

2019 Annual Report

Empowering what works.



More kids in great schools.

We're committed to transformational change.

We're tackling systemic barriers. This includes expanding pathways to the teaching profession, developing and retaining great teachers, and supporting families from underserved neighborhoods in demanding schools that work — investing in both their leadership and parent-led campaigns.

And we are building a critical mass of schools that work through strategic investments in proven and promising schools — providing the expert guidance, funding and resources great schools need to grow and succeed.

We're empowering what works.



Together, we have power.

Each of us cares deeply about the future of Minneapolis children, particularly those who are underserved by the current system. We each must contribute to dismantling a status quo that disregards their potential.

But we need each other to succeed. Only together can we ensure every child attends a high-quality, well-resourced, talent-filled school that is responsive to their needs.

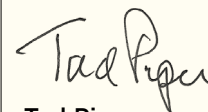
No single program, initiative, nonprofit organization, agency or agenda can prevail alone. That's why we focus on collaboration — building on our respective experience and expertise to ensure that all children have access to a great education. For our kids to succeed, we must continue to strengthen an aligned, coordinated ecosystem that supports schools that work across sectors.

We're committed to quality and collaboration, equity and engagement. Together, empowered schools and empowered communities are creating desperately needed change for kids.

MN Comeback is generating demand for schools that work and fixing broader conditions that schools face so they can better meet the needs of the communities they serve. Meanwhile, Great MN Schools partners with and invests in individual schools that demonstrate success or that are well positioned to succeed. Our investments amplify the schools' impact through expansion

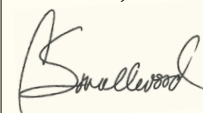
and improvement strategies so that all students have access to a better education. Our aligned strategies — and our work with you — maximizes our collective impact.

We invite you to review the results, and to let the stories impress and inspire you. Thank you for all that you do to support this work and the kids in our community.



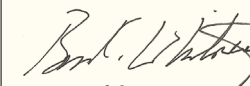
Tad Piper

Co-chair, MN Comeback



Carolyn Smallwood

Co-chair, MN Comeback



Ben Whitney

Board chair, Great MN Schools

Empowering communities.



Empowering schools.



Empowering what works is working.

Our organizations' combined progress is made possible through direct investments and hands-on engagement.

More schools that demonstrate all kids can learn

Number of schools in the Great MN Schools portfolio



14 high-performing schools

By 2022, we will have **25 schools** in our portfolio; **14** of these schools — amounting to **6,000 seats** — will be high-performing.



Increase school outcomes

Great MN Schools invests in schools already showing progress for kids and helps them achieve

stronger results through targeted improvement plans guided by national best practices.

This year, we invested

\$1,039,500



across our

16 portfolio schools



benefiting

4,635 students

Our Good-to-Great schools, for example:

Completed extensive **school quality reviews** assessing their structure and practices to promote student learning and effective instruction, and identified areas of focus to improve.

Leveraging their reviews, schools set ambitious goals, including — at the end of 3 years — increasing MCA proficiency scores in math and reading by as much as **29 points**.

Addressing pressing obstacles that schools face; to date:

8 schools accessed school quality reviews, strategic planning and/or implementation support from Bellwether Education Partners

58 school leaders accessed capacity building through the Relay National Principals Academy, EdFuel, ANet and/or Teach For America

321 teachers participated in the national TNTP Insight Survey on the instructional support they receive

15 hires for portfolio schools resulted from MN Comeback's hiring fair with TNTP, including five people of color

13 leaders received executive coaching

100% of our portfolio schools found our supports and investments “very helpful” toward improving student academic outcomes

6 school boards accessed development or member recruitment support

11 policy victories were seeded or supported, including expansion of teacher preparation pathways for people of color

Toward a city goal of 10,000... Since 2016: The number of high-performing seats for underserved students has increased from 3,092 to

5,929

Families leading the charge

To date:



3,011 parents

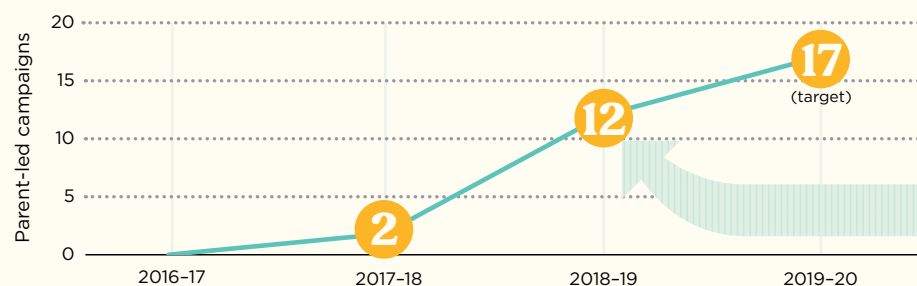
completed advocacy trainings, preparing them to advocate at the school, district or state level

250+ parents took action as part of a campaign, from media interviews to testifying at the Capitol

40 parent leaders helped design campaigns this year, toward a goal of 200 by fiscal year '22

Parent-led campaigns

MN Comeback invests in campaigns designed and led by families



New campaigns include advocating for:

- Priority enrollment for students from underserved neighborhoods to access high-performing Minneapolis district schools
- Stopping the overrepresentation of kids of color labeled for emotional and behavioral disorders

970

families

have benefited from Family Advocates in multiple ways, including...

500+

strengthened their advocacy skills

150

received school enrollment help

364

accessed one-on-one support, from finding a new school to addressing a problem at a current one

100+

participated in school tours across 34 schools — including every changing-the-odds school





The arc of advocacy.



Family advocacy momentum: Capacity-building to action

MN Comeback supplements direct community work by investing in other grassroots organizations that have established, trusted relationships so we can get further, faster. We provide funding, training and tools. Together, we're redefining parent engagement.

A multi-year, campaign-building strategy:

Train.

2017 *Tapping into parent agency*
13 organizations launched trainings on how to secure information on schools, talk about quality, advocate for children and show the impact of their voice.

Build.

2018 *Bridging disparate, fragmented efforts*
Grantees designed campaigns and applied for our Ed Champions Fellowship; we invested in six organizations to build campaigns.

Launch.

2019 *Launching campaigns*
Parents identified issues and built campaigns to address them, including advocating for an end to the over-representation of black students receiving emotional behavior labels, priority enrollment in high-performing schools for students underserved and a multi-measure school performance framework. ●

Many voices, same commitment

We supported the following organizations' campaigns or trainings this year:

- Centro Tyrone Guzman
- Coalition of Asian American Leaders
- East Side Neighborhood Services
- Isuroon
- KWST
- Latino Youth Development Collaborative
- Little Earth
- P.A.R.O.S.
- Pillsbury United Communities
- STANDUP
- Uplift MN
- Voices of Effective Change



Minneapolis' first-ever parent-led candidate forum

Empowered by their training, Ed Champions Fellows initiated and led a first-of-its-kind Minneapolis school board candidate forum that drew 150 attendees and 2,200 online viewers. The impetus: Convene a forum for families grounded in critical issues, including schools that fail kids year after year.

Fellows believed they could do better by asking questions themselves—and they did. They asked tough questions, including unpacking a board proposal to divert funding from northside schools. The Minneapolis school board candidate forum impressed long-time DFL leaders who commented that it was the best candidate forum, of any kind, they've seen. ●



Emoji placards also prompted attendee engagement.

“In our city, 24% of black kids are reading at grade level. Many families are outraged and many schools are compelled to do better. MN Comeback is harnessing this will into desperately needed action.”

– Bernadeia Johnson,
MN Comeback Board Member



3,011 parents have completed advocacy trainings, including dozens at Centro Tyrone Guzman — a grantee.

“It’s vital to have students, parents, advocates and other education stakeholders be in the ‘room where it happens.’ MN Comeback is galvanizing conversations in communities, kitchens and the Capitol about what needs to be done to ensure our schools are working for every learner in Minneapolis and across our state.”

– Aimee Guidera,
MN Comeback Board Member



Dozens of partners, from Family Advocate Khulia Pringle to MN Comeback board member Aimee Guidera, joined us in testifying at the Capitol this year or addressed legislators one-on-one.



Sharon El-Amin, Founder of P.A.R.O.S.

Growing our base

By Sharon El-Amin, P.A.R.O.S.

I've lived in North Minneapolis for three decades. It's where I've served as a community activist, helped those who are less fortunate and raised my three children. In a city hamstrung by inequities, I've seen — and experienced — the power of a great school positively changing the life of a child.

That's why I've been partnering with MN Comeback. This year, I created P.A.R.O.S. — Parents Alliance Reclaiming Our Schools — for mothers and fathers, grandfathers, aunts and uncles, friends and stakeholders to come together to build relationships for the success of all students. Positive, healthy teacher-student relationships are the foundation of a high-quality education.

These relationships are strongest when families acquaint themselves with classroom learning and expectations, and when teachers and families deepen their role in school improvement. So, we're campaigning for better school-level information transparency in the Minneapolis district so every family knows how schools are preparing students for success. I appreciate that MN Comeback recognizes the duality of rigor and relevance in schools that work. ●

Families demand input on the MPS comprehensive plan

By Adriana Cerrillo, Family Advocate

MN Comeback's investments in community have equipped families to advocate for more schools that work. As advocates, we're pursuing agendas that really matter to underserved communities of color, together. This past year, we started collaborating on the Minneapolis district's draft strategic plan.

We organized a parent-led demonstration at a school board meeting asserting that public meetings going forward require interpreters. We also had 90 parents sign up to deliver public comments and we successfully delayed the vote to approve the plan to better engage communities in the process.

We continue to advocate for tailored school improvement strategies and equitable decision-making for local school communities. ●

Mobilizing & organizing parents

Johari Moten was one of the 3,011 parents who participated in trainings that MN Comeback funded. His training with KWST Behavioral Development Group equipped him with effective strategies and tools for communicating with his son's school.

"KWST is an innovative organization building awareness of the issues. They are solution-focused, and they'll make systemic changes because it's their imperative. They operate day in and day out with a sense of urgency that is inspiring."

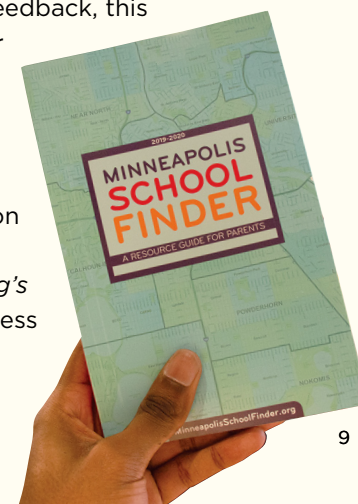
- Johari Moten, Parent

KWST focuses on dismantling the over-representation of marginalized youth, especially black boys, placed on emotional or behavioral plans. EBD is a subjective, catchall disability category; the

imbalance of the EBD special education designation signals a need to re-examine how educators' racial biases factor into the label's use. ●

Information is power

Partnering with 36 community organizations, we released the 3rd edition of *Minneapolis School Finder* (26,500 out the door since we launched in 2017!). Based on parent feedback, this edition included the number of students at each school — by student demographics — who are reading and doing math on grade level, and information on transportation options. We also improved *MinneapolisSchoolFinder.org's* search functionality and access to Family Advocates for one-on-one support. ●



Enrolling kids in schools that work & demanding more of them.

Families should not have to sacrifice rigor for relevance

By Keary Saffold, KWST

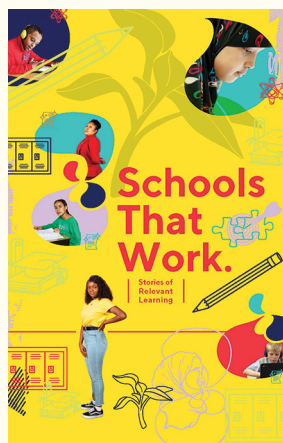
To counter families — and our community at-large — being inundated with abysmal results and test scores that tell one infuriating story after another of discouragement, dismissal and diminishment, I contributed to and helped release *Schools That Work: Stories of Relevant Learning*.

“Students and their families should demand more examples of schools that educate young minds — no matter their zip code, skin color, family language or financial circumstances. My hope: *Schools That Work* speaks to that expectation and inspires families to choose schools that offer both challenging academics and supportive relationships, effective communication, strong school culture and cultural intelligence.”

This collection of stories highlight what it means, in the words of families, when schools strive to benefit all students. Children thrive when rigorous

academics are relevant — relatable today and preparing them to face the world tomorrow.

Schools That Work elevates the work and results at Cristo Rey (independent school), Northeast College Prep (charter school) and Green Central (district school). More than 2,500 copies are scattered across barbershops, salons, eateries and community hubs in South and North Minneapolis. ●



***Schools That Work* is also available in Hmong, Somali and Spanish.**

Family Advocates provide 1:1 support



Family Advocates: Front row: Adriana Cerrillo, Mustafa Diriye, Verónica Rivera Arteaga. Second row: Khulia Pringle, Tashonda Williamson, Houda Abdo, Ariana Guerra, Fatoun Ali, Miski Aden, Sahro Abukar, Kay Comeaux. Sophie Meads (not pictured).

Equipping families with more tools

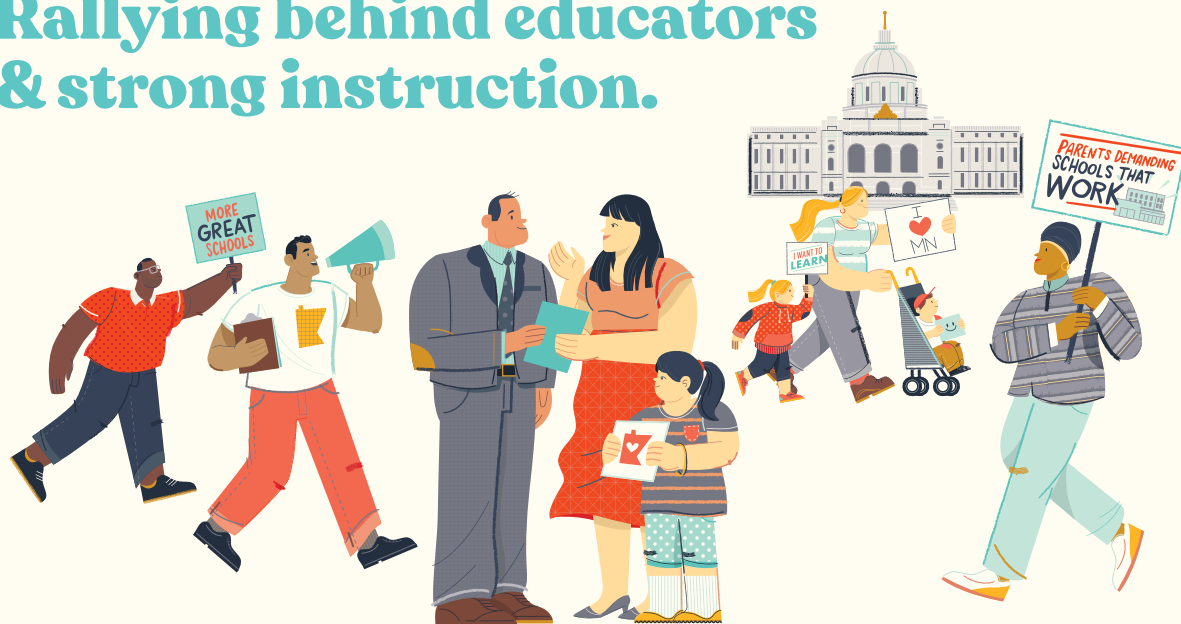
Stemming from *Schools That Work*, we created a guide that features lists of “what to look for” in schools as well as sample questions families can ask.

The guide is a product of Design Thinking and workshops with families, facilitated by Sankore Consulting, with guidance from our Relevance Committee. It supports parents when exploring schools or demanding change at their current school. It’s grounded on:

- Family communication and constructive relationships
- Family voice and leadership
- Ensuring that all kids are learning and meeting high expectations ●



Rallying behind educators & strong instruction.



Validating narratives, dialing up expectations

We're proud to elevate work and conversations toward more schools that work. TNTP, a national, best-in-class leader in policies and practices that ensure effective teaching in every classroom, published *The Opportunity Myth*, a report validating that underserved students often spend their time in school without access to key resources.

As cited in the report, "students spent the equivalent of six months of wasted class time in each core subject on assignments that weren't appropriate for their grade...."

This first-of-its-kind research was a result of partnering with five diverse school systems to thoroughly understand students' views on their education and the experiences and instruction schools offered their students. ●

Underserved students don't have access to these four key resources:

Grade-appropriate assignments

Strong instruction

Deep engagement

Teachers with high expectations

"MN Comeback convened 100+ advocates and educators on our report's findings and toolkits for reform. We were thrilled to present to such large, engaged crowds. As a result, Hiawatha Academies and Centro Tyrone Guzman extended the training to their networks, and other schools, such as Global Academy and Ascension Catholic School, are exploring changing curriculum."

- Garima Bhatt Handley, TNTP



A win for teacher and students: Tiered licensure defense

Talented educators come to licensure from multiple pathways.

School and district leaders continually cite the challenge of having too small a pool of teacher candidates of color and/or with the skills needed to meet the academic needs of all students. This is why we helped actively fight legislation to reinstate barriers to licensure and counteract the progress made in 2018 with Minnesota's tiered licensure system. ●

Diversifying the teacher workforce

Alternative pathways with a proven track record of attracting diverse teaching candidates and developing them into effective licensed teachers are critical for our students' success. (Kids with teachers who reflect them often demonstrate stronger outcomes.)

That's why we worked alongside stakeholders to provide the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board with feedback on rules for teacher certification pathways, like TNTP's, to ensure that training outcomes lead to student success in both alternative and traditional programming.

50% Candidates of color
TNTP aims to attract.

We also helped launch TNTP as an alternative licensure pathway so that school leaders have access to more aspiring candidates. Fifty percent of TNTP's teacher candidates identify as people of color, and research validates the effectiveness of its teacher training model. ●

Teacher assistants, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, Teach For America corps members and individuals inspired to change careers are among the candidates TNTP serves.



We helped TNTP work toward approval to be a certification provider in Minnesota. TNTP also established an advisory committee of Twin Cities district and charter leaders to guide its program launch in fall 2020.



“Good-to-Great”



New Millennium Academy: We're on our way

*By Stephanie Steen, Principal,
New Millennium Academy*

Before I joined New Millennium Academy, the staff had experienced significant change and discord. In one year, 80% of the teachers left.

When I started as principal last year, my first goal was to listen and learn. In the toxic culture, student achievement had declined. I knew that if we wanted to improve outcomes, we needed to focus on building trust.

Refined focus & intentionality

Once we established a strong culture, we partnered with Great MN Schools on its Good-to-Great program, which in turn allowed us to bring

Bellwether Education Partners in to evaluate and lead us through strategic planning. Our evaluators affirmed the positive things they observed, while giving us honest and helpful feedback on what they experienced during their review.



We're building on our strengths instead of being side-tracked by what hasn't worked in the past — key tenets of the Good-to-Great philosophy.



They helped us build our strategic plan with short-term gains and a roadmap for long-term success. And they supported me, realizing the demands on my time and the rigor of the endeavor.

Great MN Schools makes the change possible

We already see the impact of our strategic plan coming to life, including 90% teacher retention this past year stemming from focus provided by the plan. It's critical to have the right partnership throughout this process and we have that with Great MN Schools, including ongoing check-ins and support.

To jump-start implementation, Great MN Schools had me establish milestones for the next three years focused on survey data, student enrollment, staff retention and other details, not just MCA scores. By digging deeper into the data, we see how many kids are maintaining or improving their academic performance even if they're not yet at proficiency. In examining different groups of students, we also see that we're heading in the right direction. ●



100% of Hiawatha's first graduating class were accepted into college — and they were awarded \$6.5 million in scholarships.

Student-centered improvement at Hiawatha Academies

By Colette Owens, Executive Director, Hiawatha Academies

Improvement work is not centered on quick wins. At Hiawatha, we're employing a logical and methodical approach. Data in the areas where we're focused is exciting; our progress keeps us energized about achieving our long-term goals.

Survey signals improvement in focus areas

We've focused on strengthening our curriculum and building support systems for students, particularly around academics and character development. And we've prioritized teacher coaching, raising academic expectations and enhancing our students' learning experiences.

TNTP's Insight Survey is our "check engine light" reminder to examine whether our focused

efforts are having an impact — and they are. Scholars, for example, are meeting or exceeding growth goals, and survey results indicate improvements in increased collaboration among teachers and in teacher recognition.

"We're creating an environment where scholars are thinking, speaking and having dialogues in class — they're developing leadership skills in the classroom."

Shared responsibility

Every child needs an opportunity to meet the high standards that we set and to have a strong school culture. There's a false belief that students of color can have only one or the other, that they cannot strive academically and value their culture at the same time. Our graduates prove otherwise.

Talent-Ready Cohort

School leaders sought support in developing effective talent management practices to better hire, develop and retain diverse, effective teachers.

"The resources and ideas from peers are valuable — I appreciate (as always) that people are willing to share. We learned the tools to successfully bolster the quantity, quality and diversity of our applicant pool!"

— Erin Healy, Cristo Rey

We created the Talent-Ready Cohort, which pairs direct support from EdFuel and TNTP with a cohort experience. Schools are now accessing tailored supports to advance their most pressing needs, as well as a toolkit and peer network to engage when future talent priorities arise. ●

As partners in this work, Great MN Schools has helped us shift from feeling like we're in a silo to benefiting from external partnerships and collaboration. Structures and systems to strengthen leadership and academics for kids are examples. We're also engaging families around academic improvement so that our work is owned collectively. ●





Ramping-up family engagement & communication.

Investing in parents as partners

We convened our first year of Academic Community Partnership with five schools — in partnership with Andrea Jasken Baker — to gauge and improve how they invest in parents as partners.

“MN Comeback has led by example. This partnership has shifted us to proactive partnerships with families that will improve academic outcomes.”

- Charvez Russell,
Friendship Academy of the Arts

We refocused school efforts to partner with parents toward improving student outcomes. This included utilizing the Flamboyant Framework to identify priorities and high-impact strategies.

This has allowed the cohort to reflect on how parents are invited to give feedback on school improvement, how the school lives up to its values, and how parents' ideas and expectations are collected and considered. ●



Helping schools that work to meet their enrollment goals

Minneapolis is saturated with schools, which has caused many to fall short on enrollment.

Since the 2017 release of Minneapolis School Finder, enrollment in our city's lowest-performing schools has decreased by 700-plus students.

To address this issue, we conducted a citywide poll to understand how parents define a great school and, in partnership with a pro bono team at General Mills, completed qualitative research to unearth the factors that trigger families to switch schools. We shared this intel with district, charter and independent schools at a two-day enrollment training. ●

Findings from our citywide poll & General Mills research

What parents look for in a great school:

High achievement statistics

Enrichment in addition to core content

Student mastery of core content

Safe and welcoming environment



Support for the whole child

Curriculum/programming that meets students' needs

And why they switch schools:

Bullying (from students and adults)

Poor academics

Transportation challenges

Expanding what works.



Great MN Schools guides Hennepin Schools through expansion

By Julie Henderson, Executive Director, Hennepin Schools

We don't want to just get bigger — we want to get better. In 2018-19, we finished our first year of implementing a growth plan, including, in response to family demand, opening a middle school. Expanding to two sites has been my most-challenging undertaking since our launch.

This year, seven of my eight leaders had new roles. In partnership with Great MN Schools,

we developed a 10-year strategic plan that is guiding us through the change. The strategic plan captured our thoughts and put them on paper — the manifestation of our vision for Hennepin. For our kids to succeed, we need to stay focused on the strategic plan or we risk derailing our progress.

Accessing critical professional development & coaching

Every leader on my management team had an executive coach (made possible by Great MN

A key driver for schools to work: high-functioning boards

“In my work with the boards of schools in the Great MN Schools portfolio, I’ve been impressed with the improvements I’ve seen — alignment with school leadership on strategy; elevating board accountability, systems and effective elections; and onboarding new members. Boards are driving strategic discussions to ensure sustainability and academic performance. Strong oversight and collaboration is essential.”

– Beth Finch,
CharterSource Founder /
Great MN Schools Board Member

Schools), who served as a sounding board and mentor. They listened to our ideas and helped us to resolve issues, all while pushing us to adhere to the strategic plan.

“In my 30 years of education, I had never before been mentored in such an explicit way — having someone so dedicated to my growth. It has been invaluable”

We’ve dedicated significant time to professional development over the years. But in order for development to be effective, it needs to stick, and too often it doesn’t. We’ve seen immediate benefits from participating in the

Relay National Principals Academy Fellowship, which wouldn't be possible without Great MN Schools and MN Comeback.

Relay is by far the best staff development program I've seen. It required us to practice and gave us a common language so we could move forward together, to create a better environment for our teachers and students based on best practices. When we examined our TNTP Insight Survey data, professional development was an area where we saw a marked improvement.

Resources like Relay and TNTP are critical when you're focused on strengthening your school. They're desperately needed in education, and they've helped us do intensive coaching and make systems improvements in our school—efforts which are translating to stronger teachers and real-time upgrades.



Creating a personalized education experience

Most of our families are recent immigrants or first-generation Americans from Somali or Latino heritage, but we also serve many African American families that have chosen Hennepin as a safe place. We've worked hard to create a tight-knit, authentic culture at Hennepin Schools, one centered on respect and responsiveness. When we engage families as true partners in their children's education, we see the difference it makes for kids.

As we grow, we recognize the challenge in providing a personalized education experience, where every staff member knows all of the kids and their families. But we're committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where our students and their families thrive. ●



Hope Academy is growing, in more ways than one

"We're expanding into our existing footprint in Phillips to serve 700 students. In our 20-year history, this is a milestone for us. And, aligned with our core value to deliver remarkable education, we've leaned into the other part of growth: Improvement. This year, Great MN Schools connected us with Bellwether for a school quality review, strategic planning and focused coaching for leadership. These tools have been invaluable—and come at a critical time as we welcome more families to our school."

— Russ Gregg,
Head of School, Hope Academy

Fiscal year 2019 spending.

Total investments across MN Comeback and Great MN Schools: \$3,914,449



MN Comeback ecosystem fund

Talent	\$ 736,460
Community engagement	906,577
Policy	267,500
Facilities	39,500
Relevance	60,950
School sectors	31,962*

Subtotal: \$ 2,042,949

*Grants to improve the overall sector — district, charter and independent — to grow the number of schools that work for students from underserved neighborhoods.

Together, empowered communities and empowered schools are creating desperately needed change for kids in Minneapolis.

MN Comeback is generating demand for schools that work and fixing broader conditions that schools face so they can better meet the needs of the communities they serve. And Great MN Schools partners with, and invests in, individual schools that demonstrate success or that are well-positioned to succeed.

Our investments work in coordination to amplify their impact for kids and families.



Great MN Schools

Good-to-great	\$ 1,165,000
Expansion	506,500
Technical assistance to portfolio and planning schools	200,000

Subtotal: \$ 1,871,500

“MN Comeback and Great MN Schools have been both courageous and deliberate in their work; their due diligence and planning have positioned me to be a more effective funder.”

- Becky Erdahl,
Carolyn Foundation /
MN Comeback Board Member



A new investment this year: Chicago learning walk inspires change

People need to see great schools to know what's possible. While our portfolio schools are achieving better results than other Minneapolis schools serving similar populations, we're aiming higher.



Great MN Schools organized a learning walk to Chicago — 32 school leaders from 13 schools joined the two-day trip.

Our partners at ANet helped us tour four Chicago Public Schools deemed excellent or on the path to excellence, based on Chicago school ratings. We focused on those with notable instruction and strong leadership, and were afforded ample time at each to engage deeply with leaders on these attributes.

Helen Fisk and Scott Flemming from Global Academy welcomed the opportunity to gain insight from their Chicago peers on their change efforts. “We know our best schools can do even better,” said Fisk. “We need to lean in to continuous improvement and be open to adjusting our approach. We changed our science curriculum based on what we learned from the trip.” ●



Thank you!

We are grateful to the many foundations, individuals and corporations that are investing to empower schools and empower communities to create real change for students.*

3M Foundation	Douglass Brandenburg Family Foundation	Charles and Tara Maxwell	Smikis Foundation
Albright Family Foundation	Becky Erdahl	Bob and Polly McCrea	Chris and Nell Smith <i>The Longview Foundation</i>
Susan and Richard Anderson Family Fund	Beth and David Finch	McKnight Foundation	Soran Foundation
Craig Bentsdahl	Frey Foundation	The Medtronic Foundation	SPS Commerce
Thomas and Maggie Borman	General Mills Foundation	The Minneapolis Foundation	Bruce and Julie Steiner
John and Joan Brooks Fund	Penny George <i>George Family Foundation</i>	Lucy Mitchell <i>The Longview Foundation</i>	Turner Family Foundation
Carlson Family Foundation	GHR Foundation	David and Leni Moore	USBank
The Carolyn Foundation	Paul and Margot Grangaard	The Mortenson Family Foundation	WEM Foundation
Ciresi Walburn Foundation For Children	The Graves Foundation	Marcia Page	Whitney Family Fund
City Fund	Aimee and Bill Guidera	James Payne	Eleanor and Fred Winston <i>The Longview Foundation</i>
Cloverfields Foundation	I.A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation	The Tad and Cindy Piper Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation	Wollan and Fan Family Fund
Douglas and Wendy Dayton	The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota	Piper Jaffray	Brenda and Shay Wyley
David Winton Bell Foundation	The Joyce Foundation	Prospect Creek Foundation	
Mary Dolan <i>The Longview Foundation</i>	David and Diane Lilly	Paul Reyelts	
Code42 Software	LRE Foundation	Ann and Pat Ryan	
	Dave and Kathleen MacLennan		

*The generous donors listed on this page have made investments greater than \$1,000 from 7/1/18 through 6/30/19

Building strong Catholic schools

By Meg Nodzon, GHR Foundation

GHR Foundation is proud to have helped fund MN Comeback's and Great MN Schools' work for the past several years. We deeply appreciate their appetite for unpacking the complex, leaning into the hard work and understanding that a city of great schools requires those of all types, including independent schools.

Given the precision of ecosystem strategy and intentionality around partnering with good schools to become great ones, GHR aligned an increasing amount of our work to support independent schools serving kids with unmet needs.

Together, we:

- Seeded a coalition that lobbied for Opportunity Scholarships; for the first time, legislation included accountability and focused on students underserved.
- Continued the work of FHI360, a program facilitating the analysis of student assessment data in archdiocese K-8 schools to understand areas for academic improvement and to increase school leader instructional capacity.
- Provided five school leaders with access to ANet to strengthen data-driven instruction. ●

Our leadership.

We thank our many partners who are committed to empowering what works toward a community of great schools.

MN Comeback Board of Directors, 2018-19

Tad Piper, Co-Chair | *Piper Jaffray (retired); Piper Family Fund*

Carolyn Smallwood, Co-Chair | *Way to Grow*

Rob Albright, Treasurer | *Albright Family Foundation; Alternative Strategy Advisers*

Rosita Balch | *Hennepin County*

Becky Erdahl | *Carolyn Foundation*

Bill Graves | *The Graves Foundation*

Ethan Gray | *The City Fund*

Aimee Guidera | *Guidera Strategies*

Mithra Irani Ramaley | *City Year*

Bernadeia Johnson | *Mankato State University*

David Nelson | *Carlson Family Foundation*

Chris Smith | *Kipsu*

Phil Soran | *Compellent Technologies (retired); Xiotech (retired); Soran Foundation*

Jennifer Stern | *Great MN Schools*

Sandy Vargas | *The Minneapolis Foundation (retired)*

Great MN Schools Board of Directors, 2018-19

Ben Whitney, Chair | *U.S. Ambassador to Norway (retired), Argus Management*

Alberto Monserrate, Treasurer | *NewPublica*

Alvin Abraham | *Dougherty Family College, University of St. Thomas*

Al Fan | *MN Comeback*

Beth Finch | *CharterSource*

Phil Soran | *Compellent Technologies (retired); Xiotech (retired); Soran Family Foundation*

Sean Walker | *General Mills*

The 2018-19 MN Comeback Leadership Council

Alvin Abraham | *Dougherty Family College, University of St. Thomas*

Iris Altamirano | *Community organizer*

Phil Hatlie | *Propel Nonprofits*

Tim Benz | *Minnesota Independent Schools Forum*

Kay Comeaux | *Parent advocate*

Jennifer Davis | *Parent advocate*

Molly McGraw-Healy | *University of St. Thomas*

David O'Fallon | *Minnesota Humanities Center (retired)*

Daniel Sellers | *EdAllies*

Maggie Sullivan | *Minneapolis Public Schools*

Great MN Schools Advisory Council

Jim Bartholomew | *Minnesota Business Partnership*

Jason Brandenburg | *Douglass Brandenburg Family Foundation*

Alysa Gardino | *Soran Family Foundation*

Erin Imon Gavin | *McKnight Foundation*

Ethan Gray | *The City Fund*

Jim Hield | *WEM Foundation*

Patrice Relerford | *The Minneapolis Foundation*

MN Comeback staff

Al Fan, *Executive Director*

Nicholas Banovetz, *Director of Partnerships & External Relations*

Cay Kimbrell, *Director of Talent*

Rashad Turner, *Director of Community Engagement*

Kristen McKittrick, *Director of Development*

Nyemadi Dunbar, *Senior Communications & Engagement Specialist*

Great MN Schools staff

Jennifer Stern, *Chief Executive Officer*

Morgan Brown, *Director*

Sheilah Kavaney, *Director*

Melissa Long, *Director*

Rosie Lais, *Senior Manager of Projects & Analytics*



Together, empowered schools & empowered communities are creating desperately needed change for kids.

The people, stories and progress detailed in this year's annual report inspire us. We hope they inspire you, too. Every student deserves a great education and it takes all of us — as funders, partners, parents and community leaders, and elected leaders — to make that a reality in our community.

We're proud to stand alongside parents exercising their voices and addressing critical issues, teachers committed to strong, relevant instruction, and school leaders who set high expectations for their school and work tirelessly to meet them. With your support, we'll continue to empower what works for schools, communities and kids. ●



Al Fan
Executive Director,
MN Comeback



Jennifer Stern
Chief Executive Officer,
Great MN Schools





COME BACK

Rigorous and relevant schools for all students

We convene a broad coalition of advocates, families, educators and funders working together to ensure that all students — especially the 30,000 Minneapolis kids who are underserved — attend a rigorous and relevant school. We invest deeply in fixing the most-challenging conditions that schools face: helping them recruit and retain extraordinary educators, engage and empower families, advocate for supportive public policy, and access quality facilities.



Building a community of great schools

We're inspired by schools that are proving every child can succeed, and we're committed to ensuring that more students have access to these great schools. We make strategic investments in schools that demonstrate success or are well-positioned to do so, providing the expert guidance, funding and resources needed to create a community of great schools. We help successful schools expand, support improvement strategies for schools that show promise and partner with struggling schools committed to dramatic transformation.

**We're empowering
what works.**



COMEBACK

mncomeback.org
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GREAT MN
SCHOOLS



greatmnschools.org
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