

Annual Report 2022

Moving Students Forward During Legislative Gridlock



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



Letter From Our Board Chair



Reflecting on the past year of work at EdAllies, I am even more determined to act and advocate for our students.

Through tenacity and hard work, we shed light on the student, educator, parent, and family stories that need and deserve to be told. EdAllies' work in 2022 is a great example of what's possible when a team, a network, and a community work together to speak up and speak out for an equitable education system that ensures every Minnesotan has access to a rigorous and engaging education. We leaned into community-based collaboration and stayed anchored on student-centered change. We had to — the legislature appeared comfortable staying stuck, schools struggled as they emerged from a national pandemic, and too many families were unsure how to provide for their kids.

While gridlock stymied some of the bigger policy wins we hoped for in 2022, we were prepared for the unavoidable fact that moving a statewide system can be slow with each step feeling like it's years in the making. Students need urgent action to close opportunity gaps, yet convincing an entire state and its leaders that change is necessary and possible remains an uphill battle. It's the right battle to fight, and EdAllies will continue fighting for progress instead of gridlock.

I am immensely grateful to the broad coalition that puts Minnesota students first and joins EdAllies to commit to changes rooted in what students need and deserve. I am also thankful to have a team that prioritizes listening and advocating for policies responsive to what we hear from students and their families. This past year showed dedication to understanding, elevating the voices of, and addressing the challenges faced by families who find that the status quo is not meeting their kids' needs. We will continue fighting for student-centered change regardless of our social and political climates because kids need and deserve strong, steadfast advocates.

As always, we are committed to working with students, parents, guardians, educators, fellow advocates, and supporters to advance our mission from classrooms to the Capitol. Transforming Minnesota's deep-rooted education system might be slower than our students need, but we must continue. We cannot do it without you. Thank you to this team, the board, and the many supporters we work alongside.

In partnership until every student thrives,
Karn Engelskjerd
EdAllies Board Chair



Strengthening Literacy Instruction

In 2022, literacy emerged as one of the top education policy issues in Minnesota—and rightfully so. Reading proficiency is essential to unlocking learning in all other areas, but too many students are lagging behind mainly due to inadequate literacy instruction and inadequate teacher preparation standards. By expanding evidence-based practices in schools, giving educators at all stages of their careers access to effective training, and holding teacher preparation programs accountable to properly training pre-service teachers, we can make sure all students have the literacy skills they need.

EdAllies advocated at the Capitol for investment in teacher training, in coalition with many key partners, and we also helped build momentum for bigger-picture sector-wide change. We came together with the Minnesota Business Partnership, the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Education, the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board, Decoding Dyslexia, and key legislators to secure a multi-year technical assistance partnership with the Hunt Foundation's Path Forward initiative. With this group, we began building a statewide framework for literacy to guide Minnesota's next chapter of literacy advocacy. 🏡



To learn more about the Hunt Foundation's Path Forward Initiative, [click here to visit their website.](#)





Elevating Students as Advocates

For many years, EdAllies has worked to help students build skills and access spaces where change is made. This year, we leaned into this work in new ways, taking content we often deliver in one-off presentations and building it out into a new learning model for student advocates.

During the spring 2022 semester, we recruited students to take part in our inaugural “externship” program. The group attended scheduled meetings to learn about the advocacy process and hear from guest speakers as they explored a specific issue they experienced or observed in their K-12 experience—from the need for mental health support to frustrations with exclusionary discipline and more. Through hands-on exploration, students investigated their own perspectives as they researched and developed advocacy strategies and harnessed their voices to fight for education justice through learning, reflecting, researching, writing, planning, and action. We worked with students to publish their work with the goal of advancing their stories to help shape a student-centered narrative to detail what needs to change in Minnesota’s education system.

In the fall, we built on this program and shaped it into an in-school model in partnership with the ThriveEd Lab School. This iteration of the program, called *Education Advocacy 101: From Exploration to Action*, brought our team directly to Hopkins High School students. Taking place over three months, the sessions provided real-world examples and insights into the advocacy process. Students were empowered to learn more about policymaking in Minnesota and how it connects to their lived experience in school. 🏠



See how EdAllies highlighted and supported some phenomenal student advocates:

- ✔ **EdVoices on Student Mental Health**
- ✔ **EdVoices on Exclusionary Discipline**
- ✔ **EdVoices on Disparities in Rigorous Coursework**



Making School Funding More Student-Centered

Minnesota's school funding system is complex, and while Minnesota is a leader in equity by some measures, there are several areas where our funding systems don't effectively serve our highest need students, including low-income students, English language learners, students with disabilities, and students in rural areas. EdAllies worked with our national partners at the Education Trust to do a deep dive on these issues, culminating in a 2022 forum walking stakeholders through our findings and next steps.

The event, *From Band-Aids to Cures*, looked at key questions such as: how to build an equitable student-based funding formula, the underlying issues that lead to special education and English Learner cross-subsidies, and the structural challenges with Minnesota's compensatory revenue system.

We continued our work at both the grasstops and grassroots levels to address the shortfalls in Minnesota's student funding models and calculations, pushing legislators not just to patch gaps but to think about structural changes that will improve K-12 funding for the long-term. 🏡



Missed the event? No problem!
Click here to find a recording of *From Band-Aids to Cures* on YouTube.





Making Complicated Content Approachable

Core to our mission and visible in all EdAllies' work is a desire to make what is often complex and complicated into information that is approachable, accessible, and useful. This year was no different as we explored new platforms, mediums, and messages. Two notable highlights include:

- Civic engagement starts with sharing actionable information. We developed a series of explainer videos shedding light on real-time happenings at the Capitol—giving Minnesotans across the state a peek behind the curtain in St. Paul—and also breaking down complex issues like the special education cross-subsidy. In 2022, EdAllies created 21 videos that received over 13,000 views.
- An all-new online research library that houses content we've featured in our Research Rundowns over time. The tool allows advocates to search, filter, and find the resources they need as they dig into the advocacy issues of the day. 🏠



The legislative process can be confusing, daunting, and inaccessible. To break down barriers we developed new tools in multiple formats and platforms:

- **Take a look at the new online research library**
- **Watch Matt Shaver explain the special education cross-subsidy**
- **See students discuss why the Increase Teachers of Color Act Matters so much**



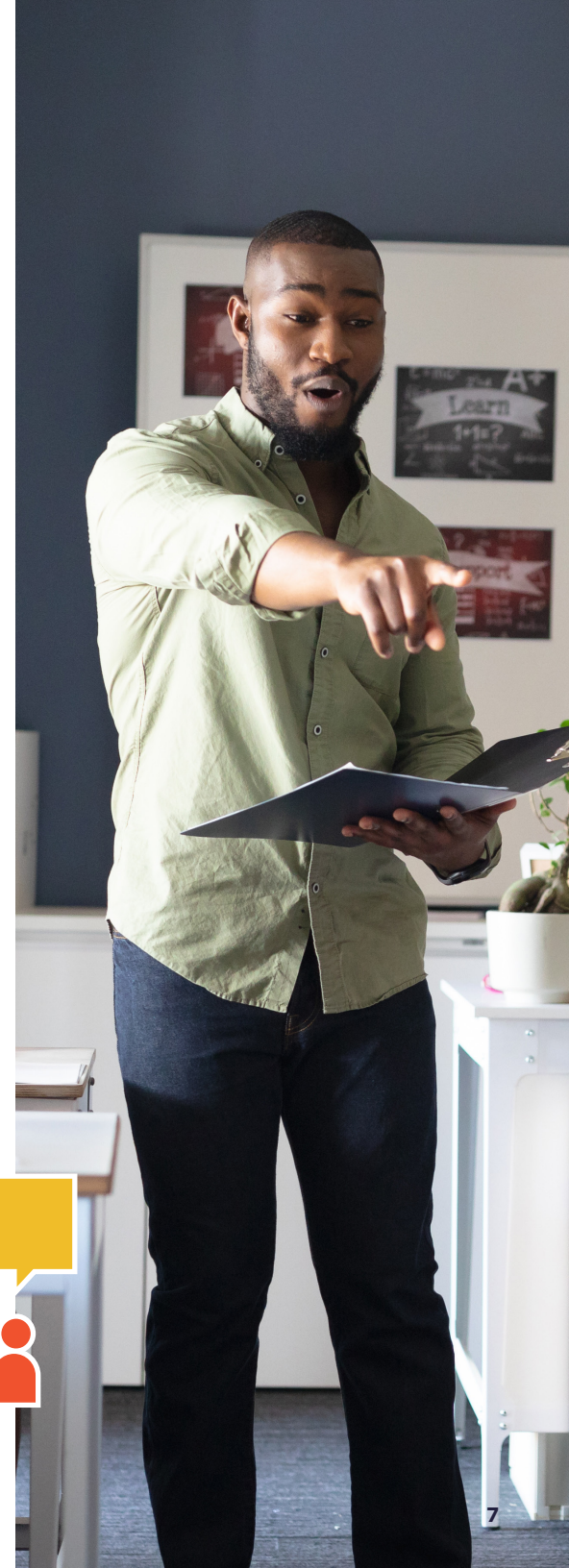
Building Strong Teacher Preparation Pathways

Developing and supporting high-quality teachers that reflect the students they serve is a central focus of EdAllies' work. This year we worked to ensure both policy and practice related to teacher preparation, licensure, and development reflect best practices, are aligned to equity and student achievement, and build a strong pool of well-supported and diverse teachers. A major milestone in 2022 was the adoption of new standards for what is taught in teacher preparation by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB). EdAllies continued our yearslong effort to provide detailed and model feedback on each draft of the standards, engaging community leaders, educators, and families along the way. Together, we advocated for new teachers to have a solid base of skills to support student needs, from literacy to culturally responsive teaching. Policy Director Matt Shaver spoke to the media about the importance of cultural competence to support a strong final draft.

We also pushed back against harmful changes to teacher licensure, building a strong coalition focused on diverse and effective teachers in the process, raised awareness of the need to better define how we measure teacher shortages, and advocated to increase access to alternative teacher preparation to bring new educators from different backgrounds into the classroom. 🏠



For some, the concept of cultural competency may be new. Check out this piece from local news station KARE11 to learn more about what it means for students.





Ensuring Culturally Relevant Schools

Every student deserves to feel seen and celebrated in their school, and receive a well-rounded education grounded in accurate history. This is especially critical for the success of students of color, English learners, and immigrant students. Unfortunately, culturally affirming curriculum, accurate history, and comprehensive standards were under threat at the Capitol and in the courts in 2022. EdAllies successfully pushed back against a so-called “Parent’s Bill of Rights” that would have undermined lessons based on accurate history and needed critical conversations. EdAllies also successfully advocated against efforts to eliminate standards requiring teacher preparation programs to teach about closing race-based education gaps and creating welcoming environments for LGBTQ+ students.

We also closely tracked the ongoing Cruz-Guzman v. Minnesota lawsuit, educating stakeholders about the status and implications as it was appealed to the Minnesota Supreme Court. We hosted informational updates, and continued to talk with parents about the role of culturally affirming schools and agency for families of color. 🏡



Action Alerts are delivered directly to advocates’ inboxes. Here’s an example from our work on the Parent’s Bill of Rights.





Digging Deeper on Community Engagement

EdAllies doubled down on our commitment to ensuring impacted communities have a seat at the table, and the information they need to influence decision making and have their voices heard. Our biggest investment was a brand new role within the team. In Fall 2022, we hired Margaret Sullivan as our first Programs & Outreach manager, adding dedicated capacity to build connections between the community and the policy process. We also renewed and revamped our EdFellows program, bringing on three parent advocates to support the Hunger Free Schools campaign through community education and outreach, while fellows also built advocacy skills in their own right by shadowing our team.

Finally, we continued to open the EdAllies blog to voices from the community on topics including student mental health, literacy, the need for ethnic studies classes, and advanced coursework for students of color. 🏠



Amplifying community voices:

- Read an EdVoices post on the impact of ethnic studies courses
- Learn more about the need to invest in Minnesota's special education services



Keeping Kids on Track for College and Career

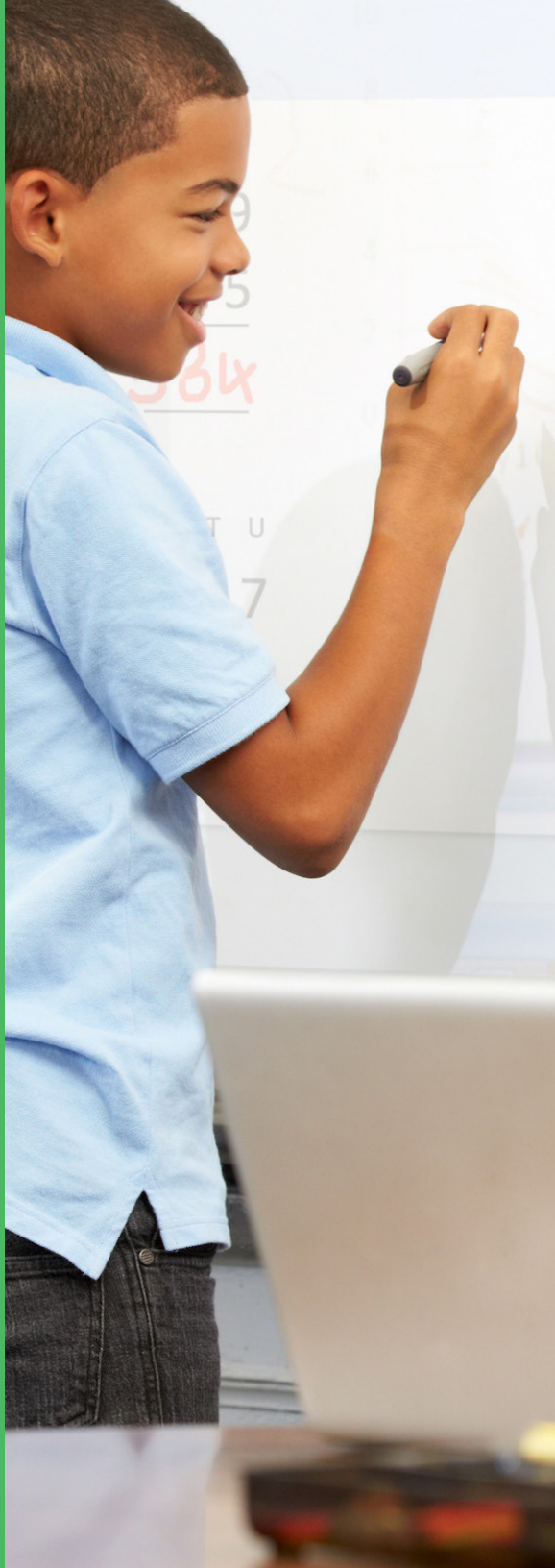
A critical measure of what happens in the K-12 classroom is whether students have substantive and accessible pathways to wherever they hope to go post-high school. Building on policy briefs from 2020 and 2021, we built significant support for key policy initiatives—such as adding a 9th grade on-track indicator to Minnesota’s World’s Best Workforce school accountability system. We also helped shepherd conversations about the “why” behind transparency and accountability systems, in the face of hasty moves to replace a robust system with narrow metrics that would overlook the range of goals critical to student success. Simultaneously, we made concrete recommendations to the Minnesota Department of Education as they modified the complementary Every Student Succeeds Act state plan.

We also raised awareness of the emerging momentum around automatic enrollment policies, which ensure qualified students are not left out of rigorous course options due to referral bias. While these milestones are works in progress, we were pleased to see a concrete change aligned to our recommendations: in early 2022, the Minnesota Department of Education improved its student data report card by adding disaggregated data on rigorous coursework. 🏡



The COVID19 pandemic’s effects will continue to be seen and felt for years to come. Listen to Josh Crosson discuss on a panel with Minnesota Public Radio.





EdAllies received numerous recognitions for our work in 2022 including:



Damus Award

The Damus Board is a group of eight St. Thomas Opus College of Business students empowered to grant funds to organizations of their choice. EdAllies received the 2022 Damus Award for advancing policies that put underserved students first and removing barriers to creating successful schools and educational programs.

[Read More](#)



MCN Mission Award for Advocacy

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) Mission Awards honor nonprofit organizations making incredible contributions to Minnesota's high quality of life. In 2022, EdAllies received the Mission Award for Advocacy.

[Read More](#)



PIE Eddie for Implementation

The "Best Implementation" Eddie category highlights the necessary implementation work to ensure that breakthrough policies or laws lead to sustained impact for students. EdAllies won the award, along with Great MN Schools and TNTP, for launching Minnesota's first alternative teacher preparation programs.

[Read More](#)

Supporters

Foundations & Corporations

3M
Blue Cross Blue Shield
Brown Family Foundation
Ciresi Walburn Foundation
Douglass Brandenburg Family Foundation
Eugene U. & Mary F. Frey Family Fund of The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
FR Bigelow Foundation
General Mills Box Tops for Education
General Mills Foundation
Georgetown University
GHR Foundation
Graves Foundation
Great MN Schools
Hubbard Broadcasting Foundation
Hunger Solutions

JAB Family Foundation
Joyce Foundation
Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Mission Award for Advocacy
Mortenson Family Foundation
Otto Bremer Trust
Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
Sauer Family Foundation
Smikis Foundation
Team SPS Gives Back Charitable Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation
University of St. Thomas Opus College of Business Damus Award
Valley Natural Foods Co-op
WEM Foundation

Individuals & Family Funds

Idil Abdull
Zachary Abrams
Heather Adel
Albright Foundation
Rebecca Alper
Alan Alvarez
Holly Andersen
Arend Family Impact Fund
Julie & Doug Baker Jr. Foundation
Chad Borseth
Susan Brown
Lauren Clyne Medley
Cheryl Coombs
Brad Crnobrna
Josh Crosson
Ella and Pete Daniels
Virginia Davis
Sarah Dicks
Karn Engelsgjerd
Emory Erker-Lynch
Finch Farms Foundation

Julia Freeman
Alex Gallagher
Erin Ghere
Dan & Megan Goodrich
Paul Gunderson
Patti Haasch
Troy Haugen
Dave & Barb Henderson
Daniel Hodges
Joan Hollick
Maren Hulden
Krista Kaput
Ariana Kiener
Holly Kragthorpe
Jenifer Loon
Dick & Joyce H. McFarland Family Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation
Anne Mahle
Lori Meyer
Andrew Minck
Lynnell Mickelsen & John Bellaimey
David Mortenson

Michael O'Connell & Sue Hayes
Sherifat Olugbode
Sophie Pawlyshyn
Tim & Sandra Penny
Piper Family Fund II of the Minneapolis Foundation
Remele Family Fund
Maeve Riley
Andrea Roethke
Thomas Rolseth
Clare Roney
Gabriel Sandholm
Daniel Sellers
Richard & Karen Sellers
Soran Foundation
Oron Stenesh
Jennifer Stern
Morgan Tomsche
Elena Vidas
Amy Walstien
Janet Weber
Ben & Mary Whitney Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation



Staff

JOSH CROSSON
Executive Director

ANDREA ROETHKE
Managing Director of
Strategy & Operations

MINDY CHANG
Capitol Pathways Intern

TIM ESSENBURG
Research Director

DANIEL HODGES
Development Manager

MATT SHAVER
Policy Director

MARGARET SULLIVAN
Programs & Outreach
Manager

ADRIENNE VITT
Strategic Communications
Director

Board

KARN ENGELSGJERD
Chair

FLOR TREVIÑO FREY

GINYA DAVIS

**SIMONE HARDEMAN-
JONES**

ANN JOHNSON

JENIFER LOON

TASHONDA WILLIAMSON
Treasurer

JANE MCDONALD-BLACK

MICHAEL O'CONNELL

LEW REMELE

ROBERTA WALBURN



FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

■	Program	72%
■	Fundraising	16%
■	Administration	12%

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS		\$1,741,345
Current assets		\$1,527,499
Cash and cash equivalents		\$1,379,233
Pledges receivable		\$120,797
Prepaid expenses		\$27,469
Right-of-use asset		\$94,823
Property and equipment, net		\$80,101
Contributions receivable		\$38,922
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		\$1,741,345
Current liabilities		\$151,187
Current liabilities — total		\$62,054
Accounts payable		\$3,022
Fiscal sponsee		\$0
Deferred lease incentive		\$19,267
Lease liability		\$61,182
Deferred rent – net current portion		\$27,951
Net assets		\$1,590,158
Without donor restrictions		\$790,085
With donor restrictions		\$635,568
Board designated for operating reserve		\$164,505

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$1,263,148
Contributions	\$1,252,108
Program revenue	\$450
Interest income	\$9,100
Other	\$1,490
EXPENSES	\$851,172
Program	\$608,593
Supporting services	\$242,579
Administration	\$106,614
Fundraising	\$135,965
NET ASSETS	
Change in net assets	\$411,976
Beginning of year	\$1,178,182
End of year	\$1,590,158

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

SALARIES AND BENEFITS	\$638,522
Salaries	\$504,272
Employee benefits	\$92,891
Payroll taxes	\$41,359
EXPENSES BEFORE DEPRECIATION	\$830,304
Fees for services	\$71,943
Office expenses	\$12,702
Information technology	\$22,304
Advocacy and promotion	\$4,185
Occupancy	\$41,118
Travel	\$13,230
Conferences and and meetings	\$3,776
Insurance	\$9,873
Other	\$7,651

What's Next

EdAllies has been hard at work in 2023 with campaigns, community building, and much more. Above all, we're working to ensure that Minnesota students are ready for college and career with opportunities for those most impacted by Minnesota's education inequities.

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

