

25

YEARS OF IMPACT

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ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

LEADING HOUSTON FORWARD



DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

As I reflect on the 2023-2024 school year, our 25th anniversary of serving families in Houston, it was one of the most successful years we've ever had, filled with achievements made possible by the dedication of over 2,000 YES Prep teammates who passionately served more than 18,000 students.

This year also saw us break new ground—literally. We completed construction on three new elementary schools, continuing our commitment to providing every YES Prep community with a pre-K through 12th grade pathway. We also witnessed the first classes from North Central Elementary and Southeast Elementary complete fifth grade, marking their transition to secondary schools and a new chapter in their educational journey.

Our secondary schools continued to shine, earning nationwide recognition. Eleven of our campuses ranked among the top 11% of high schools in the country, according to U.S. News & World Report, and were also honored by the College Board's AP School Honor Roll. This year was made even more special by the graduation of the founding class at YES Prep Northline Secondary, a significant milestone in our shared history.

Beyond academics, our students excelled in athletics and the arts. Our athletes brought home three state championships and 12 regional titles, while our artists earned top honors at the Houston Rodeo School Art competition. These accomplishments are a testament to the hard work and creativity of our students.

Throughout the year, our celebrations resonated from the heart of our classrooms to the energy on our sports fields. We watched our elementary students “spark” their educational journey, and we celebrated our seniors as they announced their post-secondary plans at Senior Signing Day. The spirit of the YES Prep community is a palpable testament to the rich diversity and thriving culture that continues to define us.

As we kick off the new school year, I am deeply grateful to the students, families, staff, and supporters who make our success possible. Your unwavering support fuels our mission, and together, we look forward to many more years of empowering Houston students to pursue lives of opportunity.

I'm starting my 24th year at YES Prep, and I can say with confidence that the future of YES Prep is as bright as it's ever been!

IN SOLIDARITY,

Mark DiBella
CEO



MISSION

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

VISION

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

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

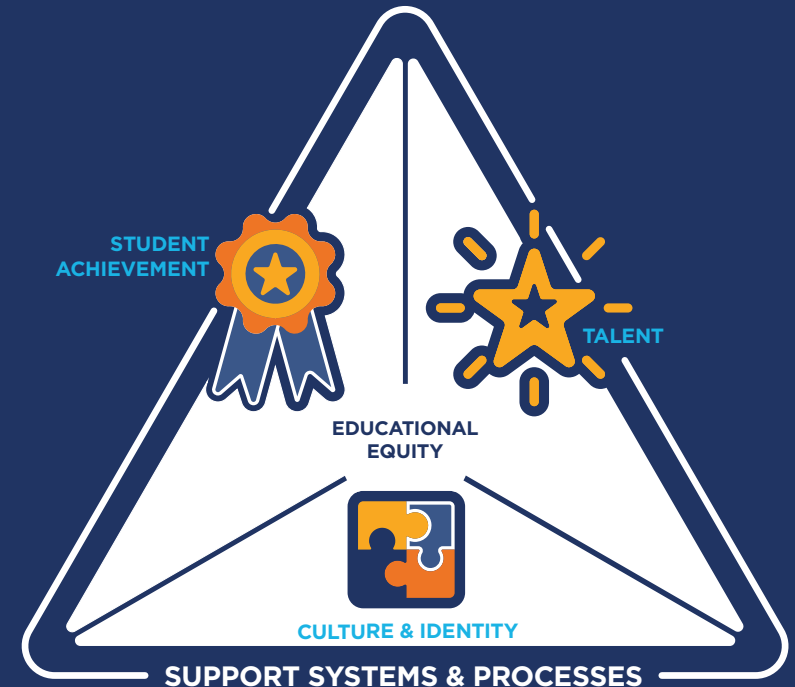
We will embrace the diverse communities, cultures, identities, and abilities of all students to help them succeed in college and lead choice-filled lives.

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.



CORE MODEL



CORE VALUES

ELIMINATE EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY TO ADVANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE



CREATE PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY

BEDTIME STORIES INSPIRE LIFELONG READERS

YES Prep Southeast Elementary's Bedtime Stories is a monthly virtual event where students from pre-K to fifth grade engage in themed readings that enhance their learning experiences. These sessions, led by Ms. Ghee, the school's librarian, explore diverse topics that integrate with the school curriculum, such as cultural celebrations and social justice issues, and promote experiential learning beyond traditional classroom settings. Ms. Ghee aims to cultivate lifelong readers and learners by making these reading sessions interactive and enjoyable, helping students connect literature with real-world themes. The program encourages students to remain engaged with reading and serves as a model for educational practices extending learning into home environments. Ms. Ghee's future vision includes expanding these sessions to foster more in-depth discussions, enhance reading strategies, and actively involve communities and families in the educational process. Through these bedtime stories, YES Prep aims to build a community of young learners who are excited about reading and learning, thereby laying the groundwork for continuous educational growth and community engagement.



FRESH PRODUCE, FRESH START

This school year, YES Prep's Child Nutrition team launched two key initiatives focusing on student well-being, including a partnership with Brighter Bites at YES Prep Southside Elementary to provide comprehensive nutritional education and fruit and vegetable distributions through May 2024. The City of Houston recognized these efforts by declaring September 20, 2023 as YES Prep Healthy Kids Day, underscoring a commitment to student health and success. Brighter Bites serves over 60 schools in Texas, delivering bags filled with fresh produce to educate families about healthy eating habits while making nutrition exciting. The distribution events are festive, community-building opportunities where families receive these nourishing bags and engage with educational resources. Overall, this initiative ensures that YES Prep students learn crucial nutritional skills and receive fresh fruits and vegetables twice a month, fostering a foundation for lifelong healthy habits.



EMPOWERING FUTURE EDUCATORS

TechTeach Across Texas (TTAT), offered by Texas Tech University in collaboration with YES Prep, is an accelerated teacher certification program starting each July and concluding the following year. The program combines online coursework with hands-on clinical experiences at YES Prep schools, allowing participants to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Education and full teacher certification. TTAT emphasizes real-world teaching experience and close collaboration among cohort members to help them thrive as educators. Applicants are attracted to the program for its quick completion time, competitive salary, housing stipends, and strong support systems, which are essential for balancing family and financial responsibilities. More than 25 graduates have completed the program and highlight the supportive culture, which includes mentorship from seasoned educators and a community that encourages practical learning and personal growth. TTAT's approach to fast-tracked, hands-on learning and comprehensive support systems make it a valuable opportunity for aspiring teachers aiming to make an immediate impact in the classroom.



SILVER STARS

YES Prep celebrated 25 years of innovative public education with its Silver Stars Celebration at POST Houston, honoring staff members who have served for over a decade. The event featured festive activities and spotlighted nearly 200 Silver Stars. CEO Mark DiBella expressed deep gratitude to these long-serving individuals, highlighting their pivotal role in making YES Prep one of the most successful charter

organizations nationwide. DiBella emphasized that the commitment and relationships of these staff members are the true heart and soul of YES Prep. The celebration concluded with Chief Schools Officer Phil Wright stressing the importance of these relationships in both past successes and future endeavors, marking the milestone as a foundation for the next 25 years.





TEACHER INCENTIVE ALLOTMENT

YES Prep is proud to have **57 teachers** who were awarded the Texas Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) this year, raising the total number of TIA recipients at YES Prep to 124. The TIA is a state-funded program that rewards teacher effectiveness based on rigorous student growth data and comprehensive evaluations. Teachers who earn this distinction receive stipends ranging from **\$3,000 to \$32,000 over five years**, recognizing their dedication, expertise, and impact on student success. Outstanding teachers are crucial to unlocking student potential and preparing them for college, and our TIA recipients at YES Prep have surpassed growth targets, creating engaging and supportive learning environments. Thank you to our 2023-2024 TIA recipients for their commitment to excellence and positive influence on students' lives!



QUESTBRIDGE SCHOLARS

Fourteen seniors from YES Prep have been selected as QuestBridge Scholars through the National College Match Program, a prestigious achievement that connects exceptional students from low-income communities with top colleges. These scholars were chosen from over 20,800 applicants, making up 14 of the 6,683 finalists. **This marks the fifth consecutive year that YES Prep has had 10 or more students awarded QuestBridge scholarships.** Each student will receive a full four-year scholarship to one of QuestBridge's partner colleges, meeting their full financial need. The program not only ensures early admission but also supports these students from high school through to their first job. This accomplishment highlights the resilience, academic excellence, and community involvement of the YES Prep students, paving the way for their future success at some of the nation's best institutions.

SENIOR SIGNING DAY

YES Prep celebrated our annual Senior Signing Day on May 21, 2024, marking a significant milestone where 1,631 seniors from 14 campuses declared their post-secondary plans at the University of Houston's Fertitta Center. This tradition, which began in 2001, honors students, many of whom are first-generation college-goers, for their academic achievements and college commitments. **The Class of 2024 received over 11,206 acceptances and more than \$2 million in scholarships and financial aid**, with highlights including four Ivy League acceptances and numerous prestigious scholar awards. The event also celebrated the first graduating class from YES Prep Northline Secondary, with Principal Brittany McGruder and founding students expressing their pride and excitement. YES Prep alumni and donors participated in a special Scholars Lunch, highlighting our impact on students' college and career paths. Founder Chris Barbic emphasized the transformative effect of college education on students and their families, reinforcing YES Prep's mission to empower Houston students.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SENIOR SIGNING DAY SPONSORS!



CULTIVATING CREATIVITY THROUGH MUSIC EDUCATION

At YES Prep, we're dedicated to enriching our students' education with music programs that spark creativity and support academic growth, beginning in pre-K and continuing through high school. Our diverse music courses range from performance arts to music theory, engaging over 4,500 students across the district. **The benefits of music education extend beyond musicianship, enhancing language skills, emotional intelligence and even academic performance.** Music fosters key social skills and self-confidence as students collaborate and share their musical achievements. By integrating music education, YES Prep nurtures well-rounded individuals who contribute creatively and intellectually to society, highlighting the importance of arts in holistic education.





FROM CLASSROOM TO CAREER

YES Prep's Electives, Career and Technical Education (ECTE) program offers students a blend of classroom learning and real-world application, equipping them with valuable skills for both college and career success. These non-traditional academic approaches, provide students with hands-on exposure to various fields such as digital media and computer science. The program includes project-based learning which mimics professional environments, helping students build critical problem-solving

skills. The program debunks common myths, emphasizing that ECTE is not just for non-college-bound students but also prepares them with versatile skills useful across multiple disciplines. YES Prep aims to expand and refine its ECTE offerings continuously, ensuring they align with student interests and district goals, ultimately supporting students in achieving their post-graduation aspirations.

YES PREP EXPANDS ACROSS HOUSTON

YES Prep is expanding its reach in Houston and broke ground on three new elementary schools: YES Prep Hobby, YES Prep North Rankin, and YES Prep Southwest Oaks Elementary, that subsequently opened in August 2024. The schools will initially serve pre-Kindergarten through second grade, with plans to gradually expand to include third, fourth, and fifth grades. Each groundbreaking ceremony, held on consecutive days during the summer of 2023, showcased community leaders and YES Prep representatives who shared their vision and enthusiasm for the new schools. The events highlighted the ongoing commitment of YES Prep to providing a college-ready education and emphasized the collaborative spirit within the community. The establishment of these schools marks a significant step in YES Prep's mission to empower students and transform communities.



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

Hundreds of YES Prep students, families and staff members gathered at Rice Stadium in January to celebrate 25 years of our district's impact in Houston during the inaugural YES Fest. The event featured food, fun activities, games, bounce houses, and face painting, aimed at strengthening community ties and fostering a sense of unity among our families and staff. The celebration also acknowledged the support of community partners and Rice University, thanking them for their involvement and assistance in making the event possible. The day concluded with YES Prep families receiving complimentary tickets to a Rice vs. Tulsa men's basketball game, underscoring the community-centric spirit of the occasion.





NORTH RANKIN TURKEY DRIVE

YES Prep North Rankin Elementary hosted a Turkey and Meal Kit Giveaway on November 21, providing over 200 turkeys and essential ingredients for a traditional Thanksgiving feast to families in need. The event was organized by Stephanie Dorsey, the founding principal of North Rankin Elementary, one of three new elementary schools set to open in August 2024. Dorsey emphasized the importance of serving families and building community as central to her leadership. The giveaway not only provided meals but also connected families to the new school. Dorsey is committed to fostering academic excellence and strong community ties in North Houston, stating that “mediocrity is not an option.” In addition to the meal kits, the event featured partnerships with Rockstar Energy Bike Park and other organizations, offering resources and giveaways to support the community.



STACKING THE DECK FOR YES PREP

The YES Prep Oil & Gas Texas Hold 'Em Tournament, a significant fundraising event in Houston's energy sector, has **raised over \$22 million since its inception in 2006 to support YES Prep students**. The 19th annual event, held at the Corinthian Houston, saw over 600 industry professionals from more than 80 companies gather for an evening of poker, raising \$2.25 million. Kenley Steeg emerged as the 2024 champion, winning for the second consecutive year. The tournament, highlighted by camaraderie and competition, showcased the energy industry's commitment to education. The tournament continues to be a testament to the community's dedication to providing quality education for all, ensuring a brighter future for YES Prep students.





ALUMNI SHINE BRIGHT AT ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The Seventh Annual Leading Houston Forward Luncheon, held on October 25, 2023 at the Wortham Theater Center, celebrated 25 years of YES Prep's impact, gathering nearly 400 guests and raising over \$800,000. Co-chaired by Melanie Trent and Janet Clark, the event honored YES Prep's history and future, with CEO Mark DiBella highlighting the positive changes YES Prep graduates bring to the community. Enbridge received the Chris Barbic Legacy Award for its long-standing support, while the event also recognized YES Prep alumni Eric Espinoza and Gustavo Mireles for their contributions. The luncheon underscored YES Prep's generational impact, exemplified by first-grader Juan Zarate and his mother, Elizabeth Martinez Zarate, a YES Prep alum and current staff member. The funds raised will continue to support YES Prep's mission of preparing under-resourced students for college success.



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Isy Gabriela Castillo
Chief External Officer



Carmen Darville
Chief Operations Officer



Dana Foughty
Chief of Staff



Luis Mena
Chief Financial Officer



Jose (Tony) Muñoz
Chief Talent Officer



Phillip Wright
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2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR STATS



2.1M

Meals Served



162

families supported through the Family Relief Fund



311

IMPACT Scholars



\$10M

donated to support YES Prep students



10,071

enrollment applications received



18,177

YES Prep students



25

YES Prep alumni at 2023 Leading Houston Forward Luncheon



90%

of seniors are first generation college-bound



878

YES Prep donors



yes prep

PUBLIC SCHOOLS