

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL

2022/2023 Annual Report

ENRICH, EMPOWER, INSPIRE



A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Highlanders,

Highland is an amazing community filled with remarkably talented students, dedicated and passionate staff, and extraordinarily supportive families. We are pleased to present the 2022-2023 Highland Annual Report, which is full of noteworthy accomplishments.

The Annual Report only highlights a small portion of the spirit of Highland. The true measure of our community is in the delightful sounds of students engaging in learning from teachers and their peers. Our successes are rooted in the collaborative belief that we are developing our students to be high academic achievers and young people who display a high level of social and emotional intelligence. This fosters the foundation for them to become kind and empathetic leaders who will make positive impacts in their communities.

Your support and commitment to Highland are the catalysts for so many of the wonderful building and programming improvements that have taken place over the past year. Our new playground and garden space contribute to developing physical skills, as well as giving students a unique perspective on urban gardening and agriculture. We are particularly proud of the expanded extracurricular activities opportunities that so many of our students participate in. It is incredible to see how students and families exhibit the principles of Highland in everything that they do.

As a Board, we remain committed to upholding the mission and vision of Highland by supporting our parents, families, staff, and leadership. We continually look for creative ways to provide sustainable resources to ensure that Highland's rich tradition of providing quality Montessori education is upheld.

As we continue to strengthen our school operations via the updated strategic plan, we encourage you to lend your voice to the process and continue to support the students, staff, and administration in any way possible.

I often marvel at our devoted staff and the countless hours they put into cultivating the culture of Highland. It is my motivation to ensure that Highland remains a community rooted in empowering and inspiring children to reach their full potential.

I look forward to working with you all to continue to build a strong and vibrant Highland Community School for all!

Brian D. Litzsey

Board President 2023-24



MISSION STATEMENT

We are a community of diverse families and educators working together to offer quality Montessori education in a nurturing environment that enriches, empowers and inspires the whole child to reach their potential. We encourage and support parents to be responsible for and involved with their children's education.

VISION STATEMENT

Changing the world by nurturing children and their families to be informed, compassionate, life-long learners who are a force for change in education, the community, and society.

OUR FIVE PILLARS

MONTESSORI PEDAGOGY

A Montessori education cultivates leadership in our youth by giving students the opportunity for self-directed learning and developing both academic and social-emotional intelligence. Our students demonstrated their leadership abilities this year on two capstone trips. Highland 6th graders attended the Montessori Model United Nations Conference in New York City where they represent a country and respond to real world issues. Eighth graders, in their final year at Highland, traveled to Costa Rica where they practiced their Spanish speaking skills and spent time volunteering and connecting their classroom education with real world experiences.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Highland’s Social Justice Committee continues the work started by the school’s founders by modeling how injustice can be overcome in the world. This year, the committee created a Social Justice Statement articulating the ways we teach and practice social justice at Highland. The committee also hosted a celebration of Juanita Adams on the school grounds, which included the unveiling of a street sign in her name on the 1700 block of Highland Avenue. As an activist who protested the development of our current school building in the 1960s and the segregation of schools in Milwaukee, Juanita Adams is a notable part of Highland’s social justice history.

ENVIRONMENT

Ms Brenda’s Garden

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Ms. Brenda’s Playground Potluck in 2023! The garden on the corner of 18th & Highland was unveiled to the community and a new bench was dedicated in Ms. Brenda DeWindt’s memory. It was a great day of community and celebration for our students, parents, and staff.

Natural Grounds

We unveiled our new play structure in Spring 2023. Our students were thrilled to have something new to climb and play on after the previous one was retired. We also continue to develop our grounds as one of the leaders in green school

grounds in Milwaukee. Thanks to the Dutton Foundation and the Natural Resources Foundation, we continue to add environmental education hubs to our grounds. This year, we completed Bluestem Meadows, a place where students can explore native plants and the creatures that call them home.

- 1 *Students receive a social emotional learning lesson from School Counselor, Ms. Tamara.*
- 2 *Highland staff and alumni enjoying Ms. Brenda’s Garden at the summer celebration.*
- 3 *GSA students representing Highland at the Milwaukee Pride Parade.*





COMMUNITY

Highland was founded on the principles of parents working together to create a place that honors the intelligence, creativity, and sensitivity of children. Highland families are the backbone of our school. In total, families logged 2,548 volunteer hours this year. A Highland parent said it best: *“At Highland, we enroll the whole family.”*

ARTS PROGRAM

HCS students produced some creative works of art this year. The Genders & Sexualities Alliance hosted a story slam in partnership with Ex Fabula. Led by Artist in Residence, Amy O’Neill, in her 10th year at Highland, students created a mural in memory of Ms. Brenda DeWindt in our staff lounge and painted and decorated a tree in the 2nd floor hallway. Ms. Amy has inspired Highland students for a decade and at the close of the year she decided to move on to continue her work with college students. We wish Ms. Amy all the best and are grateful for her 10 years of teaching.

Elementary students and captivating productions for adolescents, along with the spectacular Annual Highland Community Circus. During the pandemic, Mr. Barry’s unwavering commitment ensured the program’s continuity. He tirelessly adapted, orchestrating socially-distanced, masked, and videoed performances, enabling the students to showcase their talents uninterrupted. Notably, amidst the uncertainties of 2020 and 2021, Mr. Barry ensured that the cherished annual play and the dazzling Highland Community Circus persisted without interruption, allowing students to express themselves creatively despite challenging circumstances, precisely when they needed it the most.

INSPIRING MR. BARRY

Mr. Barry is the cornerstone of Highland Community School’s Performing Arts realm. Under his guidance, the program boasts original plays for Upper

Mr. Barry’s profound impact extends beyond performances; his mentorship has inspired countless students, fostering confidence, creativity, and a passion for the arts.



- 4 *Students having fun at our annual Bike Walk Eat fundraiser*
- 5 *New play structure opened in Spring 2023*
- 6 *Children’s House Teacher, Ms. Lindsay, giving a student a lesson*



HIGHLAND ALUMNI IMPACT

Highland Community School graduates carry our mission out into the world, utilizing all they've learned to enrich, empower, and inspire themselves and those around them. We are pleased to highlight India Dismuke, Highland Class of 2015, who exemplifies the lasting impact of a Highland education.



India attended Highland from her K3 year in 2004 to 2015 when she graduated as an 8th grader. She went on to attend Rufus King International High School. Recently, India graduated from Marian University and received her bachelor's degree in criminal justice. She is currently working as a probation officer.

**We are so proud of you
and all you are doing India!**

[Click to hear from India about her time at Highland and how it helped shape who she is today.](#)

HIGHLAND GRADUATING CLASS

From Tracy Williams, Executive Director

Each year we have more high schools both public and private who ask to come in and speak with our adolescent students to try to sway them to attend their schools. This past fall, I had an administrator comment to me about what a lovely program we have and they hear such great things about our students and have experienced this first-hand with the HCS students who've chosen to attend their high school. Below is a list of where our graduates have been accepted to attend next school year.

Where our 8th graders went (30 total graduates):

Rufus King - 13
Reagan - 4
Dominican - 2
Pathways - 2
Tenor - 2
Nicolet -1

Riverside - 1
HS of the Arts - 1
Golda Meir - 1
Pius - 1
St. Thomas Moore - 1
Hamilton - 1

HIGHLAND HIGHLIGHTS

72.8

STATE REPORT
CARD SCORE

2,548

TOTAL NUMBER
OF PARENT
VOLUNTEER HOURS

14

TOTAL NUMBER
OF CLUBS + SPORTS

31

TOTAL NUMBER
OF STUDENTS WHO
TRAVELED FOR MMUN

26

TOTAL NUMBER
OF STUDENTS
WHO TRAVELED
TO COSTA RICA

855

TOTAL NUMBER
OF HOURS OF
MONTESSORI
INSTRUCTION



STUDENTS FOR 22-23



ALUMNI STAFF



STAFF
PARENTS





FINANCIAL SUMMARY

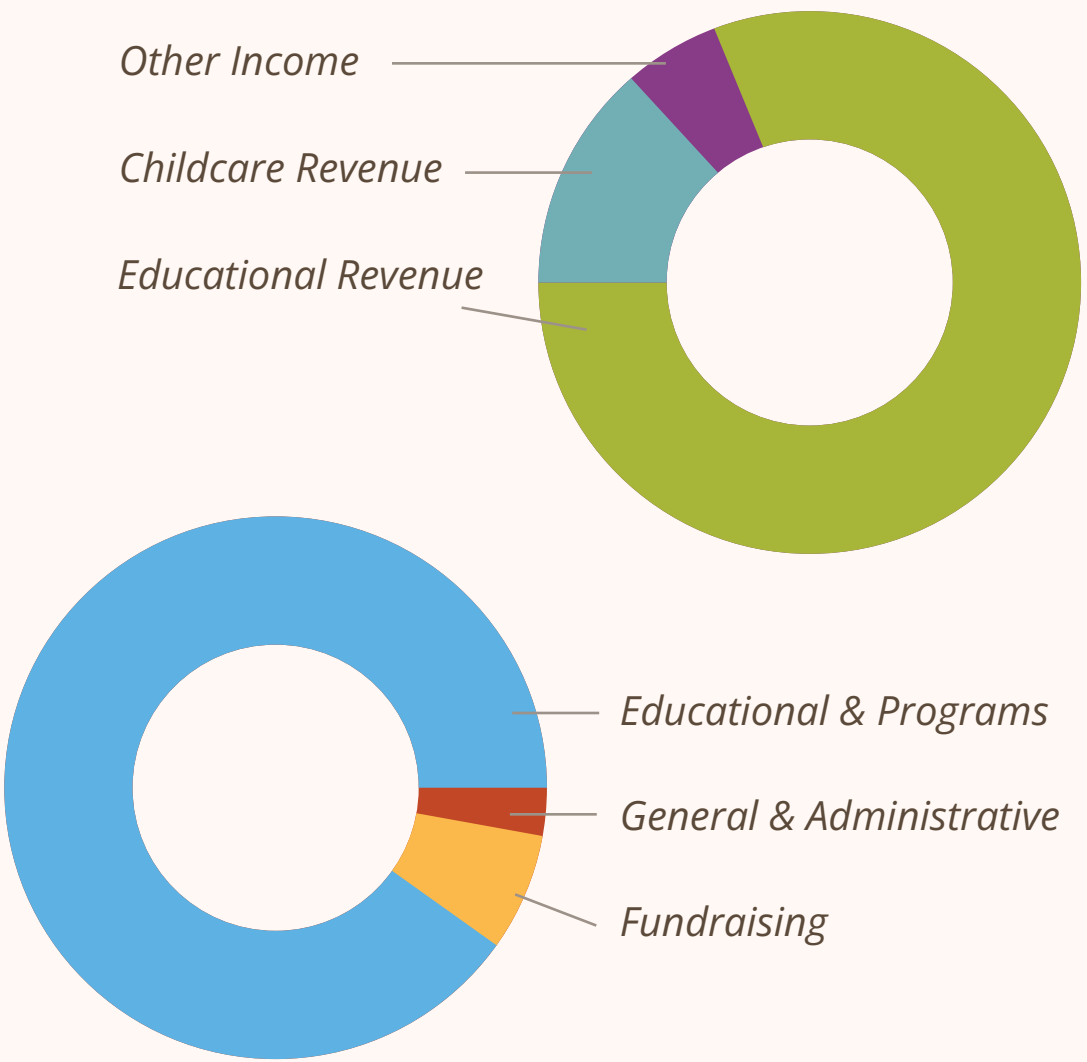
The Highland Community School Board of Directors and school administration report all of our financial requirements have been met and policies and procedures are in place, including an annual independent financial audit, to ensure the highest standards of financial oversight. A copy of our audited financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2023, is available upon request.

INCOME

Educational Revenue.....	\$4,858,130
Childcare Revenue.....	\$950,900
Other Income.....	\$320,728 <i>(includes fundraising)</i>
Total Income.....	\$6,129,758

EXPENSES

Educational & Programs.....	\$5,329,379
General & Administrative.....	\$479,609
Fundraising.....	\$75,947
Total Expenses.....	\$5,884,935



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Net Assets	
Total Assets	\$7,031,870
Total Liabilities.....	\$4,208,237
Unrestricted Net Assets.....	\$2,034,452
Board Restricted Net Assets.....	\$647,863
Temporarily Restricted Assets.....	\$141,318
Total Net Assets.....	\$2,823,633



1,349

DONATIONS
MADE

295

DONORS

\$150,000+

RAISED WITH THE AVERAGE
DONATION AMOUNT OF \$82

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Tracy Williams,
Executive Director

Typically you would find a listing of companies and community partners in this section but this year, I wanted to acknowledge all those who supported Highland both financially and with their time. You may have given a grant to support our arts program that was over a thousand dollars or you may be the parents who saw the need for a new play structure for our students and sent in \$5, \$10, or more. You may be the person who didn't have the means to support financially but you gave of your time and energy to come and read to a classroom of 3, 4 and 5 year olds or helped do

laundry for our toddlers, sat on our parent committees or served on our Parent Board of Directors. You see these are just a few ways our parents support Highland but they're no less important than the monetary gifts. There are many ways to support Highland and I wanted to acknowledge and thank everyone who gave what they could. Thank you for supporting Highland staff and students this past year and hopefully into the future. Highland is about community and you all are a part of this community that provides our students an opportunity to be who they are supposed to be.

Last February Michaela Humpal, our previous Fund Development Director left Highland to explore a new opportunity. We've missed her guidance but are lucky enough to still see her at drop-off everyday. It's taken us some time to find someone to fill her shoes but I'm happy to announce that we have hired Annie Prak-Primakow as the new Community Resources Coordinator. We're excited to see the new ways she can engage new donors, build relationships with existing donors and implement a new alumni engagement program.

CONTACT US

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