



OUR SISTERS' SCHOOL

2021 Annual Report

Class of 2011-Class of 2021

Public Secondary Schools

Bristol County Agricultural High School
City on a Hill Charter School*
Dartmouth High School
Fairhaven High School
Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational-Technical High School
JobCorps: Chicopee Campus
New Bedford High School**
Old Rochester Regional High School
Taunton High School
Westport High School

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* Now closed

** Includes the Academy of Honors at New Bedford High School



Most of us were raised with a traditional, one-way model of education: *teachers delivered content; students (it was assumed) absorbed it.* Today, however, preparing children to live—and thrive—in our modern world requires more than rote instruction and learning. At OSS, we instill foundational abilities such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills that will serve students in any future occupation or endeavor. Along with these skills, our students develop a resilient mindset and a social-emotional toolkit to respond to evolving complexities and challenges. This type of learning only happens when teachers are able to capture hearts and minds—which is no small task. It requires engagement on the part of everyone involved: in-the-moment presence and attunement to what is there, what it means, and why it matters.

The 2020-2021 school year was a study in the power of presence at OSS. By keeping our school doors safely open, we were present for—and with—each other all year. We did capture hearts and minds, and maintained our high learning standards. We lived by and demonstrated our core values of *Excellence, Community, Civic Engagement* and *Leadership*. In our pandemic response, students experienced the impact of OSS's agility and courage in the face of challenge. Students saw and experienced the benefit of calculated risk-taking. They experienced the cumulative success of every-day effort and the great joy of community. And they—and their families—learned the extent to which OSS is truly here to support them.

So, in many ways, this was a remarkable year. Yet, in other ways, it was business as usual. After all, this complex and unpredictable world is the one in which our students are coming of age. It's the one for which we are here to prepare them.

In this report, we share some of the ways that we are readying our students to thrive, ensuring they have the skills, tools, strength, and wisdom to succeed in, and improve, our ever-changing world. Thank you so very much for helping to make all this possible.

Sincerely,

Sarah Herman
Head of School

Alison Coolidge Boreiko
Co-president
Board of Trustees

Martha Sullivan
Co-president
Board of Trustees



Left to right: Alison Coolidge Boreiko, Sarah Herman, Martha Sullivan



Reimagining Education

From the outside looking in, an OSS education seems like fun. Okay, we admit, it *is* fun! But it's strategic fun. It's purposeful. There's a reason—usually several—for everything we do.

Take our sailing program at the Community Boating Center, for example. You may wonder: is that recess? A break from the day's intense concentration? No. At OSS, sailing is not a hiatus from learning. It is a method. Students learn about the weather as they harness the wind. They study maps, read charts, calculate distance... and swim! They measure angles, handle power tools, and build boats. They craft bonds with each other and with their community as they practice teamwork and leadership. They develop a love for the sea and become its stewards and protectors. And they have fun!

At OSS, students gain interdisciplinary knowledge and skills in the context of something that energizes them. And they do that within their community, alongside their sister sailor peers. This connects them and connects with them. It speaks to what they enjoy, care about, know, and want to know.

The OSS tradition "*The City that Lit the World*" is another great example of interdisciplinary learning. Each year, our sixth-graders learn about New Bedford's whaling heritage to understand how history and the environment have shaped our community.

This months-long learning unit includes an exploration of the economic forces and

social norms of the whaling era. Students learn about whale biology and interaction with humans. They study the impact of ocean topography on whale movements and whaling ship routes. They're even able to visualize these relationships using a 3D-augmented reality sandbox. Students visit the Whaling Museum and the Fishing Heritage Center, and then they identify and develop research topics that truly interest them and create artwork to accompany the research. With interdisciplinary curriculum development, each learning activity builds on the ones before and lays groundwork for the ones ahead. Each subject area adds a new dimension of insight while clarifying and reinforcing the others. And each angle offers another hook to snare an eager mind and passionate heart.

Learning that engages and connects does more than just expand a student's knowledge and understanding. It expands her ability to reason and comprehend, to imagine and empathize. Her brain is not storing lists of facts organized by subject, it is cultivating networks and learning to traverse them. This type of learning increases students' ability to see relationships, integrate new information, and manage complexity. Students learn *how* to learn, how to think, how to reflect and improve, and how to reach their goals in an increasingly complicated world.

Curriculum Spotlight: Creative Suite

Three times a week, in 90-minute increments, OSS students stretch their minds in a space that sparks independence, imagination, and growth. Throughout the Creative Suite, learning opportunities are layered from floor to ceiling in a smorgasbord of resources and choice. Think of the most fabulous Sunday brunch buffet you've ever seen and you'll get a sense of what it's like.

A Place to Engage

The **Creative Suite** is composed of four distinct areas that, together, account for about 25% of our building.

The Think Tank is the coffee and juice bar of our Sunday brunch. This is where students start *and* where they return to recharge as they work. It's a transitional zone, connecting the students to the larger space, to each other, and to themselves. The miniature Zen Garden invites calm. Toys and puzzles spur focus. Kaleidoscopes shift perspectives. Challenges encourage students to grab a marker and draw, stimulating thinking, creativity, and joy.

The **Art Studio** is our brunch breakfast fare—a make-your-own-omelet extravaganza! The room is packed with tools and supplies for drawing, painting, sculpture, fabric, and more. Laminated guides describe techniques and offer QR codes for deeper dives. Large worktables create space to experiment. A sink provides water for mixing and cleaning. Example artist statements and "gallery-style" label templates set high expectations. The results hang proudly everywhere you look. The Studio's Creative and Visual Arts curriculum provides the foundation for a strong visual arts vocabulary and technique.



Lessons help students break through their own barriers. Here, girls learn to see, understand, and express themselves as creative beings.

The **STEAM Lab** is like a buffet of exotic delicacies. It's also a wormhole to the future. There are iPads, a laser cutter, a 3D printer, hand tools, glue guns, and more. Students connect objects to the internet. They program robots. They create and construct solutions to real-world prob-

lems. The project-based curriculum poses design challenges and sets constraints. Teachers and volunteers coach and support, but students decide how to meet each challenge. They follow formal design processes and practice the four Cs of STEAM (Collaboration, Communication, and Creative and Critical Thinking). Their success builds skills and confidence. So do their mistakes, helping them reflect on

What is STEAM?

STEAM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. Its predecessor, STEM (originally SMET), arose several decades ago when American students began falling behind in fields that were increasingly essential to global competitiveness. The gap was even more pronounced in terms of income level, race, and gender.

In addition to increasing student competency in these individual disciplines, the STEM movement sought to bring them together under a wider umbrella of project-based, technology-driven innovation. This led to the inclusion of skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, and more. In 2010, the Rhode Island School of Design urged educators not to neglect the importance of Art and Design Thinking in a curriculum designed to improve innovative capacity. And, thus, STEAM was born.



OSS STEAM team, left to right: Lindsay Craig (consultant), Kim Francis (mentor), Angel Diaz, Tobey Eugenio, Katie Mosca & Elsa

Why Choice Matters

The ability—the need—for students to make choices amid so many options is essential to awakening and sustaining interest, intellect, creativity, and capability. In the Creative Suite, assignments are design challenges to be met, *not* instructions to be followed. The choices students make and the work they do is driven by their unique interests and passions. Deep learning happens when students tap into their own sense of purpose and fun.

Choice also builds critical thinking, helping students learn how to wade through complexity without being overwhelmed. They gain skills and confidence in their ability to weigh options, make decisions, plan and forecast, experiment, adapt, and adjust. Choice helps students learn how decisions are made; practice helps them make better ones.

When students have the space to test and stretch their skills with support instead of judgment, it gives them competence and confidence. When their work and learning tie directly to what matters to them, it gives them joy and purpose. Research shows the student attitudes toward scientific disciplines are typically *set for life* before they leave middle school. At OSS, those attitudes are set by choice, not chance.

The “Secret Sauce”

Interdisciplinary curriculum development underlies *all* that we do at OSS. To under-

stand what we mean, imagine a bowl of simmering stew. Chunks of beef, potatoes, and vegetables are steeped in a shared thick broth. Now imagine a plate divided into three sections. There is a steak, some potatoes, and a vegetable medley. Very often, school curricula are analogous to the plate: subjects are served up separately with little—if any—connection between them. Schools with STEM or STEAM programs follow practices that integrate

“My favorite class is STEAM because we can solve problems in a creative way.”

sixth-grader

those disciplines. Yet, sometimes, the results are like the vegetables—mixed together in just one section.

At OSS, stew is in our DNA! We focus intentionally on creating rich, project-based learning experiences that encompass



and integrate multiple subject areas at once. Each subject—science, math, art, humanities, health, and more—remains recognizable and distinct; only its isolation disappears.

The Creative Suite is a hub for interdisciplinary learning at OSS. With its direct connection to students’ interests, hearts, and minds, it naturally attracts and advances learning related to every other subject in the School. When engaged in this type of deep learning, students aren’t memorizing facts and formulas for next week’s exam. They’re connecting to a slice of the world around them and examining it with a series of lenses. They’re discovering what it means to them and making their own mark in response.

A Flexible Foundation

A world with thorny problems requires divergent and convergent thinking skills, flexibility, and resilience. Leaders and problem-solvers must know how to interpret and understand a challenge, identify and evaluate options, envision a solution, and then bring it to life. In the Creative Suite, students develop their ability to imagine *and* implement, thinking creatively *and* critically.

“The skills and mindsets that students learn in the Creative Suite will open up a world of opportunity for them, wherever they go,” explains OSS Creativity Director, Tobey Eugenio. *“They’ll be able to move through life with the ability, confidence, and drive to recognize, articulate, and solve difficult problems. They’ll make this world a better place.”*

and improve their design process. In the STEAM Lab, students explore technology’s potential while developing a sense of comfort and mastery. They cultivate the vocabulary, skills, tenacity, and desire to work as designers, engineers, and builders.

The **Media Lab**, our newest Creative Suite space, is like a tempting dessert table. It sparks wide-eyed zeal with some cautious initial restraint. It can be odd, after all, for students to see themselves on video and hear themselves on podcasts. But, with practice, the girls find

that their self-consciousness fades and their voices strengthen. The black curtain backdrops become a stage for self-expression through interviews, dramatizations, claymation, and more. A bean bag gathering space brings students together

to strategize and plan, offer feedback and ideas. In a favorite assignment, each seventh-grader designs, films, and edits a public service announcement about an issue that’s important to her. When our students speak to the camera, it’s as if the whole world is watching.

Award Winning STEAM Projects

Steam Spirit

A team of OSS inventors was chosen as a “Grand School Winner” for the “Most Inventive Spirit Award” in the 2021 International Great Passport to STEM Challenge for designing a robot concept able to create a more equitable and inclusive learning environment. A.S.A.P. (Activate Support at Any Point) was created to help kids on the autism spectrum by monitoring stress indicators, alerting teachers when a student is feeling anxious, modifying the sensory environment, and offering tools to decrease stress.

The Story of One

Anyis’s ‘22 video won multiple awards in the 2021 Bow Seat Ocean Awareness Contest. Her stop motion video about trash floating in the ocean was selected from among thousands of entries for the international middle school award and for the South Coast, Cape & Islands Award.

<https://vimeo.com/561938617>

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Massachusetts Cultural
Council

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Anne & Brem Mayer
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Sara McDonough
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Donna & Thomas Modica
Danissa Molina '15
Serge Moniz
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Network for Good
New Bedford Cultural Council
New Bedford Day Nursery Fund
New Bedford Economic
Development Council
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Nunes & Charrier LLC
Mrs. Jonathan O'Brien
Joan O'Connell
Charlotte & Larry Oliveira
Nancy Osgood
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OSS Class of 2022
OSS Class of 2023
OSS Class of 2024
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Linda & Louis Othote
Oxford Creamery
Regina Pakradooni
Mileni Palacios
Margaret Palmer
Jill & Thomas Pappas, Move
the World Foundation

Hillary Parker
Thomas H. and Letitia Landry
Parker Charitable Fund
Margaret Parker Fund
Mary Parker & Damon Smith
Ann Parson
Heather Parsons & Andy Kotsatos
Sandria Parsons
Partners Village Store
Erin Peixoto
Vinicius Peixoto
Celeste Penney
Christina Pennoyer
Robert Pennoyer
Tracy Pennoyer & John
Auchincloss
Mildred & Richard Perkins
Polly & George Perkins
Betsy & Richard Perry
Susan & Daniel Perry
Cindy & Corbin Pettway
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Gifts Program
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Cynthia Pilskaln
Larissa Pina
Cristina Torruella Pingal &
David Pingal
Kate & Hendon Pingeon
Emily & John Pinheiro
Maria Elisabete de Andrade
Pires
Plimpton Shattuck Fund
Victoria Pope & Joel Brenner
Alexis & William Popik
Mimi Powell
Alexandra & Robert Pozzo
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Betty Prescott
Suzanne & Charrier LLC
Suzanne & William Prescott
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Janelle Ramirez
Shandy Monte Raposa & Joey
Raposa
Katelyn Rapoza
Kenneth Rapoza
Tina & Demi Read

Cynthia Redel & Michael
Esposito
John Reed
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Debby Robbins
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Trust
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Jackeline Rodriguez
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Joan & Richard Roller
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Paul Schmid
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Megan Schorle
Beverly Schuch
Gale Schultz
Deborah Scott & Ralph Martin
Ruth & Arnold Scott
Krista & Roger Scoville
Sea Breeze Foundation
Seacoast Construction Group

**“Coding is important in the
modern world and I’m glad we
could have it explained to us
at such a young age.”**

seventh-grader

Eleanor Sears
Sensata Technologies Foundation
Katie & Nicholas Sever
Frances & Bruce Severance
Maryellen Shachoy
Joan Shafran & Rob Haimes
Frima* & Gilbert Shapiro
Amanda Sharp
Dedee & William Shattuck
Ann Silva
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Louis Silverstein Family Fund,
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Sloan & Hardwick Simmons
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Elizabeth & Paul* Sittenfeld
Bethany Smith
SouthCoast Community Foundation
Southcoast Storage Depot
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Pamela Spatz
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Sherry Spencer-Brown & George
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Genevieve & Steven Spiegel
Sarah & Andrew Spongberg
John Spooner
Deborah & John Spring
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St. Anne's Credit Union
St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church
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Southworth
Andrea & William Stanley
Robert J. & Bonnie M. Stapleton
Fund
Star Kids Scholarship Program
New Bedford
Fredericka & Howard Stevenson
Isabelle Stillger & Scott Chappel
Trina & Newcomb Stillwell
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Catherine Stone
Lisa & Gregg Stone
Margot Stone

Tim Stone
Sherryl & Ernest Stonebraker
Mary & Christopher Strasser
June Strunk
Martha & Michael Sullivan
Swift Harvey Family Fund
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Richard Tabors
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Angie & Nuno Tavares
Jeanne Tavares
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Kate & Ben Taylor
Juliette Terry
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Thomas A. Rodgers Jr. Family
Foundation
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Pamela & Renke Thye
Joan & Edwin Tiffany
Stacey & Clayton Timas
Patricia Tocchi
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TownWear by BER
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Tremblay's Bus Co.
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United Way of Greater New
Bedford
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Baker
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French
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Liz & Geoff Verney
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Annick & Eliot Wadsworth
Charlotte & Herbert Wagner
Wagner Family, The Weatherlow
Foundation
Marion & Henry Wainer

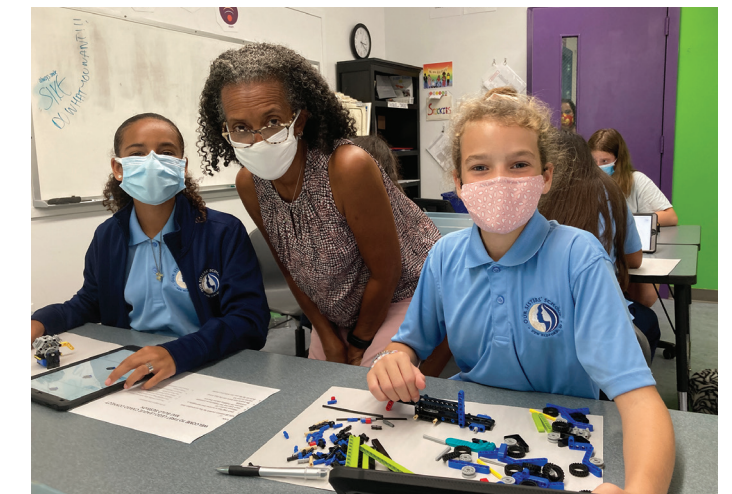
Marjorie Waite & Neal Weiss
Firth Waldon
Jane & Captain Robert* Walker
Carol Walsh
Ellen & Laurence Walsh
J. H. Walton Family Fund
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Frankie & Peter* Whelan
Anna Whitcomb
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Schrafft Charitable Trust
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Deborah Williams
Marjorie Williams & Michael
Tushman
John Willoughby
Madolyn Wilson
Catherine & Joseph Winterhalter
Desiree Winterhalter
Nanci & John Winterhalter
Pamela & Edward Winterhalter
Marcy Wintrub & Duane Barton
Ariana Wohl
Women's Foundation of Boston
Women's Fund SouthCoast
Allison & George Wood
Margaret Wool & Vincent Mor
Abby & John Yozell
Mary & Anthony* Zane
Laima & Bertram Zarins
Virginia & Peter Ziobro

Peter Berg Fund

*This memorial fund was estab-
lished by Peter's family, friends
and classmates to honor his com-
mitment and interest in supporting
OSS students and graduates.*

Anonymous (1)
The Acebes Family
Julia & Jim Adams
Mary Lee & Peter Aldrich

David Allen
Lisa Schmid Alvord & Joel Alvord
Cecelia & Richard Armstrong
Denise Arrondo
Susan & Henry Ashworth
Gary Bachula
Talbot Baker Jr.
Christy Ballou & Russell Brackett
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Courtney & Jake Glavin
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 David Jost
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 Kellogg Foundation Fund
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 Sharon Nolan & Jim Rosenfeld
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 Lynn & Harry O'Mealia
 The Parrot Family
 Nancy & Lowell Patric
 Clarissa & Frederick Phillips
 Jane Plank
 Thomas Preston
 Karen Ralph
 William Rich
 Johanna & Tom Robinson
 Susie Rogers & Whitt Barnard

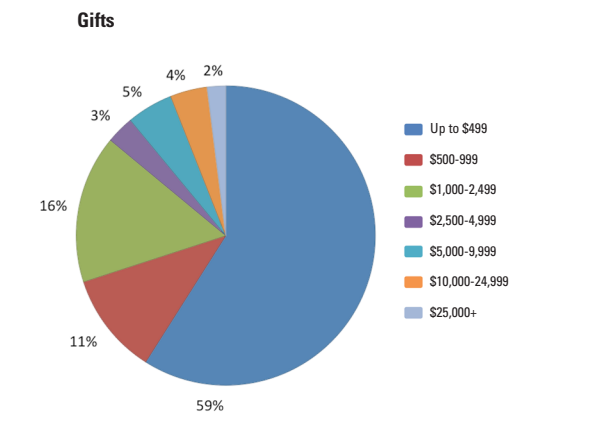
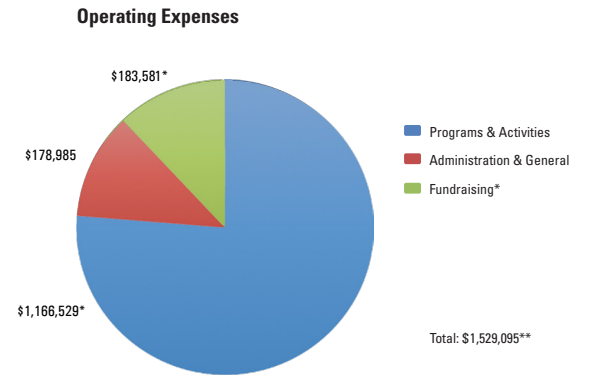
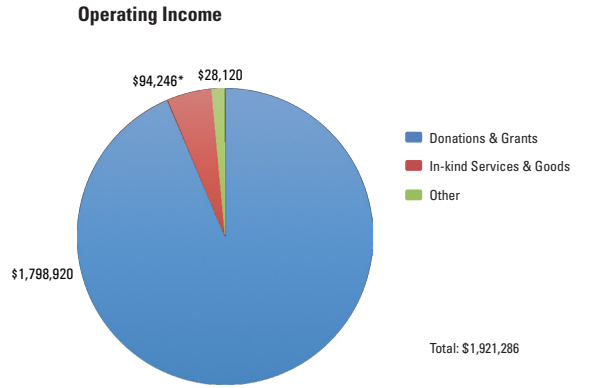
Lynne Rosenbaum & Michael Rosenberg
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 Carol Warren
 Sandra & Robert Warren
 Nancy & James Whitin
 Sarah Whitridge
 Judith & Peter Zimmerman
 Stephanie & Richard Zimmerman

True North Legacy Society
OSS is deeply grateful to those who are remembering the School in their estate plans.
 Lisa Schmid Alvord & Joel Alvord
 Talbot Baker Jr.
 Alison Coolidge Boreiko & Tom Boreiko
 Laurie & Hal Curtis
 Janet Egan
 Linda & Peter Fenton
 Bunny Garnick
 Georgie & Mark Goulding
 Sarah Herman
 Donna Jeffers
 Nancy and Edward Kurtz
 Elizabeth Lawrence
 Martha & Michael Sullivan
 Deborah Williams

* deceased
 Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of this report. Please accept our apologies and let us know of any errors at 508.994.1255 or email ggoulding@oursistersschool.org.

Fiscal Year 2021 Financial Summary

We send our gratitude to all of our generous supporters. Unlike charter schools, OSS is not eligible for state funding as a single-sex school in Massachusetts. We rely on the support of our friends and our community, which is critical to our operations. We continue to focus on investing in our people and programs, and ensuring the future security of our beloved school for our students.



* Includes volunteer services valued at \$69,380
 ** Does not include capital expenses
 Note: Gifts to capital and sustainability fund not included



Mission
 Our mission, as an independent, tuition-free, non-sectarian middle school, is to educate and inspire economically disadvantaged girls from the New Bedford area. Our Sisters' School empowers girls to step into the future with valuable life skills and a mindset of achievement and excellence by providing a safe, supportive, and academically challenging environment.

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 Marion Wainer
 Sylvia Westphal

"I learned a lot of things that most people my age aren't even learning about and I'm so grateful for that."

Maia '22

FY 2022 Board of Trustees

Left to right: Lisa Schmid Alvord (Founding Chair Emerita), Russ Weigel, Faith Morningstar, Pam Beck, Martha Sullivan, Christina Turner, Cece Armstrong, Betsy Kellogg, Kim Francis, Janet Egan, Mary Berg, Bill Prescott, Young Un, Shanna Howell, Alice Flint, Rayana Grace, Kerry Lynch (not pictured: Alison Coolidge Boreiko, Joe McDonough, Justine Medina, Angie Tavares, Marcy Wintrub)





Our Sisters' School
145 Brownell Avenue, New Bedford, MA 02740
508.994.1255/www.oursistersschool.org
Address Service Requested

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Why "Our Sisters"?

Our school's name honors the bravery of the women known as "sister sailors" who boldly headed out to sea from New Bedford's harbor during the city's whaling days. Like these women, OSS students courageously embark on a voyage in a challenging academic environment carefully crafted to support them as they discover and achieve their greatest potential, while finding true north on their moral compass.

Support The OSS Fund

We are grateful for your generosity—you help make it possible for OSS girls to receive an extraordinary education and transformative opportunities. We will continue to stay true to our core values of *Excellence, Community, Civic Engagement* and *Leadership*. Thank you for joining us on this rewarding journey. To discuss how you can help OSS, please contact Georgie Goulding, Director of Advancement, at 508.994.1255 or ggoulding@oursistersschool.org.

Planning Ahead with True North

Make a gift that will help secure OSS's future and prepare our students to live lives of consequence. Join others in the *True North Legacy Society* by naming OSS as a beneficiary in your estate planning, while meeting your current financial and philanthropic goals with tax benefits. You will make a lasting contribution to educating students and nurturing human potential.

Anti-Racism Statement

At Our Sisters' School, we are committed to an inclusive and diverse community, dedicated to our core values of *Excellence, Community, Civic Engagement*, and *Leadership*. We condemn all forms of racism—individual, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic. We will be diligent in identifying, discussing, and challenging issues of race and ethnicity to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our work, including student, staff, volunteer, and trustee recruitment, anti-racist curriculum development, and community engagement.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Our Sisters' School, Inc. admits girls as students to the School regardless of their race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic and other school administered programs.

Our Sisters' School, Inc. employs personnel of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, religion, creed, and sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges and activities generally accorded or made available to personnel at the School.

Many thanks to Cela Hobbs for designing this report, and to Kim Goddard, Pierce Harman, Val Silva, and the OSS staff for the photography.

