

(Convening)

LISTENING

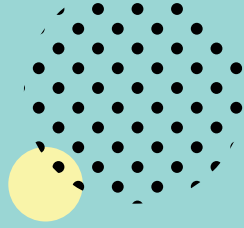
CONNECTING

Responding

Adapting

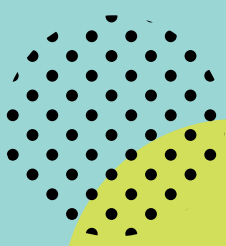
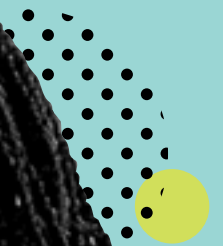
2021





**Great schools are
the cornerstone of
a just and thriving
community.**

*We aspire to significantly grow the number
of schools providing an excellent and
equitable education to every student.*



Dear Minneapolis,

Thank you

Thank you for your belief in great schools as a critical foundation for upward mobility and eliminating generational poverty.

The pandemic has affected our local community in many ways, resulting in even greater disparities. These disparities are felt most directly by our low-income families and families of color. Throughout the pandemic we have seen people unite to mitigate loss and fight for health, safety, and prosperity. This notion of togetherness should not be lost, as it is a reminder of our important work together in the past, present, and future.

We believe that great schools are a fundamental pillar of a student's future success. This belief drives us to ensure K-12 equity and to close the opportunity gaps for scholars within our city.

Transformational change comes from strong school leaders who have a clear, student-centered vision and are empowered to lead. It comes from communities that our K-12 systems have historically let down or, worse yet, intentionally failed.

We are proud to work alongside visionary school leaders in our city, on their journey from "good" to "great," and our community partners that are strengthening the agency of families to partner with schools in their children's learning.

Attending a high-performing school is crucial to every student's success. We continue to ensure that every family has access to the tools and resources that help them make that goal possible.

As we advocate for and support more equitable schools, we have deepened our own self-reflection efforts and team focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We have conducted a year-long training for our team and board around equity — pushing to diversify our board and team — and increased the percentage of our investments and vendor dollars going to organizations led by people of color. We recognize the privilege, power, and resources that we hold, and appreciate our committed partners who have made it possible for our organization to grow and learn.

In community,



Jennifer Stern
CEO, Great MN Schools



Alberto Monserrate
Board Chair, Great MN Schools;
CEO and Co-founder, NewPublica

We are committed to our goal of ensuring all students have access to a great school and continuously striving to make a positive impact on our city.

Thank you for believing in our work, as true change is accomplished together.



THE SOLUTION

GREAT SCHOOLS MATTER & THEY CHANGE LIVES

We see how some schools in our community demonstrate that children from all races, means, and origins can achieve. We need more of them – district, public charter, and

independent – **because all children should be able to attend high-performing schools** that prepare them to thrive in their lives, careers, and communities.

We aspire to **significantly grow the number of schools** providing an excellent and equitable education to every student.

The schools in our portfolio are **demonstrating what's possible:** They consistently outperform city averages for students of color and low-income students.

To drive greater demand for more great schools, **we support families as advocates for their children in schools.**



GREAT SCHOOLS GIVE ALL KIDS THE FUTURE THEY DESERVE

Students in Minneapolis who attend a high-performing school are

2x more likely

to graduate from high school.*

Students in Minneapolis who attend a high-performing school are

6x more likely

to earn a post-secondary diploma.*



Students with a bachelor's degree, compared to those with a high school diploma, expect to earn on average an additional

\$900,000

over the course of their lives.**

* Internal analysis, based on the Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System.

** 'Education and Lifetime Earnings in the United States,' by Christopher R. Tamborini, ChangHwan Kim, and Arthur Sakamoto.



As part of its Good-to-Great school success plan, Global Academy, a public charter school, is focused on several priorities:

- The creation of robust, standards-aligned curriculum guides.
- Further implementation of data-driven instruction and assessment tools.
- Improvement of teacher coaching and observations and focus on growth and development of all teachers.
- Investment in school board training and development.



Global Academy is on track with its Good-to-Great implementation. Evidence we considered includes classroom observation information, TNTIP Insight Survey data,* student attendance, and teacher retention, among other observed progress indicators.

*A teacher survey and key leading indicator of adult culture tied to student outcomes.

Global Academy: Deepening relationships with strategic partners

Global Academy, in its second year of its Good-to-Great success plan, deepened its partnership with ANet. ANet, a strategic intervention partner for all of the Great MN Schools portfolio schools, has worked with the Global staff to redefine how instructional leaders coach and run data meetings and how Global teachers use student data to identify what they need to re-teach.

With ANet support, the K-8 International Baccalaureate college-prep school began addressing student knowledge and skill gaps evidenced in daily and interim assessments, and integrating ANet practices into the teaching and learning cycle—teach, assess, evaluate, re-teach—across its campus.

This work, along with Global's commitment to providing students with curriculum and instruction that is at or above grade level, is leading to higher student engagement and achievement.

Global Academy is one of the most reliably well-performing schools serving low-income students in Minnesota. We believe, through its Good-to-Great work, the school is on a path to surpass and maintain achievement above the state MCA proficiency average across all subjects.



NEW MILLENNIUM ACADEMY STRENGTHENS CULTURE & LITERACY

New Millennium Academy has been on a roll. In year one of implementation of its Good-to-Great success plan, the growing public charter school – which now serves nearly 800 scholars – posted notable student achievement gains on interim assessments.

Then COVID-19 hit.



Like all schools, the pandemic disrupted the New Millennium Academy community, including student learning, schedules, and access to meals, among other things.

But leaders, teachers, and staff responded effectively to ensure strong experiences for all students were grounded in positive, respectful adult-family-student relationships.

LITERACY, THE FOUNDATION OF LEARNING

Strong literacy curriculum and instruction are fundamental to any high-performing school. They're also a priority of NMA's school success plan, and a throughline in Great MN Schools-funded strategic interventions. This includes teacher development and support in data-driven instruction.

As the teachers worked diligently to get students caught up during the COVID-19 year, NMA Executive Director Kevin Xiong, Principal Stephanie Steen, and their team quickly opted in to Great MN Schools' summer program with Groves Literacy Partnership and Wilderness Inquiry to address learning loss and equip students with extra instruction to prepare them for the upcoming school year.

Nearly 300 NMA scholars enrolled in the summer program. Groves Literacy Partnership's focus on proven methods to advance literacy proficiency led to tremendous student progress, as measured by pre and post assessments.

BUILDING ON HOME VISITS

Much of the enrollment success with the summer program stemmed from NMA's partnership with families during the school year. Relationship building and family engagement are crucial for any school's success to help keep students and families engaged. NMA launched home visits because of the lack of face-to-face contact with students and families.

School culture, while strong at NMA, was also an area that school leaders and the school community wanted to deepen and strengthen as part of its Good-to-Great plan implementation. While COVID-19 presented its challenges, the home visits helped school culture flourish. On TNTP's Insight Survey, for example, the family and community engagement score was NMA's largest growth area last year.

NMA recognized family engagement as a growth opportunity and intentionally invested in families as partners in academic learning.



This past school year was a year of leadership transition for NMA. School teachers and staff credited Kevin Xiong, executive director, and Stephanie Steen, principal, for a smooth transition.

NMA completed more than 250 home visits last year. These visits covered a number of areas, such as learning assistance, food needs, and technology supports for students. The visits furthered the family-school partnership and have become essential for many students' continued success at NMA!



At NMA, we define equity as: 'Just for All.' We accomplish this by allowing members of our school community to be vulnerable while holding one another accountable in order to build an anti-racist community.

*Kevin Xiong
New Millennium Academy Executive Director*



**Keep up the great work.
It's because of you
[Great MN Schools] that
we can focus more on students,
families, and team members.
Thank you!**

*Charvez Russell
Friendship Academy of the Arts
Executive Director*



FRIENDSHIP ACADEMY: EXPANDING TO NEW HORIZONS

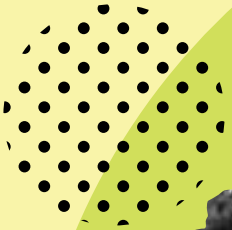
In fall 2020, Friendship Academy opened its second campus, providing the growing South Minneapolis school the space to triple the number of scholars enrolled in grades K-8. The public charter school integrates arts into its core curriculum and intentionally creates a space for families of African descent.



Friendship expanded to meet family and community demand. It now serves

280 scholars.

The school consistently lands on the Minneapolis School Finder "Changing-the-odds" list and the *Star Tribune* list of "Beating-the-odds" schools.



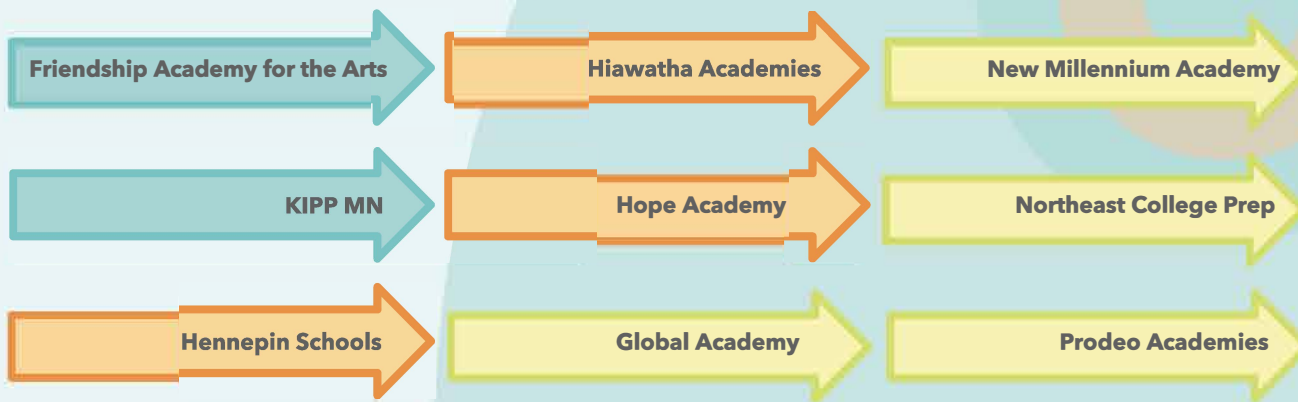
OUR PROGRESS

Toward more high-quality schools, growing our portfolio of schools & strengthening community partnerships.

Great MN Schools portfolio schools serve

5,665 students (15%+ of Minneapolis students from a low-income background)

100% OF OUR PORTFOLIO SCHOOLS ARE DEMONSTRATING STRONG COMMITMENT TO THEIR GOOD-TO-GREAT PLANS AND ARE MAKING MEASURABLE PROGRESS



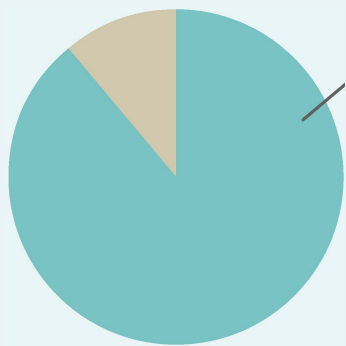
■ In planning
 ■ Completed their first year of improvement plan implementation
 ■ Completed their second year of improvement plan implementation

Our Good-to-Great strategy

Many schools in Minneapolis have a deep commitment to closing the opportunity gap. We help them develop and implement plans that take them from "good" to "great" – including diagnostic reviews, success plan development, and deep implementation support.



All portfolio schools have continued to adopt standards-aligned curriculum and rigorous materials



89% OF PORTFOLIO SCHOOL NETWORKS are on track or showing improvement with their TNTIP Insight Survey data – a pulse check on instructional culture tied to teacher retention and student outcomes

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AVERAGED

94%



“

Our phenomenal leadership team keeps me really grounded and focused on two things at once: The most important things that drive student learning and valuing people in this difficult work.

*John Trevino,
Middle Academy Principal
with Prodeo Academies*

1 5



4.8

School leaders and community partners rate Great MN Schools supports as "extremely" or "very" effective

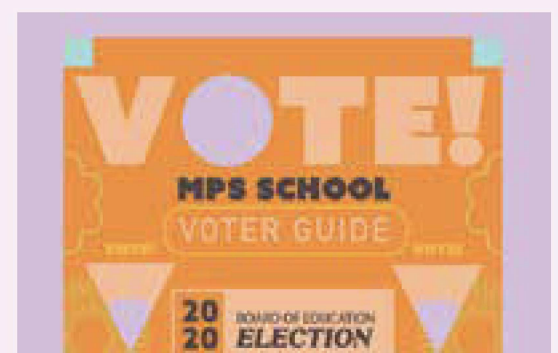
We're advancing proven solutions

We set out to address 3 major barriers this year and went 3/3!

1 The Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board approved TNTIP's alternative teacher preparation special education program, paving the way for the launch of Teach Minnesota

2 Working in partnership with EdAllies, Gov. Walz signed into law flexibilities for alternative prep programs to access state Grow Your Own funds

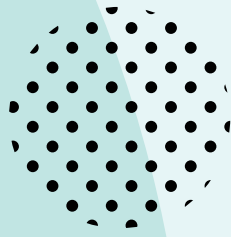
3 Working closely with the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers, we championed the passage of a new law to drive charter school authorizer accountability



We increased voter engagement in the fall 2020 Minneapolis School Board race, elevating key issues and candidates' positions

GOOD-TO-GREAT IS A CATALYZER FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

— and our portfolio schools maintained their strategic focus, despite the challenges of the year



SCHOOL LEADERS ACCESSED HIGH-CALIBER CAPACITY BUILDING & STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

16 school leaders received executive coaching

19 school leaders, supporting more than **180** teachers, leveraged ANet to strengthen data-driven instruction and standards-based, best practices

17 principals and teacher leaders participated in Relay's Summer Institute focused on teacher observation, coaching, and feedback

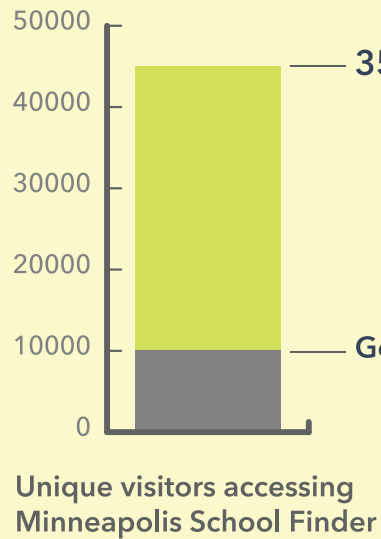
Low-income children in our portfolio schools are getting a better education than they would receive at other schools in our community.

18 schools participated in our Talent-Ready Cohort with EdFuel to support implementation of effective teacher recruitment, hiring, development, and retention

20 schools and **630** teachers participated in TNTP's Insight Survey



Community partnerships are helping more families find the best-fit school and advocate for their student's success at an existing one



a 300% increase from prior years!

Our 'How to Pick a School Guide' received **1,238** unique visitors

Trained **11** organizations on supporting families in K-12 tools and resources

2,691 families supported in K-12 decision-making and advocacy

5,626 families received tools and resources through trusted community partners

“Picking a better school for their child is a joy for them!”

Valerie Stephenson, Phyllis Wheatley Community Center (from a 'How to Pick a School' training)



During a really challenging time, we completed our first year of our community partnership strategy. By listening to, convening, and supporting organizations that work directly with families, we ensured families had the tools needed to make informed school choices and advocate within schools.

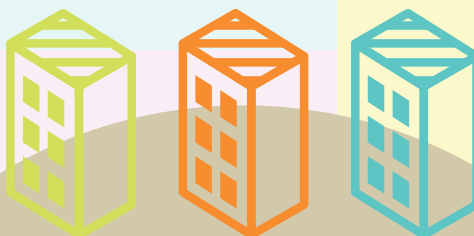


Every candidate in a competitive race participated

community organizations collaborated on and helped promote a voter guide

4,600

unique visitors utilized the tool



We are significantly growing the number of schools providing an excellent and equitable education to every Minneapolis student. With your support, and in collaboration with community partners, we can help more families select a great school. We can grow, improve, and translate our family advocacy tools to better serve the Minneapolis community. We can ensure every school in our portfolio has access to what they need to provide students with an excellent education, enabling them to thrive. We can bring more schools onto a journey from good to great, impacting more students and their families.



MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS THROUGH AN INNOVATIVE SUMMER PROGRAM

Summer programming is important for students' academic and social growth. Yet, not all families can access these opportunities.

Especially in this COVID-19 year, we wanted all students to have the chance to continue learning academic skills and have fun outside.

Our program served 721 Minneapolis K-8 students who attended one of our portfolio schools and came from a low-income background. It featured:

- **Wilderness Inquiry** led daily outdoor learning, with a STEM focus and plenty of physical activity.
- **Groves Literacy Partnership** provided small group literacy support, focused on targeted phonics interventions.



I was really impressed with all aspects of the summer program site visit. It was great to be among a few additional funders who had great questions and offered different perspectives. And with the school itself – New Millennium Academy – I left impressed with its commitment to improvement. It's clear that Great MN Schools has played a key role in its turnaround!

It was great to see the curriculum in action, and the investment you've made in having Groves develop that summer curriculum will undoubtedly pay dividends in future years!

*Daniel Sellers
Executive Director,
Ciresi Walburn Foundation for Children*



ADVANCING PROVEN SOLUTIONS

DIVERSIFYING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Teach Minnesota is among Minnesota's first approved alternative teacher preparation providers



The approval this year of Teach Minnesota by the state Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board, or "PELSB," was a tremendous feat for TNTP and introduces to Minnesota another accessible and diverse pathway for aspiring teachers to enter the profession.

TNTP is a national leader in high-quality teacher preparation and development. TNTP's program, Teach Minnesota, will launch in fall 2022 with an elementary education and special education focus. It has the potential to be a strong source of diverse, high-quality teacher candidates for our portfolio schools and other schools in the Twin Cities—and, in the future, for schools across the state.

Only 5% of teachers in Minnesota are people of color. We cultivated TNTP to be a local teacher preparation provider to open up pathways to the teaching profession.

Teach Minnesota is committed to recruiting 50% candidates of color, which will amount to meaningful progress to diversify the teaching profession. At full scale, TNTP will graduate 100 fellows per year.

Our support for Teach Minnesota is rooted in TNTP's ability to prepare more teachers of color for schools and because of the efficacy of its teacher preparation programs. We're not alone – 13 community organizations signed on to our letter of support that advocated for PELSB approval.



Additionally, Teach Minnesota can help raise the bar for teacher preparation because it is:

Diverse: Over half of TNTP Teaching Fellows identify as people of color. Growing and diversifying the talent pipeline is a clear need our portfolio schools have identified, and TNTP has the potential to be a leading provider of highly qualified teachers for these schools as they work to close the opportunity gap.

Effective: A study by the Institute of Education Sciences found that TNTP Teaching Fellows are as effective as teachers who received 2-3 years of traditional training.

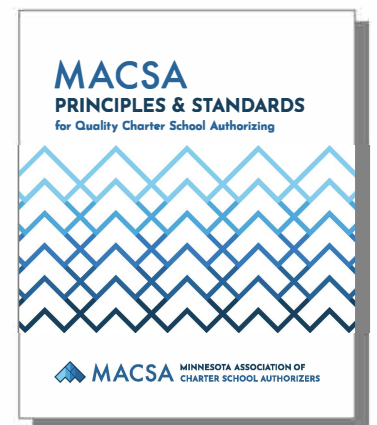
Committed: Another study by the American Institute of Research found that TNTP Teaching Fellows were more likely to be teaching a year longer than the average new teacher.

ACCOUNTABILITY BOOSTER TO THE SCHOOL AUTHORIZING COMMUNITY

Building off of our previous work to unite public charter school authorizers on shared standards and practices of authorizing, we took the next step with EdAllies to engage key stakeholders to advance—and pass—new legislation this past year to strengthen authorizer accountability in Minnesota.

While a similar bill faced defeat the prior year, we amassed a stronger, more aligned coalition this legislative session to champion the "Charter School Authorizer Corrective Action Requirements" bill.

The Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers has leaned into accountability by articulating a higher bar for quality authorizing and setting an example of how K-12 institutions can and should hold themselves accountable to students.



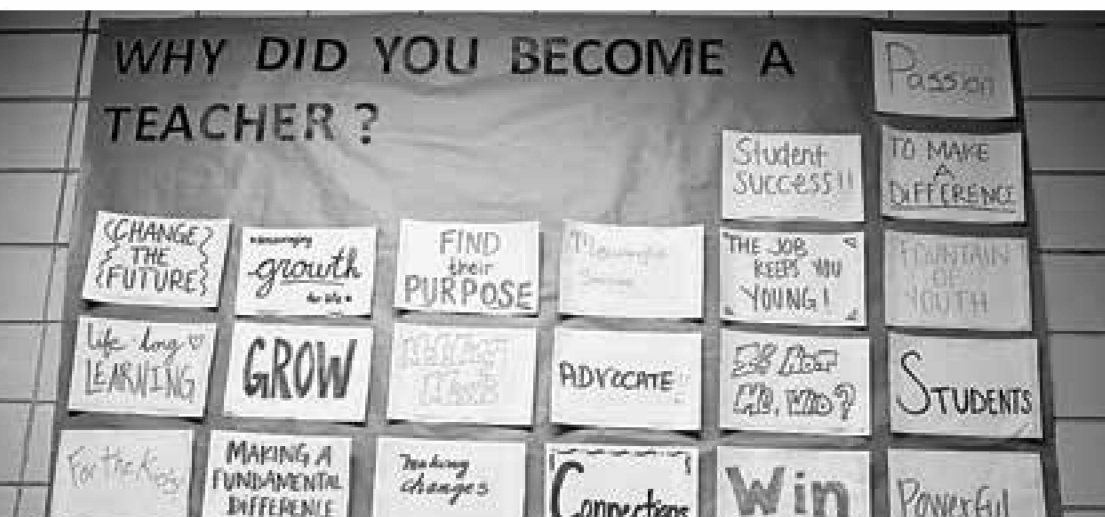
The quality authorizing legislation stemmed from our previously funded 'MACSA Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing' framework.

We appreciate that the broad perspectives of authorizers – as well as other stakeholders – helped refine the bill language as it progressed in the legislature.

Good schools can become great ones with the help and oversight of high-quality authorizing, and we will continue to push for a high bar for students.

Gov. Tim Walz signed our bill into law. It will help ensure high-quality authorizing by:

- Incentivizing authorizers to make timely improvements to areas of weakness or opportunities for improvement identified in MDE's Minnesota Authorizer Performance Evaluation System.
- Clarifying sanctions the education commissioner can take to support stronger authorizing, including subjecting authorizers in poor standing to a time-bound correction action plan.
- Empowering charter schools with flexibilities if their authorizer is in corrective action, including the ability to transfer to a new authorizer without the current authorizer's consent.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Custom training sessions for our 10 core community partners

Access to information is the critical first step for any family to make well-informed enrollment decisions and to advocate for their children at their current school.

In the past, we distributed 10,000 copies of the Minneapolis School Finder each year. But there was more work to do to ensure all marginalized families could utilize the only Minneapolis school directory with accessible, objective, and comparable information on district, public charter, and independent schools.

We decided to partner closely with community organizations that wanted to incorporate our tools into their existing programming. We improved the school finder based on their feedback, and learned alongside them.

In response to the need to provide families with the best possible services, we invested in our 10 core community partners' existing infrastructure.

We designed a training series, for example, to build the capacity and agency of both the community partners and the families they serve. Throughout the year, we conducted one-on-one training workshops for each organization's staff, to ensure they were comfortable and confident using our tools.



Pictured above is a family from Centro Tyrone Guzman, who engaged in a Minneapolis School Finder training.

“

Through trainings — in Spanish — with Great MN Schools, families learned how to use the unique Minneapolis School Finder tool. Parents are eager to continue learning as much as they can to support their children. They know schools, too, play an important role.

Maria Padilla
Centro Tyrone Guzman

Tools & resources for community organizations

Minneapolis School Finder

How To Pick A School Guide

Readiness Check
(from our friends at Learning Heroes)

More tools coming in 2022!



“

Schools and families working together are truly impactful when it comes to positioning children for success in life. I was fortunate to engage with Great MN Schools in partnership on community tools and resources. I've been an advocate and organizer for many years, and tools such as the 'How to Pick a School Guide' and the Readiness Check are transformative for the work that I do with East African families, as well as my role as a mom!

Anisa Ali
Minneapolis parent and advocate for East African families

Across our community partners as well as after school programs, nearly

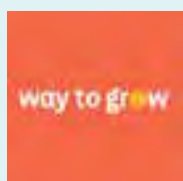
300

staff members and parents attended at least one training session.

Organizations are working alongside Great MN Schools to provide families with needed information and support.



Phyllis Wheatley Community Center



COUPLED WITH A DOSE OF THE COVID-19 VACCINES, INFORMATION ON OUR CITY'S SCHOOLS

This past spring, Phyllis Wheatley Community Center hosted a community testing and vaccination site for COVID-19. While at the “vaccination day” event, Phyllis Wheatley staff distributed copies of Minneapolis School Finder and the Readiness Check.

This collaboration with Phyllis Wheatley provided North Minneapolis residents with local COVID-19 resources, as well as crucial information for families to choose a best-fit school for their child.

We appreciate our partners dedicating some of the limited points of connection with families this past year to help them find a great school or advocate for change at an existing one.

Thank you, Phyllis Wheatley, for your holistic support to the community – prioritizing health and ensuring there is also continued support for students in K-12 education.



USE OF MINNEAPOLIS SCHOOL FINDER TRIPLES

Explore our ‘How to Pick a School Guide’ at:

<https://minneapolis-schoolfinder.org/how-to-pick-a-school/>

We strive to make our tools and resources available to meet the needs of all families.



WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO HELPING FAMILIES SELECT THEIR BEST-FIT SCHOOL AND BETTER ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE AT SCHOOLS WHERE THEIR SCHOLARS ARE ALREADY ENROLLED.

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- Osman Ahmed** - Director of Community Partnerships
- Nouf Al-Masrafi** - Operations Coordinator
- Nicholas Banovetz** - Chief of Staff
- Morgan Brown** - Portfolio Director
- Karn Engelsjerd** - Director of Development
- Joshua Hodge** - Communications Manager
- Sheilah Kavaney** - Portfolio Director
- Rosie Lais** - Senior Manager of Projects and Analytics
- Melissa Long** - Portfolio Director



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| Al Fan
Founding ED, MN Comeback
and Charter School Partners | |

**Investment Committee only*

“
Great schools are possible in every corner of our beautiful city. When children most underserved, most vulnerable attend gap-closing schools, they're set up for success in life. Countless individuals are investing their talent, time, and resources to transform PK-12 in our community, and it's an honor to work alongside you!

*Bernadeia Johnson
Mankato State University*



OUR FUNDERS

THIS PAST YEAR HAS BEEN A TIME OF CRISIS AND DISPARITIES, AND THIS COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS RESPONDED COLLECTIVELY TO THE MOMENT AND REMAINED COMMITTED TO OUR VISION OF LONG-TERM CHANGE.

We are grateful to the many foundations, individuals, and corporations that amplify the impact of Great MN Schools and of our remarkable school and community partners.*

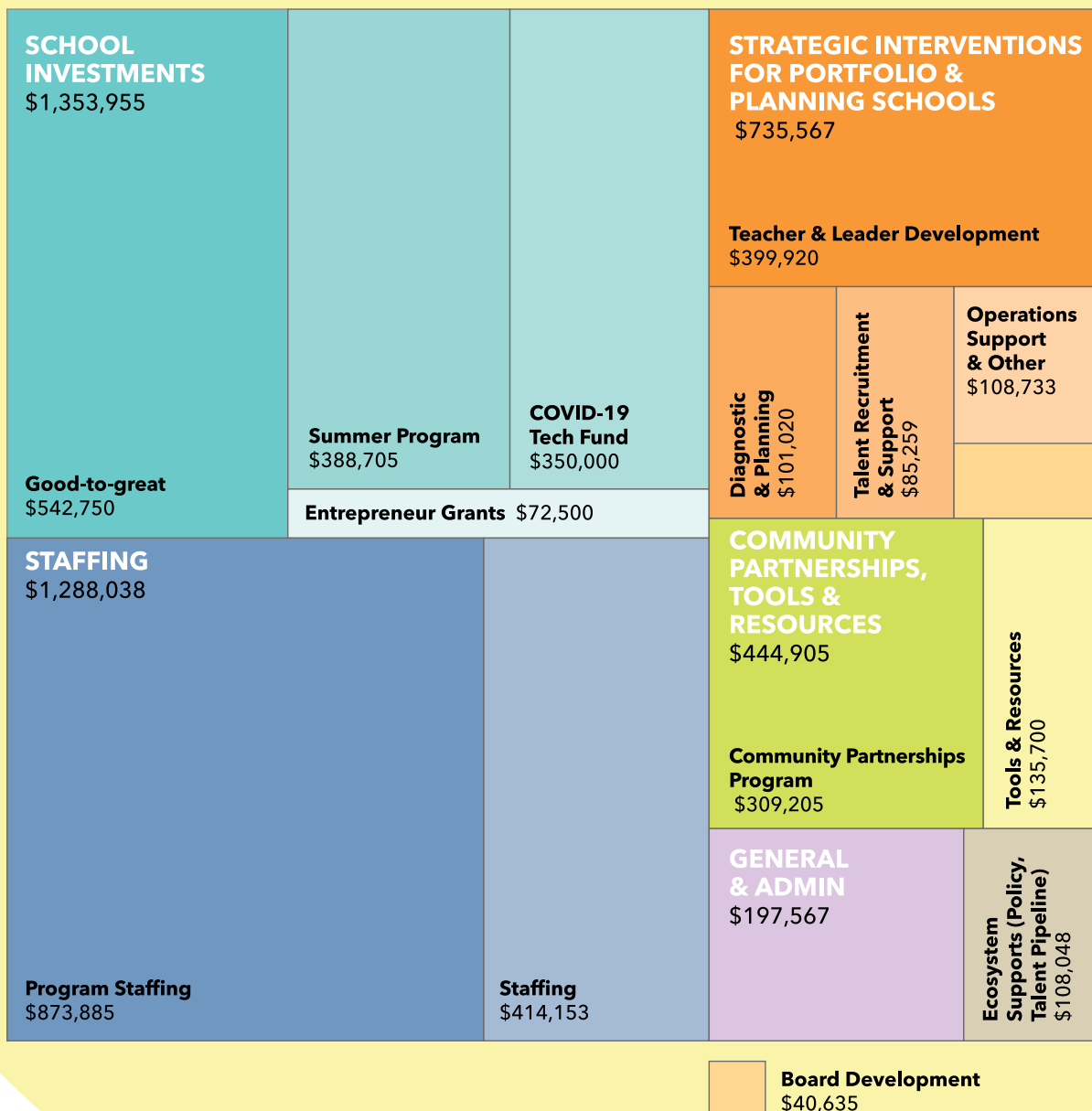
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FISCAL YEAR 2021

TOTAL EXPENSES: **\$4,128,080**



*The generous funders listed have made investments greater than \$1,000 from 7/1/20 through 6/30/21

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**I'm getting resources
for my families and clients
that I serve....
It's the information
that my clients need.**

*Maryam Nur
Somali American
Parent Association*



**Keep up the great work.
It's because of you
[Great MN Schools] that
we can focus more on students,
families, and team members.
Thank you!**

*Charvez Russell
Friendship Academy of the Arts Executive
Director*



1330 Lagoon Avenue
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Minneapolis, MN 55408

(Convening)

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2021