

## **EASTSIDE CHARTER SCHOOL**

### **Funding Needs 2021-2022**

#### **Capital Funding Needs**

EastSide (ESCS) is entering our 25th year of operation! What better way to celebrate our long rooted success than embarking on major capital improvements to update our school. EastSide currently resides in the former Martin Luther King School building which dates back to the 1960s. When EastSide was given the building as its home it took it on with an \$8MM deferred maintenance burden. Through significant and appreciated philanthropy, EastSide has reduced that burden by making substantial upgrades – e.g., replacing the roof, new boilers and improvements to all the electrical service to the building. More recently philanthropic support enabled us to replace decades old lighting throughout the building with state of the art fixtures and systems providing an improved workspace for students and staff and offering energy cost savings. But deferred and ongoing maintenance needs carry forward still, and the 60+ year-old building continues to show its age, needing more care. This past year the school was able to install beautiful new floors in 98% of the building while also revitalizing the exterior of our building. The exterior revitalization included cleaning and replacing windows while also painting portions of the building to match our school colors. We are also happy to announce that we plan to install permanent air conditioning in all of our classrooms which are currently cooled with window units. This system will vastly improve our ability to cool the school as well as assist in combating airborne pathogens and viruses such as Covid-19. These improvements are long overdue and only scratch the surface of what we have planned for campus.

We pride ourselves on serving the community and creating a family atmosphere. As our community transforms through the REACH Riverside/Purpose Built Communities initiative we want to create a state-of-the-art facility worthy of our families. For this reason ESCS is proud to announce we are purchasing a warehouse on the corner of our property. The additional property will help us expand our current building to include a STEM HUB. This state-of-the-art facility will be one of a kind servicing our APEX (Middle School Honors) and STEM programs, while also doubling as a community center after-school, weekends, and in the summer. This ambitious endeavor will cost \$10.5M for the new building with \$500K worth of furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E) to retrofit our classrooms and administrative offices, and an additional \$50K for a makerspace. It will be the premier center for parents and students in the city to learn about STEM, receive training and interact with businesses for internships and job opportunities.

#### **STEM HUB: New Construction**

1. New STEM HUB **(\$10,500,000)**
2. STEM HUB FF&E **(\$500,000)**
3. STEM HUB Makerspace **(\$150,000)**

**Total Costs for STEM HUB: \$11,150,000**

#### **Main Campus Capital Improvements**

1. ADA, Life Safety and Upgrades to Main Campus **(\$3,500,000)**
  - a. Fire Protection: Install Sprinkler System **(\$1,887,581)**
  - b. ADA Code Requirements (toilet, classroom door, water foundation and signage updates) **(\$1,322,500)**
  - c. Auditorium Upgrades: **(\$289,919)**

2. Replace old blinds throughout building with blackout flexshades to complement state-of-the-art lighting improvements (**\$39,787**)
  3. Repair/replace and standardize exterior fencing, including replacement of chain link fencing (**\$80,000**)
- Total costs for Main Campus Capital Improvements: \$3,619,787**

## Operating Needs

### APEX Honors Program: **\$267,413**

APEX honors continues to be a massive success going into its third year. See the **EastSide Charter School 2020-2021 Highlights** for an in-depth look at last year's program. The program began with 25 students in year one, grew to 32 students in year two and is now up to 61 students across grades 5 - 8. The program has gotten so large that students now attend classes at the state-of-the-art facility owned by the Teen Warehouse. Once the STEM HUB is built on campus the APEX program will then move back to our main campus where it will have the space to house 200 students, many of which will be part of our APEX Honors program. With the program expansion we hired 4 additional teachers to support the current student growth. Unfortunately, to fully support these costs the program would require another 60 students which won't happen until our STEM HUB is constructed due to limited space in the Teen Warehouse. The school is looking for funding to support the salaries and OECs of these 4 additional teachers in our APEX Honors program so we can continue to offer the highest quality education possible for these students.

### Education During a Pandemic **\$20,000**

As most schools EastSide has adapted at each new hurdle brought on by the pandemic. At each step we have leaned heavily on our ability to adapt and innovate to solve problems brought on by the pandemic. Education has not gotten easier this year as the majority of students are returning, but EastSide is always ready to rise to the challenge.

The school has been blessed with significant Federal support during the pandemic, but the majority of those funds have or will go towards technology and capital improvements. As the majority of our students have returned full-time we have seen a significant increase in the amount of PPE and cleaning supplies we are using. We have received generous donations from funders to support us through the beginning of the year, but we are still consuming those products at a high rate.

To meet the current rate of demand EastSide will need \$7,500 to support student masks for the year and another \$12,500 for classroom cleaning supplies. Bringing the total PPE request to \$20,000 for the year.

### Mental Health Supports **\$238,481**

State funding is slowly starting to catchup with the importance of mental health, but is still lagging behind in the necessary funding needs to properly service our children. Unlike Districts, Charters are unable to seek tuition tax to help meet the needs of these intense or complex students. Often times the funds we receive from districts are a fraction of the funding they receive to support the same children. At EastSide we work hard to ensure the services our students receive are on par or even better than traditional districts regardless of the funding we receive. To that extend EastSide made the decision this year to bring on a full-time psychologist for the first time in our history!

Students returning to school after some being virtual for over a year brings its own complications and means our students may need more support than in the past. With this in mind we proactively decided to bring on a full-time psychologist to help as we support students transitioning back to school full-time.

EastSide is seeking \$105,000 which cover costs related to hiring a full-time school psychologist, manipulatives and payments to contractors for related services (speech and occupational therapy).

The reality of the student body at ESCS is that it is a high needs group of children. At EastSide approximately 15% of our students have IEPs (Individualized Education Programs) requiring special supports from the school. However, the vast majority of our children have mental health needs arising from the stress and dangerous circumstances of their day-to-day lives, even though their circumstances may not require an IEP. In terms of significant factors, such as exposure to trauma, ESCS recently (2017-2018) conducted an Adverse Childhood Experience (A.C.E.) study. Such studies, developed by CDC-Kaiser Permanente in the late 1990s, look at physical and mental health outcomes based on exposure to trauma. Our study found that at least 88% of ESCS 3rd-8th graders have experienced at least 2 or more adverse childhood experiences and an associated “difficulty” as a result. Delaware's ACEs data indicate that 23% of children from birth to age 18 were exposed to 2 or more ACEs, and that those children were 5 times more likely to be reported in fair or poor health...” At ESCS 88% of our children have had such experiences! EastSide is aware that the pandemic could have a drastic impact on the trauma experienced by our students and plans to conduct the ACEs study again in the 2021-2022 school year to better understand where are students are and what we need to do continue supporting them.

Because ESCS has such a high population of kids exposed to trauma, many of these kids experience some kind of socio-emotional, learning, coping, and/or behavioral difficulty which negatively impacts the learning experiences of the balance of the students at the school, as classrooms are disrupted and learning environments challenged by the conduct of those children. In short, the school cannot survive, pursuing its mission, without the services of contract mental health therapists, working in concert with the school's staff psychologist and other school support teams.

The majority of our staff are trained for the delivery of general education services and do not come to our school with a deep understanding of working with kids with distinct and deep impairments. And although we have a Mental Health Team (MHT) that is larger than that of many schools - including a school psychologist, a Behavior Health Consultant, Family Crisis Therapist, Behavior Interactionist, contracted occupational therapist, contracted speech therapist, Guidance Counselor, Social Worker, Deans of Students, and Behavior Specialists – the need seriously challenges the ability of the Team to cover all demands of our students.

Teachers throughout our school ask for therapeutic materials for their classrooms – such as stress balls, chew toys, flexible seating (cushions, pads, manipulatable tables/chairs), noise cancelling headphones, resistance bands, etc. Additional resources for augmented occupational therapy targeted at ADHD and overstimulation (sensory & tactile impairments) are needed to help our MHT support, and our teachers see to the needs of, our student “high-flyers” (students requiring maximum attention and care during the day).

Our Occupational Therapist and Physical therapist consult, continuously, with staff on how to meet the needs of our students on a day-to-day basis in all settings. At EastSide we have a high population of students suffering from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and developmental delays in fine and gross motor skills. Supplemental materials, including therapeutic manipulatives and related materials, will assist teachers in helping students calm body movements and de-stimulate in order to be able to focus on academic tasks at hand. Additionally, we work continuously to meet our students' complex and individual needs which, over the last few years, have included opening a smaller setting, multi-grade

classroom to serve our students in need of extensive modified work, multiple therapies, time to work on life and functional skills, as well as extra adult support. Such a classroom not only requires additional support staff, but also benefits significantly from alternate seating options, and various tools to help with fine and gross motor development. The cost of such materials desired range from approximately \$3,500-\$5,000. Many of these resources will last the entire year but they will need to be replaced annually.

**PBS [Positive Behavior Supports]:**

**\$30,000**

The funding sought covers the costs of a portion of the salary and other employee costs of the lead supervisory staff for the PBS program; as well as the costs of materials (books, teacher manuals, and student class materials for the program).

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a behavior management system to be employed at ESCS in the 2020-2021 school year. It is used to understand what causes an individual's challenging behavior.

Acting out in class or losing focus is a key detrimental influence on student achievement. And the incidents of mal-behavior as they occur upset not only the educational goals of the actor, but the broader class as well. Teachers' ability to remain on task is interrupted. The entire process is a drag on scholastic advancement. With our particular students such interruptions or negative influences occur often during the school/classroom day.

Students' inappropriate behaviors are difficult to change because they are functional; they serve a purpose for them; the behaviors are supported by reinforcement in their environment. In the case of our students/children, often adults in the children's environment will reinforce undesired behaviors because the child will receive objects and/or attention because of his behavior. The positive behavior support process involves goal identification, information gathering, hypothesis development, support plan design, implementation and monitoring.

In order for techniques to work to decrease undesired behavior, they should include: feasibility, desirability, and effectiveness. PBS strategies enable teachers and parents to affect a child's ability to participate in community and school activities. Positive behavior support is increasingly being recognized as a strategy that meets these criteria. By changing stimulus and reinforcement in the environment and teaching the child to strengthen deficit skill areas the student's behavior changes in ways that allow him/her to be included in the general education setting. Key skills affected are communication skills, social skills, and self-management skills. Where other treatment plans have failed re-directive therapy allows for a positive interaction between teachers and children. Positive behavior support is successful in the school setting because it is primarily a teaching method.

Our PBS programming includes positive reinforcement - the earning of access to field trips; participation in "Fly Fridays" (weekly incentives allowing students to celebrate their hard work each week); and access to the cashing in of their weekly earned chits from the school's SOAR Store (Safety First; Own Your Actions; Act Responsibly; Remain Reflective - a school culture theme for the year). All of these benefits are tied directly to positive behaviors throughout the school week. By using a behavioral curriculum specifically tied to PBS, teachers are able to incentivize and change behavior by students.

**Performing Arts in School:**

**\$190,000**

The funding sought covers the costs of personnel, equipment and supplies to support Drama and Art during the regular school day.

Charter schools do not receive direct funding to support arts in school. EastSide has a long standing tradition of arts programs over the years ranging from a drumline, visual arts instruction, string orchestra, as well as drama and art classes. We have always placed a high value on the arts recognizing the compelling evidence connecting student learning in the **arts** to a wide array of academic and social benefits. As we continue to grow we are looking to improve our programs and offerings while also improving the spaces in which they are presented to our students. Both our art room and auditorium are severely dated and require overalls to enhance the spaces. Some of these improvements include sound equipment, stage lighting, sound boards, spotlights, and a vast amount of art consumables for class.

Arts in schools inspire our children and we have seen how improved programs with quality spaces and supplies can impact the way students approach school and these classes.

**After School Activities:**

**\$25,000**

EastSide is excited to start offering after school activities again this year after being forced by the pandemic to cancel them for the '20-'21 school year. EastSide offerings are diverse ranging from tutoring to 6 interscholastic sports teams as well as 2 club options, Interscholastic teams compete against area charter schools in coed soccer, boys basketball, girls basketball, girls volleyball; boys track, girls track; and JV coed basketball. Club sports include: flag football and basketball skills training. EastSide also has plans to introduce baseball to our students. In addition to sports offerings, the After School Program offers various club options which have included chess, drama, and mentoring.

These programs provide students with meaningful activities after school, promoting positive peer relationships, team building and social development which are all essential for children as they mature.

