



# Austin Ed Fund: An Evolution Towards Equity

TEFN Annual Conference  
April 13, 2023

# Agenda

- Overview of Austin ISD & Austin Ed Fund
- History of the Grants Program
  - Pre-Pandemic
  - Pandemic
  - Post(ish)-Pandemic
- Focus on equity
- What have we learned?
- What's on the horizon?



**At which point is your foundation in their grants program journey?**

Rookie

Rising Star

Veteran



# What is Austin ISD?



## EST. 1881

Austin ISD is the eighth-largest school district in Texas.



## 116 SCHOOLS

Austin ISD consists of elementary, middle, high, early college, academy, magnet, alternative and community schools.

### 73,384

Students

### 5,508

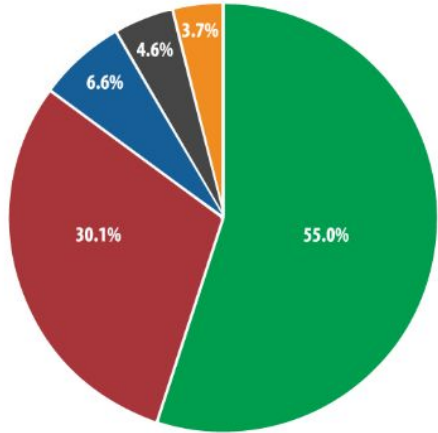
Classroom Teachers

### 1,569

Administrators & Professional Staff

### 3,866

Bus Drivers, Custodians, Food Service Staff & Educational Aides



### Ethnicity/ Race

- Hispanic: 55.0%
- White: 30.1%
- Black: 6.6%
- Asian: 4.5%
- Other 3.8%

### Inclusive Populations

- Economically Disadvantaged: 51.9%
- Emergent Bilingual: 28.2%
- Special Education: 13.4%



## 93.0%

Graduation Rate



# What is Austin Ed Fund?



# What is Austin Ed Fund?



**Austin Ed Fund inspires the community to invest in Austin ISD.**

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit created in 1993
- Independent governing board
- Staffed by Austin ISD's Office of Innovation and Development (OID)
- **We believe:** Every student deserves to be inspired. Every teacher deserves to be supported. Strong public schools strengthen our community.



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HMG Healthcare, LLC

**Vice Chair: Doyle Valdez**  
Valco Resource Mangement, Inc

**Rodney Ahart**  
Keep Austin Beautiful

**Jessica Bazan**  
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**Jeremiah Bentley**  
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REALLY

**Kathy Burrell**  
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Powell Foundation

**Michelle Earley**  
O'Melveny & Myers LLP

**Erica Ekwurzel**  
CivicAIM

**Secretary: Samantha Borders**  
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**Treasurer: Larry Graham**  
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**Julie Fisher**  
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**John Fitzpatrick**  
Educate Texas | Communities Foundation of Texas

**James Guerra**  
JG Consulting

**Ali Khataw**  
Encotech Engineering Consultants, Inc.

**Barbara Knaggs**  
Community Volunteer

**Oriana Love**  
Diffusion Labs I&T

**Sylvia Maggio**  
Community Volunteer

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Interim Superintendent

**Ex-Officio: Kathryn Whitley-Chu**  
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Austin Board of Realtors



# 2023 Board of Directors



# Points of Pride

- **Champions** for Austin ISD
- Over **\$46M** in support for Austin ISD strategic priorities and initiatives since 2001
- **Inspire the Future Event**, featuring the Superintendent's State of the District Address since 2015
- **\$1.7M** awarded to **365** teacher-created projects on AISD campuses since 2015
- Raised **\$10.2M** for **AISD Crisis Support Fund** providing basic needs assistance and educational supports during the pandemic.



## Our Impact

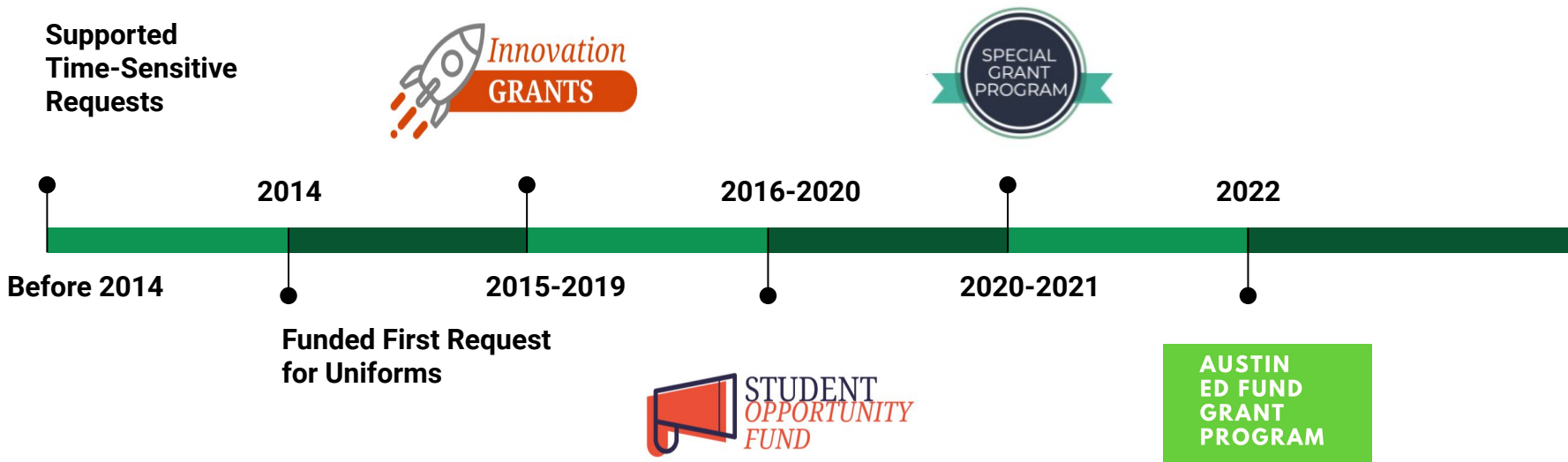
Schools & Classrooms

District Wide

Crisis Support



# Origination of Grant Program





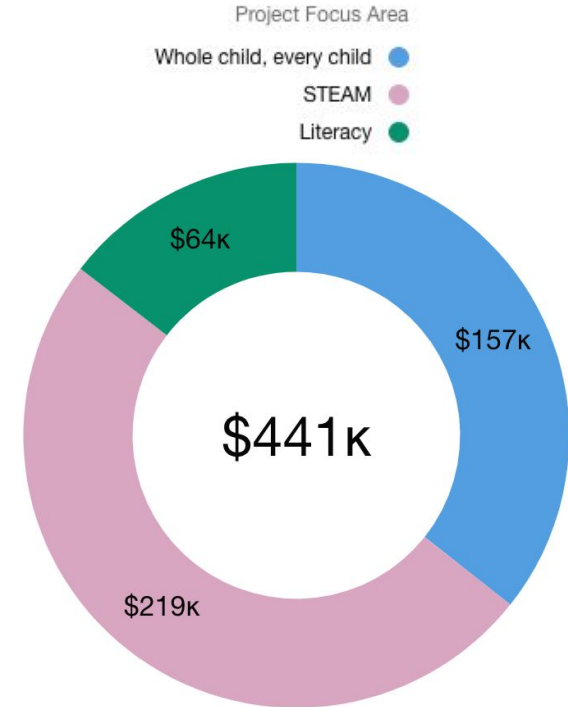
# Our Grants History: Pre-Pandemic

## 2015-2019

Encourages new & creative instructional approaches and learning experiences

All schools, no criteria regarding student demographics

Awarded \$441,000 to 98 projects



# Our Grants History: Pre-Pandemic

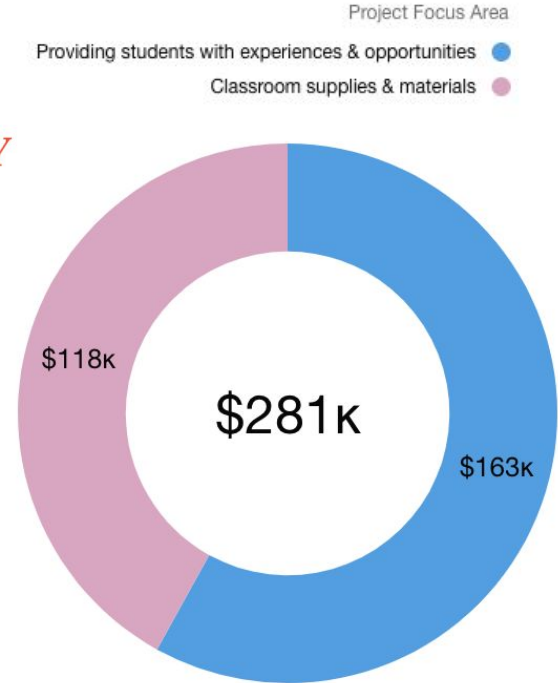


## 2016-2020

Provides time-sensitive educationally enriching opportunities that level the field

Schools with >60% students identified as economically disadvantaged

Awarded \$281,000 to 76 projects



# Pandemic Hits in 2020



# Our Grants History: Pandemic

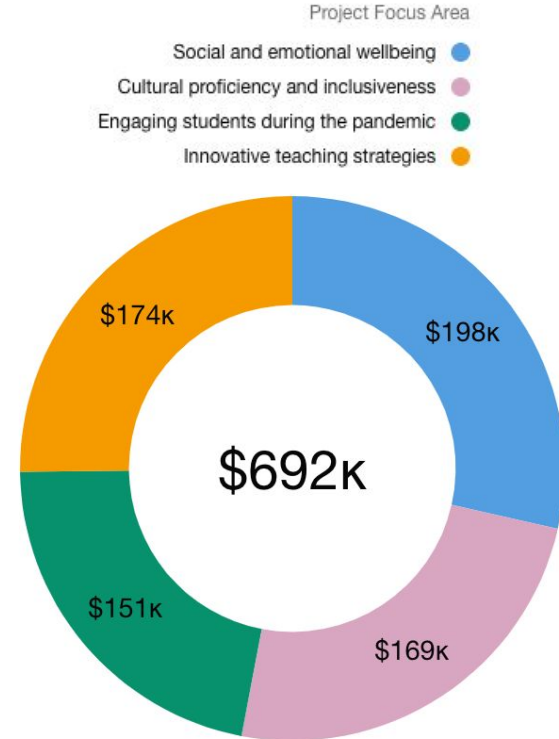


## 2020-2021

Supports time-sensitive needs for educational enhancement & innovation in response to the pandemic, racial injustice, and winter storms

All schools, but priority given to students who are identified as economically disadvantaged

Awarded \$692,000 to 136 projects



# It's Time for a Focus on Equity



- How can we **reduce barriers** for teachers applying for the grant program?
- Teachers being impacted were **not reflective of the students** being impacted.
- Partnered with research consultant to **conduct equity analysis** of grants program.
- Recommendations
  - Encourage **student voice** in development of the grant and review process.
  - **Collect better data** around success and applicant demographics.
  - **Revise rubric** to be more precise and incorporate additional **priority points** to focus our impact on marginalized students and staff.
  - Recruit more **diverse and well-represented community review team**.
  - Increase **awareness campaign** across all schools, with a focus on strategic outreach to ones that never been awarded or have new principals.
- After analysis, we had to **balance recommendations with existing procedures**.



# Our Grants History: Post(ish)-Pandemic

## 2022-2023

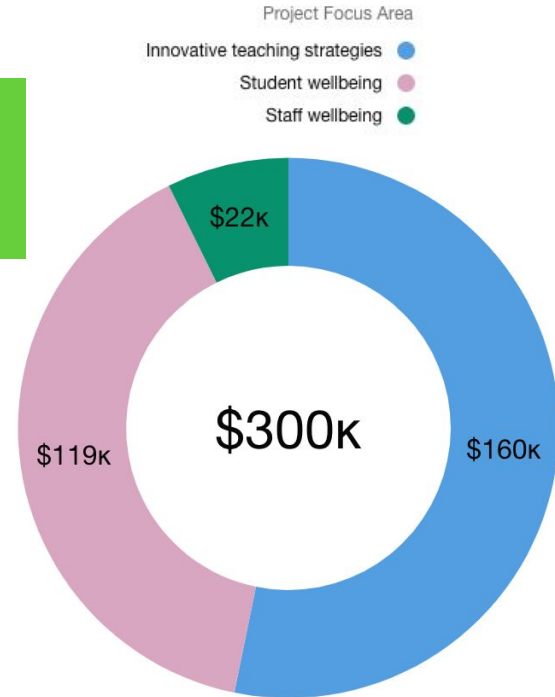
Supports innovative approaches that address inequities found in our community, as well as student and staff wellbeing

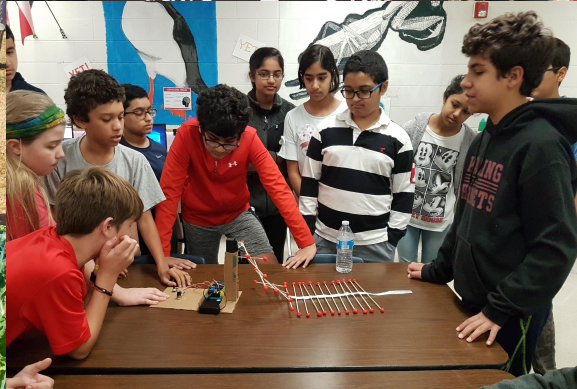
All schools, but priority given to projects that impact marginalized student groups

Awarded \$300,000 to 52 projects  
& *will award \$400,000 in 2023*

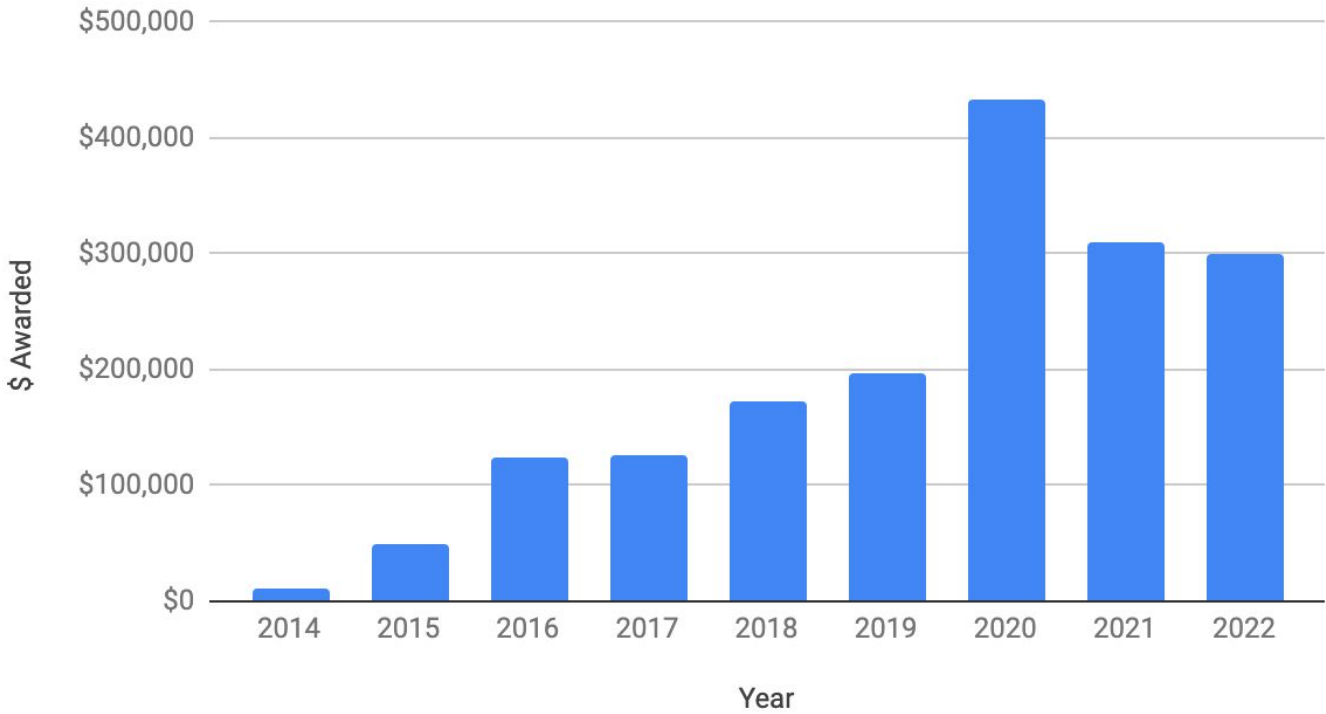


Inspire the  
Future Grants





# Grant Program Award History







# How Can Your Grant Program Ensure Equity?



# What Have We Learned?

- Schools know their needs, so we should trust and listen to the experts.
- Needs change, and so must our programs.
- Evaluation can be difficult. It's important to consistently collect data over time that is reasonable for a teacher.
- Funders and community supporters trust schools to utilize funding to positively impact students.



# What's Are We Working On?



- Ensure equitable opportunities for **marginalized students**.
- Build awareness of Austin Ed Fund as a **resource for teachers, staff, and families**.
- Serve as a vehicle for families and community **supporters to give back** to the district.
- Provide grant writing and crowdfunding **campus support** resources and trainings.
- Expand **external support** to schools through grants database and crowdfunding platforms.
- **Scale innovative ideas** from individual campuses to district-wide initiatives.
- Incorporate **student voice** in the process.
- **Collect better data** that is reasonable.



# Let's Stay Connected!



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