



CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL

2020 - 2021 Impact & Gratitude Report





Children's Community School is no stranger to adversity. In our more than 50 years of operation, CCS has faced challenging times with resilience and an unwavering sense of commitment to our mission. Yet, on the heels of Covid-19's devastating impact on schools and our communities, we were facing a year filled with incredible uncertainty, ever-changing expectations and guidelines, and a sense of anxiety and angst that seemed like a dark cloud hanging over us. Teachers, families, and students alike braced for a school year unlike any other.

Despite uncertainties, frustrations, and fears, the CCS community forged ahead with laser-like focus on our mission. While our sense of "normalcy" was flipped upside down, the faculty, staff, and Board of CCS worked tirelessly to ensure that our mission was fulfilled. We found new ways to connect with and teach students, leveraging increased technological resources. We capitalized on increased outdoor time with unique experiences like drone flying and planting a community garden. Recognizing the profound impact of the pandemic, our commitment to character development was enhanced through regular, intentional social-emotional learning opportunities. And we leaned heavily on our families to continue their commitment to supporting their students' learning at home.

Despite the challenges of this past year, and the gloomy forecast for educational experiences of children throughout the nation, CCS continues to excel. While our students' academic achievement scores did not reach the levels to which we have become accustomed, we did see all of our students show academic progress and growth, in spite of the challenging learning circumstances. Whether learning virtually or in-person, we are proud that our attendance rate exceeded 90 percent. The same is true for our on-time high school graduation rate. We could not be more proud of our students and alumni!

The name of our school is incredibly apropos. We are a community, and our strength comes from the work we do together. The things we have accomplished throughout our history, and particularly this past year, would not be possible without the generous and heartfelt support of so many. From those who donated monetarily -- big or small -- to those who thought of CCS and made sure we were well stocked with masks, sanitizer, and anything else we needed, you are part of this community, and you are part of our success. On behalf of every student, parent, guardian, teacher, and staff member, we offer our sincerest thanks. We hope you will continue to be moved and motivated by what you read in the pages that follow, knowing that you played a vital role in keeping the CCS mission alive during an incredibly challenging year.

Gratefully,

Selim G. Noujaim
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 President, Board of Directors

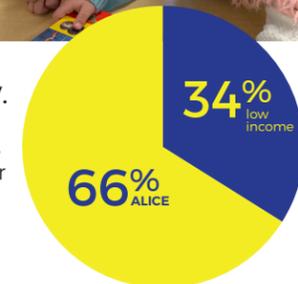
Jeff Martin
 Jeff Martin
 Executive Director



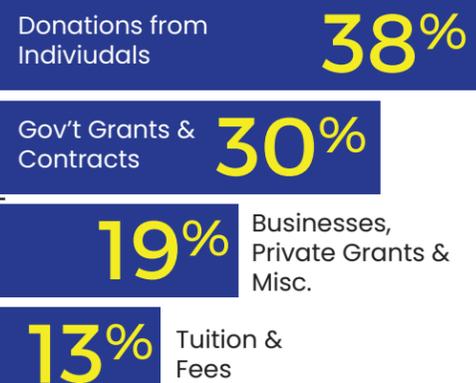
The Children That Benefit

148 students that come from low income and ALICE* households in Waterbury.

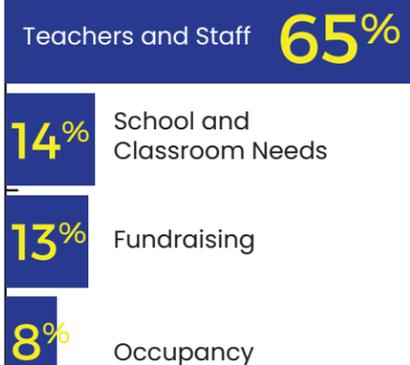
*ALICE is a standard United Way measure that represents households that are "Asset Limited, Income Constrained, but but any significant unexpected expense could cause them to fall into financial crisis." It means that a member of the household is employed, but any unexpected expense could throw them into financial crisis.



SUPPORT & REVENUE \$1,268,860



EXPENSES \$1,412,850



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This was not a typical year financially either. Social distancing and transmission fears kept CCS from having our annual fundraising events. The school was more dependent on individual donors who were capable of giving larger gifts. It was a perfect opportunity to build a new corporate membership program called the "Better Futures Society." Inaugural members include:

- Thomaston Savings Bank
- Webster Bank
- Hubbard-Hall
- Green Wealth Management Group of Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner Smith
- St. Mary's Hospital

Additionally, while government grants are not commonly part of the CCS income mix, CCS revenue grew significantly from Covid relief funds, including:

- ESSER - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund
- CARES Act - Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act
- EANS - Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools
(from the U.S. Dept. of Education to individual states)
- ARP - American Rescue Plan



Children's Community School lays the foundation for urban students' educational success by offering a robust curriculum and unique experiences, by developing their individual character, and by cultivating strong family involvement.

PROGRESS ON OUR MISSION:

Robust Curriculum –

CCS curriculum has followed the trend of many schools with growing emphasis on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) education. What started with a grant to create a technology plan around five years ago has blossomed into a fully equipped technology classroom with supportive and engaging curriculum materials. The Mattatuck Museum partnership brings formal expertise in photography, journaling, and "mini masters" learning famous artists and their techniques.

Unique Experiences –

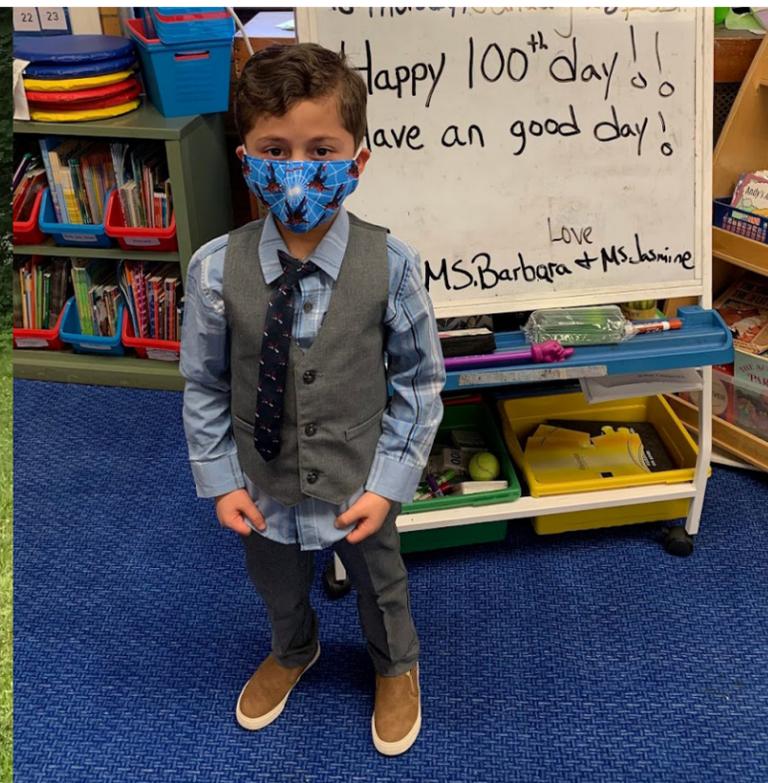
If you want to see greater creativity in the classroom, leave it to the teachers! The CCS teaching team introduced drone flying and virtual reality headsets to enthusiastic learners. When students could not perform in front of audiences, one teacher came up with the idea of producing an old fashioned radio drama.

Character Development –

CCS started a Social Emotional Learning curriculum this year, led by the school counselor whose time was increased by 50% to address the need. The teachers already see results in more confident, positive student behavior. Discipline referrals have been reduced by two-thirds when compared to last year.

Strong Family Engagement –

CCS is dependent on this key element in its program. Virtual PTO meetings saw an increase in parent participation in the beginning of the year as parents found this an easier way to participate. The Board of Directors is also making a concerted effort to strengthen this bond with greater representation in the community and involvement at the Board level.



MEASURING SUCCESS

Attendance – 91% attended regularly

Students were in school at CCS more days than most throughout the nation. Classes started in August and were restricted to virtual learning only during the holidays when potential transmission was feared to be greatest. By the school year's end, approximately 80% of our students were in the classroom. Those who joined virtually, were strictly followed by teachers and administrators to ensure their engagement and participation.

Academic Growth – Ground to regain

Results at CCS mirrored those from Connecticut and throughout the nation in showing that students who were in classrooms saw greater progress than those who learned remotely, and that overall progress did not reflect gains made in the past. Connecticut, along with many states throughout the nation waived state tests as an accountability tool for the second straight year.

A report from McKinsey & Company* referred to gaps in learning over the pandemic as "unfinished learning." The report states that all students experienced unfinished learning, but students of color and those from urban areas and low-income households suffered most.

CCS principal Katherin Sniffin made this report to the Board of Directors at the close of the year:

Reading - Prior to the pandemic, our students had 66.7% of students meeting or surpassing grade-level expectations in reading. We were able to attain the same percentage by spring of 2021 through much effort by parents, teachers, and, of course, students. Because of the emphasis on reading at CCS, the percentage of our students who beat the reading benchmark went from 44% to 52.3%

Math - Prior to the pandemic, our students had 62% of students meeting or surpassing grade-level expectations in Math. We were able to attain virtually the same percentage by spring of 2021, again by heightened efforts from parents, teachers, and students.

Notes:

*National data based on Curriculum Associates' i-Ready assessments;

**Connecticut data can be found on EdSight.ct.gov

CCS Academic success is measured through the Renaissance Star 360 measurement tool, as it has been proven to be the most closely aligned to Connecticut's Smarter Balance Assessment. Private schools in Connecticut are not allowed to take the Smarter Balance Assessment

15 GRADUATES
On-time High School graduation -- 93%, historically 94%

Of 15 students in the class that graduated this year, one could not be contacted or verified. CCS is proud of the students' accomplishments both at CCS and beyond. Read a few of their stories in the long term impact portion of this report.

142 DAYS
Specific to the Covid-19 Pandemic

CCS students had 142 days of in-person learning in order to benefit from the best learning environment. Statewide only 21.8% of students had that opportunity. Because of strict adherence to health and safety protocols, there were no transmissible cases of Covid from within the school.

LONG-TERM IMPACT

Anjavie Thomason Class of 2014

Ana graduated from the private Gunn School in Washington, CT and was awarded the Gunn Cup as a student "who, through character and achievement, contributed most to the success of the school year." This honor is bestowed on a standout in the graduating class and is chosen by fellow students.



Jessica Lewis Class of 2008

Jessica was expected to go to college from the very beginning, so her mother arranged for her to start at CCS. Through hard work and good planning, she completed her undergraduate degree at UConn and is working in preparation to pursue a dual master's in public health and social work.



George Bradford Class of 2000

George proudly posted a photo of his diploma on LinkedIn when he received his master's degree in counseling and human services. He also said, "Never giving up on myself was the best thing I ever did. It's been a long time coming!"



Our SUPERHEROES through this challenging year: Students, Parents, Staff and You!

