

# From Fallow to Flourishing:

## Cultivating Sustainable Impact



**Mita Havlick, Executive Director  
Dallas Education Foundation**

**TEFN Connect Webinar and Interactive Learning Series  
April 15, 2021**



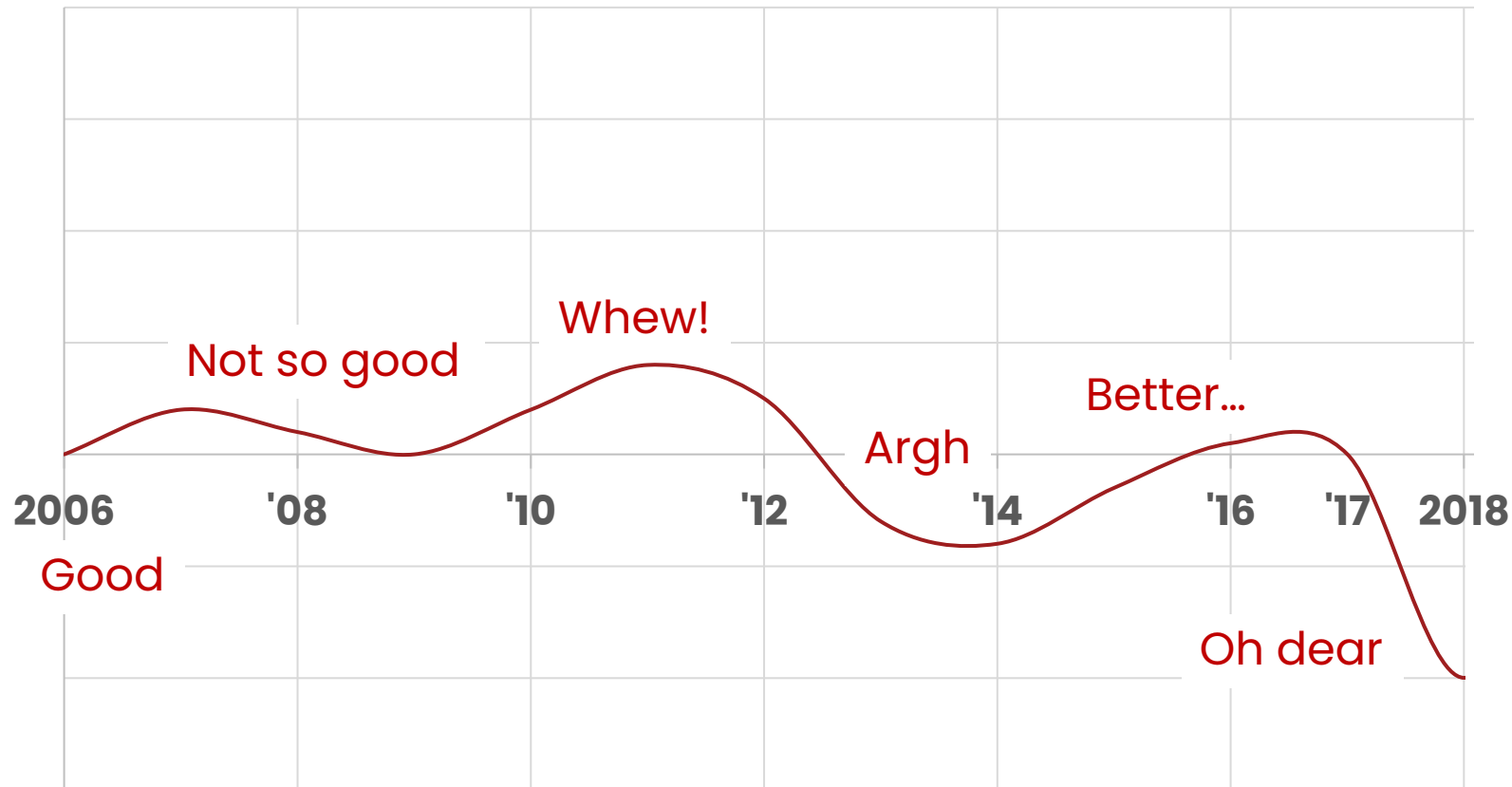
# This is the Dallas Education Foundation



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1q6KqZ2pqU>



# A Long Road... Fertile to Fallow



# A Long Road... Fallow to Flourishing



How did  
we go from  
*Oh dear* to  
*OH WOW!!*





# Late 2018 – Optimal Timing

The ground was fertile



Sharp rise in  
student  
achievement



Stable and  
functioning  
school board



Consistency in  
District  
leadership



Commitment and  
support from the  
business  
community



Strong  
advocacy from  
community  
groups

# First half of 2019 – Resowing the Seeds

## Intentional first steps

- Driven by Superintendent
- Recommitment from Board of Trustees
- Hiring of a consultant
- Reinstatement of the 501(c)(3)
- Newly negotiated and executed MOU
- Nationwide search for a new Executive Director



# Last Quarter of 2019 – A New Day

## A New Director – Now What?

- Create, build and nurture new and existing relationships
- Embark on an internal Listen and Learn Tour
- Expand the board and include those who
  - Believe in the need for a foundation
  - Are diverse in demography, geography and experience
  - Are committed to the rebuilding
- Ensure Superintendent attendance at every board meeting



# Early 2020 – Getting Started



- Create task forces to review/update Policies & Guidelines, By-laws, Org Chart
- Hold a strategic offsite to define who we are
  - Outside facilitator is key
  - First opportunity to seek a new donor partner who is willing to invest in the foundation and underwrite the costs

# Who We Are

DALLAS EDUCATION FOUNDATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023 – V.2

REVISED FEBRUARY 24, 2020

ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATION	STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	DRAFT - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	
Our Customer	Align with and support Dallas ISD initiatives		
Dallas ISD and the programs that support transformative work in the lives of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify, understand, and address the resource gaps that impact Dallas ISD strategic initiatives</li><li>Identify current players and providers in the space and determine effectiveness of their efforts</li><li>Package solutions for greater impact</li><li>Ensure all supported programs align with one of more Dallas ISD initiatives</li></ul>	Metric	Target
Our Mission		Number of resource gaps addressed	
To inspire community investment to accelerate student success		Number of events supported	
Our Vision	Improve community understanding of and engagement with DEF		
A galvanized community whose resources support transformative work that makes Dallas ISD the preferred choice for families across North Texas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Create branding related to impactful storytelling through: Website, Social Media, Collateral</li><li>Develop communication plan<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop case statement and messaging</li><li>Identify key audiences</li></ul></li><li>Develop “road show” – Internal and External<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop content and identify target audiences</li><li>Create messaging - who we are, why we exist, how we work, with whom we partner</li></ul></li></ul>	Metric	Target
Our Core Values		Number of presentations to internal stakeholders	
Stewardship      Transparency		Number of presentations to external stakeholders	
Integrity          Credibility		Number of individuals engaging with DEF in some capacity (board member, volunteer, speaker’s bureau)	
Equity              Sustainability			
Collaboration			
Unique Value Proposition	Develop and nurture donor relationships		
Community awareness of the Dallas Education Foundation and its role in supporting the Dallas ISD has increased as a result of recent events. This increased awareness, coupled with a strong potential donor base and the opportunity for partnerships with other organizations, uniquely positions DEF for success in leveraging community investments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop donor relationships with those who have given to Dallas ISD and/or DEF - historically and/or during disaster relief</li><li>Develop donor relationships with those who have never given to Dallas ISD and/or DEF</li><li>Utilize DEF board members to reach out to their networks</li></ul>	Metric	Target
		Number of board member contacts made	
		Number of first-time donors	
		Number of gifts for operating fund (non-disaster related)	
		Percentage of increase in funds received	
DONOR CHANNELS	ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT		
Foundations interested in supporting local public education	Overview		
Business community	Dallas ISD needs an effective approach for tapping into private philanthropy to ensure sufficient investment in programs contributing to the success of students. Dallas ISD is on an upward trajectory, community confidence is growing, and fundraising opportunities exist.		
Major donors committed to supporting Dallas ISD	Organizational advantage		
Private individuals – Direct appeal	New and entrepreneurial leadership, combined with a knowledgeable and influential board and the support of Dallas ISD Leadership.		

Result: A New Strategic Plan!





# Back to last quarter 2019

- 3 schools rendered unusable
- 12 schools damaged
- 7,000 students displaced
- An entire city and country who wanted to help and give... and donate

Foundation ED had been on the job for three weeks

Dallas Tornado Causes Significant Damage Sunday Night



# First Opportunity to Support

“In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity.” – Albert Einstein

- Quickly created a tornado disaster relief fund
- Asked to be include in press statements
  - Superintendent stated that monetary donations be funneled to Foundation at every news briefing
  - Dallas Mayor Johnson made similar statements
  - Dallas Morning News Editorial and television media outlets included the Dallas Education Foundation as one of the primary places to give
- \$2.3m in donations in four weeks



# First Opportunity to Learn

Ugly campaign but lots of lessons learned...



- Importance of being nimble
- Immediate need for structure and organization, including
  - Donor management system
  - Digital presence – website, social media
  - “Thank you” cards
- Understanding how to navigate the district

... and it put us on the map

# 2020 – First quarter

- Executed digital communications strategy including new website, social media presence and YouTube channel
- Implemented new donor management system
- Secured major sponsors for annual State of the District event
- Learned how to navigate through and garner the support of those within Dallas ISD

Our Strategic Plan is our guiding light



# 2020 – And Then the Pandemic

- Found the need: “What can we do to help?” is very different than “Here’s what I can do to support.”
- Prioritized the needs
  - Food
  - Internet connectivity
  - Subscription licenses for classroom and instructional tools
- Used all our channels to relay the needs and communicated how to help

Committed to raising \$200,000 to provide direct support; actual number was \$1.2m





# Moving forward in 2020 to 2021

Unless you want to be the Red Cross, you can't build a sustainable organization waiting for the next disaster

- Held 1<sup>st</sup> ever Annual Campaign and exceeded our goal by 40%
- Funded two large-scale Racial Equity initiatives
- Continued to increase and improve our digital presence
- Accepted pass-through donations

We create stories of impact



# 2021 – Flourishing

## From Fallow to 18 months later

- Doubled the size of the organization – board and staff
- Increased general fund by 6x
- Raised to-date \$6.4m since relaunch (with tornado disaster relief and Covid response accounting for \$4.2m)
- Are frequently and positively mentioned in the press



# Press Mentions

## Laura Bush Foundation Awards \$500,000 in Grants to Dallas Education Foundation

Grants will help Dallas ISD school libraries rebuild and expand library collection after 2019 tornadoes

🕒 November 18, 2020

## USAA Announces \$200,000 Grant to Dallas Education Foundation to Advance Racial Equity

 The Dallas Morning News

Hinojosa said that, even if he did earn the money, he would donate the funds to the Dallas Education Foundation.



OPINION

## It takes all of us to rebuild schools

Donations from corporate citizens signal renewed trust in the Dallas Education Foundation.

## Farrow-Gillespie Heath Witter LLP proudly announces the formation of The Liza Farrow-Gillespie Intrepid Young Woman Scholarship

\$100,000 fund established at the Dallas Education Foundation provides a \$10,000 scholarship each year to a deserving female student at Dallas ISD's Judge Barefoot Sanders Law Magnet

## Central Market donates \$1M to help Dallas schools a year after tornado destroyed campuses

The donation from the upscale division of San Antonio-based grocery chain H-E-B is the latest big-money donation to [Dallas ISD's flourishing education foundation](#).



# 2021 – Focused on the Future

## The Road to Sustainability

- Build the brand
- Build and maintain the foundational structures
- Build and leverage internal and external relationships and resources
- Hire the right people (person)
- Believe in your missions and get others to buy into it:
  - Mission Moment at every board meeting
  - Speak at events; moderate panel discussion
  - Say “yes” to interview requests
- Slow down to cultivate
- Be nimble and always be a good partner



# Who We Are



To inspire community investment  
to accelerate student success



A galvanized community whose resources  
support the transformative work that makes  
Dallas ISD the preferred choice for families  
across North Texas



@FutureOfDallas



<https://futureofdallas.org>

*"Together we power the future of Dallas"*







# Thank you for attending!

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Dallas Education Foundation

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complete our survey!

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