



Berkeley Public
Schools Fund

IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024



The Berkeley Public Schools Fund Theory of Change

How We Are Doing the Work

These principles are the roadmap that guides our work. At the core, we believe that when students feel safe and supported, they can fully engage in learning.

Love of Learning

Safety and Belonging

Basic Needs

VISION

A future where
public schools support students
of all identities and
life experiences
to thrive in school
and in life.

MISSION

To champion equitable
public education for
students, families,
and our community.

Through grants, volunteers,
and STEM programs, we
center equity for the benefit
of our students and the
entire community.

With your support, the Berkeley Public Schools Fund proudly continues Berkeley's deep legacy of championing public education — an essential pillar of our democracy.

For over 40 years, we've fostered enriching, inclusive schools, adapting to meet our students' evolving needs. Our work is grounded in a clear theory of change: a true **love of learning** can only develop when **basic needs** are met and students experience **safety and belonging** at school.

It is from this framework that we bridge gaps in our schools by:

- Directly investing in innovative, educator-led equity projects through our **grant program**
- Fostering resilient school ecosystems with the support of **hundreds of volunteers**
- Expanding equitable access to **high-quality STEM** and career-connected learning
- Enriching our schools by serving as a **fiscal sponsor** for dozens of projects across the district

Public education is not just about academics; it empowers every student to thrive and contribute to a healthy community. Together, we are building a vibrant, more inclusive future — and we are proud to do it right here in Berkeley.



Basic Needs

Schools expect students to arrive ready to learn, but when their basic needs aren't met, they may struggle to focus, participate, or even attend.

Fueling Learning: Our Commitment to Food Security

Since the pandemic, the Berkeley Public Schools Fund has intensified its focus on meeting basic needs, especially access to healthy food. In the 2023–24 school year, we made the following possible:

- Partnering with Berkeley Food Network, our Berkeley Schools Volunteers (BSV) program supported monthly **food pantries for nearly 400 families**, prioritizing dignity and choice.
- Our volunteers **delivered over 950 grocery boxes** to some of BUSD's most vulnerable families.
- We provided daily snacks for 15+ intervention programs at Berkeley High, ensuring **840 students facing food insecurity had the nourishment needed to thrive** during and after school.

"The snacks that you provide for us Bridge students offer us a lot of support. They are good fuel after a long, energy-draining day of school. I know many students who joined Bridge, compelled by the snacks, who then end up investing in their futures permanently."

— BHS Bridge Student

Empowering Families: A Partnership in Action

Also core to the Schools Fund's basic needs strategy is our close partnership with the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) **Office of Family Engagement and Equity**.

"The Schools Fund acts as a core funding partner and a thought partner as we develop ways to most equitably and effectively serve our families. Supporting the Schools Fund is a way to support an equitable community and make education more accessible for our most vulnerable students."

— Lydia Gebrehiwot, Supervisor, BUSD Office of Family Engagement and Equity

CREATING MORE RESOURCED SCHOOLS: The Schools Fund as Capacity Builder

One of the Berkeley Public Schools Fund's most powerful yet often overlooked roles is serving as a fiscal sponsor for vital programs that BUSD cannot directly fund. By enabling these initiatives to receive essential donations and grants, we help build capacity in schools and provide students with crucial opportunities and experiences.

We proudly support programs that address students' basic needs, belonging, academic success, and workforce preparation. These initiatives include the Family Emergency Fund, Growing Leaders, and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs.



Safety & Belonging

When students experience safety and belonging at school, they are better able to focus on learning. In 2023–24, the Berkeley Public Schools Fund awarded multiple grants to support this critical need.

Strengthening Connection Through Affinity Groups for Students, Families, and Staff

The Schools Fund made over **30 affinity groups possible last year, reaching over 600 participants**. Affinity groups provide fundamental supportive spaces for students, staff, and families with shared community interests, or racial, ethnic, or gender identities.

SOME EXAMPLES OF '23–24 AFFINITY GROUPS

STUDENT GROUPS

Young MENtors
(Longfellow)

Literary Society for
Girls of African Descent
(Malcolm X)

Gender-expansive
Group (BHS)

Arab American
Affinity Group
(Berkeley Arts Magnet)

FAMILY GROUPS

Families of Students with
Special Needs (King)

BEARS Community Family
Dinners (John Muir & Washington)

Latinx Family Engagement
(BUSD-wide)

STAFF GROUPS

Black Staff Collaboratory
(BUSD-wide)

“Thank you for making this happen. It makes us feel that we belong.”

— Family Group Participant

Investing in Emotional Wellness Spaces for Every Student

Last year, the **Schools Fund invested \$25,000 in emotional health and wellness grants**, helping launch or expand wellness spaces like the “reset” classroom at Cragmont, the “Regulation Room” at King, and the Wellness Center at Berkeley High. These essential spaces support students in regulating and managing emotions so they can return to class ready to learn. We also continued the “Healthy Me” initiative in Transitional Kindergarten classrooms, promoting movement and healthy habits amongst our youngest.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Naemi's STEM Journey

Naemi, a 6th grader at King Middle School, has participated in two Schools Fund/BUSD partner programs aimed at closing opportunity gaps in STEM: Super Science Saturdays (SSS) and Maker Camp. These hands-on experiences ignited her passion for STEM, transforming her learning. *“I love all things about STEM. The activities in SSS and Maker Camp are always different. I loved it because it was not like regular school — you get to participate a lot.”*

Naemi has gained confidence in STEM, learning valuable skills that prepare her for future challenges and opportunities, which she continues to apply outside the classroom: *“In Maker Camp, I struggled with coding, but the mentors were there to help me. I still code at home now.”*

Early exposure to STEM is crucial for students from historically underrepresented populations. These programs make a meaningful difference, inspiring the next generation of innovators.





Love of Learning

Meeting basic needs and fostering a sense of safety and belonging are essential for students to fully engage in the classroom. At its core, the Schools Fund's work nurtures a lifelong love of learning.

Empowering Young Readers for Lifelong Learning

Literacy is a critical "gateway" skill that underpins learning across all subjects. Last year, through our grants, **we invested over \$40,000 in three key literacy projects:**

- Supplied elementary libraries with **hundreds of high-interest audiobooks**, with supported access for students not yet reading at grade level.
- Acquired culturally relevant, **phonics-based books to advance district literacy goals.**
- Purchased **hundreds of backpacks filled with summer reading books** for students with limited access to books at home.

Bridging Community and Classroom: The Power of Classroom Volunteers

For over 30 years, the Schools Fund has fostered a "love of learning" by connecting the Berkeley community to classrooms. Last year, we **trained and placed 409 Classroom Volunteers** with BUSD teachers, supporting reading, math, science, PE, gardening and more. By reducing the adult-to-student ratio, volunteers provide **personalized support to students** and **crucial behind-the-scenes assistance to teachers.**

Volunteer Power 2023-2024

500+ Volunteers

25,400+
Hours of Service

Over \$980,000
Value for Berkeley Schools

"Our BSV volunteers have allowed students to be supported in more individual and responsive ways, have their voices heard by fresh ears, and connect to more adults through new and exciting interactions."

— Josh Heideman, Principal,
Washington Elementary

CLOSING THE OPPORTUNITY GAP IN STEM: Deepening Our Impact

Two years into our K-12 STEM initiative, our work to close the opportunity gap in STEM education is deepening. Student surveys from our 23-24 Summer Maker Camp are showing consistent growth, particularly around feelings of belonging and stronger connections with educators and near-peer mentors. Students are also reporting increased problem-solving abilities as they embrace the process of trying, failing, and trying again.

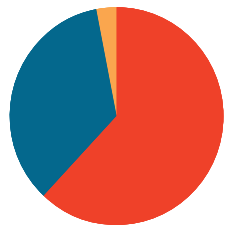
In the 24-25 school year, we plan to pilot our STEM programs in after-school spaces, building capacity in these environments while also creating a sustainable learning community among educators.

With two more years of funding secured to continue this vital work, we are actively seeking visionary partners to help us sustain and deepen this impact for future generations.



2023–24 Financials

(unaudited)



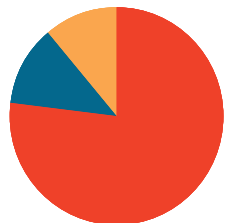
INCOME

Revenue Total \$ 2,560,192

62% Contributed Revenue
— Unrestricted \$ 1,586,989

35% Contributed Revenue
— Restricted \$ 893,390

3% Other Revenue \$ 79,813



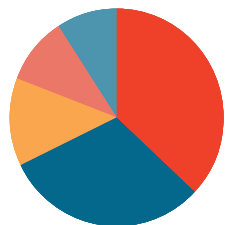
EXPENSES

Expenses Total \$ 2,379,065

77% Program \$ 1,832,077

12% Fundraising \$ 297,233

11% Management & General \$ 249,756



PROGRAM EXPENSES

Program Expenses Total \$ 1,832,077

37% Equity Grants \$ 677,144

31% Fiscal Sponsorships &
Other Restricted Funds \$ 573,082

13% STEM Programs \$ 244,586

10% Berkeley Schools Volunteers \$ 176,054

9% Schools Fund-Directed
Restricted Funds \$ 161,210

"Having free access to these programs is monumental to growing diversity within STEM fields. Keeping students of color, girls, and gender-expansive youth engaged in STEM starts with each and every interaction they have during their youth."

— Maker Camp Staff Member



MOVING THE NEEDLE:

The Schools Fund as an Incubator for Innovation

At the Schools Fund, we don't just support existing programs — we seek out potential and nurture it. Through our Equity Grants, we provide essential start-up funding for educator-led innovations that have the power to transform our schools. Our goal is to grow the most promising of these projects into sustainable, lasting programs that take root within BUSD, benefiting students for years to come.

"Why is it important to invest in public education? Because these students are our future. And what is more important than that?"

— Charlie Schad, Volunteer and Donor



**Berkeley Public
Schools Fund**

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