

# 2020-21 Annual Report

## VISION

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Each and every student in our member school districts graduates with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in a global economy.

## MISSION

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Washington Alliance for Better Schools (WABS) is a collaborative of school districts and industry leaders that leverages resources, talent, and intellectual capital to help over a quarter million students graduate career and college ready.

## COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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WABS is committed to addressing the systemic racism that creates disparities in education. We are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion, which requires that we use our collective voice to identify and eliminate institutional barriers that deny equitable access and impact the success of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and other underserved students.

In order to achieve our vision of ensuring that each and every student graduates with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a global economy, we must address systemic racism and align our beliefs to action aimed at dismantling inequities with commitments that operationalize this work for our organization.

2020-2021

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

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This past year has challenged us all in ways we never anticipated as we navigated through the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects on our region and communities served to reinvigorate and reinforce our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, as we saw firsthand how a catastrophic event could impact certain communities so differently than others. I am so grateful to our community partners - school districts, businesses, companies, and organizations - who have worked with us to adapt and be nimble over the past year so we could continue to keep student success at the forefront.

Despite the pandemic, we continue to focus on providing opportunities to the youth and families furthest from educational justice through our programs and partnerships. Helping young people gain supported access to career connected learning opportunities is a fundamental way we ensure that youth are on a path to a family-sustaining career that will offer them upward mobility and growth opportunities.

While we have many tools to combat the pandemic, we know that it is not over, and its impacts will be felt for years to come. We continue to rise to meet these challenges in partnership and solidarity and are focused on ensuring that all students, particularly those students furthest from educational justice, receive the support and opportunities needed to succeed. I am deeply grateful for all our partners and program participants who make this work possible, and I look forward to the creative ways we will continue to work to improve life for students.

In Gratitude,



Emily Yim

2020-2021



# ENGAGED STUDENTS

We build students' **21st Century skills** (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity) through industry and community partnerships for all students, particularly those impacted by systemic racism and those furthest from educational justice. We provide **career connected learning opportunities** across the K-12 educational spectrum to prepare students to succeed in the global economy.

## AFTER SCHOOL STEM ACADEMY

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After School STEM Academy connects elementary and middle school students with industry volunteers who facilitate hands-on STEM lessons intended to spark student interest in STEM and support the development of 21st Century skills.

In response to the pandemic, WABS implemented a fully virtual program so students, teacher hosts, and volunteers all participated from their own personal spaces. Instead of building a classroom kit of materials, we built individual materials kits which were distributed to each student, teacher host, and volunteer. We provided slide presentations to accompany the lessons to improve ease of facilitation virtually.



Students, teachers, and volunteers all voiced their appreciation for the opportunity to connect through this program and get the chance to build with hands-on materials. We were inspired by the creativity and flexibility of all the program participants and volunteers!

### PROGRAM OUTPUTS

- 66 schools
- 117 sessions
- 1,984 students
- 220 volunteers
- 3,025+ volunteer hours

### PROGRAM IMPACTS

Students reported that after participating:

- 70% increased problem solving skills
- 69% knew more about STEM jobs
- 60% felt more interested in learning about STEM



# ENGAGED STUDENTS

## AFTER SCHOOL STEM ACADEMY

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In response to the virtual learning needs of the 2020-21 school year, we redeveloped\* two hands-on curricula specifically for students learning at home.

**To the Rescue: Aid Drop Packages:** Students learn about how aid drop packages are used in areas impacted by a natural disaster and work to engineer the components including the parachute, protective packaging, and labels.

**Shake Things Up: Earthquake Resistant Buildings:** Students engineer earthquake-resistant model buildings and develop building codes to help others build safe buildings.



Both topics focused on exploring problem-solving through the *Engineering Design Process* which focuses on student-generated ideas, collaborative iteration, and reflection. Students built and tested their designs using everyday materials. Each student received a personal supply kit and participated in live, virtual sessions guided by our industry volunteers. WABS maintained this option even as students returned to school, taking steps to create new opportunities for all students to participate in this valuable opportunity.



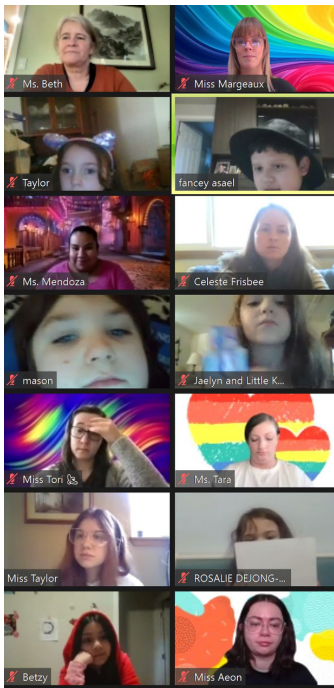
*It was a great program this year! I really enjoyed the slides and all volunteers were dedicated and excellent! Students and families were also very appreciative.*  
- Teacher Host

\* Curricula adapted from *Engineering Adventures*, Museum of Science, Boston

# ENGAGED STUDENTS

## 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

21st Century Community Learning Centers help students develop to their full academic, social and physical potential. In 2020-21, WABS oversaw two OSPI grants to implement enrichment programs at four elementary schools. The goal of the federally funded programs is to provide high-quality after school and summer school opportunities to help students meet state and local academic standards in core content areas and support social emotional learning.



During the 2020-21 school year, the program was implemented virtually, providing space for support with school assignments, as well as a forum for positive peer interaction. Students received take-home kits of materials in order to complete activities virtually with their peers or independently with their family members.

Due to the evolving public health guidance, we were able to implement an in-person summer program across the four schools. Students followed COVID precautions including masking and social distancing while engaging in academic enrichment, social emotional learning, and engaging activities led by community partners.

Students and staff were all so happy to be able to be meeting in-person again!

496 students in  
grades K-5 were  
served at four sites



# EMPOWERED FAMILIES

We **partner with families** to support students impacted by systemic racism and those furthest from educational justice by providing family-centered engagement opportunities. We use an asset-based model to identify and cultivate skills and resources to address complex systemic barriers by centering family leadership, engagement, and advocacy to support student success.

## NATURAL LEADERS

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The Natural Leaders program uses an asset-based model to help families identify and cultivate the skills necessary to overcome systemic barriers. Program content is driven by the needs of families. This year, topics included a focus on social emotional learning and mental health supports, as well as information about COVID-19 vaccines. The program also provided training for school district staff to help support families. In response to the pandemic, trainings were offered virtually, which actually increased accessibility to many families due to the reduced barriers around transportation and childcare.

*"I am very excited to be more knowledgeable and learn about resources that can be beneficial to our community and their families, and that our students be more successful."*

- Training Academy Parent Participant



### PROGRAM OUTPUTS

- 71 schools
- Training Academy served 59 new family and 54 new staff participants
- Served diverse language communities including Arabic, Chinese, Somali, Spanish & Vietnamese

### PROGRAM IMPACTS

After participating in the Training Academy:

- 94% of respondents felt more prepared to engage with their students' school
- 97% of respondents felt more prepared to engage with other families



# EMPOWERED FAMILIES

## NATURAL LEADERS

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The Natural Leaders program focused on reconnecting and rebuilding during 2020-21 as we navigated the shift from in-person to virtual meetings, along with the continued impacts of the pandemic. As families experienced immense life changes, more than ever it was important to listen and offer support. We held our Natural Leaders Training Academy during the fall and winter. In the spring, we focused on sharing resources and offering training based on the feedback from families about their greatest needs, some of which are highlighted below.

### COVID-19 Vaccine Information *in partnership with Providence*

Presenting science-based vaccine information from trusted, language-accessible sources

### Building Economic Stability *in partnership with Seattle Jobs Initiative*

Addressing immediate needs (navigating unemployment & food benefits) while preparing for a more stable future (job search strategies)

*"I believe this program is a door for parents. It's a wonderful door, because with this program you can be part of the school. You can provide your talents, provide your opinion, you can say what your need is as a family with your students. As an immigrant, I don't have the language, I don't have the knowledge of the education system, and because this program opened the door for parents I can be present and learn all the time."*

*- Natural Leaders Mentor*



# EMPOWERED FAMILIES

## EQUITY & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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In 2020-21, WABS established an Equity and Family Engagement Leadership Council, a group of area leaders. One of their first tasks was to define equitable family engagement, so we have a foundation from which to guide our work with families and schools.



**Equitable Family Engagement** is the recognition that systemic inequities exist in our educational system that creates barriers for families and students based on race, ethnicity, language, socio-economics, ability, and more. To address this we must:

- Honor the family wisdom and expertise of those who are impacted as a result of these inequities
- Partner with families to address inequities, support students holistically, and to create positive school cultures for all
- Collaborate in leadership and decision making

*"Thank you. I think this is a great space for parents to learn more about leadership and get more involved in the schools to support and advocate for our kids."*

*- Natural Leaders Parent*

# EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS

We engage **educator leadership with industry** and **community partners** so that all students, particularly those impacted by systemic racism and those furthest from educational justice, can access post-secondary certification options and move into the future workforce with the 21st Century skills (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity) they need to thrive.

## ACCESS STEM

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ACCESS (Accessing Career Connected Experiences for Students Success) STEM is a partnership between businesses and teachers that brings engaging, worked-based problems to our classrooms. The goal of this partnership is to have more students be able to access post-secondary credentials and thrive in the workforce.

To help all students change their perspectives on pathways and skills needed in the workforce, this program builds teachers' knowledge and instructional capacity. Our students need a greater understanding of pathways that allow them to pursue high-demand careers in our region.



### PROGRAM OUTPUTS

- 44 teachers
- 12 teams
- 41 schools
- 5520 students
- 57 industry and higher education volunteers
- 390+ volunteer hours

### PROGRAM IMPACTS

- 75% of teachers now embed more real world examples and connections to out-of-school experiences
- All educators who participated reported they believe these instructional strategies increase equitable access for those furthest from educational justice.



# EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS

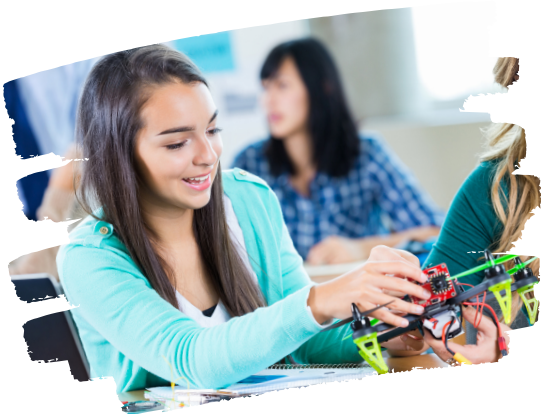
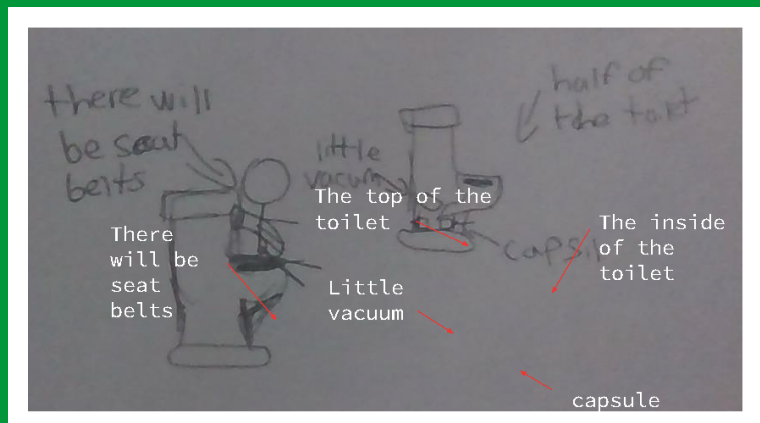
## ACCESS STEM: TEAM HIGHLIGHT

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### BOLDLY GO! DESIGNING A MICROGRAVITY TOILET IN SPACE

"Houston - we have a problem. The toilets aren't working!" A team of elementary educators worked with industry volunteers from Costco and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). In their unit, students became design engineers and toilet specialists working together to support a crew getting ready to explore Mars. Before they lift off they tested their decision making skills, problem-solving, communication, and collaborating as a team.

The 4th and 5th grade students worked in teams to develop a micro-gravity toilet that keep the user and their environment in space clean. Students made connections between science and social justice, and increased hands-on learning.



*"I decided to take on this volunteering opportunity out of a desire to share the personal and financially rewarding career opportunities available in our industry. Working with the WABS educators has been challenging and eye-opening. I had no idea how much work went on behind the scenes in selecting topics, planning lessons, evaluating what might solicit student engagement, and much more. I am also just beginning to realize the potential*

*impact that, as an industry professional, my contribution can have on the future life of the students. It's been a humbling and rewarding experience."*

*- ACCESS STEM Industry Volunteer*

# EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS

## ONLINE EXPERIENCES FOR EDUCATORS

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Due to the pandemic, there was a lack of available opportunities for professional development since in-person options were not available. In response, we designed online experiences for all K-12 educators including counselors, librarians, and instructional coaches. The online professional development opportunities are self-guided, combining videos, readings, and reflections, and ultimately provide educators with clock hours for educator certificate renewal. 175 educators across our 12 districts enrolled in these opportunities. Session topics include:

- Pathways and Careers: Orientation & Industry Presentations
- Teaching 21st Century Skills in Your Classroom
- Picking up STEAM: Integrating Content Areas in a Student-Centered Classroom
- STEM Career Connected Learning

*"I have learned that I don't know as much about some industries as I thought I did. There are so many moving parts within each company, similar to one school building. It will be useful to have this perspective during my career unit with my students so that we can stray away from blanket careers like 'marketing, CEO, doctor' and get much more specific."*

*- Educator Participant*

**175 educators  
participated across  
12 school districts**



# PARTNERSHIP WITH CAREER CONNECT WA

## KING-PIERCE REGIONAL NETWORK

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WABS, along with our partners College Success Foundation, Workforce Central, and Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County lead the King and Pierce County Career Connect Washington Regional Network. Career Connect Washington provides a framework for students to participate in Career Explore, Career Prep, and Career Launch programs that expose them to new opportunities, real world-of-work experiences, and earn-and-learn internships and apprenticeships.

The Regional Network serves as a hub for career connected learning to help young people, especially those furthest from opportunity, envision and achieve high opportunity careers in our regional economy through a collaborative network of K-12, higher education, industry, labor, and community-based organizations.



**King-Pierce Regional  
Network includes 34  
school districts  
serving over 433,000  
students**

Learn more: [www.careerconnectkingpierce.org](http://www.careerconnectkingpierce.org)



# PARTNERSHIP WITH CAREER CONNECT WA

## CAREER LAUNCH PROGRAMS

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Career Launch programs combine meaningful, supervised, paid, on-the-job experience with aligned academic instruction, resulting in an industry-recognized and/or post-secondary credential. Upon program completion, participants are competitive candidates for a real job.

### DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE PATHWAYS WITH PROVIDENCE

WABS received funding from Career Connect WA to serve as an intermediary for a suite of three projects with Providence to develop Career Launch programs in healthcare. The three tracks lead students through a combination of paid worksite learning and coursework to prepare them for high-demand, high-wage roles in nursing, project management in ambulatory care, and clinical engineering.

Supporting our industry partner Providence, the programs were originally designed with Renton School District and Renton Technical College, and are being expanded with Highline Public Schools, Highline College, and, Spokane Public Schools, and Community Colleges of Spokane.



### FULL-STACK DEVELOPER CAREER LAUNCH WITH T-MOBILE

WABS developed a tech career accelerator program with T-Mobile, Edmonds School District, and Edmonds College. The program received Career Launch Endorsement in 2020 from the State Board of Career and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). The first cohort of high school students began the program in Summer 2020, with the second cohort starting in Summer 2021.

Upon completion of the program, participants are eligible to apply for Full-Stack Developer positions with T-Mobile, which would typically require a 4-year degree. This allows them to have a fast track to jobs with family-sustaining wages and upward mobility. The program is currently being expanded with Seattle Public Schools and Seattle Colleges.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### *Snohomish County Co-Chair*

Dr. Alison Brynson, Superintendent,  
Mukilteo School District

### *Vice Chair*

Dr. Keisha Scarlett, Chief Academic  
Officer, Seattle Public Schools

### *King County Co-Chair*

Elizabeth J. Warman, Community  
Leader

### *Secretary/Treasurer*

Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent,  
Edmonds School District

## BOARD MEMBERS

Cheryl Chamberlain, Chief  
Administrative Officer, McKinstry

Dr. Susan Enfield, Superintendent,  
Highline Public Schools

Dr. Joshua Garcia, Superintendent,  
Tacoma Public Schools

Joel Gilbertson EVP, Regional Chief  
Executive, Providence

Dr. Jon Holmen, Superintendent, Lake  
Washington School District

Brian King, Executive VP & CIO,  
T-Mobile

Marie Kurose, CEO, Workforce  
Development Council Seattle-King  
County

Dr. Damien Pattenau, Superintendent,  
Renton School District

Dr. Chris Pearson, Interim  
Superintendent, Marysville School  
District

Dr. Michelle Reid, Superintendent  
Northshore School District

Dr. Susana Reyes, Superintendent,  
Shoreline Public Schools

Dr. Ian Saltzman, Superintendent,  
Everett Public Schools

Dr. Carla Santorno, Superintendent  
Tacoma Public Schools

Pat Schirmer, Retired VP Enterprise  
Engineering Strategy & Operations,  
ET&T, the Boeing Company

Katina Thornock, VP, Senior Corporate  
Counsel-Litigation, Providence

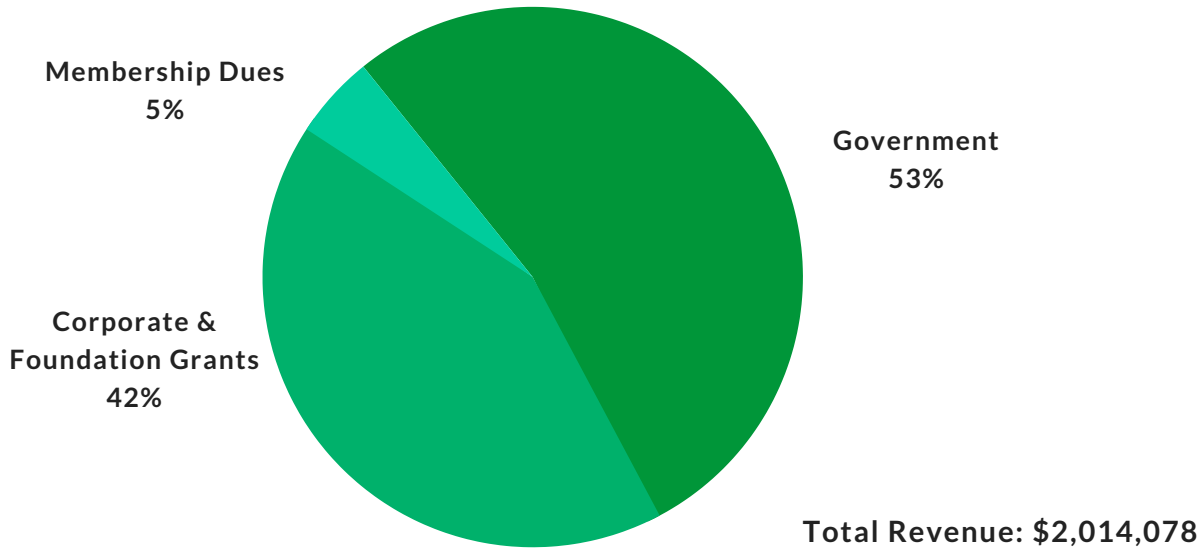
Israel Vela Interim, Superintendent,  
Kent School District

as of March 1, 2022

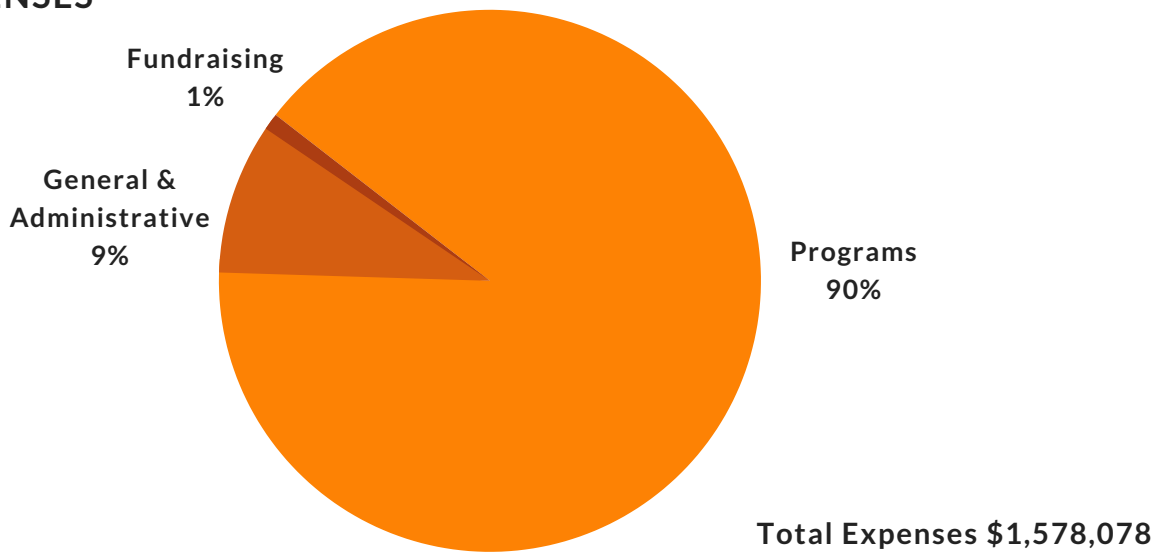
# FINANCIALS

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## REVENUE



## EXPENSES



## MEMBER DISTRICTS

Edmonds School District  
Everett Public Schools  
Highline Public Schools  
Kent School District  
Lake Washington School District  
Marysville School District

Mukilteo School District  
Northshore School District  
Renton School District  
Seattle Public Schools  
Shoreline Public Schools  
Tacoma Public Schools

*A complete audited financial statement is available upon request.*