

# Together, We're Moving Our Schools Forward



**MADISON  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
FOUNDATION**



# Madison Public Schools Foundation

## Lifting up a destination school district in a destination city.

Everywhere you turn, you read about the Dane County population boom—another 200,000-plus residents expected by 2050. Why? Our city is a hub of commerce, tourism, higher education, biotechnology, outdoor activities, and innumerable restaurants. With ease of mobility and relative affordability, Madison is a city on the move, making a mark and evolving into a major national player.

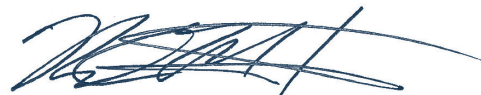
At the heart of it all – we are bold to say – is the Madison Metropolitan School District—the cornerstone of our democracy, an economic engine, and the home to over 25,000 schoolchildren. They are our present and our future, and how we treat and invest in them reflects who we are and what we stand for. We have a collective responsibility to safeguard and champion our public schools. In that way, we can continue to move forward together.

The Madison Public Schools Foundation is proud to convene, advocate, inform, invite, and engage our community. We are the glue that makes "together" possible. While many nonprofits touch on the issues we contend with and many have formal partnerships with MMSD, we are the only agency

delivering a multi-faceted, comprehensive set of programs and services on behalf of MMSD students, families, staff, and schools. And it is all possible because of you.

In the pages that follow, we invite you to learn about our core program areas and the accomplishments your generosity made possible in 2024. We hope you take pride in what we've moved forward together. Yet even as we celebrate progress, we recognize that the work continues. Stay with us. Commit to another year of standing up for our kids. "Out there" seems unpredictable and chaotic, but rest assured, the Foundation remains your steady presence and reliable partner.

We're ready for the fight ahead. Are you?



Melinda Heinritz, President



**MADISON  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
FOUNDATION**

**\$3,014,367**

total raised by the  
Foundation in 2024

# Schools Make Madison

It's what we believe, guiding our work every day and shaping our vision for the future.

**KIDS MATTER.** They are our future. School is an important, foundational point of access for academic and extracurricular activities, and a gateway to opportunities for personal discovery and development.

**TEACHERS MATTER.** They know and care about our students, shaping their futures as educators, mentors, guides, and inspirations for what's possible.

**SCHOOLS MATTER.** They are embedded in our neighborhoods, and are an important economic driver. MMSD is the 6th largest employer in Madison, with 6,380 staff, generating an estimated \$86M in state and local tax revenue per year.







# 2024 TSN Impact: \$319,482 in Support

## Key Areas of Support:

**\$117,767**

in supplies provided through the TSN online store, including:

**\$48,330**

in school supplies

**\$36,518**

in snacks

**\$9,101**

in hygiene products



**\$90,000**

in winter gear and clothing donations from Lands' End

Sorting and distribution of the donated items was hosted by EZ Office Products, with a crew of 30 volunteers organizing thousands of hats, winter coats, boots, pants, tops, socks, and other clothing. After the sorting process, district staff were able to shop for their students.

**\$63,627**

in Lands' End winter gear for the Transition Education Program



**\$3,089**

in support for a new educator orientation



**\$45,000**

in-kind donation from  
EZ Office Products

Our sincere gratitude for their ongoing partnership and support.



# Our Adopt-a-School program is 20 years strong.

Over 50% of our partners have a 5+ year relationship with their school.

Launched in 2005, the Adopt-a-School program is a prized source of stability for our schools and is deeply embedded in our approach to serving MMSD. We are the point of access, forging and facilitating these student-centered partnerships between MMSD schools and the community.



An East High staff member enjoys a latte during Summit Credit Union's 3rd annual teacher appreciation event.



Lincoln Elementary School receives a donation of clothing essentials from their partner, SMM Health.

## SUPPORTING 60 FAMILIES AT THE HOLIDAYS

GHC delivered almost 300 gifts of gift cards, toys, clothes, household items (blankets/bedding, cleaning supplies, vacuums, etc.), art supplies, and even a television for one family of boys. These gifts were sponsored by GHC staff and their Population Health Department for their partner schools: Anana, Badger Rock, Leopold, Sandburg, Southside, and Thoreau.

## 20 Year Partner



of South Central Wisconsin

## 15+ Year Partners





## 10 Year Partner

Kristi Heim, Human Resources Manager at American Printing Company, notes the company's 65+ year history in the Madison area has always involved serving the community. Kristi shared that "one of our values is to serve the community as a committed corporate citizen. Being a part of the Adopt-a-School program is a great way to realize that value—a perfect fit you might say! Whether it's helping with printing projects or donating school supplies, paper products, toys and gifts during the holidays, our staff really love supporting the kids at Thoreau!"

Collectively in 2024 our 62 Adopt-a-School partners invested \$707,000 in their school communities through direct financial support, significant volunteer time, and generous donations of materials.

**AMERICAN  
PRINTING**  
Our people make the difference

### ADOPT-A-SCHOOL STORY

Emerson Elementary School's Adopt-a-School partner Bethel Lutheran collected \$4,000 to support families over the holidays. They spent \$3,000 on \$50 Walmart and Woodman's gift cards, using the remaining \$1,000 to purchase winter outerwear and boots.



Read more  
Adopt-a-School  
stories



# Being present in new spaces and ways helps build connections in our community.

We were regulars at the King Street corner of Madison's popular Saturday morning Dane County Farmer's Market and the Sunday North Side Market. It was a great chance to connect with community members about our work and the 2024 Strong Schools Strong Community referenda campaign.



We were on State Street to give away goodies to 4,000 kids and families who came in costume to celebrate Halloween.



We greeted the 700 guests of Downtown Madison Incorporated's Annual Celebration held at the Orpheum Theater.





# Hosting events invites the community into conversations, and our schools.



## 150+ Gathered for the 2nd Annual Schools Make Madison Summit

The event was a powerful convergence of educators, policymakers, innovators, and community stakeholders, all dedicated to driving positive change in Madison's public schools. We demystified school funding, shed light on the myriad ways school social workers support student success, and explained the mechanisms of the school nutrition program.

Thank you to our event host,

**ThermoFisher**  
SCIENTIFIC

## La Follette High School Hosted our 3rd Annual Partners for Progress Breakfast

Principal Mat Thompson enthusiastically welcomed guests to experience the soul of La Follette High School and tour the newly renovated spaces. Foundation board member and La Follette alumna Anne Marie Malecha, along with Board of Education member and La Follette alumnus Savion Castro, also participated in an inspiring morning of celebration.

La Follette alum and MMSD Superintendent Dr. Joe Gothard reminded us *"Understanding students and families - that's our purpose. Learning will happen, and great learning will happen when we create culturally safe districts and environments."*

We heard from La Follette students Aiden Browning, who played the piano for guests before the program, and Aisha Jabang, a senior who shared her experience participating in the STEM Academy at Madison College. She also invited guests to *"stand with MMSD students like me to help support my future and my sibling's futures as well and their education system."*

# Creating new ways for organizations to engage in our work.

“ At Nelnet, we prioritize education and giving back to the communities where we live and work. Setting aside time for this initiative was an investment in both the community and strengthening relationships among our leaders, highlighting the importance of collaboration. It’s also a reminder of the bigger picture and the positive role we can play as a team. We chose to engage with the Madison Public Schools Foundation because we see schools as vital to the success and growth of our communities.”  
– Mary Woodruff, Employee Experience and Engagement – Business Program Manager



Black Hawk Middle School staff received conference day care packages created by Nelnet staff.

# Thank you to our Sponsor and Champion-Level donors.

Your gifts allow us to innovate and accelerate our impact.

## Schools Make Madison Sponsors

### Visionary-Level \$25,000+



### Innovator-Level \$10,000+



\* Denotes Sponsors who are also active Adopt-a-School

## Schools Make Madison Champions

### Honor Roll-Level \$10,000-\$24,999

Anonymous (1)  
Betsy Huebel and Dave Silverberg  
Jennifer N. Kraemer  
Deb Neff and Kurt Sladky  
Pat Schiro  
Joe Silverberg

### Leader-Level \$5,000-\$9,999

Alicia Reed  
Cummings Christensen Family  
Foundation  
Cathy and David Gillman  
Melinda and Mark Heinritz  
Erica and Ralph Kauten  
Marty Malloy  
Linda D. Nolten



A complete listing of our Sponsor and Champion donors can be found on **SchoolsMakeMadison.org**

# Referenda Success: Addressing immediate needs while working toward sustainable long-term funding solutions.

On November 5th, voters overwhelmingly approved two referenda questions, securing \$607M in support of MMSD. The questions passed with 70.3% and 69.5% 'yes' votes, paving the way for MMSD to:

- make critical facility repairs
- build new modern schools
- continue uplifting the well-being of scholars and staff.

The Strong Schools, Strong Community campaign, which led the 'vote yes' efforts, is the second referenda campaign powered by Schools Make Madison Advocates, Inc. – an affiliate of the Madison Public Schools Foundation. Created in 2020 and celebrating its fifth anniversary, it has led two referenda campaigns, securing a total of \$957M in referenda support for MMSD.

Due to strict revenue limits and state reimbursement rate of only 31% for special education, MMSD faced an \$87.2 million budgetary gap for the 2023-24 school year. This one-year gap is nearly equivalent to the four-year \$100 million operations referenda passed in November 2024.



SCHOOLS MAKE MADISON  
**ADVOCATES**



# A leading voice for Madison's public schools.

Ensuring every Madison public school student receives a high-quality education requires more than just awareness – it demands action. Our advocacy agenda is focused on four key priorities:

- 1 securing sustainable, adequate, and equitable state funding
- 2 addressing students' basic needs
- 3 attracting and retaining educators
- 4 increasing tax transparency

November 2024 was the first time we've held state elections under fair maps in over a decade and, as a result, we have seen new opportunities arise with closer margins in the State Legislature. We are committed to engaging on the state level in light of these changing circumstances and as it relates to the 2025-27 state budget.



**OUR KIDS  
CAN'T WAIT**

Fund Our Schools or  
Fail Our Future.

Download  
the Advocacy  
Agenda



# Education is human-centered work, and it is in partnership that we make progress.



*"Your support of our programs makes a giant difference for our students. When we met with a student this morning to enroll him, I asked if he would like a snack. His whole face lit*

*up and he said excitedly, 'You all got snacks in here?' He continued to tell us that for the last several years he has been pretty checked out of school. Snacks were a big start to winning his interest in re-engaging."*

– Maria Schirmer, Metro High / Dane County Jail Teacher



*"The opportunities and support I received as an MMSD student from amazing teachers, coaches and community members are forever present in my work as an educator.*

*As Superintendent and as a parent of former MMSD students, I understand how important community support is to provide a high-quality education. We all have to be courageous for our students. We can do great things as a community to help them learn and grow.*

*Thank you to the many people who are partners of the Madison Public Schools Foundation, you make a meaningful difference for students each and every day."*

– Joe Gothard, Superintendent, Madison Metropolitan School District

# School endowment funds continue to pay dividends for our students.

“ One of our new classes, *Constructions* (an interdisciplinary course blending geometry and engineering content), utilized school endowment fund income managed by the Madison Public Schools Foundation to partner with *The Bodgery* makerspace down the road. It was an overwhelming success, as the funds allowed us to pay for workshops with multiple instructors teaching students various skills ranging from woodworking, welding, stained glass, laser cutting, sewing, ceramics, hot glass, among other things.

For a small school that doesn't have the space or staff to support these types of experiences in-house, it was a real gamechanger to have the MPSF funds to offer these opportunities for our students. They created some very cool final projects including cutting boards, a new sign for our shed, coat racks, cat stands, birthing stool, tiny library, bird house, wood mallets...even a "Captain America" shield. It was a pretty great class."



**Brian Counselman**, Shabazz High Science Teacher and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2025 Teacher of the Year



**\$134,655**

The total School Endowment Fund investment income distributed to schools in 2024.

# Strengthening alumni connections through class reunion support.

In 2024, the Madison Public Schools Friends & Alumni Network (MPSFAN) launched its reunion services—helping classmates reconnect, reminisce, and celebrate their shared history. We utilized our database and communication channels to help connect alumni to celebrate their shared history. Over the summer and fall, we supported seven reunions, with even more planned for 2025, deepening alumni engagement and strengthening school pride.

Our planning guides made event prep easier, and in-person giving opportunities inspired several classes to make "class gifts" in support of their high schools.

Beyond bringing classmates back together, this initiative is strengthening our alumni database, ensuring we can engage even more graduates in the years ahead. Looking forward, we're expanding our outreach in 2025 and launching a Giving Challenge—a friendly competition among reunion classes to inspire philanthropy and collective impact.



West High Class of 1974, one of many classes to make a gift to their alma mater, poses together at their 50th reunion.



Madison Public Schools  
**Friends & Alumni Network**  
*Brought to you by the Madison Public Schools Foundation*



# Alumni stories are a reminder of the shared history and lasting impact of an MMSD education.

Our MMSD graduates are an asset to our community, taking different paths through life, with many giving back to the public school community that shaped them. It is an honor and privilege to share their stories.

A shining example is Bernadette Galvez, a Memorial alum and the Madison Fire Department's Community Education Officer. She has spent over 30 years teaching fire safety to thousands of local students and was honored as Wisconsin's 2024 Public Educator of the Year. Bernadette is a testament to the power of community and service.

Scan the QR code to  
read more inspiring  
alumni stories!



# Actively seeking diverse support to keep MMSD schools and our work strong and thriving.

A \$50,000 year-end giving challenge came from a small, but generous group of donors. They matched Schools Make Madison Champion gifts of \$500 or more, up to \$50,000. **Our donor gifts totaled \$63,337. Match secured!**

In 2024, we received **\$198,766 in in-kind support** from the following partners:

- American Printing
- EZ Office Products
- Lands' End
- Mid-West Family Madison
- Summit Credit Union
- TASC
- Thermo Fisher Scientific
- WI State Journal / Madison Media



Our Schools Make Madison Legacy Circle gained new members, Ken and Jane Belmore, when they chose to include the Foundation in their estate plans.

*"The growth of the Foundation to include such important Schools Make Madison donor programs and the Teacher Support Network are all reasons that we have chosen to become Legacy Circle donors. Their recent advocacy role for MMSD and public education across the state of Wisconsin solidified our support."*

In 2024, we processed **\$766,489** in gifts to the 170-fund portfolio we fiscally manage.

**\$13,959,594**

Total assets held by the Madison Public Schools Foundation as of December 31, 2024.

**\$40M+**

Total resources secured for MMSD since our founding in 2001.

## Grant Award Highlights

**Roots & Wings**  
FOUNDATION

\$100,000 unrestricted award;  
\$327,500 to MMSD Health & Wellness Fund

 **Madison**  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

\$50,000 grant award for capacity-building

 **Evjue**  
FOUNDATION

\$25,000 grant award for Teacher Support Network

GREEN BAY PACKERS  
**FOUNDATION**  


\$8,000 split between Teacher Support Network and Metro School Fund

**W**

WIDEN FAMILY FOUNDATION

\$5,000 grant award for Teacher Support Network



**MADISON  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
FOUNDATION** + **You**

# Moving Forward Together for Our Students

There's a role and a way for  
everyone to get involved.



**Donate**



**Become an  
Adopt-a-School Partner**



**Advocate**



**Volunteer**

Madison Public Schools Foundation is the largest school foundation in Wisconsin. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, our programs and services are 100% funded by donations. The support of our community fuels our work on behalf of MMSSD and our students. Thank you for supporting our mission.

# A Principal Experience Returns on October 30, 2025



**MADISON  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
FOUNDATION**

“ In 2019, through A Principal Experience, I was partnered with then Glendale Elementary principal, Ben Ketterer. This incredibly educational, rewarding and thought-provoking experience enabled me to shadow Ben for the morning, exposing me to the enormous responsibilities of a public-school principal. Ben was an outstanding leader, working tirelessly to educate the next generation and serve his community in innumerable roles. A Principal Experience made me realize that a whole community must take part in raising the next generation to ensure Madison's future is even brighter.



Melinda Heinritz and Jason Ilstrup

I'm so excited that the Foundation is bringing back this powerful event. If you haven't yet participated, please do. It's not an exaggeration when I say it's a memorable experience."

**Jason Ilstrup**, President,  
Downtown Madison, Inc.

**Stay in touch and informed**

**SchoolsMakeMadison.org**

608-210-6900

Follow us on social



**Sign up  
for our  
newsletter**

