

# LETTER FROM THE CEO



**Dear Community,**

2020 has perhaps been the most challenging year for our community since the Alliance for Education was founded 25 years ago. COVID-19 forced Seattle Public Schools (SPS) to close schoolhouses and move education completely online last spring, at a time when the support services the district provides are more necessary than ever. Many families lack the technology they need to participate in online learning, and more families than ever are struggling to secure food, childcare, health supports and more. Meanwhile, the racial reckoning ignited by George Floyd's murder brought into even stronger relief the inequities inherent in our educational system, and the need for change. We're channeling our energy into responding to these challenges head on. **Our mission—to support excellence in education by advancing educational justice and racial equity for students in Seattle Public Schools—guides our efforts in the face of these unprecedented circumstances.**

We are so grateful for your continued support as we address these challenges. At the Alliance, all hands are on deck. Read on to learn more about how we have created new initiatives to address the current moment and are actively realigning our ongoing efforts to respond to this crisis in the most impactful way possible.

**SEATTLE TEACHER RESIDENCY** For almost a decade, the Alliance's Seattle Teacher Residency (STR) has been developing cohorts of diverse, highly qualified and dedicated Seattle educators to serve in SPS' highest poverty schools. Residency participants receive practical experience through their yearlong placement in a Title I classroom, and pedagogical development at the University of Washington's College of Education. The remote learning required during the pandemic has brought new challenges to our hands-on program, but the Residency has adapted by effectively pivoting to an all-digital experience, both for classroom engagement and university classwork. This year's cohort is uniquely helpful to their Title I teacher-mentors, serving as an additional adult in the virtual classroom to engage with students during this challenging time.

Research indicates that teacher diversity has a direct positive impact on the success of students of color, and STR plays a critical role in diversifying SPS's teaching workforce. 130 STR graduates are currently teaching in 27 SPS Title I schools, Seattle's highest poverty schools, where more than 80% of students are students of color. STR graduates are on average 48% people of color, compared to 26% of all SPS teachers. This year's STR cohort is one of our most diverse yet, with 57% participants of color. 17% of all STR participants identify as Black and African American, while just 4.6% of SPS classroom teachers do. STR is committed to increasing the recruitment and retention of Black and African American program participants in alignment with SPS priorities. Today, 81% of all STR graduates since 2014 (cohort 1) who started teaching in SPS are still teaching in the district. STR graduates have comprised up to 1/3 of the total Title 1 elementary hires in SPS in a given year.

**PHILANTHROPIC STEWARDSHIP** The Alliance has long played the role of steward between Seattle's philanthropic community and Seattle Public Schools, raising dollars for a wide variety of district strategies. Of late, the Alliance has convened donors around strategies specifically designed to increase racial equity in schools. In June of 2020, the Alliance announced the creation of a \$1.9M fund to support the development of SPS' new Office of African American Male Achievement (AAMA). The Office of AAMA will work to ensure that Seattle Public Schools has the culture, conditions, competencies, and community connections in place for all Black male students to be successful. We see this initiative as a critical investment in SPS' Black students, and an essential strategy to

reimagine systems such that they support the excellence of our students furthest from educational justice. In the 20-21 school year, the Office of AAMA is conducting listening and learning sessions with Seattle's Black students, families, and community members, to design systems change and programs centered in what they learn from Black male student voice and experience.

**RIGHT NOW NEEDS FUND** The Alliance launched the Right Now Needs Fund in partnership with Amazon in 2018. This new strategy provides low barrier funds to address the basic needs of students and families in every SPS school, needs like food, housing, clothing, medical care and school supplies. Since inception, the fund has been a critical asset to SPS families, providing more than 22,000 instances of support to students and families, and distributing more than \$1.5M. These dollars, and the lines of communication and understanding between SPS staff and families that they have opened, have proven to be even more crucial during the pandemic.

**COVID 19 RESPONSE** In March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic turned the world upside down, and required an immediate shift from the Alliance to support the district in new and targeted ways. Alliance leadership worked directly with the SPS executive team to understand the most critical district needs - childcare, food distribution, and continuous learning - and in turn communicated those opportunities for investment to concerned donors. This engagement resulted in a wide variety of resources coming to SPS, including the donation of 8000 laptops to students and families, the provision of dinners at SPS meal distribution sites, consulting support to prepare teachers to teach remotely, and much more. We also created the Education Equity Fund, a standing fund donors can contribute to to support the remote learning needs of SPS students and educators during the pandemic. To date, the Alliance has raised more than \$3M in dollars and in-kind contributions to support students' academic and socioemotional needs during this global crisis. In the 20-21 school year, we will continue to partner with SPS and local philanthropy to generate creative and innovative systemic solutions for today's challenges.

Over the last 25 years, our role at the Alliance for Education has consistently been to connect the Seattle community to our public education system to support students - you have been a part of that collaborative effort. During this particularly challenging year, we've seen our city come together in ways that make us proud of our community and hopeful for the future of Seattle's students and families. On behalf of the Alliance for Education, thank you for your commitment to a strong Seattle Public Schools that serves every student. With your help, we'll continue to support students, advance racial equity and educational justice, and evolve our efforts to meet new moments of need, no matter what the future brings.

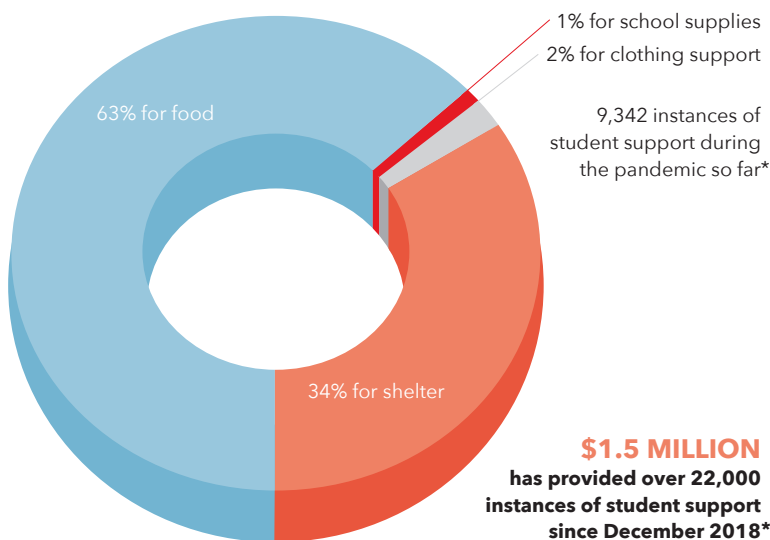
With appreciation,



**Lisa Chick**  
President and CEO  
Proud SPS Mom

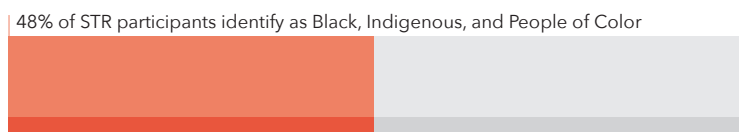
P.S. Have thoughts to share on this update, ideas we should consider, or want to hear more about our work? Reach out to me directly at [lisa@alliance4ed.org](mailto:lisa@alliance4ed.org).

**RIGHT NOW NEEDS FUND DISTRIBUTED OVER \$767,451 DURING THE PANDEMIC\***



\*As of 11/30/20 across 103 schools

**158 STR PARTICIPANTS TEACH IN TITLE I SCHOOLS**



**1/3 OF SPS TITLE I ELEMENTARY HIRES IN A GIVEN YEAR ARE STR GRADUATES**



**\$1.9 MILLION RAISED BY 13 COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

IN SUPPORT OF THE SPS OFFICE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE ACHIEVEMENT