Dear Friends,

As we write this letter, our schools have been virtual for nearly seven months and will be for the foreseeable future; our nation is suffering through the greatest public health crisis in our history; and we continue to struggle as a nation with a racial reckoning 400 years in the making. COVID-19 has laid bare the inequities in our economic, education, health, and social support systems. These disparities have always existed, but are even more stark during this pandemic. The effects of this pandemic have been disproportionately felt by our Building 21 community.

Our response to this has been to hold tight to the network of strong relationships we have developed across this community and to fight even harder for a purpose that has never felt more vital. In the midst of despair, our community keeps fighting for hope.

We find that hope in the resilience, resistance, and aspirations of our young people, our families, and our staff. From organizing a nationally recognized voter registration drive so their voices would be heard to simply overcoming the day-to-day barriers of virtual learning, our students are showing up, finding their passion, building their agency, and tapping into their own power to improve our communities—and our teachers, staff, and leaders are innovating, adapting, and supporting them every step of the way.

This Annual Report is dedicated to all of the teachers, administrators, and staff across all of our schools who have so consistently gone ABOVE AND BEYOND over the last year to serve our students and our families despite all of the technical, practical, and emotional challenges that they face every day.

While every member of our team deserves to be highlighted in this report, we hope you enjoy getting to know just a few of our colleagues and feel inspired, as we do everyday, by their determination, courage, and perseverance.

In solidarity,

Chip Linehan and Laura Shubilla
Co-Founders and Co-Executive Directors
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## ABOVE & BEYOND PROFILES

Lakesha Harrison-Bethea 5  
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At Building 21, we believe that encouraging passion and developing agency allows students to impact their today, their future, and the world around them. We accomplish this goal by focusing on five core design pillars:

- A just, equitable, and caring learning environment
- A more robust set of graduation requirements
- Authentic and connected learning opportunities
- Strong instructional practices
- Adult growth and development

Above and Beyond
When it became clear that the traditional in-person graduation ceremonies that our students had looked forward to for four years would not be possible, our lab schools’ administrators and staff went above and beyond to find creative and safe ways to honor the seniors and their families. Building 21 Philadelphia staff created a car caravan and visited each student at their home to deliver their diplomas and celebrate with their families (pictured on this page) and Allentown staff planned a Diploma Drive-Thru celebration, which is featured on the back cover.
Tell us about a memorable moment this past year:

“My favorite 2019-2020 moment was the We Bloom celebration led by ‘Broken but Healing,’ our all-female trauma group. We created We Bloom as a way to make space for females—young and older, black and white—to come together and celebrate each other. We honored all of the females in the building through poetry, song, and dance. Everyone left the celebration feeling like they can do anything they put their mind to.”

Talk about your passion for your work:

“I know first-hand what it feels like to want better but not be sure you have what it takes to get better. I know how it feels not to have support and for your surroundings to be the opposite of your true heart’s desires. I also know how it feels to be scared to strive for better because of the fear of failure. My past traumas push me every day to be better than yesterday, so that I am in a position to help our students understand that their life has value and that it is okay to fail but it is never okay to give up on yourself.”

On keeping students engaged during the pandemic:

“When the pandemic began and schools were closing, everything that I knew about social work boiled down to one simple thing ‘meet people where they are.’ Based on my relationships with students and their families, I was able to connect with them beyond school supports, such as helping a single mother in an abusive relationship and working with my colleagues to ensure that every student had a laptop. It is all about relationships and not being scared of not having a solution right at that moment but being willing to work together to create one.”

Kesha is a talented and dedicated social worker and embodies the definition of ‘above and beyond.’ Her energy seems limitless and her passion for challenging and supporting our students, families and staff is critical to the foundation of our school. There is never a task too big or too small for Kesha and she ALWAYS shows up to help and to support each and every school initiative. She is creative, hopeful and never stops believing in the students she serves. In particular, Kesha’s mentoring and support for our most vulnerable young people has literally saved lives.

— Ayris Sanders
School Leader
Building 21 Philadelphia
building21 ALLENTOWN

265 Lehigh Street
Allentown, PA 18102

72.6% Hispanic
16.5% Black/African American
8.3% White
2.6% Two or more races / other

460 students

English Language Learners (ELL) 12.4%
Special Education 18.0%

School Leader: Jose Rosado, Jr.
Opened: September, 2015
Grades: 9-12

building21 PHILADELPHIA

6501 Limekiln Pike
Philadelphia, PA 19138

87.7% Black/African American
7.7% Hispanic
3.5% Two or more races / other
1.1% White

350 students

English Language Learners (ELL) 5.1%
Special Education 16.9%

School Leader: Ayris Sanders
Opened: September, 2014
Grades: 9-12

data source: https://futurereadypa.org/
Graduation Rates at our Lab Schools

The comparable (comp.) set includes other local high schools that have no admissions criteria and highly similar racial and socio-economic demographics as our lab schools.

The 2019 graduation rates are published by the PA Department of Education at https://futurereadypa.org/. The state has not yet released 2020 data, so we have included estimates based on our data for the two lab schools.

Annualized Retention Rates

Across our two lab schools, over the course of the last year:

- >90% retention: we retained more than 90% of our students, and
- <0.5% drop-out: less than one half of one percent of our students dropped out.
Jared McElroy  
Social Studies Teacher & 10th Grade Team Lead  
Currently co-teaching an anti-racism, interdisciplinary African American History and English II studio  
Fourth year teaching and fourth year at Building 21 Philadelphia

Tell us about a memorable studio:
“Anyone that’s talked to me about my class knows about my passion for the What’s In a Neighborhood? studio that I co-teach with Ms. Grieb. In this studio, we explore students’ often complicated relationships with their communities, while providing a historical explanation for why American cities look the way they do. It always seems to be the part of the year that sparks the most genuine and interesting conversations with students. Plus, it allows me to also have some introductory conversations on financial literacy.”

Talk about your passion for your work:
“The problems facing the American education system are a microcosm of the problems facing the American democracy. If you’re interested in being part of the solutions to massive problems, you have to choose where you’re going to jump in and where you think you can have an impact. Education is the undervalued, long-term investment in American democracy. The ideas to make democracy succeed are there; we just need to drastically improve on the execution. The same could be said about education. So what better investment of time than to try and work on both at the same time? What it all comes down to is that I genuinely value the lives and futures of our students and I am obsessed with the idea of finding a way to best prepare them to push our democracy forward.”

On keeping students engaged during the pandemic:
“At the end of the day, at the onset of the pandemic, the goal stayed the same. We want students to achieve success, academic and otherwise. We want students to be able to encounter and overcome adversity. So we have to model that for them. If we panic, so will they. If we quit, so will they. So I just kept working the problem in the hopes that they would too.”

Transparent, courageous and passionate are the three words that come to mind to describe Jared. He has demonstrated significant leadership that consistently helps to move forward the work of our school. In addition to his passion for developing our next generation of leaders, he has served as the tenth grade team lead and the lead for our school-wide tiered intervention and support process. He has shown a tremendous commitment to ensuring that all young people get what they need to be successful, while at the same time challenging himself to continue to grow and to develop. Jared stays focused on the ‘why’ and challenges all of us to do the same.

— Ayris Sanders  
School Leader  
Building 21 Philadelphia
As COVID-19 necessitated our schools move to virtual learning, the pressure on our school leaders increased considerably. They found themselves responsible for reinventing processes and developing strategies to keep students engaged, families connected, and a new virtual team of staff and teachers supported and ready to educate, all while managing the stress and anxiety of a global pandemic as parents themselves. Additionally, as our communities responded to the upsurge in racism across our nation, our leaders created safe spaces for our students and staff to process and heal together.

We celebrate our school leaders. We thank them for going above and beyond every step of the way, for supporting their teams, keeping our students engaged, and for allowing all voices to be heard.

We asked Building 21 lab school leaders for their reflections on this moment:

“This spring was obviously unprecedented in so many ways. To go from a normal, in-person learning environment to completely virtual in a matter of weeks was incredibly disruptive. That being said, I think in times of crisis, an organization’s true colors shine through. In our case, I am proud to say that our deep connections with our kids and families and our flexible, personalized learning model made a huge positive difference for our students.”

— Jose Rosado, Jr., Building 21 Allentown

“The strong relationships that we built within our community were essential to our ability to pivot and to navigate the uncertainties we faced. We doubled down on our commitment to every member of our community; we strategized and collaborated; and most importantly, we found ways to remain hopeful for ourselves, each other, and our students and to help them find hope within themselves.”

— Ayris Sanders, Building 21 Philadelphia
Building 21’s Affiliate Program

We currently support four Building 21 Affiliate Schools across the country, which collectively serve close to two thousand students. These schools have each adopted a new vision for graduation requirements that are aligned directly with our competency sets, which each school utilizes along with our curriculum, professional development resources, and learning management system. In addition, Building 21 actively coaches their school leaders.

Kankakee High School: We have been working with the Kankakee School District in Illinois for three years. We reached out to Dr. Genevra Walters, Superintendent, and asked her to reflect on the Kankakee team’s journey implementing a competency-based education (CBE) model and the impact of the pandemic. Dr. Walter’s son is a ninth grader at Kankakee High School, so she also brings a parent’s perspective to the work.

Dr. Genevra A. Walters
Superintendent, Kankakee School District #111:

Building 21 has been a thought partner and a leader for us for the past three and a half years. I officially feel that Building 21 is a part of supporting us and helping us to build this new educational system. They work primarily with the high school but because of some of the things that they have done with us, we’ve adopted strategies all the way down to preschool. The idea of Habits of Success, the competencies, and the focus on outcomes rather than process, these are examples of where I see Building 21’s impact. I don’t think we would have been as successful had we not worked directly with Building 21.

When we went into the pandemic, we were better prepared than other schools in Illinois because we were already thinking outside of the norm. We don’t look at time as being a constant, we look at learning as being the constant. We had already gone one-to-one in order to facilitate learning outside of the building. So there are all kinds of things that we started working on as a district because of our experience with Building 21 and CBE that actually lend themselves to transitioning into this new norm. I think the experience of solving the issues at the high school around CBE has led to very effective problem solving and analysis that I don’t know that we had as a distinct six years ago that we do have now. So we’re problem solving some of the struggles that our students and families are having and some of our teachers.

One of the things I have learned from this experience, CBE and with the pandemic, is that we weren’t really teaching students to be responsible and to advocate for themselves. We were just teaching them that these are the things you have to do and you have to do it. And now my son sees the value in it and he knows how to create a schedule that works for him. He knows, ‘I have to create my schedule for the week. I have to know when I have academics and when I have football practice.’ The process of teaching him those skills and him learning these skills will benefit him in four years.

Dr. Walters was the recipient of the 2019 Kankakee County Athena Leadership Award and was greeted by excited students when she returned to her office.
Central Academy
Meridian, Idaho
Donell McNeal, Principal:

We are in a day in age where human beings must demand that the time and energy that schools are investing into our children will translate and transfer positively for all.

Though we began the work using words like engagement, empowerment, and ownership, the real work that we do is about equity.

We must reform and restore education to a global common good. Please know that our fight is for all students. The battle is not about teaching; the battle is rooted in learning for all.

Meridian Academy
Meridian, Idaho
Dr. Eian Harm, Principal:

The competency-based model and its flexibility gives us increased options for engaging students in learning. They don’t fail for not showing up, rather they just aren’t done yet. In an alternative setting, during a pandemic, many students would simply disengage from the process and drop out. We have been able to prevent that through this flexibility.

Building 21 has been a part of our redesign process from the beginning. The team at B21 has continually been a source of knowledge and guidance as we have worked through the innumerable strategic decisions necessary to implement the CBE [competency-based education] change.

I would say it was simply their expertise and willingness to be available and guide our leaders and staff through the ‘thinking process’ that was most impactful to helping our school. The Building 21 team has been and continue to be invaluable for our schools.

Eagle Academy
Eagle, Idaho
James Buschine, Principal:

[Building 21 was essential in] teaching us about the portfolio model, getting to students’ ‘Self-Reported Grading,’ and helping us understand the competency model.

We could not have done this without the competency dashboard, portfolios, learning opportunities, and evidence pieces that we learned by working with Building 21.
Network Support:

Good to Great

In the summer of 2019, Building 21 received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as part of the foundation’s Networks for School Improvement (NSI) portfolio. The NSI grants support schools working together to identify and solve common problems to enable more students, particularly low-income students and students of color, to graduate from high school and achieve post-secondary success. The $500,000 grant supports our efforts to deliver key supports for our network of schools, including the standardization of tools and curriculum, the use of data for continuous improvement, and the strengthening of school culture and leadership.

In order to best direct these resources, we undertook an exhaustive review of our results to-date, including quantitative and qualitative data gathered from a multitude of different sources. Out of this work emerged four priorities that would support our efforts to go from “Good to Great.” Priorities one and four are highlighted in this report.

Priority 1: Integrating autonomy and design with high quality instructional content and high leverage instructional practices

Priority 2: Strengthen and support a culture of ongoing coaching, personal and professional learning, and leadership development

Priority 3: Strengthen and support our student advisory program

Priority 4: Deepen Building 21’s Connected Community vision building on our TriChange work
Network Support:

Curriculum & Design

**Good to Great Priority 1:**
Integrating autonomy and design with high quality instructional content and high leverage instructional practices.

Over the course of the year, we have worked with teachers, partners, and school leaders to connect teacher autonomy and expertise with high quality instructional content and stronger alignment with our competencies and instructional vision.

Through this process, teacher designers, network staff, and content experts have come together to build a library of studios that support students in developing their civic identity. By integrating English Language Arts and Social Studies, the team produced engaging, rigorous, and relevant studio designs.

As a Network, we have always had a commitment to “open source” tools and are grateful for all of those in the education space who share this commitment. Our math focus this year involved building on the Illustrative Math open source curriculum with teacher developed standards-based grading rubrics and assessment tables. We are also developing modeling prompts which will complement the IM curriculum and align with our competency focus.

Our science team has also been hard at work improving our Biology curriculum, carefully balancing the necessary content, key standards, and critical science competencies all within a problem-based learning approach.

**ELA/Social Studies Integrated Studio Designers**
Heather Harlen
Megan Justice
Sandra Moumoutjis
Samuel Raup
Shannon Salter
Ann Marie Stevens
Grace Cruz, Content Consultant

**Math Designers**
Thomas Gaffey
Derrick Houck
David Montenegro
Andrew Pattison
Melissa Routson
Bear St. Michael
Christopher Tempro
Teaching Lab, Implementation Partner

**Biology Designers**
Ray Baratta
Telsa Comunale
Thomas Gaffey
Matthew Jones
Jim Novak
Nabeehah Parker
Rachel Scoratow
Julia Silvasy, Content Consultant, G rovider
Network Support:

**Tri-Change**

Cultural Competency, Trauma-Informed Care, and Restorative Practices

**Good to Great Priority 4:**
Deepen Building 21’s Connected Community vision building on our TriChange work

Over the past three years, our Philadelphia school has been building an approach to integrating restorative, trauma-informed, and culturally competent practices through an initiative called Tri-Change. This year’s work has focused on codifying these efforts. Grounded in our Building Relationships Teacher Competency, Tri-Change is designed to support adult growth and development, improve professional learning, and ensure the adherence to Tri-Change principles in six areas of focus: Processes, Programming, Policies, Practices, People, and Performance.

The Tri-Change Steering Committee guides the work of Tri-Change throughout the school. The committee is comprised of teachers, staff, and school leadership. Shout out to the Tri-Change Steering Committee Members: David Sparrow, Committee Lead (in photo), Jared McElroy, Ross Hamilton, Misean Elsheikh, Lakesha Harrison-Bethea, Daneen Gackou, David Montenegro (’19–’20), Kevin Gold and to our Tri-Change implementation partner Grovider.

“...The work I do with Tri-Change is based upon an enduring desire to ensure that our students fulfill their greatest intellectual and social potential. This is accomplished through validating their personal identities (Cultural Competency), healing their emotional wounds (Trauma Informed Care), and cultivating their higher sense of humanity (Restorative Practices).”

Misean Elsheikh
11th Grade Social Studies teacher and Tri-Change Steering Committee Member
Building 21 Philadelphia
Network Support:

Open Resources

We take pride in openly and transparently sharing our work and learning. A few years ago, we created a space on our website to share our Learning What Matters Competency sets and several guides and templates for teachers and students. Over time, thousands of people from around the world have found our resources and have downloaded them.

Since June 2019 alone, more than 1,300 individuals have signed up and viewed the Open Resources we’ve developed to support the implementation of competency-based education.

We recently surveyed site visitors to learn more about how they use our resources in their own work. Among the secondary educators from the US who responded, 9 out of 10 said that they’ve referenced or noticed the influence of our open resources in their work, with a third saying this happened often or always. Most notably, just under half of these educators reported an organizational “transformation” or “shift” inspired by one or more of the resources. A map of respondents and some of their feedback is provided on the next page.

Resources with the greatest impact:

- Student Competencies & Continua
- Competencies for Teachers
- Intro to CBE Webinar Series
- The Building Blocks of a Competency-Based Model

Most frequently, respondents used our open resources to...

- Develop student targets, goals, and self-assessment
- Design and develop curriculum
- Create their school model
More than 1,300 educators across the country—from every state—have signed up and viewed our Open Resources since we began tracking usage a year and a half ago.

We reached out to the school leaders who reported an organizational “transformation” or “shift” inspired by one or more of the resources, to learn more about how they use our resources and how our model has inspired their work. Some of their responses are excerpted here.

We adopted our academic competencies straight off the Building 21 website....What we had in mind is what you had.

Marti White, Dean of Studies, & Zachary Hayden, Dean of Faculty
The Oxford Academy, Westbrook, CT

I went to my Head of School [and said] 'look at what I just found [online]'! . . . The B21 materials made it click for me in a way nothing else had . . . B21’s competencies are by far the best out there.

Christopher Pannone, Associate Head of School & Chief Advancement Officer, Wooster School, Danbury, CT

[Our design team] knew they wanted to write competencies for their pathways and were looking for a way to get started. So I went online and looked at the Building 21 resources. I immediately contacted Laura and asked if I could bring a team just so they could see the potential of where we could go.

Suzanne Rogers, Assistant Superintendent, Franklin County Public Schools, Rocky Mount, VA

We are coming back and using the continua a lot. The rubrics that we're building for assessments are all straight from B21.

Alison Gillmeister, Academic Lead, Capital Experience Lab, Washington DC

B21 is my north star in creating competencies.

Lisa Simms, Former Principal, DSISD (Denver School of Innovation and Sustainable Design), Denver, CO

[Our rubrics] are pulled from Building 21 continua by our project designers and the unit writers. They pulled all of the relevant skills from [Building 21's] learning continua to assemble our rubrics.

Lisa Simms, Former Principal, DSISD (Denver School of Innovation and Sustainable Design), Denver, CO

[The Building 21 Open Resources] provide inspiration and aspiration. . . . We are coming back and using the continua a lot. The rubrics that we’re building for assessments are all straight from B21.

Alison Gillmeister, Academic Lead, Capital Experience Lab, Washington DC

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Melissa Routson
Mathematics Teacher, Advisory Designer & PBIS* Designer
Teaches all math studios, 3D Modeling, and Advisory
Fifth year teaching at Building 21 Allentown

Tell us about a memorable studio or project:
“Seeing the culmination of the creativity that the staff put together in order to celebrate the graduating class. We had a diploma ‘drive-thru’ where we all got to celebrate the students while still social distancing. I cherish the relationships I built with all of those students and being able to send them off from high school, albeit not in quite the way we thought we would, was very unique and special.”

Talk about your passion for your work:
“I am driven to be a teacher to change the lives of the young people I work with. I strive to help my students see their potential and act on it. I enjoy making students work hard and find success even when they didn’t think they could do it. This work is shaping the next generation.”

On keeping students engaged during the pandemic:
“The students really are what kept me going during the shut down in the spring. I was so happy to still be able to engage with students on Zoom. Even if students just joined my office hours to talk I was so happy to hear their voices and share our quarantine stories! There is a reason we focus so much on relationships at Building 21. Without relationships with our students and staff, my experience of working at home would be drastically different. Social interaction and relationships are key to the work we do here!”

Melissa is always willing to give her time and energy to the well-being of our students. She offers support with our advisory model, our PBIS implementation, serving as a Teaching Lab Leader, and is considered our resident event planner. Melissa recognizes when our team needs support. Her time and dedication to our community does not go unnoticed and we are grateful for her unselfish contributions.

— Telsa Comunale
Assistant School Leader
Building 21 Allentown

*Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Sonia Heath
Administrative Assistant & Office Manager
Sixth year at Building 21 Philadelphia
Twentieth year with the School District of Philadelphia

Tell us something memorable from the past year:
“Some of my favorite moments with students are in the morning. Students come to say good morning everyday. That they go out of their way to share a moment with me is humbling. I am grateful for it. . . . My favorite moments with staff are in professional development. I am thankful to be a part of a staff that challenges themselves and ideas to constantly improve.”

Talk about your passion for your work:
“I am thankful for the divine opportunity to be a part of this school. Never, in my entire career with the School District of Philadelphia, have I been at a school that cares so much about their students and staff. Building 21 is a place that is intentional about building relationships, reaching staff and students where they live, and facilitating channels for growth, learning, and development for everyone. Students can trust, grow, and be challenged. I think our strategies for building relationships, conflict resolution, and pushing students to utilize their power and voice will change the landscape of the future. That idea is a beacon of hope.”

“I was a teen parent. I know the importance of a person that is kind and non-judgmental. How a friendly face and being treated respectfully goes a long way. Understanding that a person’s current situation does not dictate where they are going or define who they are. . . . I love working with young people because I view life as a journey, and the experiences on that journey pave the way for the future. My view on my role is to be an example of a person that is helpful, kind, trustworthy, and positive and I work to be that everyday.”

Sonia is such a blessing to Building 21. She goes above and beyond to serve our students and their families. She takes the time to listen to their concerns and challenges, lift up their spirits when they are down and is the heart of our school. Her approach to her work as our school secretary is grounded in true servant leadership. I don’t know what I would do without Sonia.

— Ayris Sanders
School Leader
Building 21 Philadelphia
School Partners

Thank you to our generous partners for supporting our work and creating authentic, real-world learning opportunities for our students in Allentown and Philadelphia.

Air Products & Chemicals
Allentown Police Department
Amogha Yoga
ArtsQuest
Attorney Gavin Holihan
B. Braun Medical Inc.
The Baum School of Art
Bethesda Christian Fellowship
    Church of God
Cedar Crest College
Cetronia Ambulance Corps
City Center Allentown
City of Allentown
Communities in Schools
Community Bike Works
Community College of Philadelphia
Da Vinci Science Center
DeSales University
Education Plus Health
Faces International
First Commonwealth Federal
    Credit Union
Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber
    of Commerce
Halal2Go Catering
HNL Lab Medicine
IBEW Local 375
Jocelyn Adams
La Salle University
Lehigh Carbon Community College
Lehigh County
Lehigh County Conservation District
Lehigh University
Lehigh Valley Educators Credit Union
Lehigh Valley Health Network
Lutron, Inc.
Manufacturers Resource Center
Miller-Keystone Blood Center
Office of the District Attorney,
    City of Philadelphia
PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley
Peaceable Kingdom
Penn State Extension
Penn State Lehigh Valley
Penn State University
PennDOT
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
PHEAA
PPL Electric Utilities
Promise Neighborhoods of the
    Lehigh Valley
Reading Terminal Market
Reciprocity
Rider-Pool Trust
Sean Tate
Senator Pat Browne
Spanish Immersion Learning Center
Spillman Farmer Architects
St. Luke’s University Health Network
Tech Smart Kids
Tee Academy
Teigh Orthodontics
The Literacy Center
US Armed Services
Villanova University
Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley
What I Wish I Knew Foundation
Tell us about a memorable studio or project:
“During 2019-20, one of my favorite initiatives was revamping our re-engagement room (our progression and restorative version of what some schools call an in-school suspension room) into our Focus Room. It became a place where, when a student’s actions removed them from the community, the student not only reflected on their actions with our behavioral specialists but also met with their counselors throughout the day. This initiative brought us closer to our goal of becoming a truly restorative school in every part of our community. It also helped students build their social-emotional capacity and agency.”

Talk about your passion for your work:
“As a teenager in New York City, being part of a small learning community that believed in relationships and restorative practices pushed me to work towards transforming school culture by breaking the traditional mold of school discipline that criminalizes students and the cycles of ruckus and recidivism.”

On keeping students engaged during the pandemic:
“One of my favorite quotes comes from the late Kobe Bryant: ‘Everything negative—pressure, challenges—is all an opportunity for me to rise.’ Throughout the pandemic, this quote pushed me to stay positive. It served as a reminder that even though we were facing a very difficult time, it was an opportunity to make sure that our students stayed positive and engaged in the learning process. To accomplish this, I collected student cell phone numbers to reach them directly on a regular basis, created Zoom opportunities to have fun and converse throughout the day and night, and created a space for students to interact with their peers and teachers over social media media.”
Audited Financial Results
July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020

Income

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$2,738,702</td>
<td>93.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and Consulting Fees</td>
<td>$177,152</td>
<td>6.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$5,115</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>$2,920,969</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
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</table>

Expenses

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>$1,539,760</td>
<td>87.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and General</td>
<td>$192,642</td>
<td>10.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$36,780</td>
<td>2.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$1,769,182</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major Investments in 2019–20

Tri-Change Program
$57,446
We invested slightly more than 25% of our overall staff development expenses for 2019-2020 in building the capacity of our staff around anti-racism, cultural competence, and restorative practices (our “Tri-Change” program). Supported by the Gates grant, this pilot program was launched in Philadelphia. We will be rolling it out more broadly in the coming years.

Allentown Culture & Climate Support
$141,548
In an effort to build upon our strong foundation of relationships and to deepen our restorative practices work, we brought on a Climate Manager and a Communities in School Site Coordinator to our Allentown school staff. We appreciate the support of Communities in Schools for their partial financial support of the Site Coordinator position.

Math Curriculum
$85,300
This investment in teacher and administrator training allowed us to successfully roll out a new problem-based math curriculum that is extremely well aligned with our competency-based approach across both of our Lab Schools as well as our affiliate school, Kankakee.
Shannon Salter
Social Studies & Founding Teacher at Building 21 Allentown
Teaches US Government, AP US Government, and Yearbook
Sixth year at Building 21 and ninth year as a teacher

Tell us about a memorable studio or project:
“\textit{I will forever remember 2019-20 as the year my US Government ‘Voter Turnout’ studio culminated in students registering family, friends, and themselves to vote, and then celebrating this work in a virtual meeting with Michelle Obama and at a virtual prom with MTV. For the past two years, over 90\% of our eligible seniors have registered to vote. Last year, we were selected as one of 20 high schools nationwide for our success in encouraging youth civic participation. We shared our strategies with the When We All Vote organization on a Zoom call with Michelle Obama and Jenna Bush Hager. Our students appeared as guests at the MTV virtual prom, organized to celebrate young people in civic life. Our students were ambassadors for youth voting and appeared in local print, TV, and radio media.}”

Talk about your passion for your work:
“I became a social studies teacher out of a desire to serve our country and democracy by preparing the next generation of citizens to raise their voice. Our young people so often inherit a nation that they had little part in shaping—all because they haven’t developed the skills of effective citizenship. Our young people come to us with so much passion. They just need the space to find their power and harness it into agency to impact the civic life of their communities!”

On keeping students engaged during the pandemic:
“The pandemic was a real world opportunity for students to enter the civic life of their community. . . . There’s never been a more important time to remain ‘at our post’ and help students use their learning to navigate their world. Every day was an opportunity to continue to be there for students who had questions, who needed mentoring. This was the call that got me onto those Zoom meetings. The work of keeping students engaged and connected isn’t the work of a crisis moment—it is work that started long before the pandemic ever hit. Our Building 21 model places relationship building front and center. During the first months of the pandemic, the successes I saw with students came because of our long-term investment in building strong relationships.”

Shannon continues to adapt current practices and procedures to incorporate student voice in daily routines and in school improvement efforts. By elevating our students’ voices, Shannon has enhanced student participation, citizenship, and leadership. Most recently, her instruction related to voter registration yielded students the opportunity to connect with Michelle Obama, via the voter participation initiative, and culminated with Building 21 Allentown’s participation in the 2020 MTV Virtual Prom.

— Jose Rosado, Jr.
School Leader
Building 21 Allentown
## Donor Recognition

We are extremely grateful for all of the support we received this year and since our founding.

### 2019-2020 Donors

**Gifts and grants received between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Donors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 +</td>
<td>The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Lenfest Foundation, Siegel Family Endowment, Spring Point Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>Air Products Foundation, The Barra Foundation, City Center, Drant Charitable Giving Fund, Haynes Charitable Fund, PPL Corporation, The Topper Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000 to $9,999</td>
<td>American Bank, Don Bernhard, Doug and Peggy Brown, Tony Karboski and Connie Mearkle, Lissette Santana, Don Spangler, Weis Markets, Inc., When We All Vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $99,999</td>
<td>Century Fund, Charles and Molly Linehan Family Foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Honor Roll Donors

**Gifts and grants received since our founding in 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cornerstone ($500,000 +)</th>
<th>Keystone ($250,000 +)</th>
<th>Next Generation Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Products Foundation</td>
<td>The Century Fund</td>
<td>PPL Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Lenfest Foundation</td>
<td>The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation</td>
<td>The Rider-Pool Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Schools Partnership</td>
<td>Linehan Family Foundation</td>
<td>Siegel Family Endowment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Point Partners</td>
<td>The New Schools Venture Fund</td>
<td>Harry C. Trexler Trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Above and Beyond

When it became clear that the traditional in-person graduation ceremonies that our students had looked forward to for four years would not be possible, our lab schools' administrators and staff went above and beyond to find creative and safe ways to honor the seniors and their families. Building 21 Allentown staff planned a Diploma Drive-Thru celebration (pictured on this page) and Philadelphia staff created a car caravan and visited each student at their home to deliver their diplomas and celebrate with their families (page 4).