



GIRLS PREPARATORY

**ACADEMY**

KANSAS CITY



# 2020 Annual Report

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# A NOTE OF THANKS

It is with hearts full of gratitude and optimism that we share with you a report on our founding year at KC Girls Prep, our city's first single-gender, open-enrollment public school.

We opened our doors in August, 2019, to a promising class of 75 fifth-grade girls and their extraordinarily supportive families. The journey has been exciting, fulfilling, challenging and, thanks to COVID-19, at times a bit daunting.

We've been humbled to see how our students, families, and team have come together to support one another through the pandemic, even as it disproportionately impacted our school community. This reality, combined with the continuing effects of housing segregation and inequitable access to healthcare and jobs, has exacerbated worries about both financial and physical security for much of our school community.

In fact, we've now been in virtual instruction for longer than we've been in person. Paradoxically, the ingenuity of our students, families, and team during this trying time has expanded our vision of what's possible - not just in how we deliver lessons, but in much more fundamental ways.

Our students in particular have shown us again and again that they are ready for more independence and leadership than we had imagined. Their smiling faces on Zoom each day are the constant reminder that, given the opportunity to choose, they are eager beyond measure to connect, learn and grow. Their daily commitment to their peers and to their own growth challenges us as educators to raise our own expectations higher still.

Today, we celebrate our progress and resilience as we submit this report, now in the latter half of our second year as a school.

To our students, our faculty and staff, our families, our funders and friends: we are well aware that this is a team sport. None of what we are about to share would be possible without each and every one of you. For that, we are grateful.

Together, we will realize the vision of KC Girls Prep to ensure young women growing up on KC's east side have every opportunity to use their voices, succeed in college, and lead impactful, meaningful lives. Together, we will make a difference. Thank you.

Respectfully,  
Tara Haskins, Founding School Leader  
Tom Krebs, Founding CEO  
Christine Kemper, Founder and board chair

## **Kansas City Girls Preparatory Academy**

5000 East 17th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64127  
816.268.2573  
info@kcgpa.org  
**kcgpa.org**

## **Board of Directors**

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## **Our Mission**

We develop young women to use their voices, succeed in college, and lead impactful, meaningful lives.

Three core values:

- **Community:** We trust and support one another in sisterhood.
- **Growth:** We are constantly growing to be our best selves.
- **Freedom:** We create opportunities to think, speak, and act with courage and purpose.

## **Our Vision**

Provide a college preparatory experience through academic and social development that will allow students to pursue their own educational and professional goals.



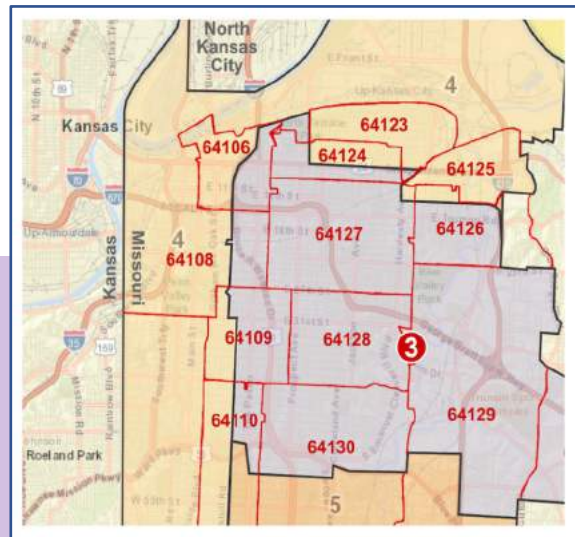
## Who We Are

We believe in the power of education to transform lives. Our explicit focus on inclusive practices affirms young women of all backgrounds and ensures they approach academics with confidence.

There is no admissions testing. There is no tuition. There is just one requirement. It's simple; girls in the public school district boundaries entering fifth, sixth, or seventh grade are welcome to enroll.

Girls Prep is an affiliate the [Young Women's Leadership Network](#), a national network of single-gender schools, and is sponsored by the Missouri Charter Public School Commission.

We provide tuition-free instruction that recognizes the social and emotional needs of our students while engaging them with rich literature, accurate and multicultural history, intensive learning in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics), and meaningful enrichment opportunities.



We are located at the heart of KC's east side. We embrace our community's incredibly rich, diverse cultural heritage that has been too often undervalued because of racial segregation.

***"A diverse staff is really important to me. I love the teachers so much!"***

## SEL, Mental Health, and Basic Needs



### **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

Girls Prep's social-emotional programming proactively supports students in developing a strong sense of identity, building authentic relationships, and determining how students will best contribute to their community. Rather than over-relying on traditional, punitive discipline measures, Girls Prep uses Restorative Justice techniques to repair harm and restore relationships, while providing for accountability and healing.

Daily small-group Pride (advisory) time is focused on community building and sisterhood. Students also participate in Circle twice weekly. Pride leaders have biweekly one-on-one check-ins with students to establish strong, positive relationships. Girls Prep's licensed clinical social worker is also available to support students through open office hours, one-on-one sessions, and small group sessions.

When a community commitment is broken, all individuals involved have an opportunity to reflect on their intent and their impact, and to discuss the path forward. These proactive SEL

structures support students in seeing themselves as part of a true community where they have the space to learn from mistakes and make better choices over time.

### **Mental Health**

Girls Prep partners with a wide variety of agencies to support families in accessing publicly available mental health services. Unfortunately, these services often have limited capacity, which has been stretched even further due to COVID-19's disproportionate impact on our school community. Families may need to wait months to access urgently needed services, if they can access them at all. Girls Prep continues to support students' social-emotional health via community-building, peer-to-peer engagement, and supportive check-ins with adults.

Due to the heightened needs at this time, Girls Prep hired a part-time counselor and a full-time licensed clinical social worker to address a range of mental health and safety needs through a combination of case management and direct service. Case management provides direct and indirect support for emerging family

*"I love that we are creating something new. I also love that you can see everyone's passion for kids and our work. It inspires me to stay in this work and be a better educator!"*



needs such as housing assistance, food, rent/utilities, employment, transportation, and legal issues. Meanwhile, Girls Prep also provided counseling services for dozens of students to meet a wide variety of pressing needs ranging from dealing with the aftermath of gun violence to developing strategies to manage strong emotions. This direct partnership with our families has helped to ensure that crises don't spiral and that students and families feel supported in meeting an often overwhelming range of needs.

### **Basic Needs**

It is part of Girls Prep's ongoing mission to connect students and families with resources and support. While it is tempting to focus only on academic achievement, we know that building a community means taking care of our team and our families, especially during this pandemic.

As we navigate this COVID-19 experience, Girls Prep is uniquely positioned to lift up our

families, drawing upon their strengths, supporting them, and creating equitable learning experiences for young women in Kansas City. Staff check in with each family biweekly via phone or in-person visits (at a safe physical distance while wearing masks). Girls Prep continues to develop new partnerships to handle the challenges related to COVID-19 ranging from non-profit social services organizations to community faith-based organizations.

Many families have unfortunately been experiencing a heightened lack of food access. The Community Eligibility Provision allows Girls Prep to offer free meals to all students. Throughout the year, we provided 113 households with weekly meal kits (one week's worth of breakfast, lunch, and snack) for all children in the home, via school pick-up and home delivery. We have made and will continue to make available thousands of meal kits and supplies for our families in need, 100% of whom have participated.

***"What freedom means for me is being yourself. We learn more about our voices and being heard. Even around the world. That's what freedom means for me in school."***

## **STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math**



Long-standing but biased assumptions about which students will be successful in STEAM, and the academic and financial support that follows, has significantly affected access to STEAM advanced degrees and careers for women, and especially women of color (Carlana 2019 and OECD 2019). We prioritize strong STEAM programming to build conceptual understanding and interdisciplinary connections in content areas that open doors to a vast array of future opportunities for young women.

STEAM curricula at Girls Prep are inquiry-based, rely on content-focused literacy development, and emphasize principles of scientific thinking and interdisciplinary connections with students' math learning. Students engage in an integrated science,

technology, and engineering class alongside art and mathematics classes that start daily with the exploration of new concepts via discussion of complex problems that students have not yet encountered.

STEAM projects give students opportunities to problem-solve in unique ways, utilizing a variety of methods. By experiencing trial and error, learning how to take risks, and reflecting upon the results, students get away from the commonly used approach of applying a known method or formula to solve a set of problems. STEAM curricula give students a chance to engage in hands-on, experiential learning. These opportunities level the playing field so that all students acquire the mindsets, skills, and knowledge to pursue a wide variety of STEAM careers in their futures.

***"They make us stronger by teaching us. They teach us math and science and stuff that I don't know, that I can get to know. And that makes us stronger!"***

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS: MATHEMATICS



Strong conceptual and procedural mathematical thinking is an important prerequisite to advanced STEAM learning. State test scores in math for incoming students demonstrated that the majority of our students came to us with academic gaps caused directly by systemic opportunity gaps in our education system for our east side community.

In mathematics, only 16% of our incoming students scored proficient or advanced on their prior state assessments, while 84% scored at the basic or below basic level. As we saw strong growth in our first year, we were disappointed by the cancellation of state assessments due to Covid-19.

Girls Prep attributes its students' growth to its exceptional faculty and its participation in a

selective, national cohort of schools working with a rigorous math curriculum: the Achievement First Navigator program. Schools in this network use common interim assessments to measure student progress over time. All of these schools have long-standing track records of success.

It is important to note that many of these schools begin working with their students prior to Girls Prep's 5th-grade entry point. By the January interim assessment, Girls Prep students were scoring highest of all schools in this national network, with an average proficiency of 28% on Common Core State Standards (CCSS)-aligned interim assessments that are more rigorous than the Missouri state assessment. This is an increase of 12 percentage points from prior year state assessment results.

***"My daughter had such a successful year this year. I feel the transition to home based learning went very smoothly for her and I was impressed with how the school changed things up to meet needs as they arose."***

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS: ENGLISH & HUMANITIES



Girls Prep offers rich English coursework focused on immersion in novels paired with rich nonfiction text to build relevant world knowledge. Paired with this class, a Humanities course combines the disciplines of English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies/History. These courses are grounded in the reality that when literature, historical, and world knowledge are taught in an integrated manner, learning becomes more meaningful and authentic. Just as importantly, our content-focused approach to literacy development also builds the knowledge needed to comprehend complex, grade-level text.

Unfortunately, as in mathematics, only 19% of incoming students scored proficient or

advanced while 81% scored at the basic or below basic level. This again shows the impacts of the gap in educational options available in our community. We were pleased to see strong growth due to our teachers' and students' hard work, despite the pandemic's disruption to our usual assessment process in early 2020.

Girls Prep students demonstrated strong growth on rigorous, CCSS-aligned interim assessments. Schools that are new to using these assessments for ELA typically score at 15-20% proficient. Girls Prep students averaged 38% proficiency, in keeping with the top-performing schools in the state. This represents an increase of 19 percentage points and a doubling of the proficiency percentage from the previous year's state assessment results.

***"As a parent, at my old school I felt like I had to be reactive, not proactive. I like that you truly want to partner with me."***



## COMMUNITY IMPACT



Gender and race matter in schooling, not because girls learn differently, but because normative social and cultural beliefs often obstruct the progress of young women, especially young women of color. These beliefs play a prominent role not just in the classroom, but across entire school systems.

School performance data for KC Girls Prep's priority zip codes bear out the reality of this lack of access to strong school options. In 2019, only four out of fourteen schools within KC Girls Prep's priority zip codes had more than one-third of students proficient in math and reading. That same year, secondary schools serving these zip codes had a four-year graduation rate of 71.7% and average composite ACT scores of 16. This is significantly lower than the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks of 20 for ELA and general education courses, 22 for

mathematics, and 26 for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) coursework.

Girls Prep believes that transforming the life of a girl transforms families and impacts the whole community. The quality of schools has often been studied in any number of ways, including class sizes, literacy performance, funding received, and graduation rates. What can get lost in the process is discovering what engages learners, what motivates them, and what inspires them. Students at girls schools are more likely than their female peers at coed schools to experience an environment that welcomes an open and safe exchange of ideas. Nearly 87% of girls' school students feel their opinions are respected at their school as compared to 58% of girls at coed schools (Holmgren, 2016; National Coalition of Girls' Schools).

***"I have the opportunity to truly build a space that I would have wanted to attend as a child. A space where teachers look like me, books have characters who reflect my experiences, and we work in partnership with families."***



During this pandemic, Girls Prep has been critically aware of the need to bridge the digital divide for our students and families to mitigate expanding educational inequities. Girls Prep believes we have a responsibility to help our students and families overcome obstacles to accessing virtual classes and curricular resources during COVID-19.

Girls Prep has worked with SchoolSmartKC, the Kemper Family Foundation and the Sprint Foundation to purchase computers and hotspots for each student attending Girls Prep. All 150 students received free Chromebooks and hotspots to ensure access to live, synchronous daily instruction in all core content and enrichment classes. Live video lessons are led by our team of teachers, and students receive a weekly class schedule that includes links to all live Zoom classes. All students are required to attend each virtual class and Girls Prep communicates

immediately if a student is not present in a class. When/if a student shows signs of struggling in a content area, mandatory tutoring hours are assigned during a teacher's office hours. In addition, support for Exceptional Learners and/or English as a New Language Learners is provided through remote sessions.

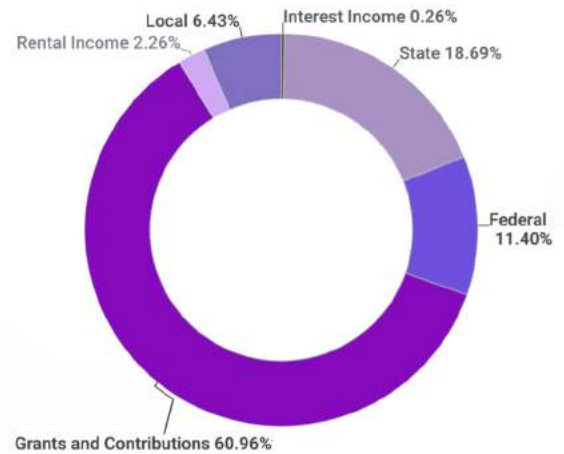
The education of young adults no longer happens solely during regular business hours, seven hours a day, ten months of the year. Girls Prep students and families are utilizing online platforms, creating a hub of activity, learning new skills, and enjoying new experiences on demand. The Girls Prep community remains inspired by these learning connections, community mentors, character development initiatives, and cooperative approaches to creating a great school experience for students, teachers, and families alike.

***“Pride, and its support system was beneficial for our student and to maintain connectivity between home and school. The responsivity from leadership and staff in response to questions and concerns was excellent.”***

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

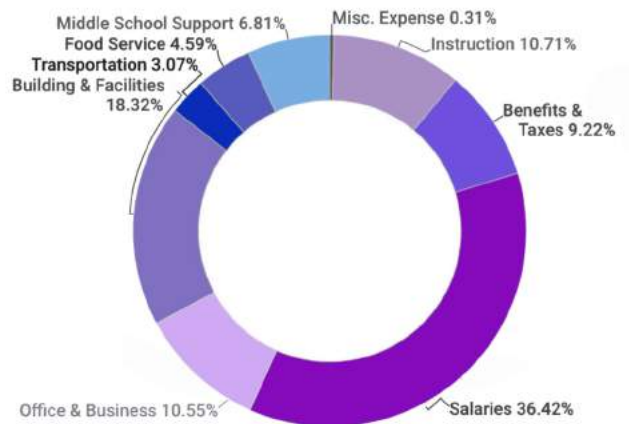
## 2020 Revenue

	Academy	Foundation	Total
Local	301,421	31,735	333,156
State	968,100	0	968,100
Federal	590,367	0	590,367
Grants and Contributions	866,289	2,290,940	3,157,229
Rental Income	0	117,000	117,000
Interest Income	0	13,311	13,311
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>2,726,177</b>	<b>2,452,986</b>	<b>5,048,852</b>



## 2020 Expenses

	Academy	Foundation	Total
Salaries	1,074,164	95,904	1,170,068
Benefits & Taxes	279,788	16,253	296,041
Instruction	344,137	0	344,137
Building & Facilities	379,258	209,392	588,650
Office & Business	309,482	29,367	338,849
Transportation	98,551	0	98,551
Food Service	147,456	0	147,456
Middle School Support	0	218,750	218,750
Misc. Expense	0	10,063	10,063
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,632,836</b>	<b>579,729</b>	<b>3,212,565</b>



*"This was the first time in a long time that I've felt so happy and ecstatic about my daughter's education. My daughter feels great about her academics... in the past she wasn't as confident in her learning or learning environment but now she is so engaged and happy!"*

## OUR DONORS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

In addition to generous individuals and businesses across our community, many area charitable organizations have provided significant and ongoing support since our founding, including:



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Some of our significant philanthropic partners awarded KC Girls Prep funding through nationally competitive processes, including:

**Charter School Growth Fund**  
**Federal Charter Schools Grant**  
**NewSchools Venture Fund**

Ann and Andrew Tisch Fund  
Bartlett & Company Grain Charitable Foundation  
Brady Family Fund  
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Turn The Page KC  
Vivian and Hymie J. Sosland Charitable Trust  
W. K. Kellogg Foundation

***“What I love about my school is they let you be who you are... They really care about who you are! I mean they teach you well too! And they make you brave enough to speak up with courage. And they make you learn more about yourself. That’s what I like about my school.”***