



Bear Lake
Education Foundation

Annual Report | 2023-2024

Message from the Chair

Dear Bear Lake Education Foundation (BLEF) supporters,

As Chair of the Bear Lake Education Foundation, I am honored to share the highlights of the 2023-2024 school year. This has been a year of growth and impact, made possible through the generosity of our donors and the dedication of our community. Together, we have supported teachers, empowered students, and strengthened the educational opportunities across the Bear Lake School District. I am proud of what we've accomplished and excited for what lies ahead.

This year, BLEF funded innovative classroom projects that foster creativity and academic excellence, helping students engage with learning in new and meaningful ways. From STEM initiatives to arts programs, the grants we provided enabled teachers to think outside the box and enrich their students' experiences. We also expanded our Senior Project Grants, giving students the resources to turn their ideas into projects that benefit the entire community, showcasing the leadership and vision of our next generation.

One of the proudest achievements this year was our growing scholarship program, which has supported graduating seniors in their pursuit of higher education. These scholarships are not just financial assistance; they represent our belief in the potential of every student to succeed and make a difference in the world. We are deeply grateful to our donors for making this possible.

As we look to the future, our commitment to innovation, equity, and academic excellence remains stronger than ever. We are excited to expand our partnerships with local businesses and corporate sponsors to continue funding life-changing programs. Your ongoing support is crucial in helping us meet the needs of students and teachers in the Bear Lake community.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are making a difference, and I look forward to what we will achieve in the coming year.

With gratitude,

Danny Tarbet

Chair, Bear Lake Education Foundation



Bear Lake

Education Foundation

Mission

The Bear Lake Education Foundation is dedicated to fostering academic excellence within the Bear Lake School District by providing vital resources that support innovation, enrichment, and equity. We empower educators and enhance educational opportunities, ensuring every student has the tools to succeed.

Vision

To create a thriving educational community where every student in the Bear Lake School District is equipped to reach their full potential, inspired by innovative teaching, enriched learning experiences, and equitable access to resources.

Support Innovative Teaching

Provide grants and funding for teachers to access new technologies, equipment, and educational materials.

Encourage and support professional development opportunities for educators to enhance their teaching practices.

Ensure Equity in Education

Identify and address gaps in resources and support to ensure all students have access to high-quality education.

Promote initiatives that support underrepresented and disadvantaged student populations.

Sustain and Grow Funding

Develop diverse and sustainable funding streams to support ongoing and future educational initiatives.

Conduct fundraising campaigns and events to increase financial support and awareness of BLEF's mission and impact.

Promote Enrichment Opportunities

Fund extracurricular programs, arts, and cultural initiatives that broaden students' learning experiences.

Facilitate partnerships with local organizations to bring diverse learning opportunities into the classroom.

Engage the Community

Foster strong relationships with local businesses, corporate donors, and philanthropic organizations to support our mission.

Encourage community involvement and volunteerism to enhance the educational environment.

Monitor and Evaluate Impact

Implement robust evaluation processes to measure the effectiveness of funded programs and initiatives.

Use data-driven insights to continuously improve and adapt our support strategies to meet evolving educational needs.

Learn how you can get involved at www.blefgives.org.



2023-2024 At a Glance

Focus

Expand our impact through increased funding for teacher grants and student scholarships.	Empower innovative educational programs that enhance the learning experience.	Provide equitable access to resources for underserved students.	Engage community partners and increase donor support to fund strategic initiatives.
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Financial Overview

Revenue

- **Public Donations:** \$21,205.60
- **Grants and Foundations:** \$25,500
- **Teacher Donations:** \$4,073.23
- **Fundraising Events:** \$8,682
- **Corporate Sponsorships:** \$2,000
- **Other Revenue:** \$506.71

Total Revenue: \$61,967.54

Expenditures

- **Teacher Grants:** \$21,085.46
- **Student Scholarships:** \$8,750
- **BLMS Lighting Project:** \$25,776.79
- **Senior Project Funding:** \$400
- **Administrative Costs:** \$1,245.93
- **Fundraising Expenses:** \$2,907.96

Total Expenditures: \$60,166.14

Programs & Initiatives

Teacher Grants

In the 2023-2024 school year, BLEF provided over \$21,000 in funding for teacher grants, allowing educators to bring creative and innovative learning opportunities into the classroom. These grants have supported projects ranging from new science lab equipment to art supplies, benefiting over XXX students.

Student Scholarships

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, BLEF awarded \$8,750 in scholarships to help graduating seniors pursue higher education. This funding has empowered students to attend colleges, universities, and vocational programs, giving them a head start on their future careers.

Stage Lighting for BLMS Auditorium

This year, BLEF contributed over \$25,000 toward the project, which was made possible by grants from the Idaho Commission on the Arts and F.M., Anne G., and Beverly B. Bistline Foundation as well as community donations. The new lighting system will significantly enhance student performances, community events, and productions hosted in the auditorium.

The financial overview includes information from June 1, 2023 - May 31, 2024.



Success Stories

Funding Stage Lighting in BLSD Auditorium

The Bear Lake School District celebrated the [installation of a state-of-the-art stage lighting system in its auditorium](#), a key venue for student performances and community events. The project was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Bear Lake Education Foundation and the community, including a grant from the Idaho Commission on the Arts and over \$16,000 raised locally. Executive Director Shannon Marx highlighted the project's success as a testament to community teamwork, emphasizing how the new lighting would enhance the quality of school and community performances.



Awarding Scholarships to Further Education

In May 2024, [BLEF awarded five scholarships](#) during an assembly at Bear Lake High School, recognizing exceptional students for their academic achievements, community involvement, and commitment to higher education. This year's recipients—Hallie Bruce, Toby Flake, Cassidy Higley, Kenna Robinson, and Alexis Wuthrich—are pursuing degrees in fields like Education, Counseling, Psychology, and Physical Education. The scholarships, aimed at supporting students with a passion for teaching and education-related careers, reflect BLEF's ongoing dedication to fostering future educators. BLEF's scholarships are made possible through community support, donations, and grants, helping students achieve their academic and career goals.



Partnering with Corporate Sponsors

Nutrien contributed \$2,000 to Bear Lake High School's [Agricultural Science Department](#), supporting their hands-on farming education programs. This donation helps cover the costs of essential supplies for the Science of Plant Growth and Development class, enabling students to engage in practical, sustainable farming practices. BLEF's role in facilitating such partnerships highlights their commitment to enhancing educational opportunities and ensuring that students in the Bear Lake Valley gain valuable skills for the future of agriculture. Nutrien's support underscores the importance of community involvement in nurturing the next generation of agricultural leaders.



Success Stories

Fundraising Through Pickleball

Bear Lake Education Foundation (BLEF) hosted a successful pickleball tournament at Bear Lake Middle School, raising over \$2,300 for scholarships for Bear Lake High School seniors. This event, featuring players of all levels and a silent auction for pickleball paddles, underscores BLEF's dedication to supporting education and enhancing community engagement. BLEF, which has been improving local schools for over 30 years, used the tournament to further its mission of building a community of lifelong learners and supporting educational initiatives.



Advancing Education Through STEM

BLEF worked to secure a \$5,000 grant from the Rocky Mountain Power Foundation to support a new STEM program at Bear Lake Middle School. This program, which focuses on teaching 3D modeling, animation, and programming through game design, aims to engage students with familiar technology and enhance their skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. BLEF's ongoing partnership with the Rocky Mountain Power Foundation highlights their commitment to advancing educational opportunities and supporting innovative learning initiatives in the community.



Supporting Senior Projects

BLEF plays a vital role in supporting senior community projects through its dedicated grant program. Each year, BLEF allocates funds to senior students in the Bear Lake School District to help them execute impactful community projects. These grants, typically up to \$100 per project, are designed to encourage students to apply their skills and creativity to benefit their local community. By funding these projects, BLEF not only supports students in their educational journey but also fosters a sense of civic responsibility and engagement, ensuring that their contributions have a lasting positive effect on the Bear Lake Valley.



Looking Forward: 2024-2025

As we move into the 2024-2025 school year, the Bear Lake Education Foundation remains dedicated to fulfilling our mission of supporting innovation, enrichment, and equity in education. Our vision for the future is centered on creating a school district where every student has the resources, opportunities, and support to achieve academic excellence. With that in mind, our goals for the coming year include:

Focus

Enhancing Innovative Programs:

We will continue to prioritize funding for creative and cutting-edge educational initiatives that empower teachers to inspire and engage their students. By supporting projects that integrate technology, the arts, and experiential learning, we aim to foster an environment where students are excited to learn and explore.

Expanding Equitable Access to Resources:

Our commitment to equity drives us to ensure that all students, regardless of their background or financial situation, have access to the tools they need to succeed. This year, we will focus on providing targeted support to underserved schools and students, ensuring that resources are distributed where they are needed most.

Growing Our Scholarship Fund:

To support our vision of helping students reach their full potential, we will increase our scholarship offerings for graduating seniors. By expanding these opportunities, we aim to help more students pursue higher education and vocational training, opening doors to their future success.

Strengthening Community Partnerships:

We believe that a strong community is essential to the success of our schools. In the coming year, we will deepen our engagement with local businesses, families, and corporate donors to build lasting partnerships that will provide sustainable support for our programs. Together, we can achieve even greater impact for the students and educators of Bear Lake.

With these goals, we are excited to continue building a brighter future for the Bear Lake School District. Together, we can create lasting change and empower our students to thrive academically and beyond.



Get Involved

The Bear Lake Education Foundation thrives because of the support from generous individuals, families, businesses, and community members like you. There are numerous ways to make a meaningful impact on the educational experiences of students and teachers in our district. Whether through financial contributions, volunteering your time, or partnering with us in other ways, every effort helps us get closer to our mission of fostering innovation, enrichment, and equity in education.

Donate Today!



Your financial contributions are essential to the success of our programs. Donations directly fund teacher grants, student scholarships, and senior projects, ensuring that educators and students have the tools they need to succeed.

We welcome one-time donations, recurring gifts (automatic payments scheduled on a regular basis), and legacy donations (gifts left to BLEF through a will or estate). No donation is too small—each dollar helps us make a difference in the lives of Bear Lake students.

To donate, visit our website at www.blefgives.org. All donations are tax-deductible (eligible to reduce taxable income), and you can choose to support specific programs or make a general contribution to the foundation's mission.

Volunteer

Volunteering your time is another way to contribute to the success of the Bear Lake Education Foundation. We are always looking for passionate community members to assist with events, help with administrative tasks, or serve as ambassadors (representatives or spokespersons) of BLEF in the community. Whether you can dedicate a few hours or offer long-term support, your involvement is invaluable in helping us carry out our mission.

Advocate

Advocacy (publicly supporting or recommending a cause) is a powerful way to support the foundation. By sharing our mission with your network—whether on social media, in local meetings, or with your friends and family—you help us reach a wider audience and inspire others to get involved. Spread the word about the work we're doing and encourage others to join us in making a difference.

No matter how you choose to get involved, your support is invaluable. Together, we can continue to provide essential resources that promote academic excellence, foster creativity, and ensure equitable opportunities for all Bear Lake students. **Thank you for being part of our mission!**



Acknowledgements

The Bear Lake Education Foundation would not be able to fulfill its mission without the unwavering support of our incredible community of donors, volunteers, educators, and partners. This year, your contributions have allowed us to fund innovative programs, provide life-changing scholarships, and support the dreams of students across the Bear Lake School District. We are profoundly grateful for your generosity and dedication, which have made the 2023-2024 school year a success.

Donors

To our individual donors, we extend our deepest thanks. Your financial contributions have empowered teachers to bring creativity into their classrooms and given students the resources to pursue their academic and personal goals. Every gift—whether large or small—makes a tangible difference in the lives of the students we serve. Your belief in our mission inspires us to continue striving for excellence and equity in education.

Corporate Sponsors and Business Partners

We are incredibly fortunate to have the support of local businesses and corporate sponsors who have partnered with BLEF to make a lasting impact on education in the Bear Lake School District. Your financial contributions, event sponsorships, and in-kind donations have helped us sustain our programs and expand our reach. By working together, we are building a stronger, more connected community that values education and invests in its future.

Volunteers

To the countless volunteers who have given their time, energy, and expertise to BLEF, we are deeply grateful. Whether you've helped with events, assisted in fundraising efforts, or offered your skills behind the scenes, your dedication has made it possible for us to carry out our mission. Your selfless contributions are the backbone of our foundation, and we couldn't do it without you.

Educators and School Staff

To the incredible teachers and staff of the Bear Lake School District, we honor and appreciate the dedication you bring to your work every day. Your passion for educating and shaping young minds is the reason BLEF exists. We are proud to support your efforts through grants and resources that enable you to continue inspiring students and creating transformative learning experiences. Thank you for being the heart of our community.

Board of Directors

A special thank you to the Bear Lake Education Foundation Board of Directors for their tireless work and leadership. Your strategic vision and commitment have guided the foundation through another successful year, ensuring that our mission stays at the forefront of everything we do. Your efforts behind the scenes have laid the groundwork for BLEF's continued growth and success.

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who has played a role in supporting the Bear Lake Education Foundation this year. It is through your generosity, hard work, and belief in our mission that we are able to continue empowering the students and educators of Bear Lake. Together, we are creating lasting change, and for that, **we thank you!**



Our Leadership

2023 - 2024 Board of Directors

Directors

Elyse Bartschi
Tabetha Bissegger
Shawn Lloyd
Monique Flake
Ron Flake
Cassidy Higley (BLHS Senior)
Rebecca Jenson (BLHS Junior)
Danny Tarbet
Nic Tarbet
Mauria Teuscher
David Ream

Bear Lake School District Representatives

Dr. Gary Brogan, (Ex-Officio) BLSD Superintendent
Debbie Keetch, (Ex-Ofiicio) BLSD
Shannon Marx, BLEF Executive Director
Luke Kelsey, Bear Lake High School Principal
Dr. Janet Lindsay, Brea Lake Middle School Principal
Laurel Jensen, AJ Winters & Georgetown Elementary Principal
Penny Bassett, Paris Elementary Principal

About the Foundation

Bear Lake Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to fostering academic excellence within the Bear Lake School District by providing vital resources that support innovation, enrichment, and equity. We empower educators and enhance educational opportunities, ensuring every student has the tools to succeed.

Over the last three decades BLEF has provided hundreds of grants for teachers for equipment, books, personal education, and training, all aimed at improving the quality of education in their individual classrooms. BLEF has been involved in countless projects to help improve our Schools in the Bear Lake Valley. We need your help to continue this legacy.



