

GROWING IMPACT FOR ALL STUDENTS IN BENNINGTON

2023/24 Annual Impact Report



THANK YOU FOR HELPING US GROW!

Growth is often defined as "an increase in physical size, like the growth of a sapling into a mature tree." This year, we are focused on expressing our gratitude to everyone who has helped us grow over the years. Our donor gifts—a beautiful succulent—are a symbol of the growth they have contributed toward at the BPS Foundation.

When I reflect on the idea of a sapling growing into a mature tree, I'm reminded of our logo. Every colorful element—from the roots to the leaves, and the words "support, grow, achieve"—represents the contributions of donors, volunteers, and employees impacting students, teachers and community. The BPSF, like a strong, flourishing tree, literally took a village to create, and our growth is far from over!

Growth can take many forms—sometimes it's visible and tangible, other times it happens behind the scenes. A common question in the nonprofit world is: "How do we measure it?" The growth we've experienced at the BPS Foundation can be seen in many ways: through our financial investments, the expansion of our programs, the number of students we impact, and so much more. But growth also comes in less measurable ways. For instance, when a student thanks us for a book they received from a book vending machine, it reflects social, emotional, and intellectual growth—forms of impact that numbers alone can't capture.

Looking back, it's incredible to realize that we've all contributed to the depth, growth and strength of this remarkable tree. Every volunteer hour, every dollar, and every new idea has helped shape the lives of students in ways that truly can't be put into words!

I'm excited to see how our tree continues to branch out. I've had the privilege of spending countless hours with our board of directors and district leadership as we planned for the future through our recent strategic planning process, which you'll see featured throughout this report. We've set a course for BPSF to grow its impact over the next decade. While we know there will be twists and turns along the way, and we may gain or lose leaves, we are committed to growing together to benefit the district for years to come.

I'm so honored to be on this journey with everyone who crosses the BPSF path, and I'm excited to continue growing together!



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Executive Director
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\$260,000
funded IMPACTFUL programming

**\$30,000 INCREASE
FROM 2022/23!**



SCAN FOR MORE
DETAILED BREAKDOWN
OF PROGRAMS



BlueNited Student Success Programs	13.32%
Blue Nation Staff Success Programs	32.79%
Beyond Blue Future Success Programs	50.40%



4,272 STUDENTS



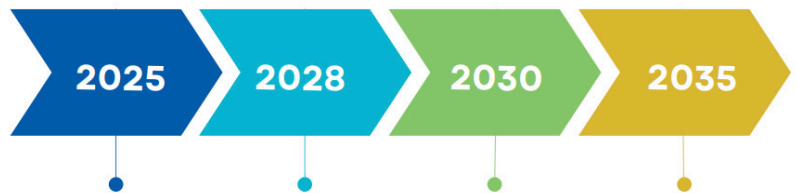
537 TEACHERS & STAFF



8 SCHOOLS

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

This year, the Bennington Public School Foundation Board and Staff completed a Strategic Plan to guide our growth and impact through 2035. By assessing current achievements and future goals, we created a



roadmap of **short-term** and **long-term** strategies. This plan answers the community's question, "What is your plan for growth?" and ensures we're ready to expand our mission, support students, and adapt to future challenges.

1.0 Optimize Operations

- » Strengthen staff for organizational growth.
- » Improve Board operations and communication.
- » Recruit BPS teachers and staff for input committees.
- » Finalize office space, staff, and tech plans.
- » Expand program offerings and leadership roles.
- » Review strategic plan and staffing needs.

3.0 Build the Brand/Spread the Love

- » Raise an additional \$60,000 through gala
- » Showcase the mission in action.
- » Reinvent and enhance PTO/Booster collaboration.
- » Strengthen partnerships and increase visibility.
- » Consider additional events to expand reach.
- » 75% of community know our story by 2027.

2.0 Amplify Support of Student Impact

- » Conduct school-based assessment to identify student needs.
- » Enhance All Star Kids staff and program.
- » Restructure and update senior scholarships.
- » Analyze data to expand student support programs.
- » Increase career support and volunteer engagement.
- » Evaluate need for and launch pre-school model.

4.0 Diversify & Increase Funding to Grow Financial Impact

- » Develop a plan to diversify funding streams.
- » Engage 30% of alumni in giving.
- » Plan RFP for future capital campaign.
- » Strengthen alumni and corporate giving.
- » Develop endowment, grants, and sponsorships.
- » Launch capital campaign.



SCAN TO VIEW
FULL PLAN

**STARTING IN 2024/25
SCHOOL YEAR, OUR ANNUAL
IMPACT IS SET TO GROW
TO OVER \$350,000!**

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



The **Words for Thirds** program was revitalized this year through our partnership with the Bennington Lions Club. Previously limited to providing dictionaries, the program now includes a "365 Words a Day" book and a vocabulary tool for mastering compound words, antonyms, synonyms, and homonyms, aligning with the District's English Language Arts standards.

It also now features an optional week-long curriculum of engaging activities, including the popular Vocabulary Parade where students create costumes representing words and share them with their class. One student remarked, "I had no idea words could be so much fun!" This enhanced program promotes writing, active reading, and creative thinking.



High School FCS Teacher Mallory Mohr received a **Classroom Grant** for Greenhouses, serving multiple cross-curriculum purposes in weather, biology, agriculture, culinary labs and entrepreneurship. With the greenhouses now assembled by Building Construction students, planting will be scheduled as soon as conditions allow.



Bennington TeamMates Mentoring program served 87 matches over the school year, and culminated in the annual end-of-year bowling celebration. 14 students are currently waiting for their own mentor. Apply or nominate today at TeamMates.org.



Hundreds of middle and high school students utilized the **Study Centers** over **700 hours** throughout the year.



232 students attended elementary summer school were awarded books for their attendance. The Foundation covers 50% of the book costs – approximately \$8,000 of assistance annually.

View more impact stories:





27 Classroom Grants
Awarded to Teachers



\$110,000 Scholarships
Awarded to 92 Seniors



410 Students Served in
All Star Kids Before &
After School Year &
Summer Program



Over 38 students were supported by the **Student Needs Fund**, which provided essentials like tennis shoes, groceries, winter gear, and even a car battery to help a family reach school. This program addresses immediate needs for students facing financial challenges, ensuring their well-being so nothing impedes their school success.



The **Project One-Time Fund** provided impactful additions to our schools this year, including book vending machines for each elementary school. The book vending machines were inspired by the success of a pilot program at Pine Creek Elementary, initially launched through a previous ClassroomGrant. These machines reward students for positive reading habits and good behavior with books, reinforcing the value of literacy and motivating students to engage more deeply with their education.

Books are selected by Librarians to meet District standards and funded by PTOs.

ELEVATING STAFF APPRECIATION!



Partnering with the district, we introduced the Shine Your Light Awards, designed to recognize teachers and support staff who go above and beyond in making a difference for their colleagues or students. Nominations are submitted by peers, with two deserving staff members selected each month to receive this honor.

We also sponsored monthly gifts for every staff member and covered the costs for one night of conferences during both the Fall and Spring conference seasons.



We are excited to continue growing our impact with BPS staff. Investing in their success not only strengthens our school community but also directly enriches the experiences of the students they serve.

EVENTS

Events are an important part of our work. Events bring in revenue as well as raise awareness about the Foundation and the work we do for the district.

ALUMNI HOMECOMING TAILGATE & EVENTS

We hosted our first-ever all-alumni Homecoming Tailgate, welcoming alumni of all ages back to their alma mater. Attendees enjoyed free game admission, a meal voucher from the Athletic Booster Club, a chance to win free apparel, and time to reconnect with fellow alumni.

62 alumni joined us for this inaugural event. Additionally, we hosted alumni nights at a girls' and boys' basketball game and the school musical.

Alumni are encouraged to create a free profile at [BenningtonAlumni.NationBuilder.com](https://www.BenningtonAlumni.NationBuilder.com) to stay updated on events, access the online directory, plan reunions, and shop for alumni merchandise.



TRIFECTA GAME NIGHT

New last year, Trifecta Game Night was created based on community feedback requesting a more casual event. Teams of four competed to complete a 300-piece puzzle, finish a large pizza, and drink a 12-pack of beverages. Throughout the night, teams spun the 'Wheel of Chaos,' facing fun challenges to keep them on their toes.

It was an evening full of laughter and friendly competition!

Join us next year for sessions on January 17 and 18, 2025!



ANNUAL GALA

The 2024 Annual Gala "Little Italy" raised \$45,000 for programming, with over 300 attendees!

An additional \$3,475 was raised for TeamMates Mentoring and Classroom Grants through the "Fill the Heart" campaign and an optional Wine Tasting.

This event has become Bennington's largest fundraiser for its schools.

Join us for next year's Gala on Saturday, March 22, 2025!



COMMUNITY RACE: TRIPLE B RELAY

Led by Board Vice President Kim Rohe, we introduced the Triple B Relay. Presented by Thrasher Foundation Repair, a new race open to all ages and skill levels. This "school-to-school" style event took 99 participants through the Bennington Public Schools District. Runners could choose from a 1-mile fun run, a 2-5 person relay, or a 5-mile individual race.

Funds raised supported the Bennington Disaster Relief Fund, aiding those affected by the April 2024 tornadoes.

Join us for next year's event during Bennington Daze on June 7, 2025!



CORNETT'S "WHY"

Chris and Sheryl Cornett grew up and went to school in the Cambridge area, a small community in southwest Nebraska. **Their rural upbringing is where they learned the importance of investing in the most precious commodity of any community, its people—financially, as well as in the form of service and volunteering their time.**

They both attended UNL, and Chris furthered his education at UNMC, getting both his physical therapy degree, as well as his medical degree. After completing his residency in Wisconsin and his fellowship

in Pennsylvania, they actively sought out and settled in the small community of Bennington in 2011.

It did not take long for them to become involved and contributing to the Bennington Public School system, the Bennington Community and its activities, Nebraska Medicine/UNMC and the Metro, at large.

They have five children –Benton, Avynne, Emmersyn, Mazlyn & Zyden, whom have all reaped the benefits of Bennington Public Schools and also have been involved with the various activities, clubs and volunteering at multiple levels.



The BPS Foundation thanks these major supporters who make it possible to enrich teaching, inspire learning, and maximize educational opportunities for all students, teachers and schools in Bennington.

See all 253 donors who gave through us during the 2023-24 fiscal year and how you can join them:



Jason & Danielle Buchholz

Darrell & Coe Leta Logemann



Dr. Chris & Sheryl Cornett



Controlled Rain



Making Better Lives. Rock Valley PHYSICAL THERAPY



Cara Colvert



Ahmed Morsy, Alex & Melanie Frary, Amy Jenkins, Ben Pile, Brandon McCarville & Kaylee Wallace, Chris & Melissa Reiner, Chris & Tara Gufford, Craig & Joni Schultz, Craig & Tracy J Behnken, David & Megan Holtorf, Devin Bird, Dr Aaron & Laura Plas, Dr. Terry & Theresa Haack, Jason & Brooke Limbach, Kent & Renee Rucker, Kimberly Remmereid, Krae Dutoit, Mark & Nicki Byars, Matt & Alli Deaver, Matt Larson, Matthew John, Michelle & Tom Miller, Plattsmouth Community Schools, Rodger & Dr Dee Hoge, Steve Koesters.



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MONTHLY E-NEWS
FOR IMPACT +
OPPORTUNITIES
YEAR ROUND!**

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NONPROFIT 501(C)(3)

We act as a separate entity to the District. Donor dollars are not used to cover operating expenses and go straight to program impact. Donations made through the BPS Foundation can be tax-deductible.

You can choose to give to the general programming fund or to a specific program that most aligns with your giving goals.



**SCAN TO MAKE
AN END OF YEAR
DONATION**

BenningtonSchoolsFoundation.org | 531.329.3710 |   