

Annual Report

2017



EdAllies



Our Mission

EdAllies partners with schools, families, and communities to ensure that every young Minnesotan has access to a rigorous and engaging education. We advance policies that put underserved students first, remove barriers facing successful schools and programs, and foster an inclusive conversation about what's possible for students.

Our Core Values

EQUITY • INVENTIVENESS • HUMILITY • HONESTY • COURAGE



Intro From Our Board Chair



As a parent and an educator, I know that all children are capable of greatness. It's this knowledge that makes Minnesota's achievement and opportunity gaps all the more heartbreaking—and the work of closing these gaps all the more urgent. When we assume that, because some children are not excelling in school, it reflects more on them than it does on the system that's educating them, we are not helping those kids achieve greatness. When, instead of giving these children more resources, opportunities, and effective educators, we actually give them less, we are perpetuating the system that has too often left them behind.

I helped launch EdAllies in late 2016 because I was tired of waiting for change. Our underserved kids need an organization that is willing to not just name the hard truths about what's not working for them in schools, but to change those truths, too. As the founding board chair, I envisioned that EdAllies would become that organization. As I look back on 2017, our first full year in operation, I am proud and humbled to share the ways in which we lived up to that vision.

In the highlights that follow, you'll see that we worked on many fronts, from elevating issues and voices that may have otherwise been overlooked, to advancing policies that will make sure our most underserved students move front and center. I hope you'll see, too, that we picked our name, EdAllies, with purpose and intent, to stress our commitment to working in genuine partnership with families, educators, and community members who know that our state's children can't wait any longer.

That's why as I reflect on 2017, I am most thankful for you: the partners who helped us get off the ground and who believe, like us, in every child's greatness, and share our urgency in helping them achieve it.

A handwritten signature in yellow ink that reads "Ann Johnson".

Ann Johnson
EdAllies Board Chair

Rallying a School Accountability Coalition

Throughout 2017, we worked with coalition partners and the Minnesota Department of Education to craft a state Every Student Succeeds Act plan that advances equity, transparency, and accountability. Our coalition united around shared priorities, from grounding MDE's process in community input, to a strong system for identifying schools for support, to meaningful teacher quality provisions. In addition to being at the table for working groups, we submitted public comments, conducted research and outreach, and partnered with the media and policymakers to get the word out on the importance of getting the ESSA plan right. Our coalition mobilized around several concerns with the state's draft plan, leading to positive changes to ensure MDE identifies struggling schools for support on the front end, and does not exit them from the improvement process prematurely.



Our ESSA coalition brought together 23 diverse organizations, all committed to creating an accountability system that works for students, families, and educators.

Putting Education on the Minneapolis Mayoral Agenda

To help voters learn more about the Minneapolis mayoral candidates' views on education, EdAllies partnered with over a dozen organizations to host a forum focused on educational equity and excellence. The forum drew five of the leading candidates, attracted well over 300 attendees, and garnered media coverage in some of the state's biggest newspapers, pushing both candidates and community members to see education as a top civic priority.

Advancing Solutions Not Suspensions

In 2017, EdAllies was an active member of Solutions Not Suspensions, a statewide coalition working to advance discipline practices that improve school climate and make suspensions and expulsions a last resort. From helping community members speak out in support of discipline alternatives—and against efforts, both locally and nationally, to make it easier for schools to suspend and expel students—to engaging advocates in opportunities to take action, our coalition helped block harmful policies and make the case for rethinking school discipline.

Lifting Up EdVoices

To reimagine what is possible in schools—and ultimately improve outcomes for students—we need a new conversation on education, centered on the candid perspectives of those who are most impacted. That's why we launched EdVoices: a program where Minnesota students, teachers, and parents can share their thoughts on education as they see it. In 2017, we welcomed eight EdVoices contributors, who shared their takes on student bullying, teacher prep, charter schools, school discipline, and more with thousands of EdAllies' blog readers.



EdVoices contributors also had their pieces published in the *Star Tribune*, *Education Post*, and even *The Huffington Post*, reaching new audiences both locally and nationally.



Leveraging Parent Choice to Advance Equity

Every student deserves a rigorous and engaging education—and there is no one-size-fits-all path to get there. In 2017, EdAllies worked to increase access to, and urgency around, protecting high-quality school options for underserved families. For example, we helped successfully block proposed administrative rules that would have created unnecessary, and unlawful, barriers for charter schools. We worked, too, with local partners and families to raise awareness of how the *Cruz-Guzman* school integration lawsuit could threaten schools currently changing the odds for students of color. We also released a brief detailing why equity and quality must be front and center in the debate around state scholarships for independent schools. Throughout all of this work, we focused on bringing greater balance and real parent stories into the public debate. Through an in-depth parent training, continuing one-on-one support, and initiatives like EdVoices, we helped give parents a platform to tell their own stories, re-centering the conversation on the needs of students and families.

Making Sure That All Kids Count

To help all students excel, Minnesota must start with more accurate and detailed data on where they are now. The All Kids Count Act, which passed the Legislature with bipartisan support, called for student achievement data disaggregation and cross-tabulation to provide policymakers, educators, and families with detailed, actionable data they can use to build on students' strengths and target specific needs. In 2017, we worked with policymakers and diverse advocacy partners to strengthen this legislation, guaranteeing that key student groups are included and clarifying the timeline and requirements to ensure smooth statewide implementation.

Making Sense of Ed Finance

At EdAllies, we work to make education policy more accessible to parents, educators, and community partners. In 2017, we worked to demystify one of the most complex policy topics impacting schools: education finance. Our EdFinance 101 training drew nearly 50 partners, advocates, funders, and even legislators. Since then, we've shared the presentation directly with other partners eager to engage in school funding work.

Getting Great Teachers into Minnesota Classrooms

For years, Minnesota's broken licensure system was a barrier for experienced educators and school leaders alike—particularly as they worked to increase teacher diversity and fill shortages. In response, we organized educators to tell their stories, rallied partners around shared concerns, and engaged policymakers to strengthen our approach to teacher preparation and licensure. Finally, in 2017, Gov. Dayton signed a bill creating a straightforward tiered licensure system that recognizes teachers' varied training and experience—both local and out-of-state. The overhaul creates a clear bar for entry into the profession and consolidates licensure operations under the new Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board. The Legislature also created a grant to support innovative teacher training models.



We helped advocates make over 600 connections with policymakers, through emails, calls, and in-person meetings, to call for a new teacher licensure system that works.



Staff

DANIEL SELLERS

Executive Director

ANDREA ROETHKE

Managing Director of
Strategy and Operations

JOSHUA CROSSON

Senior Policy Director

BRANDIE BURRIS-GALLAGHER

Policy Director

ARIANA KIENER

Strategic Communications
Director

JODY WITHERS

Research Director

DAISY BUENROSTRO

Capitol Pathways Intern

HOANG MURPHY

Community Organizing Fellow

Board

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HOLLY KRAGTHORPE

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TIM PENNY

TAD PIPER

LEW REMELE

BEN WHITNEY

Partners

We take our name, and our role as an ally, seriously. We partner closely with families, school and district leaders, teachers, students, and other education stakeholders, and, when a project or campaign winds down, seek to learn from them what we did well and what we didn't.

2017 PARTNER SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

23

local partners
completed the survey

100%

agreed or strongly agreed that
EdAllies is a **valuable partner**

96%

agreed or strongly agreed that
we are **responsive & reliable**

How well are we living up to our core values?

Our strength is courage

where **91%** rated our team as good or excellent

Our biggest area for growth is humility

where **69%** rated us as good or excellent

Where can we do better in the coming year?

We will focus on deepening partnerships

with **parents** and **community-based organizations**



Funders

Foundations and Corporations

3Mgives
 Advance Consulting LLC
 The Douglass Brandenburg Family Foundation
 Bush Foundation
 Carlson Family Foundation
 F R Bigelow Foundation
 General Mills Foundation
 GHR Foundation
 Graves Foundation
 The Joyce Foundation
 McKnight Foundation
 Microsoft
 Minnesota Comeback
 National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
 Otto Bremer Trust
 The Walton Family Foundation
 WEM Foundation

Individuals and Family Funds

Albright Foundation
 Chancey Anderson
 The Julie and Doug Baker, Jr. Foundation
 Nicholas and Liz Banovetz
 Shannon and Jeanette Blankenship
 Thomas Borman
 Caleb and Mollie Bousu
 The Brown Family Foundation
 Amy and Matt Buckley
 Darrel Burris
 Brandie Burris-Gallagher
 Jay and Page Cowles
 Josh Crosson
 Ella Daniels
 Madaline Edison
 Elizabeth and David Finch
 Warren Gallagher and Stella Pagonis

David and Stephanie Garry Garfunkel
 Paul and Elizabeth Gunderson
 Troy Haugen
 Ben and Kathleen Heupel
 Maren Hulden
 Ann Johnson
 Brent Kent
 Ariana Kiener
 Holly Kragthorpe
 Matt and Katie Barrett Kramer
 Conor and Cameron Leonard
 Dick and Joyce H. McFarland Family Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation
 Andrew Minck
 Shannon Mitchell
 Joe Nathan
 Michael O'Connell
 Olson Family Fund
 Tim and Sandra Penny

Piper Family Fund II of The Minneapolis Foundation
 Morgan and Tiegan Rapp
 Josh Reimnitz and Daniella Vassan
 Remele Family Fund
 Andrea Roethke
 Don and Sondra Samuels
 Katie and Jeremy Schroeder
 Daniel and Stacy Sellers
 Karen and Dick Sellers
 Nathan Sellers and Kendahl Moser-Bleil
 Smikis Foundation
 Ed and Val Spencer
 Eric and Lauren Stavenger
 Jill and Richard Stever-Zeitlin
 Bo Thao-Urabe
 Allison Welch
 Ben and Mary Whitney
 Dan and Ginny Wright



FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

■	Program	71%
■	Fundraising	13%
■	Administrative	17%

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS		\$402,778
Current assets		\$387,086
	Cash and cash equivalents	\$249,072
	Pledges receivable	\$126,148
	Prepaid expenses	\$11,866
Property and equipment, net		\$15,692
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		\$402,778
Current liabilities		\$11,622
	Accounts payable	\$4,104
	Salaries and related benefits payable	\$7,518
Net assets		\$391,156
	Unrestricted	\$120,323
	Temporarily restricted	\$270,833

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

PUBLIC SUPPORT	\$926,109
Contributions	\$926,109
Other	—
EXPENSES	\$895,668
Program	\$632,661
Supporting services	\$263,496
Administration	\$151,414
Fundraising	\$112,082
NET ASSETS	
Change in net assets	\$30,441
Beginning of year, as previously stated	\$371,069
<i>Prior period adjustment</i>	<i>–\$10,354</i>
Beginning of year, restated	\$360,715
End of year	\$391,156

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL EXPENSES

SALARIES AND RELATED	\$683,258
Taxes and Benefits	\$683,258
Salaries	\$555,462
Employee benefits	\$83,506
Payroll taxes	\$44,290
EXPENSES	\$895,668
Total before depreciation	\$891,087
Fees for services	\$111,531
Advertising expenses	\$6,949
Office expenses	\$15,755
Information technology	\$10,129
Advocacy and promotion	\$11,266
Occupancy	\$18,618
Travel	\$14,968
Conferences and professional development	\$4,748
Insurance	\$5,349
Other	\$8,516
DEPRECIATION	–\$4,581

What's Next

We're already hard at work on our 2018 goals, from advancing policies that support great teachers and school leaders, to bringing more nuance to local education conversations, to making it easier for families to understand—and access—their school options.

To learn more, get involved, or make a contribution to support our work, please visit edalliesmn.org