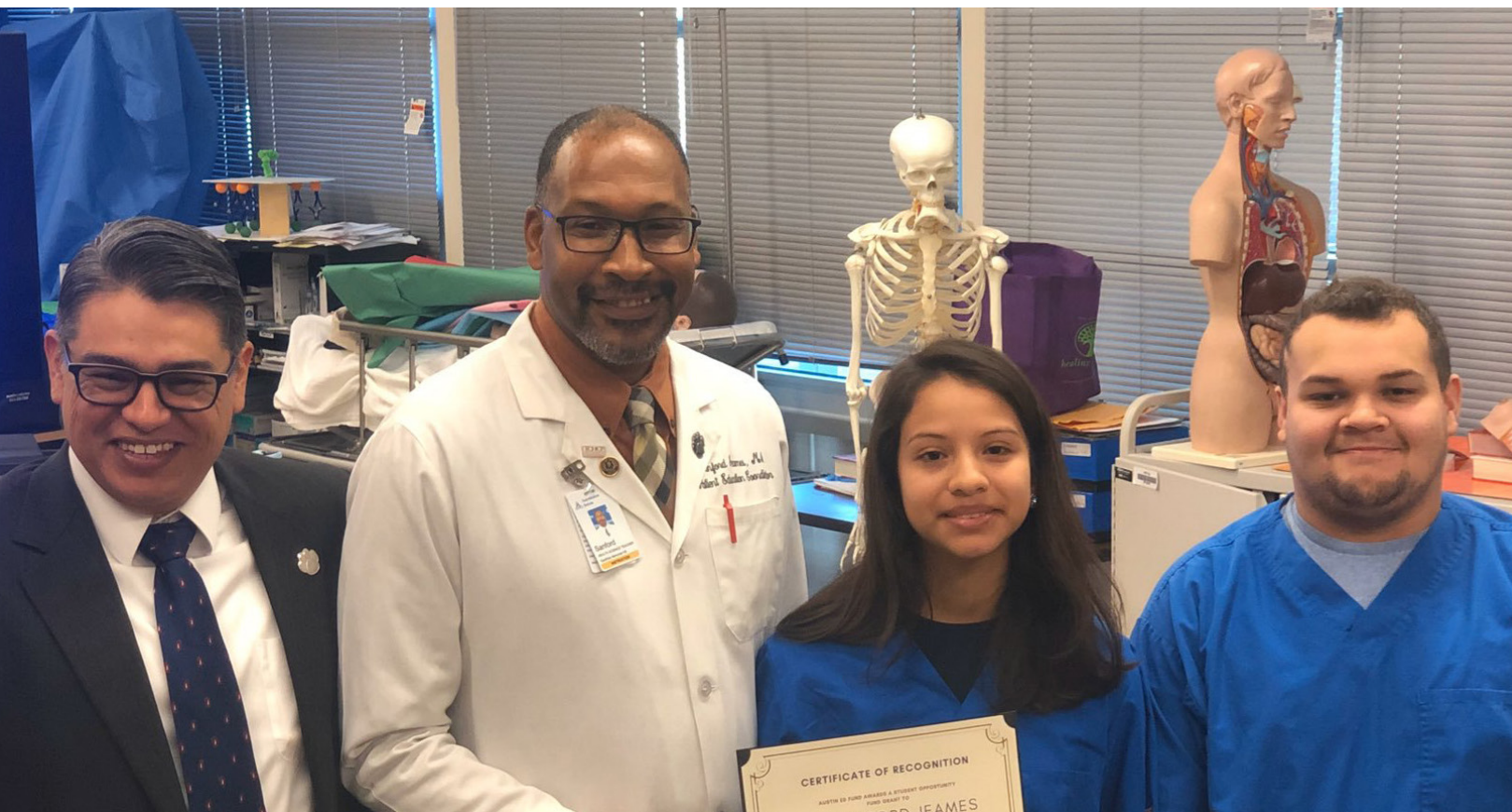
PARENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Families as Partners

The Genevieve and Ward Orsinger Foundation has supported AISD's Families as Partners project over the last several years. The goal is to strengthen families by increasing parental self-efficacy and offering opportunities that support children's learning. Grant funds have been used to support adult education (including ESL and computer/technology classes, ParaEducator Certification and Parent Champion roles), early childhood (including training for parents to provide small-group literacy intervention, and in Conscious Discipline) and family engagement (including offering a curriculum that instructs parents in hands-on learning activities to do with their young children and SEL camps).

Get-Out-the-Count Efforts for 2020 Census

With support from the United Way for Greater Austin, AISD utilized PTA leaders, parent leaders, and Parent Support Specialists to help ensure that historically undercounted populations such as, young children, highly mobile families, racial and ethnic minorities, low income families, nonnative English speakers and the homeless within AISD's boundaries were counted in the census.



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF THE PALS

PALS TODAY

Across the city in scores of schools, Austin students are learning to be leaders thanks to a longstanding peer mentoring program. Since its creation in 1980, the PALS (Peer Assistance Leadership and Service) program has trained thousands of students across the district to become peer mentors to younger students at feeder schools. Additionally, in the last several years, 8th graders have begun mentoring 6th graders, and 4th and 5th graders have begun mentoring PK-2nd grade students. PALS is a class or program in every traditional high school in Austin, in more than a quarter of our middle schools, and in just under half of all elementary campuses.

The PALS serve as role models and learn to expand their interpersonal skills and build a sense of community. The connection between the leaders and their PAlEes is affirming, but PALS also build profound connections with their fellow PALS. As one Navarro student described, "You don't feel alone in this class. You can talk about anything. There's no judging. What happens in PALS stays in PALS."

PALS say they gain as much, if not more, from the opportunity to be mentors to other students. "We learn from the special ed kids," explained one PALS student at Navarro Early College High School. "When we are in the same class, they usually come in a group and don't socialize with a lot of kids. But when we're at lunch with them it's nice because we can socialize with them and they all have smiles on their faces. Sometimes you'll see them in the hallways and they recognize you and high-five or wave at you. You get to connect with kids who don't easily connect with others."

PALS is a curriculum-based program that is an elective course at the middle and high school levels and implemented by school counselors in elementary schools. Teachers build their leaders through teamwork exercises and SEL education. The rewards are high. "I love the relationship you're able to build with the PALS students," said Mirtha Tabasco, Navarro Early College High School's PALS teacher. "The connection you build is a lot deeper than with a regular class. You get to know them as people, not just students."

On a larger scale, district leaders are proud of the thousands of students making an impact on their schools and their community. Stacia Bowley, Austin ISD PALS Liaison, sees incredible power in these students.

"A lot of times, young people are underestimated. A lot of times adults assume they won't rise to the occasion, but I'm always amazed that students are continually brave. Not only are they taking a risk to get to know kids in their PALS class, but they're creating an environment where everyone shows up and is open. And they keep rising to that occasion."

PALS ALUMNI

From its beginnings in 1980, the PALS mentoring program has been supporting students and building community leaders. Early on, it became clear that the program's success would reach well beyond the classroom. Not just for the high school years, but for the decades beyond.

Mentored kids were raising their grades, staying in school longer, and feeling more connected to their school. Mentors were rising to the challenge, accepting increased responsibilities, and seeing how powerful their influence could be on a younger mind.

In its first year, PALS enlisted 10 students at Crockett High School in Austin. The next year, they added Lanier (now known as Navarro) High School. Within seven years, all the high schools in Austin offered a PALS program, and by 1994 more than 300 school districts in Texas and beyond had joined in on the effort. More than three decades later, there are thousands of PALS alumni across the country.

To harness the strength of those bonds, PALS is now developing alumni chapters so that

participants can stay connected after their high school experience, support their fellow PALS, and bolster the entire program. The goal is to have alumni chapters in every high school.

PALS alumni are proof of the importance of this mission and the long-term influence of PALS. We are proud to share a few of their stories:

You don't feel alone in this class. You can talk about anything. There's no judging. What happens in PALS stays in PALS."

PALS student, Navarro Early College High School

Servando Varela was a freshman at Crockett High School the year that the PALS program was created. As one of a handful of students selected to be mentors in this pilot program, he agreed to participate without many expectations of what was to come. To his surprise, the experience turned out to provide skills he would use throughout his life and career.

"I probably didn't realize what I was getting out of it when I was in it, but looking back, PALS gave me real insight into compassion," he said. "It taught me how to talk to strangers."

Turns out, talking to strangers would become a large part of Varela's career. After high school and college, he joined the Austin Police Department and served the city for 23 years.

"As a police officer, you're dealing with the public every day. You have to be able to strike up a conversation with a stranger...to learn how to relate to all kinds of people."

In his second career as the owner of a home remodeling business, Varela continues to value those interpersonal skills he learned through PALS.

"Every day I'm dealing with employees or I'm doing estimates for the company. I'm always meeting new people. When I think about the PALS program, I wonder if I helped the kids as much as they helped me in the future. Because PALS gave me the tools to walk into any setting and confidently say, 'Hi, I'm Servando. How are you?'"



Pastor Robert Moore is very clear about what PALS did for him: it completely turned his life around.

Moore's story actually began the day of his graduation from Navarro (then known as Lanier) High School. Right before walking the stage, he learned that he had missed his graduation requirements by half a credit and wouldn't be allowed to graduate.

He was devastated. "I had my whole family sitting there waiting. It was an honor for my family because not a lot of graduates were coming out of my family," he said. "Somehow I drove home to east Austin from the Toney Burger Center, but up until this very day I couldn't tell you how I did that."

Once he got over the hurt, Moore returned to Lanier (Navarro) for the fall semester and joined PALS. He spent three days a week mentoring 8th graders. When the fall semester ended and his graduation requirements were met, Moore decided to complete the school year so he could finish counseling the young students. And so began his lifelong journey of working with youth.

Early in his career Moore worked with agencies such as Travis County MHMR and Family Forward, where he was the first African-American parent liaison in Texas. Later on he served inner-city fathers, counseled inmates, became certified in anger management facilitation, and earned both his bachelor's and master's degree.

Today Moore is a pastor and is working on his PhD. Of all the lessons PALS taught him, he believes integrity was the most valuable. "I didn't

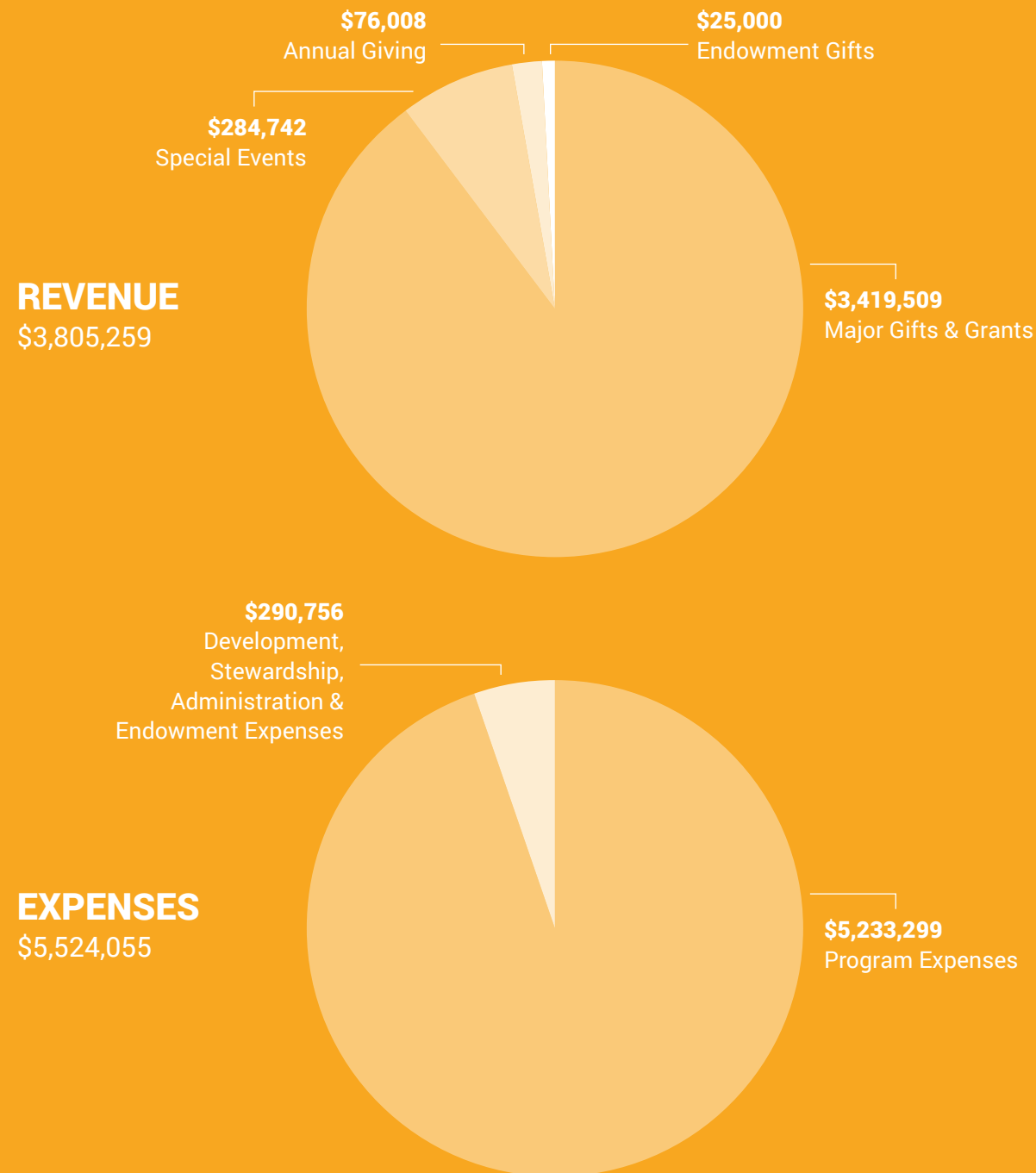
fully understand the power of integrity until I dealt with kids who knew what it felt like to be let down. So integrity has been my priority ever since. To keep my word. On that integrity you build respect."

"A lot of times, young people are underestimated. A lot of times adults assume they won't rise to the occasion, but I'm always amazed that students are continually brave. Not only are they taking a risk to get to know kids in their PALS class, but they're creating an environment where everyone shows up and is open. And they keep rising to that occasion."

Stacia Bowley, Austin ISD PALS Coach

The PALS Program is made possible by generous donors. A special thank you to Grant and Margo Thomas and the Kabacoff Family Foundation and the Buena Vista Foundation for your generous support of the PALS program.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE



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We have seen students become highly invested in their school and now have an increased appreciation for the environment and outdoors. This Outdoor Learning Lab has also supported our STEAM initiative and provided countless opportunities for STEAM based hands on learning.

*Casey Elementary Outdoor Learning Lab
 Alexandra Denning*

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