



2024-2025 Academic Year

# Annual Report

The North Wasco County District  
21 Education Foundation

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# From Our President

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Since its founding, the North Wasco County Education Foundation has brought together parents, educators, business leaders, and community members who share a belief that a strong public school system is essential to the health, growth, and vitality of our community and our region. Each year, that shared vision becomes reality through the programs and opportunities we are able to provide for students and educators across the district.

This year, we are proud to celebrate meaningful milestones made possible by your generosity. Our Classroom Mini-Grants program, one of the Foundation’s most impactful initiatives, continues to grow in both demand and reach. In the 2024-2025 academic year we awarded more grants than ever before, supporting hands-on learning in the areas of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, music and arts enrichment, classroom innovation, and student-centered projects across the district. Teachers consistently tell us how these resources spark creativity, deepen engagement, and foster a love of learning in their classrooms.

We also advanced our strategic planning process to strengthen the Foundation’s long-term capacity and clarify the ways we can best support district students in the years ahead. This work positions the Foundation for sustainable growth, clearer communication, and expanded partnerships aligned with district priorities.

What began as a grassroots effort to support local classrooms has grown into a vital source of enrichment for students, educators, and schools throughout our community. None of this would be possible without you, our donors, partners, and champions of public education. Your belief in the importance of opportunity and leveling the playing field continues to shape what is possible for students in North Wasco County.

As we look ahead to 2026, we are energized by the momentum we’ve built together. From deepening our impact through Classroom Mini-Grants to exploring new programs that support science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics, career exploration, and student well-being, the Education Foundation is committed to meeting the evolving needs of our students and educators.

On behalf of the North Wasco County Education Foundation, thank you for your partnership, your generosity, and your dedication to empowering students and strengthening our schools. Together, we are building a brighter future for every learner in our district.

With gratitude,

Candy Armstrong  
President of the Board of Directors



## 2024-2025 Board of Directors

Candy Armstrong	Carolyn Bernal-	Kurt Evans	Ken Onstott
Jose Aparicio -	(Ex-Officio)	Mic Kelly	Julie Schilling
(School Board Rep.)	Codie Carpenter	Rymmel Lovell	David Wagenblast
Lucille Begay	Anne Coddling	Andrew Meyers	Andrea Witherspoon



# About Us

*Our Mission is to foster community, staff, and corporate support for the academic, artistic, athletic and cultural enrichment of the students of North Wasco County School District 21.*



**2,774**  
Students



**423**  
Teachers

As a supporting organization, the North Wasco County Education Foundation has been proudly serving our community for 29 years. Since our founding in 1996, we've been committed to enhancing educational opportunities to students in The Dalles and Mosier.

We are dedicated to supporting access to a robust and well-rounded education for all children in the D21 school district.

The North Wasco County School District 21 Education Foundation is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to enriching the educational experience for students across our district. We unite community members, educators, corporate partners, and volunteers to support academic, artistic, athletic, and cultural initiatives that empower our students to excel.

Guided by a committed thirteen-member volunteer board of directors and a part-time Administrative Director, we work collaboratively to secure vital resources and foster community engagement. Through innovative programs and strategic partnerships, our mission is to create lasting, positive impacts on the educational environment, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive.

## Our Core Programs

- 01

**Classroom Mini-Grants**

We empower educators by awarding small grants to innovative, creative, and timely classroom projects that enhance learning. We have distributed nearly 100 grants over \$45,000 to support classroom programming within the last 5 years.
- 02

**Golden Apple Awards**

The Golden Apple Awards program annually honors four outstanding staff members within the D21 school district, each recognized with a \$500 award for their invaluable contributions.
- 03

**Fiscal Sponsorship**

We proudly support small district-connected groups by serving as their fiscal sponsor. By offering administrative structure and financial oversight, we help these initiatives succeed and make a meaningful, lasting impact on students and schools.

# The Golden Apple Awards

The Golden Apple Awards are an annual recognition program dedicated to celebrating excellence in education within the North Wasco County School District. This initiative honors outstanding administrators, teachers, and staff who demonstrate dedication, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to student success.

Nominations open in mid-April and close in mid-May. Award recipients are surprised and celebrated at their respective schools just before the end of the school year in early June and receive a \$500 check. This heartfelt recognition ensures that educators and staff feel valued for their dedication before students depart for summer break.



**2021**

In the program's inaugural year, 30 nominations were received with community engagement blossoming.



**2022 & 2023**

The program continued to gain traction with over 50 nominees received each year and increased diversity.



**2024 & 2025**

The program saw its largest number of nominations yet. Runner-up recipients received a coffee gift card.

## 2025 Golden Apple Award Winners

- 1 Luke Vieira – Colonel Wright Elementary School**  
Administrator/Principal/Other Category
- 2 Sarah Hammel – Dry Hollow Elementary School**  
Teacher Category
- 3 Gabriel Judah – The Dalles High School**  
Teacher Category
- 4 Heidi Bodolay – Colonel Wright Elementary School**  
Classified/Support Staff Category



# Classroom Mini-Grants

The North Wasco County Education Foundation awards Classroom Mini-Grants bi-annually to support innovative, hands-on learning experiences across D21. These grants ensure teachers have the tools, materials, and inspiration they need to engage students, spark creativity, and strengthen academic success.



## Examples of Impactful Classroom Projects for the 2024-2025 School Year

Here are a few examples of how teachers used NWCEF Mini-Grant funding during the 2024–2025 school year to enrich student learning across the district:

- Chenoweth Elementary – Swing set installation supporting collaborative play and physical development in partnership with CGCC, newcomer English vocabulary kits and the SECRETS Environmental Program with field trips to the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center.
- Dry Hollow Elementary – Privacy screens for focused learning, interactive science review stations supported by parent volunteers, and Oregon Zoo field trips for first graders, supporting science and environmental learning.
- The Dalles Middle School – Universal Design for Learning tools for special education students; Native American–authored library books; reading intervention headsets; performance and reading of Novio Boy.
- Mosier Community School – Mobile literacy resources for small-group instruction and a new literacy group space; interactive learning for kindergarten.
- Colonel Wright Elementary – OMSI Overnight Science Adventure for fifth graders; SECRETS science curriculum support; Next-Gen Science Readers; “Life-long Learners” resource materials; physical education equipment.
- The Dalles High School – STEM Club Maker Space enhancements and support for students to participate in Festival of Bands and take a University of Oregon music tour.

## 2024–2025 Mini-Grants at a Glance

During the 2024–2025 school year, NWCEF awarded a record number of Classroom Mini-Grants, thanks in particular to a \$15,000 grant from Google and generous donations from our community, which supported projects across all grade levels and subject areas. Teachers used these funds to bring STEM exploration, arts education, literacy support, CTE pathways, wellness activities, and inclusive learning tools directly into their classrooms.



**Thank you Google!**  
\$15,000 Donated

22	\$15,463	1,238	29	\$23,112
Grants Awarded	Awarded Funds	Students Impacted	Grants Requested	Requested Funds



# Fiscal Sponsorship

Small, community-oriented groups and projects that are in line with our mission that are too small to obtain their own 501(c)(3) status operate under the umbrella of the Education Foundation. We have found that this helps provide them stability and staying power, while keeping their costs down for their all-volunteer led efforts. It also helps us coordinate fundraising efforts and allows donations to them to be tax-deductible. We do better by working together!

## Chenoweth Booster Club

The Chenoweth Booster Club is a dedicated, volunteer-powered group of parents and staff who work together to strengthen the school community. Through organizing fundraisers, supporting beloved events like Skate Nights, providing meals during Teacher Appreciation Week, and funding student enrichment opportunities—from playground improvements to scholarships for Chenoweth alumni—the Booster Club plays a vital role in creating a fun, connected, and supportive environment for every CES student.

## The Dalles Booster Club

The Dalles Booster Club supports extracurricular and athletic programs within D21, encouraging student participation in sports, music, clubs and other enrichment opportunities. Through volunteer efforts and fundraising, the Booster Club helps ensure that students have access to activities beyond the classroom that build school spirit and personal growth.

## The Dalles School Archive Museum

The Dalles School Archive Museum, located on the Wahtonka campus, preserves and showcases D21's rich educational history, is run by volunteers and open seasonally to the public; it serves as both a resource for former students and community members to reconnect with their past and a living record of the district's legacy.

## The Dalles Sister City Association

The Dalles Sister City Association fosters cultural, educational, and civic connections between The Dalles and its sister-city partners. Through events, exchanges, and collaborative initiatives, the Association helps broaden community awareness and global friendship, enriching the experiences of students, families, and residents alike.

## Senior Parents Committee & Banners

The Senior Parents Committee and its associated Banner Project are parent-led efforts focused on celebrating graduating seniors at The Dalles High School. Through collaborative fundraising, event planning, and senior year traditions, this group fosters community pride, recognition, and a sense of closure and celebration for students entering the next chapter after high school.

## TDHS Scholarship Committee (501(c)(3) status)

TDHS Scholarship Committee identifies, raises funds for, and awards scholarships to graduating students of The Dalles High School. While operating with its own nonprofit status, the Committee also serves on the board of the broader Education Foundation of D21, helping ensure that scholarship opportunities remain an integral part of the district's commitment to post-secondary readiness.

# Strategic Planning

In 2025, the NWCEF embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process to clarify its mission, strengthen operations, and ensure deeper alignment with North Wasco County School District 21’s goals for student success. With guidance from board members, district leadership, and community partners, the Foundation identified key priorities such as financial realignment, expanded community engagement, clearer board roles, and enhanced support for classroom enrichment. This plan now serves as a roadmap for NWCEF to support the district by strengthening collaboration, increasing fundraising capacity, and positioning the Foundation to better support the evolving needs of D21 students and educators.

## Strategic Direction 1. Positioning for Sustained Engagement

The Foundation is focused on strengthening its internal operations, financial management, and alignment with district priorities.

- Complete the Foundation’s QuickBooks transition and integrate affiliate accounts for clear reporting.
- Partner with local professionals to ensure compliance, accountability, and fiscal transparency.
- Align grantmaking with district goals around belonging, career-connected learning, and equity.
- Conduct annual reviews of financials, policies, and board procedures to guide improvement.

## Strategic Direction 2. Revitalizing & Solidifying Board Purpose

NWCEF is renewing its focus on effective board leadership, purpose-driven culture, and clear organizational structure.

- Conduct annual board self-assessments and set measurable goals tied to this plan.
- Provide ongoing training in nonprofit governance, fundraising, and equity.
- Update bylaws and committee structures to clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Develop succession planning for key officers and ensure 100% board giving participation.

## Strategic Direction 3. Engaging & Expanding Community Involvement

The Foundation will deepen relationships with community members and broaden participation in education initiatives.

- Build partnerships with local businesses, civic groups, and service organizations to expand programs.
- Share impact stories through social media, newsletters, and community events.
- Expand annual giving and sponsorship campaigns to diversify funding.
- Create new volunteer and alumni engagement opportunities that celebrate public education.

## Accountability & Review

NWCEF will review progress annually, publish updates for transparency, and adjust strategies as community and district priorities evolve.

### THANK YOU

**Beset and Alton Counseling & Consulting**  
for their thoughtful leadership and facilitation of our 2025 Strategic Planning process!



# 2024-2025 Financials

## 2025 Strategic Planning & Financial Audit Statement

The financial figures shown are preliminary placeholders and may not reflect final FY 2024–25 numbers. NWCEF is currently completing a transition into QuickBooks and undergoing a financial audit as part of the organization’s strategic planning efforts initiated in August 2025. Updated and verified financials will be published once this process is complete.

The Education Foundation’s financials are presented on a fiscal year basis from July 1 – June 30. A local account holds assets such as transferable scholarships, teacher mini-grants, program funds, and reserves.

**Notable for FY 2024:**

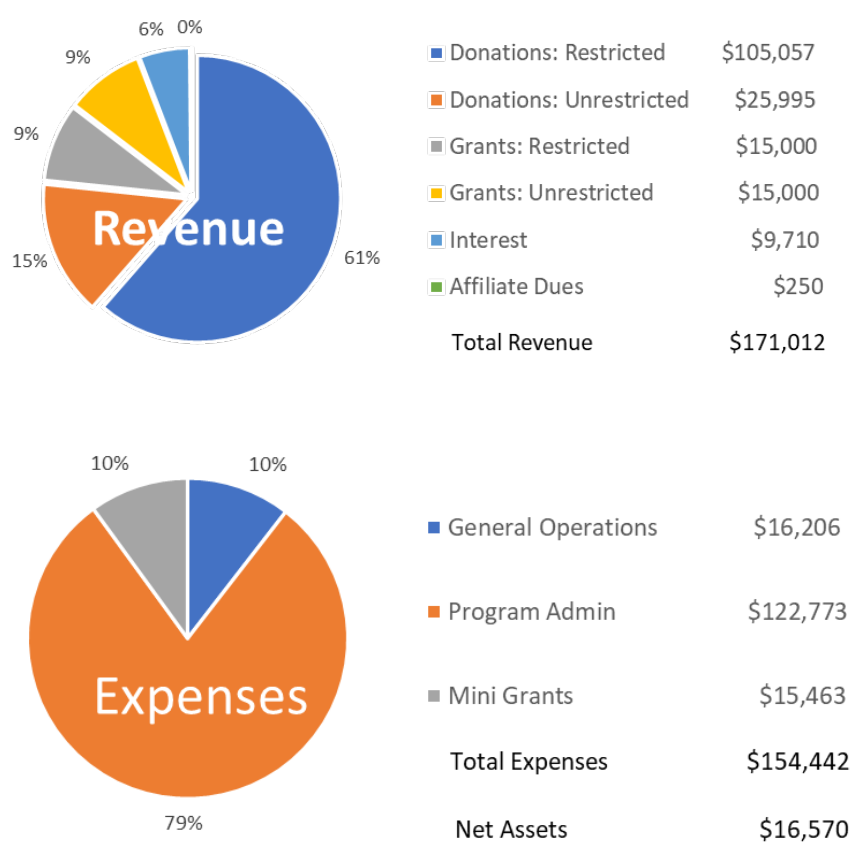
Total revenue increased due to new restricted donations. \$100K was held for the school district until disbursement for the Sid White Field announcement booth. Two grants were obtained – one for an elementary school and one for board training. An unrestricted Google grant was also received, along with many private donations.

Most program administration costs went to the booth. Other program costs included affiliate member transfers, other grant disbursements, and Golden Apple awards. Teacher mini-grant awards are carved out of the pie as a significant slice for the foundation.

Net assets or reserves for the fiscal year time period amounted to \$16, 570.

**Financial Note:**

Financial records for NWCEF affiliate and associate organizations have been managed independently during the 2024–2025 period. As the Education Foundation completes its current financial realignment and transitions to a unified accounting structure, consolidated and transparent financial reporting for these groups will be made available in future fiscal years.





# 2024-2025 Community Partners

## Corporate & Foundation Partners

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Benevity Causes	Sunshine Mill
Bi-Mart	Terra Cotta Gorge Co
Brick City Games	The Dalles Google Data Center
Burgerville	The Dalles Main Street
Columbia Gorge Toyota	The Ford Family Foundation
Emma's Bowtique	The Workshop
Freebridge Brewing	Vibe Consignment
Hattenhauer Enterprise	Wines on Second
Kiwanis - The Dalles, Oregon	

## Individual Donors

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Gerald Commander	Kenneth Onstott
David Cooper	Gene Parker
Casey Diss	Jessica Porter
Daniel Gillock	Israel Romero
Harold Haake	Ellen Ryssdal
Ada Marie Haake	Marilyn and Wilfried Smaka
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Donita Huskey-Wilson and Terrie Methvin	Daniel and Michele Spatz
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Robert and Joy Krein	Susie Thurman
Karol Magnuson-Hardin	Jean and Karl Vercouteren
Jim Martin	Richard and Elaine Walker
Donna Mollet	Matthew White
Veronica Ochoa	Tanya Williams

Thank You!!



Your donations—no matter the size—have a direct and immediate impact. To contribute, simply scan the QR code or send a check payable to the North Wasco County Education Foundation at the address provided below.



## Contact Us:



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