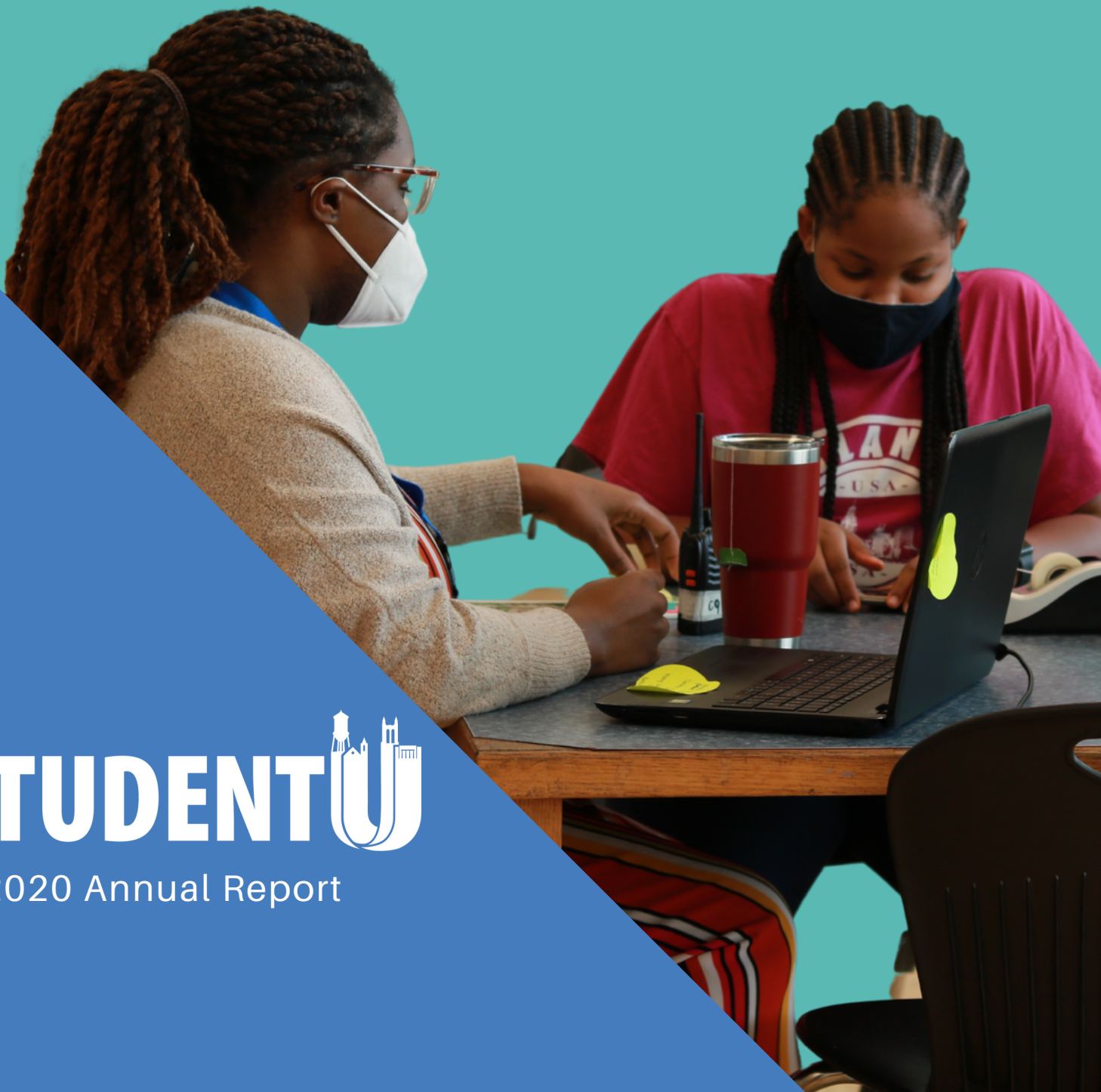




EMPOWERED STUDENTS ARE

ESSENTIAL



2020 Annual Report



- 2020 -

Contents:

Letter from Executive Director and Board of Directors.....	3
A New Mission.....	4
Who We Are.....	5
COVID-19 Response.....	6,7,8
Response to Racial Injustice.....	9
Financials.....	10
Results.....	11

The year 2020 was a momentous year in Student U's history and certainly made our work extremely pertinent -- and more challenging. As an organization, Student U started the year dreaming fearlessly about how to expand Student U's programming and best practices to make a positive impact beyond our 550 students and their families. While this dream grounds our work, Student U had to pivot and rapidly adjust its programming when COVID-19 impacted the Durham community.

The growth into our mission was accelerated to meet our families' and students' needs during that time. This was a stretch for our organization, but our deep relationships and conversations with our families were at the heart of all our decisions.

We were in awe of the resiliency of our families, students, and staff as we have dug deep into our values and commitment to our mission to support one another during this unprecedented and overwhelming season.

A NEW MISSION



On January 30, 2020, Student U launched its new mission to “empower and equip first generation college students in Durham Public Schools, their families, and educators to become the leaders that will transform our city.” This change shifted our mission to specifically name first-generation students as Student U’s intended target population, and established a scope of our work.

Student U also publicly announced its three strategies for carrying out this new mission: a strong intergenerational programming pipeline, sharing Student U institutional best practices broadly with other educators and institutions, and organizing our students and families to advocate for more equitable policies and decisions in our local, state, and federal governing bodies. At this event, Mayor of Durham Steve Schewel and Superintendent of Durham Public Schools Pascal Mubenga joined us to launch Student U’s new mission and celebrate the accomplishments that our Student U community has made in the past thirteen years.

WHO WE ARE



Student U is a community organization that uses the power of education to build a just and equitable Durham.

We empower and equip first-generation college students in Durham Public Schools, their families, and educators to become the leaders that will transform our city. **Together, we're creating a Durham where all students succeed.**

We support this transformation with an approach that combines three key elements:

- **Whole Families Approach**
- **Student - And Family-Led Advocacy**
- **Sharing Our Best Practices**



Whole-Families Approach

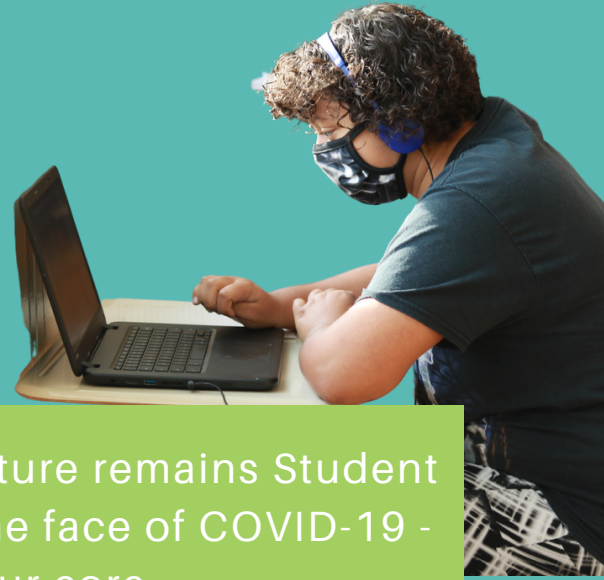


Student- and Family-Led Advocacy



Sharing Our Best Practices

COVID-19 RESPONSE



While this intentional vision for the future remains Student U's ultimate goal, in mid-March -- in the face of COVID-19 -- Student U staff quickly had to shift our core programming significantly. We set out to match the new needs our families were experiencing and ensure the safety of our staff, students, and families.

RAPID RESPONSE

Increase in Emergency Funds

More than \$10,000 was distributed in 2020 for emergency student and family support to fund basic necessities such as housing, wifi, healthcare support, and food security.

Support for technology and tools

More than 60 Chromebooks were lent to students and families at the onset of COVID.

Distribution of meals

We partnered with Durham FEAST to support the distribution of meals to members of our community.

Access to local resources

We hired two Student U Parents as Community Health Workers.



RECOVERY RESPONSE



The W.G. Pearson Learning Center

On September 28, 2020, we opened and updated the W.G. Pearson Learning Center. More than 90 students utilized the resources there on a daily basis during 2020. We also provided academic, social, and emotional support for Student U and more DPS families. This included regular wellness check-in calls with all 528 students and families in our Middle School, High School, and College Promise Programs.

How We Adapted

During this time, we also quickly shifted all in-person programming to virtual delivery. We offered 25 hours of virtual programming each week for Middle and High School students to sign up for, including 12 hours of online tutoring, 6 book clubs for both Middle and High School, and 7 activity-based clubs such as Art Club, Mad Science Club, and Wellness Club. Additionally, we coordinated 31 "Morning Brilliance" messages from our community to bring us together and created 10 Wellness Support videos for our students and families in addition to offering emotional counseling and support to students identified as needing additional social/emotional support. We also created and packaged 350 Summer At Home Learning Kits which were used to deliver educational materials to Middle and High School students. These helped fill the instructional gaps students experienced due to school closures and summer learning loss. Lastly, we coordinated two family conferences and multiple summer Zoom gatherings to nurture a sense of community in lieu of the typical Summer Academy community.

REIMAGINING RESPONSE



Outside of these programming shifts, Student U also began organizing around advocating for better decisions in our community and in our state. Student U's Executive Director, Alexandra-Emmanuelle Zagbayou appointed to the Task Force to Develop a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education (DRIVE) focused on improving education equity and inclusion in education. Student U also communicated with its families about pertinent Durham School Board meetings to attend to have their voices heard and influence the decisions the Board was making with regard to schools re-opening. The culmination of this advocacy work occurred in an Op-Ed piece published in the Indy Week titled "Re-Opening Durham Public Schools: Why We Can't Afford to Get It Wrong" by Alexandra Zagabyou, Student U's Executive Director.

Pushing the school district to ensure our most vulnerable community members' well-being is at the center of all of the decisions

Advocating and securing 6 DPS-sponsored learning centers for 900 students K-12 with consistent therapy and social emotion support for students and families

Partnering with many other organizations to mobilize and increase our social impact

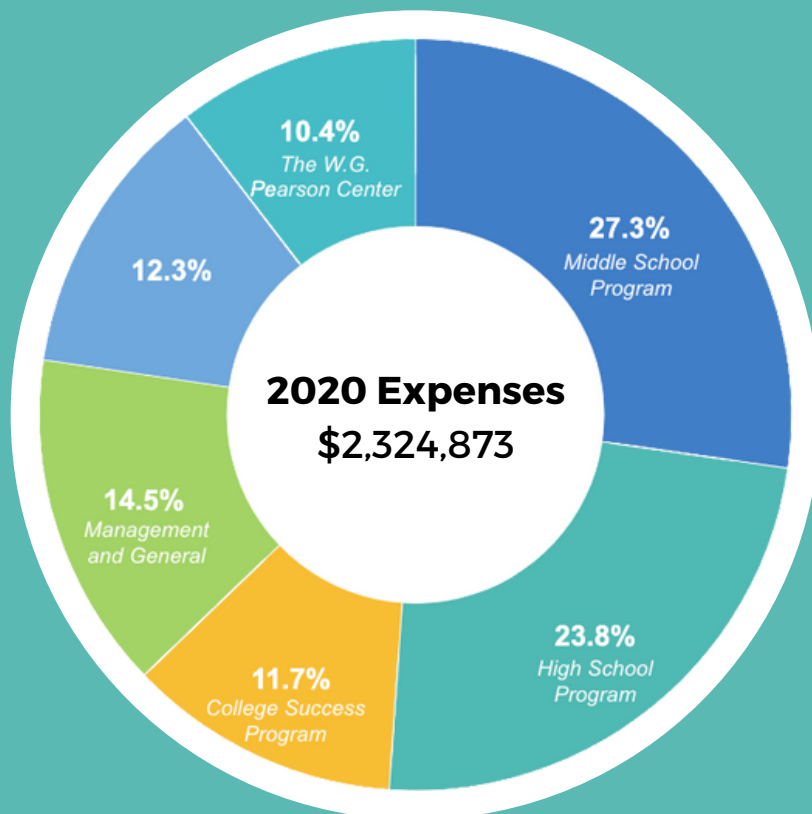
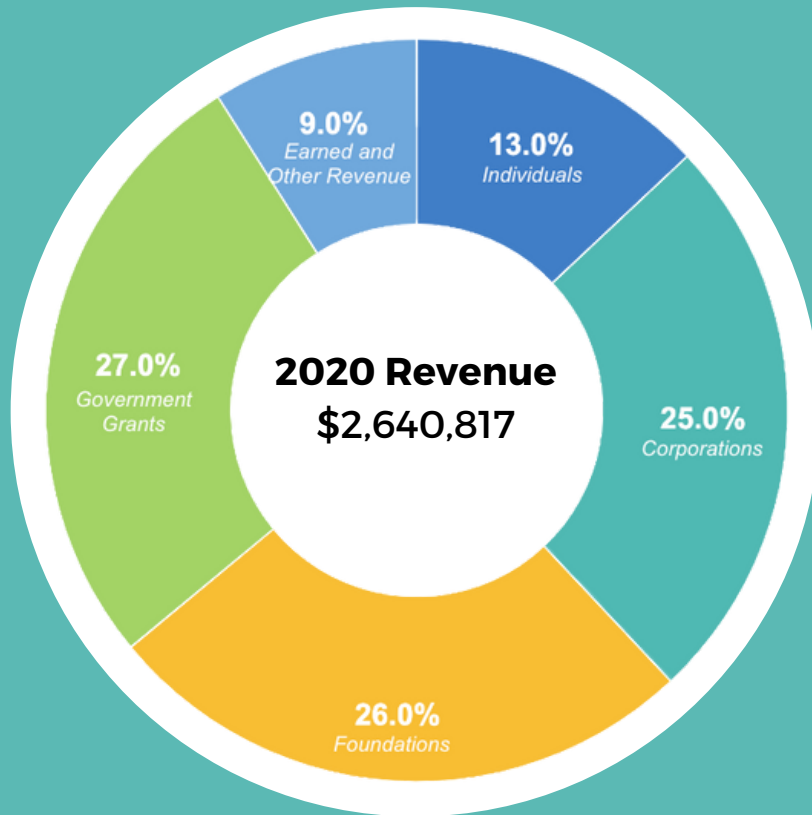
Advocating and securing City and County funding to provide 338 children in our community access to free learning center access at the YMCA, W.G. Pearson Center, Kate's Corner K-12

RESPONSE TO RACIAL INJUSTICE

The summer of 2020 also brought an increased awareness around instances of violence against Black people by law enforcement. The killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, among many others that will never be known, and the recent shooting of Jacob Blake have affected the Student U community -- almost all of whom are students of color -- significantly. Student U responded and continues to respond by affirming the brilliance and positive racial identity development in our 550 students, while also reflecting on this moment together. Student U remains committed to using an antiracism lens in all of its work and continues to incorporate curriculum and learning interventions that are culturally relevant to our students' lives.

- Student U hosted a Black caucus for the Black members of our community to process with each other.
- Student U also facilitated a white caucus group for white people to learn to become "co-conspirators" and come alongside our community in our work in ways that do not negatively affect people of color.

FINANCIALS

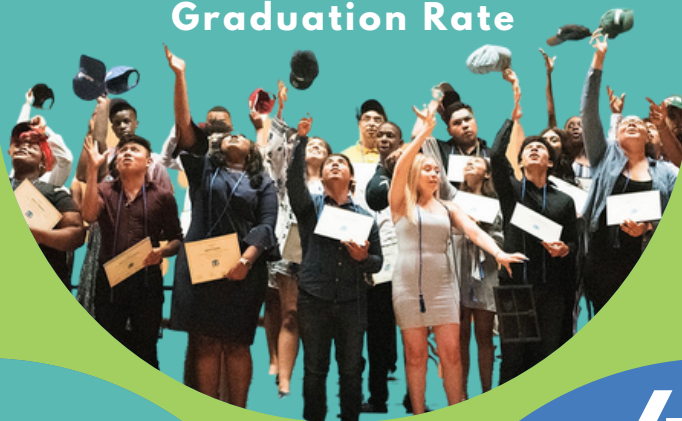


RESULTS

For students who stay in our programming from start to finish, they have outstanding outcomes:

100%

High School
Graduation Rate



90.3%

OF OUR STUDENTS
FEEL HOPEFUL
ABOUT THEIR
FUTURE!

42

College Graduates

