



## 2020-2021 Annual Report



Every student. Every chance. Every day.

## LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends and Supporters,



Every year we take the time to reflect on our work, and every year we are profoundly grateful for the overwhelming support, kindness, and dedication that you show the students of Access Academies.

This past year was particularly challenging. Filled with much uncertainty for our entire region, it required us to come together to meet the needs of our students and families differently. Because of you, we were able to forge ahead, serve with purpose, and use innovation to create solutions to new problems. Because of you, we can undoubtedly celebrate many accomplishments and lessons learned. Together, we:

- Strengthened our College and Career programming with the first Access Academies ACT Prep Program and College Scholarship, as well as laid the foundation for expanding our College and Career team.
- Prioritized organizational capacity building by partnering with FTI Consulting, a global business-consulting firm, to conduct a pro-bono analysis that provided Access with data-driven insights to better serve our students and partner schools. Access was also awarded a capacity-building grant by St. Louis Community Foundation to conduct staff professional development and implement strategic organizational initiatives.
- Reaffirmed our commitment to data by beginning a two-year program evaluation initiative and hiring a Postdoctoral Evaluator.
- Welcomed Shelly Williams (pictured above) as Executive Director, and celebrated our first year of partnership with the Saint Louis University School of Education.

Thank YOU for helping Access Academies make the best of 2020-2021. Your continued partnership will accelerate our work to improve youth outcomes, address equity gaps with critical enrichment, counseling, and scholarships, and provide our students with the resources necessary to sustain our impact. We also offer a sincere thanks to our partner schools and staff for working with us to keep our students on the path to success during a year of such uncertainty.

As we learned this past year, there are many ways in which we all support the Access mission – and the impact of our efforts relies heavily upon the dedication of many. We hope you enjoy reading the success of our joint efforts in this year's annual report. Thank you again for everything that you do for our students. We are proud to consider you a part of the Access Academies family.

Sincerely,

Brian Day  
Chair, Board of Directors



### OUR MISSION

Access propels middle school students who have been historically underserved through high school and on to college and career success with enrichment, counseling, and scholarships.

### OUR VALUES

Access is committed to...

- Supporting a top-quality, values-based education
- Focusing on the individual student
- Strengthening our communities
- Leveraging our partnerships

### OUR HISTORY

Access was founded in 2005 by a group of St. Louisans convinced that education was the most enduring path out of poverty. Embracing an innovative model that emphasized extended school days, a challenging enrichment curriculum, and 11+ years of counseling, they started the first Academy with 15 students in a single South City middle school. In 2020-2021, Access served over 500 students in three partner middle schools, 40 high schools (including 21 partner college-prep high schools), and 48 colleges and post-secondary institutions across the country.



# You're Helping Us Create Equity in Education

With your help, Access Academies creates countless opportunities for youth in underserved communities across the St. Louis region. Annually, we support the development of over 500 students from 30 different zip codes, and because of our intentional focus on providing programs in areas of greatest need, more than 64% of Access' students are Black, 32% are Hispanic, and 94% are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program.

While these statistics offer insight into the demographics of our students and families, they also illuminate systemic inequities that our young scholars and their families have faced for generations. Regional research continues to emphasize the disparities experienced by students

of color, including dramatic gaps in access to quality education, a lack of affordable housing, higher rates of poverty and unemployment, limited access to basic needs, lower life expectancies, and more.

Organizations like Access are working hard to make a sustainable impact and change the narrative. For us, that means committing 11+ years to each of our students and providing the enrichment, counseling, scholarships, and additional resources required to help them thrive. We all know that access to education can change lives. Thank you for helping our students become the future leaders, thinkers, and catalysts for change in St. Louis.





# Your Support Sustains Critical Programming



## Counseling

### *Individualized Support Increases Academic Success*

Research proves that strong relationships are the foundation for student success. At Access, every student is embraced and supported by a community of trusted, caring adults who help them succeed in and persist in school, work, and life. Our individualized counseling ensures every student's academic, social, financial, and emotional needs are met.



## Enrichment

### *Challenging Our Youth to Dream*

Access provides over 1,179 hours of high-quality after-school and summer enrichment programming to 165 middle school students each year, a support that promotes student achievement, encourages positive behavior, and expands their definition of success. Our donors can be confident that their support is making a lasting difference. According to the Afterschool Alliance, "Afterschool programs also provide a significant return-on-investment, with every \$1 invested saving at least \$3 through increasing youth's earning potential and improving their performance at school."<sup>\*</sup>



## Scholarships

### *Illuminating a Path by Eliminating Financial Barriers*

At Access, we believe in equity: that every student should have every chance to thrive every day. Since our founding in 2005, Access has contributed more than \$7,254,348 in financial scholarships to high school and college students. It's an investment that eliminates financial barriers for our families and uplifts the St. Louis region.

<sup>\*</sup> *'This is Afterschool' Fact Sheet. Afterschool Alliance. (2020, March).*



*Members of the  
Graduate Support team*

# Your Investment Propels Every Access Student



**\$16,560**

average 4-year  
investment in each  
high school student



**\$7,041**

average 3-year  
investment in each  
middle school student



**165**

**STUDENTS**

in 3 city  
middle schools



**213**

**STUDENTS**

in 40 high schools, including 177 in 21  
private, college-preparatory schools



**130**

**STUDENTS**

in 48 colleges or other  
post-secondary institutions



**7**

college visits organized  
for each Access student  
from 6th to 12th grade



**11+**

years of counseling,  
mentoring, and advocacy  
for each student



**1,179**

hours of extended-day  
and summer enrichment  
instruction provided annually



**\$759,411**

total amount awarded in  
high school scholarships  
and fees



**\$3,271**

average annual  
high school tuition  
award per student

SINCE OUR FOUNDING IN 2005:

**\$7.2 million**

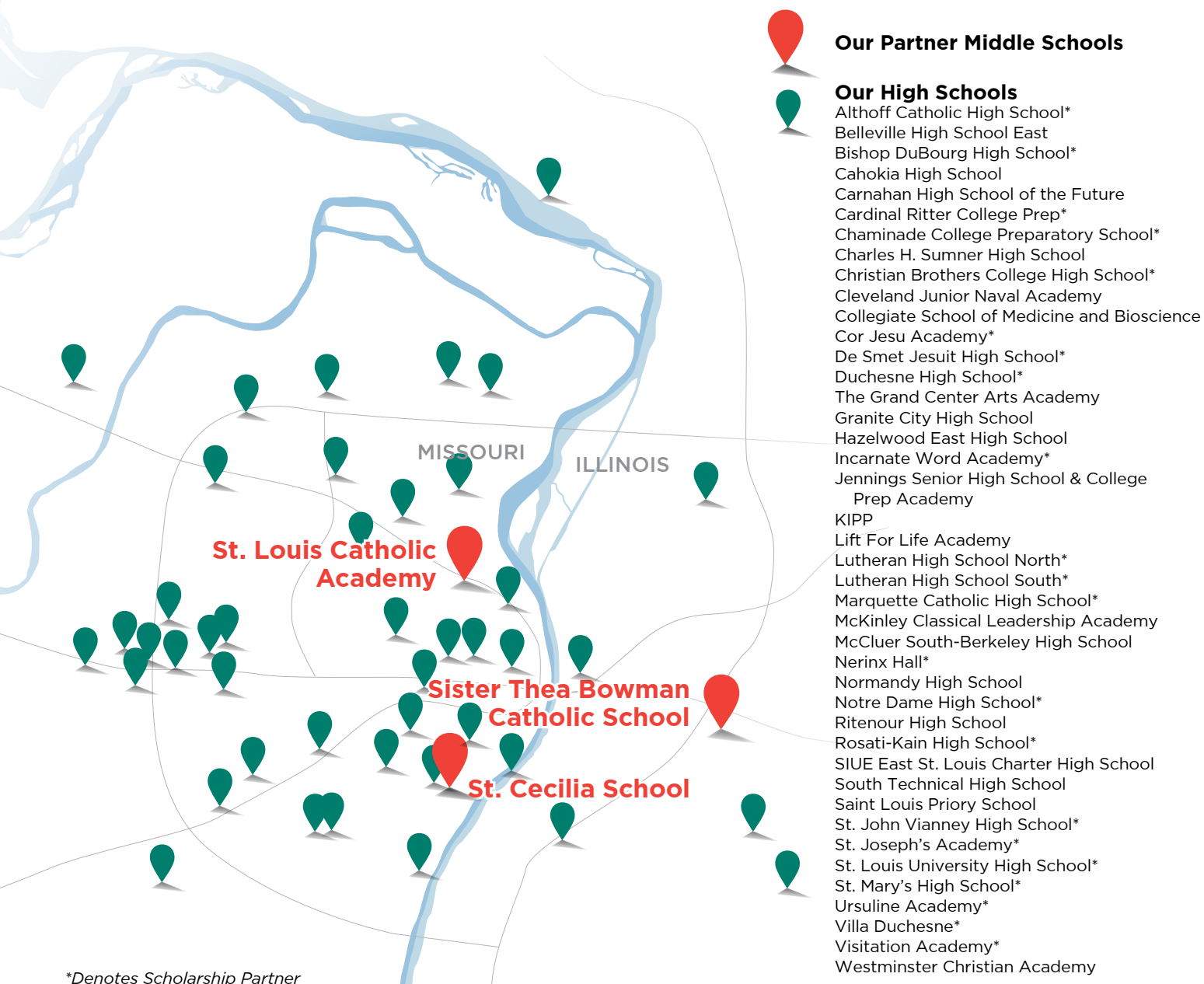
awarded in high school  
& college scholarships

**1,294 students**

benefited from  
our programs



# Your Commitment to Access Impacts Our Region



**99%**

**ACCEPTED**

to college-preparatory  
high schools



**98%**

**GRADUATED**

high school on-time  
(compared to 84% nationwide)



**96%**

**ACCEPTED**

to college or other  
post-secondary institution

# Your Continued Support Is Always Appreciated

A gift to Access helps pay for essential after-school enrichment programs, eases the tuition burden on our students' families, and ensures Graduate Support Directors are available at every stage of the 11+ year education journey. Help our students succeed by giving to Access today.

## ONLINE

Make a donation by credit/debit card or set up a recurring gift at [accessacademies.org/donate](https://accessacademies.org/donate).



## MAIL

Mail your gift to our office at:  
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Room 200, St. Louis, MO 63103.



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## VIEW OUR NEW DOCUMENTARY

This year, we released an inspiring new documentary, "We Are Access," that takes an in-depth look into the lives, struggles, and accomplishments of our young scholars. We invite you to watch the film at [accessacademies.org](https://accessacademies.org) and learn firsthand about their dreams and aspirations, the hurdles they face, and how the support you provide keeps them on a path to success.



*Student panel discussion at our  
12th Annual Celebration Dinner*



## Thank You to Our Donors

*"I am so grateful to have Access Academies by my side every step of the way through my high school and college experience. As a first-generation college student, Access has helped guide me on my path to college."*

*—Erika Valenzuela, Maryville University '22*

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 have informed those  
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 loved ones of your  
 thoughtful gestures.

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John and Margie Simon



The Joan and John  
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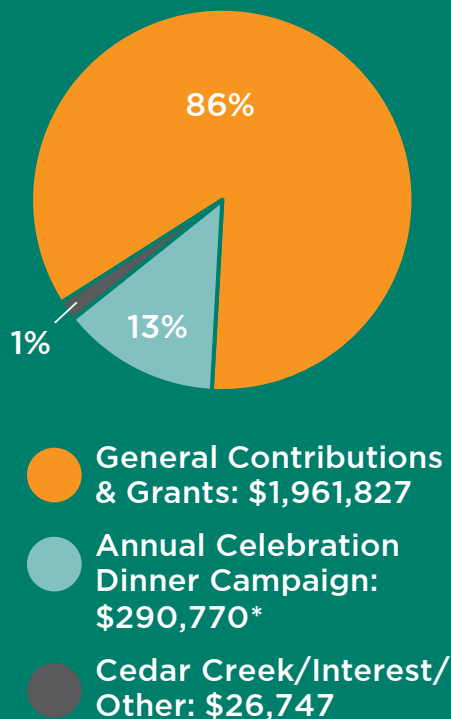
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# Your Dollars at Work: Our Financials

(Fiscal Year 9.1.20 - 8.31.21)

## 2020-2021 Revenue



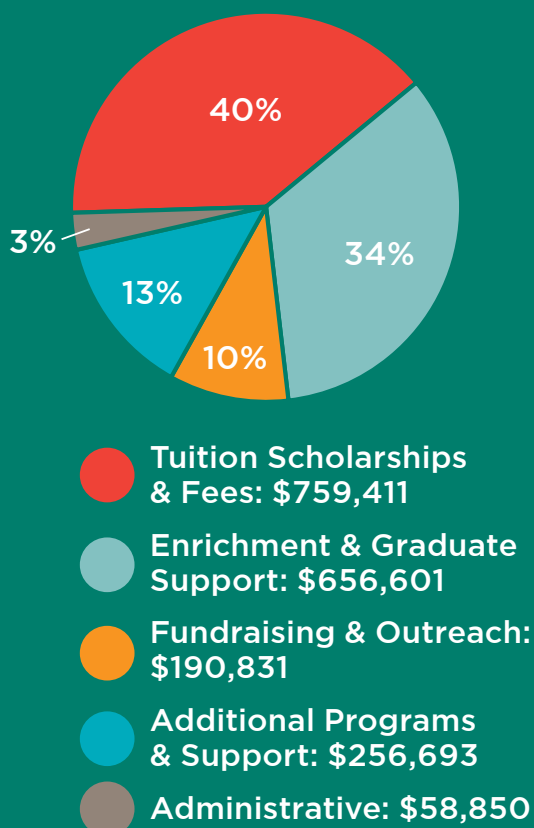
General Contributions & Grants: \$1,961,827

Annual Celebration Dinner Campaign: \$290,770\*

Cedar Creek/Interest/Other: \$26,747

*\*Because the 12th Annual Celebration Dinner was held in September 2021, this number only reflects funds raised up to August 31, 2021. The remaining money raised from the dinner will be reflected in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.*

## 2020-2021 Expenses



Tuition Scholarships & Fees: \$759,411

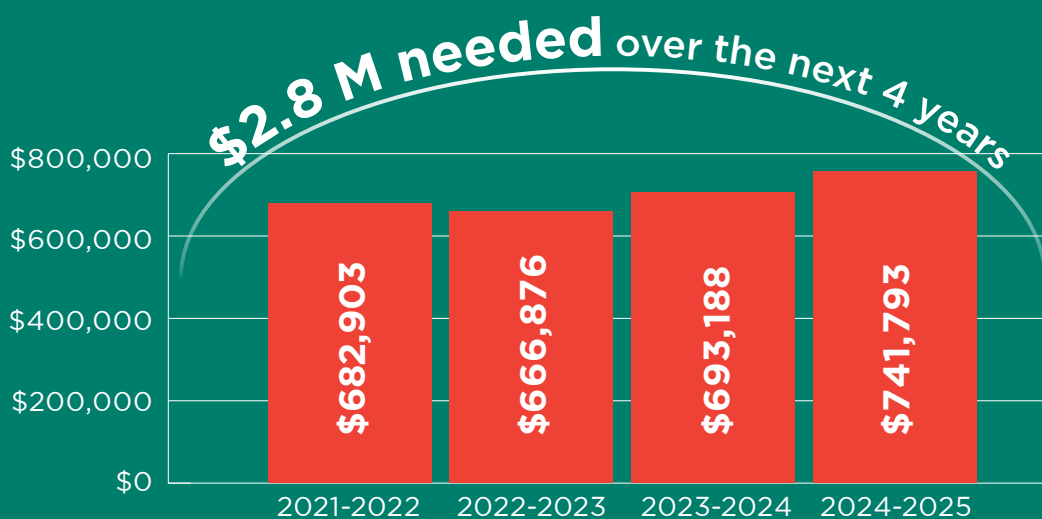
Enrichment & Graduate Support: \$656,601

Fundraising & Outreach: \$190,831

Additional Programs & Support: \$256,693

Administrative: \$58,850

## Investing in the Future: Our Scholarship Commitments





# Our Leadership Team

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*\*Special thanks to Anja Schmelter and Birch Mullins for their many years of service and dedication as Access Academies Board Members.*

*"We believe every child can reach his or her potential if given the right structure, environment, education, motivation, and inspiration."*

—JOHN C. VATTEROTT,  
FOUNDER & CHAIR EMERITUS





# Access

*Every student. Every chance. Every day.*

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**Support  
Our  
Mission**

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