



Expanding Minds

In the Spirit of Courageous Women

Annual Report 2015-2016

Established in Anacostia in 1997, the Washington School for Girls is an all-scholarship, independent Catholic school offering a holistic education for girls in grades 3-8.

Expanding Minds

Dear Friends,

The word of the moment at WSG is "Expanding." The WSG experience has always been centered on the concept of broadening opportunities, challenging preconceptions, and guiding our students as they explore the world around them: expanding their horizons.

In these pages, you will learn about some of our recent innovations in our curriculum and enrichment programs that challenge our students to take a wider view of themselves, their peers, and their communities. You will see the many ways that our program introduces students to new ideas, new skills, and new people and how students benefit from an expansive world view.

In this report, you will read about our new 3rd grade program and our ongoing transition to a year-round academic calendar that adds more classroom instruction time and lessens the "brain drain" that occurs for many students over the summer months. You will also meet new staff members who have dedicated their time and talent to growing our family engagement, community outreach, and graduate support programs.

Our expansion is guided first and foremost by our mission to broaden the educational opportunities for our students. The evidence of the need for a 3rd grade program was clear: many of our incoming 4th grade students started below grade level in at least one subject area each year. Following extensive study of year-round programs, it became equally clear that a 12-month balanced school calendar was likely to help our students close the achievement gap.

We are thrilled to report that our first year of the 3rd grade year-round program was a definitive success. Students thrived, teachers enjoyed the extended schedule, and parents were grateful that their daughters had more time in school. Students returning for 4th grade have received no failing grades in the first quarter and have above a "B" average overall! We will continue to expand this program to all grades and will be a fully year-round school by the 2017-18 school year.

The growth of our program requires the expansion of financial support, and this year marked an exceptional one in the history of fundraising at our school. WSG received a pledge of \$4M, the largest commitment in the school's history. This gift is a matching challenge grant that will directly support our expansion initiatives. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we are already more than halfway towards securing these matching funds, which will be available until 2020.

Lastly, WSG was proud to be selected by the Catalogue for Philanthropy of Greater Washington as one of the best small charities in the Washington region in 2015-16. This designation is truly an honor and represents the outstanding work of our staff in delivering an outstanding service to the community and the financial soundness of our organization.

Thank you for your exceptional support this past year. The 2015-16 school year was a collaborative effort made possible by the generosity of over 45 volunteers, 13 board members and 50 additional committee members, 36 staff, 133 students and their families, and 1,145 donors who gave their hearts, time, and philanthropic support to make sure that each of our girls could expand her mind throughout the year. Thank you for not only supporting our present but also for making our future possible.



S. Mary B.

Mary Bourdon, RJM Head of School



Panel S Johnson

Pamela S. Johnson Chair, Board of Trustees

Our Students:

133 students enrolled, grades 3-8

82% qualify for the Federal Lunch Program

80% from single-parent households

66% household incomes below \$40,000

27% of families experienced unemployment

Our Graduates Excel:

98% graduate from high school (compared with the neighborhood average under 50%)

79% pursue education beyond high school at over 45 colleges, universities, and other institutions.

50% of the class of 2016 enrolled in Catholic schools for high school.



2015-16 Highlights

More weeks of school in the 3rd grade yearround program lead to significant academic gains.

Students participated

subject areas.

in regular Saturday

School sessions for

extra support in all

Percent of 5th grade students were reading on grade level by the end of the year thanks to structured reading support.

Students enrolled across largest student body in school history.



Student: teacher ratio allowed for differentiation in the classroom to meet students' individual needs.

Books checked out of the library, in addition to new digital content resources added to our library. Literacy thrives thanks to support from the **Junior League of** Washington.



two campuses, the



2015-16 Highlights

computing connected students with resources around the world such as virtual reality expeditions and news.

Extended Day clubs
encouraged students
to explore new
interests and make
new friends.

Collaborating partners provided field

18 trips, learning opportunities, program support, and Extended Day clubs.

Students at The VIEW
Campus joined the inaugural soccer team. 35% of all WSG students played on an athletic team.

Regular volunteers provided tutoring and mentorship, allowing students to forge bonds with adults from varying backgrounds.

Percent of 8th grade students completed a semester or year-long independent study project on topics ranging from 3D printing design to developing natural cosmetic products.









2015-16 Highlights

families took place, families took place, including faith retreats, Mother's Day brunch, and a financial literacy seminar.

10 Students were fortunate to meet our Holy Father, Pope Francis during his historic visit to Washington.

Average hours that parents engaged
with their daughter's learning beyond regular homework help. For example, 13 families did an online cultural exchange with a foreign family together.

Hours of soul-enriching music and arts instruction were added per student at The VIEW Campus thanks to volunteers and partnerships.

Community prayers took place at WSG during the year, including the practice of the daily examen according to the lgnatian tradition.

9,232 student body in both on-going group projects and individual volunteering.





"It is important to treat people the way you want to be treated. At school we watched a video about homelessness, and I was really sad to think about people who have less than me. My mom and I sometimes see homeless people around, so I told her about the video, and we decided to donate money to help people in need."

Dana, 4th Grade



School Expansion

WSG welcomed its first-ever 3rd grade class for the 2015-16 school year. In addition to meeting students at a critical time in their education, when they transition from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn,' the 3rd grade served as a pilot for a year-round academic calendar.



Students who completed the year-round program started the 2016-17 school year with an average GPA of 3.46 and no failing grades.

Year-round school starting in 3rd grade gives students and teachers more time to close the achievement gap:



82% of 4th graders from lowincome families nationwide tested below grade level in reading proficiency in 2011.

The number of **years** that students in low-income communities often fall behind by 5th grade.

"It is very invigorating to be part of this exciting expansion of WSG's academic program and services. The results so far have been remarkable, and I'm proud that WSG is among the first schools in our region to recognize that a year-round balanced calendar is the future of urban education."

> --Brianne Wetzel, MA, MEd **WSG Principal**

Transition Timeline: Year-Round School

Year-round 3rd grade program begins

Year-round schedule expands to 4th and 5th grades (entire VIEW Campus)

(projected) Transition to yearround program for all grades will be completed (both campuses)

New and Notable



FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn (pictured) visited the school thanks to WSG's partnership with Globalstar. Inc. The school served as a test site for the company's exclusive broadband channel. Globalstar donated Chromebooks to WSG, bringing the school to a 1:1 ratio.

Continued partnership with the Junior League of Washington(JLW) strengthened our literacy program. JLW volunteers supported Saturday School, regular library sessions, and student literacy events.





Deanna McCall, MSW, joined the WSG staff in the summer of 2015 as Family Relations Coordinator, Ms. McCall helps ensure that students can continue to learn at home and facilitates active family engagement in the learning process.

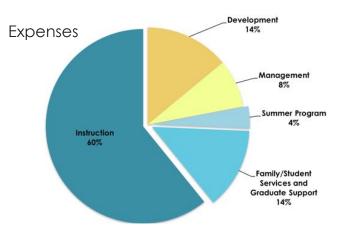
Jaztina Somerville, WSG Class of '06, ioined the WSG staff in the fall of 2015 as the Assistant in Graduate Support and Student Life. Ms. Somerville is the first graduate to return to WSG as a full-time employee. She works primarily with recent graduates as a mentor.



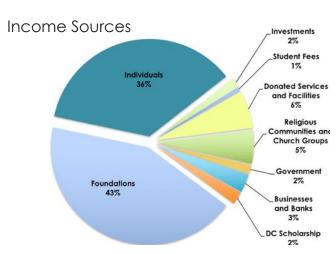


Financial Outlook

Thanks to our many generous supporters, the Washington School for Girls is in a strong financial position. In 2015-16, WSG's income met the expenses of \$3,325,075, allowing us to offer a full academic program. extended day programming, graduate support, and family services.



78% of funds are used for direct services.



87% of funds come from private philanthropy

Thank You to Our Contributors 2015-2016

Every effort has been made to assure the accuracy of the following donations made from July 1, 2015. June 30, 2016. If errors are found, please accept our apologies and be sure to contact WSG so we can correct our records. Names are published in the format they are received, unless otherwise specified. Please contact the WSG Development Office if you would like to change how your name abbears in future reports.

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(continued on next page)



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- Ensuring she has the education she needs to succeed in high school and beyond
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