

LEADING HOUSTON FORWARD

ANNUAL REPORT
2022-2023



Mark DiBella · CEO



Dear Friends and Supporters,

In June, we watched the culmination of YES Prep's hard work as more than 1,600 members of the Class of 2023—the largest graduating class in YES Prep's history—walked proudly across the stage and received their diplomas. Each one of these graduates has persevered, often in extraordinary ways, to overcome challenges and launch their postsecondary journey.

Though our seniors cross the stage as individuals, they will forever be part of the YES Prep community, and we will support them long after graduation and remain firmly committed to their success. They belong to a vast and growing network of YES Prep alumni, now nearly 12,000 strong, who are the proof of our mission: to empower all Houston students to succeed in college and to pursue lives of opportunity.

As we enter YES Prep's 25th school year, I think about how different things were when I joined the team as a teacher in 2001. YES Prep was one school with approximately 400 students and 50 staff members housed in a cluster of temporary buildings in Southeast Houston. Donning circa-1970s wood paneling and threadbare carpet, our buildings' best days were certainly behind them. However, our students' best days shone brightly in the future. From all those long-ago memories of YES Prep, what I remember most is that we were a community where we all believed in the limitless potential of the kids we were privileged to serve.

What you will read in the pages that follow are vivid stories of the many ways in which YES Prep continues to grow and thrive and how, in the midst of much change, our core beliefs in the power of community and the limitless potential of children are unwavering. These stories also highlight what students from underserved communities can achieve when they have access to high-quality academics and dedicated support.

On behalf of everyone at YES Prep, I want to thank you for everything you do to make our work and our students' achievements possible. Your support and partnership allow us to keep Leading Houston Forward and equip more students to discover and fulfill their potential, with lasting positive implications for their families and communities.

Yours in solidarity,

Mark DiBella
CEO



Dear Friends and Supporters,

I have had the honor to serve as Chair of the YES Prep Board of Directors for the last three school years, and it is bittersweet to be stepping down soon. I am so proud of the amazing students, the dedicated teachers and staff and the exceptional management team of YES Prep.

This has been an amazing year for YES Prep. I am especially proud that, amid a global pandemic, YES Prep was able to reach its goal of raising \$80 million to Lead Houston Forward. The incredibly generous support of our funders will make it possible for YES Prep to change the lives of so many more young people and their families in the years ahead.

We have so many reasons to celebrate the last three years as we executed our strategic plan:

- YES Prep opened six new elementary schools, and three more are on track to open in August 2024.
- Enrollment rose to almost 18,000 students.
- YES Prep Southeast Elementary became the first YES Prep elementary school to earn an 'A' rating, and more will undoubtedly follow.
- More than 4,000 YES Prep college-ready graduates began their postsecondary journeys.

These results demonstrate what young people from under-resourced communities can accomplish when they have equitable access to a rigorous public school that delivers a college-ready education. We are so grateful to all of the supportive Houstonians who have generously contributed to our campaign to ensure more young people have access to these incredible opportunities to achieve their full potential in college and beyond.

I look forward to continuing to support YES Prep in every way I can and watching YES Prep continue to achieve and stretch boundaries for the benefit of our Houston children.

Yours in partnership,

Melanie Trent
Board Chair

Mission

YES Prep Public Schools empowers all Houston students to succeed in college and to pursue lives of opportunity.

Strategic Priorities

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

We will ensure that every child in Houston has greater access to a rigorous YES Prep pre-K through 12th grade education.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

We will ensure that in every school, in every classroom, every day, all students engage in rigorous, aligned and active learning, dramatically increasing their college readiness.

CULTURE & IDENTITY

We will embrace the diverse communities, cultures, identities and abilities of all students to help them succeed in college and lead choice-filled lives.

TALENT

We will continue to attract diverse, extraordinary talent at every level and will purposefully increase the inclusivity, retention and development of our teammates.

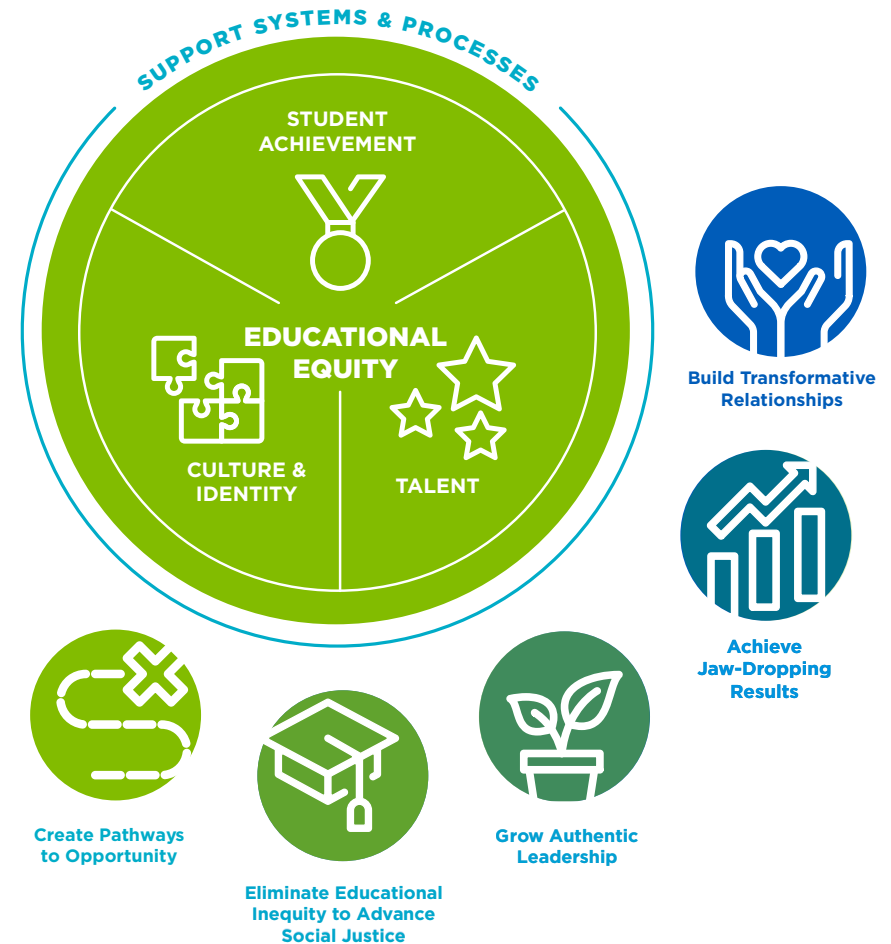
SUPPORT SYSTEMS & PROCESSES

We will make optimal use of available systems and data and share innovative best practices to significantly increase agility, productivity and sustainability.

Vision

Every child in Houston will have equitable access to a public school that delivers an excellent, college-ready education.

Core Model



Core Values

Mission Accomplished

Leading Houston Forward \$80M Fundraising Campaign

Launched in 2019, Leading Houston Forward is a five-year strategic plan to build YES Prep's first 11 elementary schools, add 10,000 high-quality seats and strengthen our capacity to serve 22,000 students. Thanks to the generosity of many supporters, YES Prep reached our ambitious \$80 million fundraising goal ahead of schedule!

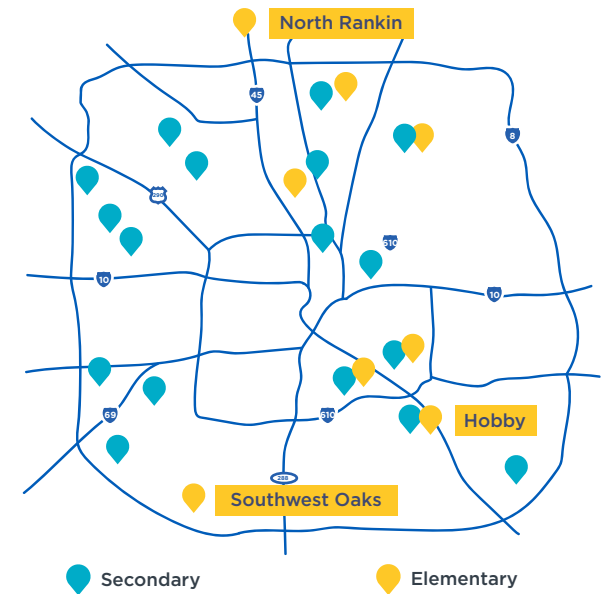
Providing a high-quality public education to Houston's youngest learners is critical to achieving our mission of empowering all Houston students to succeed in college and to pursue lives of opportunity. Building on the success of our secondary schools, Leading Houston Forward expanded our reach to also serve elementary students.

Leading Houston Forward has allowed YES Prep to open six elementary schools across the Houston area. We have increased enrollment by 5,000 students and hired more than 700 additional teachers and leaders.

While the fundraising campaign goal of Leading Houston Forward has been achieved, the growth plan continues with five additional elementary schools to be opened by 2025. Thanks to Leading Houston Forward, our first group of YES Prep SPARKS will enter fifth grade this fall, and our district will proudly serve students in every grade level from pre-K through 12.

These inspiring efforts would not have been possible without Campaign Chair

Joe Greenberg, Honorary Chairs Laura and John Arnold, the YES Prep Campaign Cabinet and the overwhelming support of campaign donors and community supporters.



Donors to the campaign have made possible the gift of an 'A' quality education at YES Prep that will affect generations. It is hard to conceive of a more impactful gift to the city, children and their families."

Joe Greenberg, Leading Houston Forward Campaign Chair

Elementary Students

Celebrate 100 Days of School

At YES Prep, we take the 100th day of school very seriously as it marks the halfway point of the year, an important milestone for setting goals and reflecting on all the progress our elementary students have made. On this special occasion, classrooms come alive with creativity as students dress up in their most creative “100th Day” outfits. Some costumes are cool, some are quirky, and some are just outrageously fun!

In addition to celebrating with their unique attire, our elementary students also participate in various activities throughout the day to celebrate their successes. For example, they might create a wall-sized collage or decorate an oversized banner with colorful numbers in honor of reaching 100 days of learning. Another popular activity is sharing what they have learned so far this academic year—a great way for them to reflect on how far they’ve come through their hard work and dedication.

At YES Prep, we believe it is important to recognize successes big and small along the way—not just for our elementary students but for our staff members, too. We know that each student will use this experience as motivation to keep striving forward towards more success ahead. Thank you, families, staff and students, for participating and being a part of our SPARKS family.



Play Days Showcase What Makes YES Prep Special

This year, YES Prep launched a new Play Day event series to celebrate our elementary families and share what makes YES Prep special. These events serve as a valuable tool to engage with the communities we serve and to share information about our elementary programs. Play Days also connect us with families who show high levels of interest in joining YES Prep. Families from across our YES Prep East End Elementary, YES Prep Southeast Elementary, YES Prep Southside Elementary, YES Prep Airline Elementary and YES Prep North Forest Elementary joined us for Play Days in March and April. We look forward to expanding these fun events to engage with current and future YES Prep families.



FUTURE FAMILY PARADE



Family Representatives Build Community and Inspire Change

Parents and families play an important role in ensuring students are equipped with the tools they need to learn, grow and thrive. YES Prep partners with families across the district to engage, educate and empower them to play an active role in their school communities.

Family Representatives are selected by campus principals to help support and develop meaningful opportunities for parents and families to effectively engage in the school and community, which will in turn improve student learning outcomes. Throughout the year, Family Representatives support each other by sharing best practices of what can be accomplished on their campuses. These Family Representatives lead other YES Prep families in volunteering for campus events, Teacher Appreciation Weeks and end-of-year campus celebrations, just to name a few.

YES Prep's Family Representatives Program began in 2017 and has developed over 40 Family Representatives since its inception, including 22 Family Representatives during the 2022-2023 school year!



Donor Spotlight: Astros Foundation

Astros Foundation Knocks It Out Of The Park!

The Astros Foundation stepped up to the plate this school year to support YES Prep staff, students and alumni. They led the school year off with the “Badges and Bases” Back-to-School Rally. Held at YES Prep North Forest Elementary, the Astros Foundation, Cheniere Energy, the Houston Police Foundation and other community partners gave away 1,000 new backpacks filled with books and school supplies to YES Prep elementary students and their teachers.

In addition, thanks to a charitable ticket donation from the Foundation, nearly 100 YES Prep alumni gathered at Minute Maid Park to cheer on the World Series champions, build community with fellow alumni and create lasting memories. For many alumni, this was their first opportunity to attend a Houston Astros game in person. And to bring it home, YES Prep was awarded this year’s \$50,000 Chevron and Astros Foundation Wins for Kids Grant for our work to empower students and families to transform their lives through education.

YES Prep is proud to partner with the Astros Foundation to support high-quality public education for all Houston students. Thriving partnerships like these help enhance the school experience for current and prospective students, staff and families by building transformative relationships within the community.



On March 30, Houston Astros Opening Day, students at YES Prep Airline Elementary welcomed the Astros Foundation Literacy Bus to their campus. With the help of local librarians, each student selected a book to take home and read to their family and friends. Thank you to the Astros Foundation, Oxy, Houston ISD and Houston Public Library for making this opportunity possible.



YES Prep Educators

YES Prep invests significant time and funding to ensure students receive the highest quality public school education. Quality education can only be attained through high-quality teachers, and the YES Prep Talent team focuses on recruiting and retaining those incredible teachers.

In the 2022-2023 school year, 465 teachers were hired to serve at 25 campuses, totaling over 985 teachers within the YES Prep system. Of those teachers, **164** were YES Prep alumni who returned to educate future YES Prep graduates. Over the years, numerous alumni have returned to YES Prep to ensure students like themselves have access to the resources and support they need to pursue lives of opportunity.

Returning to YES Prep After Graduation

YES Prep hired Samantha Ramirez, an alumna of YES Prep East End Secondary, as an intern on the Communications team in 2018. After completing her undergraduate degree from Salem College, she returned to YES Prep to work full-time on the Communications & Marketing team. Sam shares, **“Coming back to work alongside those who taught me has been so special.”**

Sam’s parents enrolled her in YES Prep because they were dissatisfied with the underperforming schools in their area. Her brother and sister also attended YES Prep. Her successful transition from YES Prep student to college graduate to YES Prep employee also inspired her two siblings to pursue degrees after their graduations. Sam credits this influence to YES Prep, sharing how **“it’s amazing what getting my name drawn in the YES Prep lottery in 2007 has done for me and the people around me.”**





In-Person YES Prep College Fair Returns

After two years of adapting to a virtual college fair environment, YES Prep’s 16th Annual College Fair was held in person last October at the Stafford Centre. More than 3,400 junior and senior students had the opportunity to interact with representatives from 120+ colleges and universities across the United States.

Every fall, YES Prep holds the College Fair during the school day, removing barriers to our students attending, such as transportation, work and family obligations. College acceptance is a goal for every YES Prep student, and one way we fulfill this commitment to higher education is by demonstrating that college is not a far-away concept. Over 90% of YES Prep students are first-generation college-bound, and engaging directly with college representatives makes the reality of attending college feel real and attainable.



Leveraging Technology for Blended Learning

The YES Prep Online Scholars Program provides students with opportunities to access a wide variety of classes that may not have enough students or staff to offer a full section of a course on every campus. Approximately 600 students at 16 secondary campuses are enrolled in a variety of advanced courses, including Mandarin Chinese, Fundamentals of Computer Science, AP Computer Science Principles, AP Psychology, AP Spanish Literature, AP US Government, AP Statistics, AP Calculus BC and AP Physics C. By engaging in instruction through Microsoft Teams, students can learn and collaborate with students from other YES Prep campuses.



Lights, Camera, Arts!

Spring is known for the beauty, color and vibrancy it brings to our lives. It also means that YES Prep students get to highlight their artistic abilities at our annual Spring Fine Arts Showcase. This year's showcase consisted of 215 student artists across 13 YES Prep campuses, with over 200 guests in attendance. For the first time, the showcase featured both visual and performing arts, with choreographed dance pieces and imaginative paintings as part of the event. The showcase provided students a great opportunity to share their passions with their peers, family members, teachers and community supporters.

When students are given the chance to express themselves in a setting beyond the classroom,

they can feel empowered, gain self-confidence and express themselves in new and exciting ways. Creativity and collaboration are essential to a well-rounded education.

“I appreciate the showcase because it's a great experience for our students to show and see other students' work. It's a great way for them to communicate with others and have that exposure to a real art show!”

*Parker Hernandez, Art Teacher at YES Prep
Fifth Ward Secondary*



The Bridge Between Learning and Life

Through the support of generous funders, YES Prep is able to offer rigorous and engaging after-school programs—ACE/ASPIRE.

YES Prep Airline Elementary's Crafter's Club is a space where kids can explore their imaginations and original ideas and create something new. Being creative is a life skill our world will continue to need more and more as the next generation confronts change. Creative practice provides opportunities for trying out new ways of thinking and problem-solving. It encourages kids to express themselves openly and without judgment. As they stretch beyond their elementary years, the creative process and foundation they build now can help them face challenges ahead with flexibility and resourcefulness.

YES Prep Southwest Secondary's Ballet Folklórico is a club for students to deepen their connection to their roots. Our students have a variety of experiences in Folklórico, and we enjoy learning together. Regarding those students who may not be culturally connected but show interest, they're a part of it too! We try to be as inclusive as possible. Therefore, we have dances from across Latin America, not just from Mexico.





Partnering to Celebrate Our Authentic Identities



The diverse communities, cultures, identities and abilities of our staff, students and families are some of the many things that make YES Prep unique. With over 20 years of support, Enbridge's partnership has played a major role in our growth. In addition to their generous contributions, Enbridge has provided significant impact through school supply drives, serving as career panelists and, most recently, serving as the lead sponsor of our Student Affinity Summits.



“YES Prep had one campus when we began our partnership, and the fact that there are 23 YES Prep campuses serving over 17,000 college-bound students is incredible and a testament to the solid investment YES Prep yields,” shares Regan Kasman, Enbridge's Senior Advisor, Corporate Citizenship.

Our student affinity summits include the Brotherhood and Sisterhood Summit for students identifying as Black or African American, the Latinx Summit, our Pride Plus Summit and the APIA Summit for students identifying as Asian and Pacific-Islander American. Through these summits, students can celebrate their identities in a safe environment and build relationships with others within their communities.



“Diversity, equity and inclusion are foundational at our company, so the opportunity to support the Student Affinity Summits aligns with our core values and was the perfect place to invest our funding this year,” Kasman notes. We are beyond grateful for our partnership with Enbridge, which reaches beyond the classroom and into the heart of the YES Prep community.





COMCAST

This year, YES Prep began a new partnership with Comcast Texas to engage their staff as volunteers and supporters. In addition to providing swag and information on affordable internet options to all Student Affinity Summits, Comcast Texas leaders served as panelists. One lucky senior even walked away with a brand-new laptop to help with her studies as she enters college this fall! Thank you to Comcast Texas for your incredible partnership and support of the many communities we both serve.

YES Prep Staff: Change Makers

In and Out of the Classroom

Every day, YES Prep staff members work hard to ensure our students can achieve their academic goals and set them on a path to pursue lives of opportunity. However, unforeseen challenges at home can make an already difficult path nearly impossible.

During the tornadoes in January 2023, numerous YES Prep families in the Southeast and Hobby communities were severely impacted. Through the Family Relief Fund, YES Prep was able to provide much-needed immediate financial support to those who suffered severe weather damage.

YES Prep's Family Relief Fund was created to provide financial assistance directly to YES Prep families in crisis. Student Support

Counselors at each of our campuses have access to these dollars to distribute to families who may be facing any number of emergency needs that can impede student success.

This spring, in response to the growing needs of our families, YES Prep staff members were challenged to become Change Makers by donating to the Family Relief Fund. A longtime donor provided motivation through a challenge grant of \$10,000, which would be donated when the fund achieved 100 staff donors.

Not only did YES Prep staff meet the goal, but they exceeded it by reaching 130+ donors in only one week! We are grateful to our staff, who always go above and beyond to promote success for our students and families.

“ There are places where immediate impact can be felt, and the Family Relief Fund is one of those places. I get to meaningfully contribute to helping our families when they experience personal or environmental emergencies.”

Kiara Hughes, YES Prep Director of Organizational Strategy and Initiatives and Change Maker



Advisory Council Hosts a Panel of YES Prep Alumni

In May, Advisory Council chair Ann Vaughan and her husband Richard opened their home to donors and supporters for an engaging panel discussion showcasing a few members of YES Prep's growing alumni network, nearly 12,000 strong. **"Since knowing that I would become chair of the Advisory Council, I have wanted to feature our YES Prep alumni at a meeting and have a conversation about what life after YES looks like and the varied paths our alumni follow,"** shares Vaughan.

Led by Alejandra Muñoz, Director of Alumni Support (and an alumna of YES Prep Southeast Secondary herself!), panelists shared how their experiences at YES Prep helped shape them into the successful leaders they are today. A common theme was that the rigor of a YES Prep education, with appropriate support along the way, taught them how to balance academics with work, extracurriculars and family responsibilities.

Thank you to panelists Jesse Arredondo, Edriena Gee, Luly Castillo and Ngozi Nwajiaku for sharing their experiences and providing valuable insight that will help YES Prep continue to grow and thrive.



Education Reform Advocate, Geoffrey Canada, Visits YES Prep

This January, supporters and community leaders gathered at the Hotel ZaZa for a fireside chat with Geoffrey Canada, a passionate advocate for education reform and a nationally recognized leader for his pioneering work helping children and families in Harlem, New York. Canada engaged in a passionate discussion with Ashleigh Fritz, YES Prep's Deputy Chief Schools Officer, about the state of public education and rapidly shifting public opinion on the public charter school movement.

Canada left YES Prep with some powerful closing comments. **"You can't be afraid to fail. You can't be afraid to go out and do something innovative. It's a tough job, but we have to continue to show up every single day. When you choose this profession, you are choosing the future."**



“

It's the collective responsibility of all of us to level up and do right by our kids because they are our future."

Geoffrey Canada

YES Prep Students, Families and Teachers Advocate at the Texas State Capitol

On April 6, 2023, YES Prep made an impact in Austin. YES Prep's Advocacy team led a group of Teacher and Family Advocacy Captains along with 30 juniors and seniors across six YES Prep campuses to the Capitol. The purpose of visiting the Texas Capitol during this important legislative time was to amplify our staff's and families' voices. Students, teachers and parents shared their stories about YES Prep's impact and their passion for high-quality public education with nearly a dozen lawmakers who directly represent our families

and their surrounding school communities.

The Advocacy team was proud to provide this opportunity to our students, families and staff. **"We know our students are the leaders of tomorrow, so it's critical that they interact with the leaders of today. Our Teacher and Parent Advocacy Captains are working hard to ensure our students have the confidence and know-how to make a difference in this world,"** shares Kiara Cabrera, Community Coordinator.



Community Coordinator Spotlight: Kiara Cabrera

As a community coordinator, Kiara Cabrera works alongside her colleagues on YES Prep's Advocacy team to uncover opportunities for partnership between YES Prep campuses and their immediate communities. Cabrera has been a strong YES Prep advocate for many years.

In addition to being a proud alumna of YES Prep Southeast Secondary, she spent her summer breaks interning with YES Prep's Literacy team, where she provided benchmark tests to assess new student reading levels. After completing her degree at The University of Texas at Austin, Kiara moved back to Houston and supported YES Prep's COVID Response Team, where she enforced school guidance, safety protocols and system communications.

Special Events Make a **BIG Impact**

The Leading Houston Forward Luncheon, YES Prep's annual luncheon held at the Wortham Theater Center to celebrate YES Prep's achievements, was on the path leading toward another successful gathering of loyal supporters and donors. The Astros World Series win and the subsequent championship parade forced many venues in the downtown area to temporarily close during this time, which unfortunately included our luncheon venue.

Despite the event cancellation, our supporters stepped up and celebrated YES Prep with over \$800,000 in support of the event. Michol and Mike Ecklund, the Leading Houston Forward Luncheon event chairs, continued to seek support through day-of gifts and participation through the online donation page. Last fall's luncheon cancellation only builds more excitement for the Seventh Annual Leading Houston Forward Luncheon this October 25, 2023, when we'll celebrate 25 years of YES Prep.



Grab Your Chips and **Take a Seat**

On March 2, 2023, YES Prep welcomed Houston leaders across the business and philanthropic communities for the 18th Annual Oil & Gas Texas Hold 'Em Tournament at Corinthian Houston. More than 550 guests attended the record-breaking event that raised \$2.1 million to support YES Prep's 23 campuses across Houston.

Nearly 80 corporate, foundation, and individual sponsors and their guests attended the event, which raised over \$1 million through

sponsorships and an additional \$1.1 million through the night of giving at the tournament. In a thrilling final round, Kenley Steeg of Alta Resources was crowned the winner of the 2023 tournament.

The Oil & Gas Texas Hold 'Em Tournament is an annual event made popular by Houston's oil and gas industry. Since the first tournament in 2006, the event has raised over \$20 million towards providing YES Prep students with the high-quality education they need and deserve.



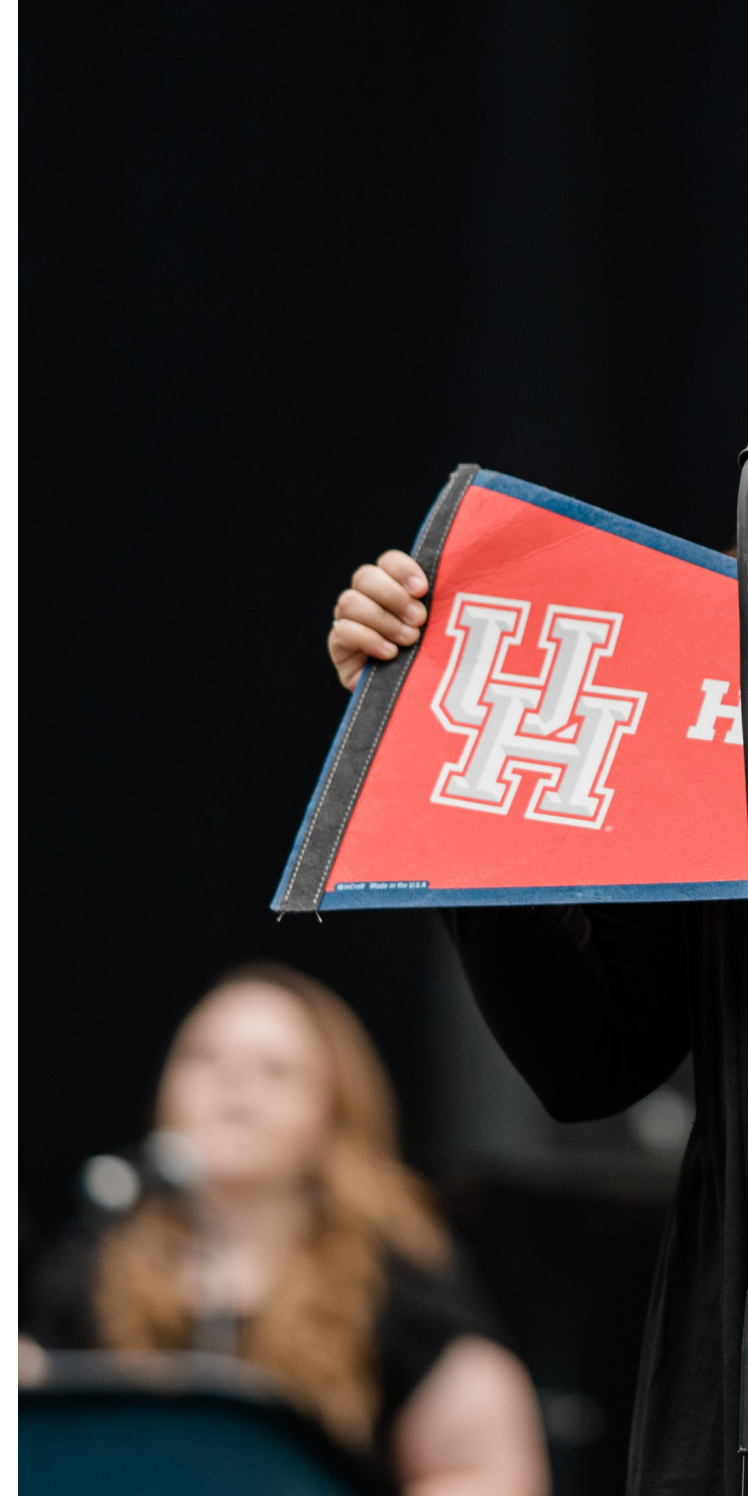
A New Senior Signing Day!

At YES Prep, Senior Signing Day has been an annual tradition where our seniors declare what is next in their journey by sharing what college, university, armed forces branch or postsecondary opportunity they will pursue after graduation. The Class of 2023 has watched this tradition every year since starting at YES Prep and have now earned their moment in the spotlight!

As the number of students YES Prep serves continues to grow, this year's Senior Signing Day looked a little bit different. To accommodate more than 1,600 seniors, their families and the younger YES Prep students in attendance, the day was split into two events, with seven campuses declaring in the morning and another seven in the afternoon. Dozens of student groups performed throughout the day, including YES Prep Brays Oaks Secondary's BOLD Dance Squad and YES Prep Southwest Secondary's Origen Folklórico.

With over 13,000 individuals gathering to celebrate our soon-to-be graduates, NRG Stadium was the perfect place to applaud the extraordinary accomplishment of our seniors and wish them well in their postsecondary plans.

Another new feature of this year's Senior Signing Day was a matching gift campaign. Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, all gifts made during the campaign were matched dollar-for-dollar, helping us raise over \$25,000! Every dollar raised will go toward supporting the YES Prep students who follow in the footsteps of the Class of 2023.



CLASS OF 2023

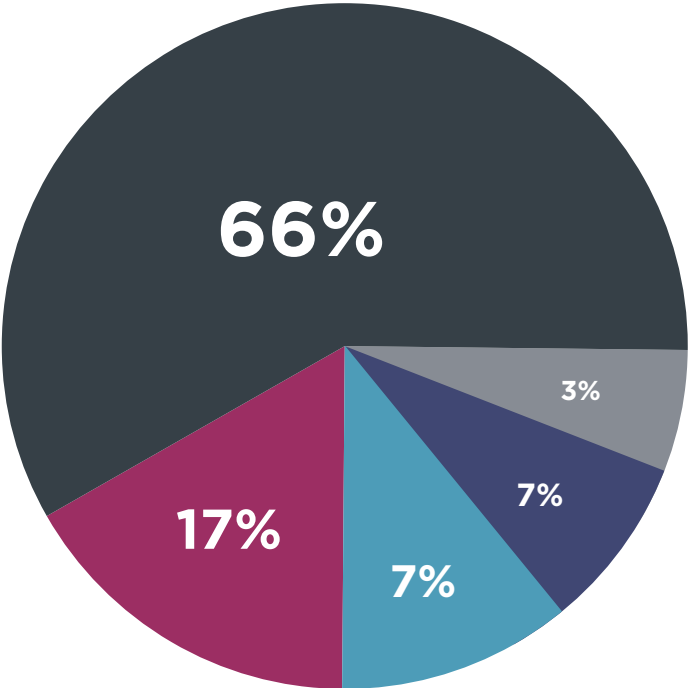
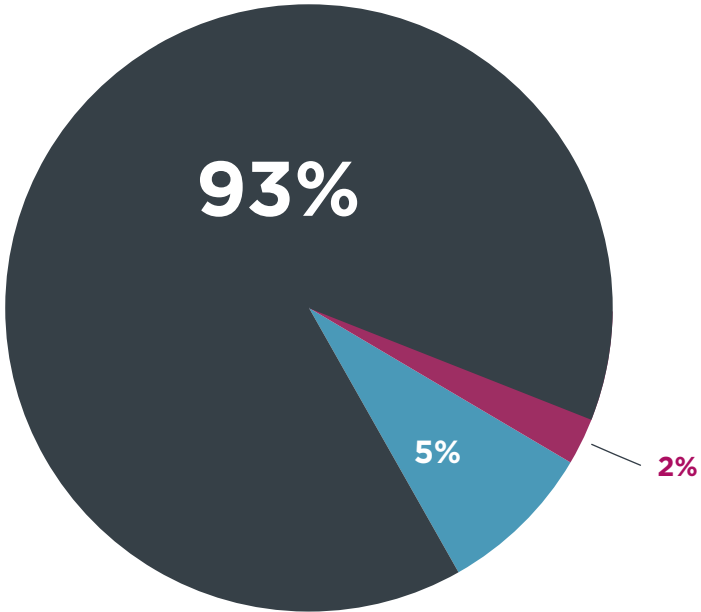


Fiscal Year 2023

FY23 REVENUE

STATE AND FEDERAL	\$237,102,644	93%
FUNDRAISING	\$11,502,494	5%
OTHER	\$5,542,821	2%

TOTAL	\$254,147,959
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FY23 EXPENSES

PAYROLL AND RELATED EXPENSES	\$157,316,540	66%
PROFESSIONAL AND CONTRACTED SERVICES	\$39,963,522	17%
SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS	\$17,089,638	7%
OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES	\$16,957,093	7%
DEBT SERVICE COSTS	\$5,901,148	3%

TOTAL	\$237,227,941
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