







1MPACT **REPORT** 2022-2025



Lasting impacts make great futures possible.

Over the past three years, the Williamsport Area School District Education Foundation has deepened its role as a vehicle to provide opportunity, innovation, and community investment in public education — operating on its mission to create powerful classrooms and inspire futures.

What began as a vision 20 years ago to enhance the educational experience for students has grown into a network of support that reaches every corner of the district: from classrooms and athletics to the arts, wellness, and beyond. This is the collective strength of a community that believes in its school system.

For the first time, we're looking back not on a single year, but on three years of momentum, investment, and impact. Guided by our five-year strategic plan, our work closely aligns with the district's goals and priorities. Together with our donors and community partners, we've invested more than \$425,000 in grants and scholarships over the last three school years to enhance learning and open post-secondary pathways for WAHS graduates.

This report is more than a reflection; it celebrates the lasting difference made when vision and generosity come together. Thank you for helping us create opportunities that inspire students, strengthen our schools, and build a brighter future for the Williamsport community.







Mallory Weymer



Gregory L. Hayes, Jr.

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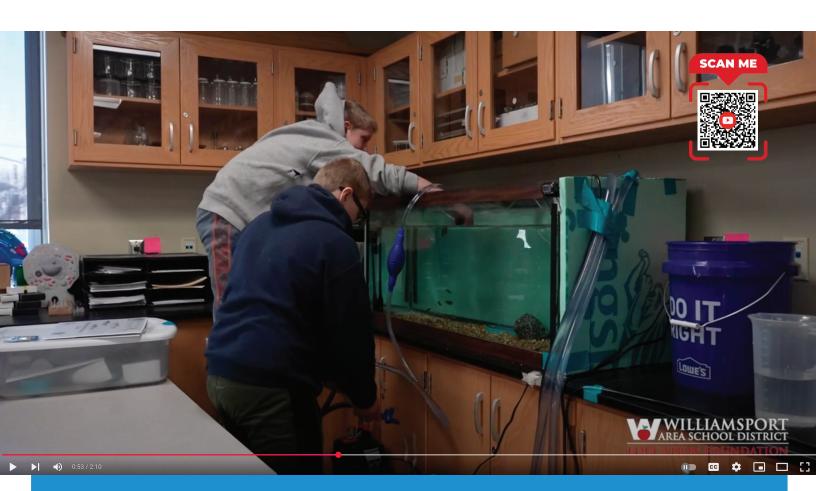
Opening Opportunity for Discovery: **Classroom Innovation**

Thanks to a grant from the Foundation's Annual Fund, students at Williamsport Area Middle School spent the 2024–2025 school year learning science in a truly hands-on way.

Seventh-grade science teacher Nick Hessert launched *Trout in the Classroom*, an environmental education program that brought the study of ecosystems, biology, and conservation to life — literally.

It began in the fall with a small tank of delicate trout eggs. Over the course of the school year, students cared for the fish as they hatched, grew, and prepared for release into the wild. Along the way, they learned to test water quality, monitor aquatic habitats, and understand the fragile balance of an ecosystem, all within the walls of their classroom.

But this wasn't just a science unit. It was science in motion — biology students could touch, conservation they could feel.



WATCH: Scan the QR code to watch as students release the trout into Pine Creek and learn about the program from their own perspective.



With each feeding, water test, and tank adjustment, students didn't just absorb facts; they developed ownership, responsibility, and genuine curiosity. They were no longer just learners — they were caretakers.

The culmination came in spring, when the class traveled to Pine Creek in Waterville to release their trout into the watershed. It was a moment of wonder, pride, and real-world connection.

"We started with nothing and now we have something, thanks to the Foundation's grant and generosity," Hessert said. "I look forward to using this as a platform to bring environmental literacy and sustainability into the classroom. I think this will be a really good component to expose our kids to that content."

Because of your support, one teacher's idea became a hands-on lesson in stewardship. One tank of trout became a catalyst for lifelong environmental awareness.

Scholarships: Providing **Access to Opportunity**

For Wayne and Gerry
Fausnaught, giving back
means creating a legacy of
service. Their scholarship
encourages students to
lead lives rooted in purpose
and community.

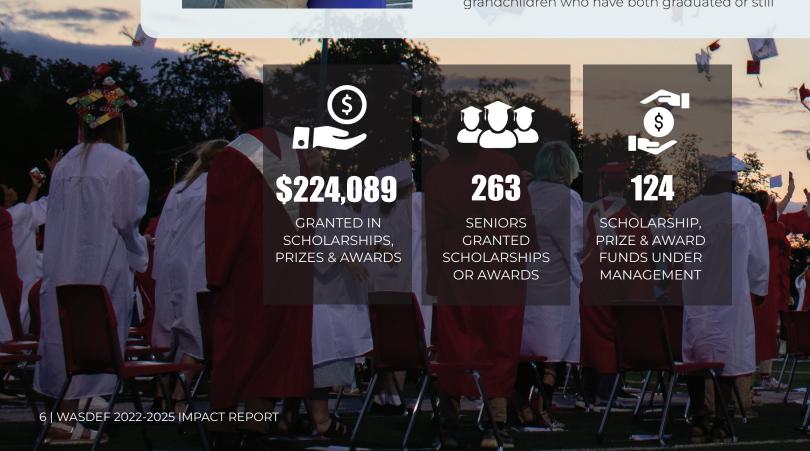


Scholarships at the Foundation give donors and organizations the opportunity to continue their legacy while granting eligible graduating WAHS students the chance to advance their education.

Providing access to post-secondary opportunities is important to district retirees Wayne and Gerry Fausnaught, who endowed **The Fausnaught Family Scholarship Fund**. The two continue to lead an active life fueled by a passion for family, community, and service.

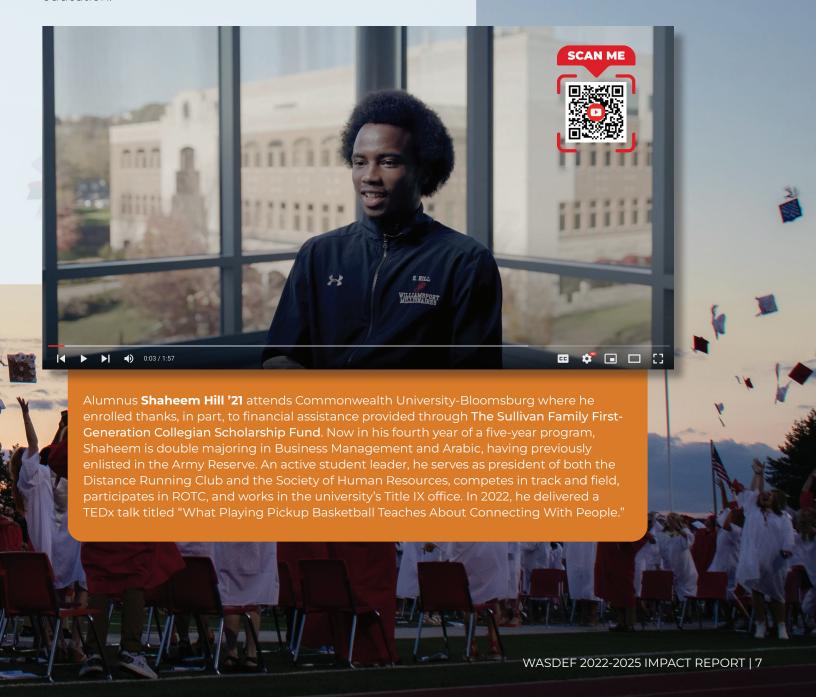
"We want students graduating from high school to make service an integral part of their future plans," the two said. "Thus, (this scholarship) will encourage students to give back to their communities where they will live. Service above self is the legacy we hope to establish."

The Fausnaughts are proud parents to three successful WAHS alumni: Tim '88, Todd '90 and Beth '92. They also have a number of grandchildren who have both graduated or still



remain enrolled in the WASD system.

"Excellent academics, stellar music opportunities, A-one athletics and a diverse student population have provided them with the ability to communicate and understand the needs and opportunities of all people," they said. "We are Williamsport Area School District proud, and thankful for our family reaping the benefits of an excellent WASD education."



Supporting **Health & Wellness** and **Youth Development**

WASDEF has emerged as a partner in advancing student well-being and emotional resilience throughout the district.

With targeted funding and a strong commitment to addressing the mental health crisis among youth, WASDEF has played a pivotal role in launching and sustaining several impactful district initiatives focused on mental wellness and suicide prevention.

Creating Safe Spaces for Mindfulness and Regulation

Among the most visible results of this support is the creation of the Focus Zone Room, a therapeutic environment developed with Foundation assistance at Williamsport

Area Middle School. Tailored for students who benefit from a structured, low-stimulation setting, the Focus Zone provides tools and guidance to help learners maintain emotional balance and focus, particularly those struggling with anxiety or attention-related concerns.

Complementing this initiative is the Mindful Meadow — a serene, sensory-friendly space designed to help students regulate emotions, manage stress, and build mindfulness skills. Located in Cochran Primary School, the Mindful Meadow will offer a calming retreat where students can re-center during challenging moments in their day beginning in the 2025-2026 school term.

Empowering Peer Support Through Hope Squad

In alignment with national best practices in suicide prevention, the district has also launched Hope Squad, a peer-to-peer support program that trains students to identify warning signs of crisis, offer support, and connect peers with trusted adults. With funding from the Foundation to support the program, Hope Squad empowers students to be allies and advocates for mental health, helping to create a school culture rooted in compassion and awareness.

Anchoring Students in Support: Find Your Anchor

Another important initiative supported by the Foundation is Find Your Anchor, a program

that distributes "anchor boxes" filled with mental health resources, inspirational messages, and tools designed to offer hope during difficult times.

These boxes serve as tangible reminders that no one is alone — and that help is always within reach.

A Vision of Holistic Student Wellness With the continued strategic

investment of the Foundation, the district is advancing a comprehensive approach to mental health — one that integrates physical spaces, peer-led initiatives, and accessible resources into daily school life. This work underscores a broader vision: schools not just as centers of academic achievement, but as communities where every student feels seen, supported, and safe.

As mental health continues to be a vital focus in education, the Foundation remains a resource in the effort to equip students with the resilience, tools, and support networks they need to thrive—in school and beyond.



\$64,458

GRANTED TO HEALTH & WELLNESS/YOUTH **DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

200+

VISITS TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL **FOCUS ZONE** ROOM

100+

STUDENTS IN GRADES 4-12 TRAINED AS HOPE SQUAD **AMBASSADORS**

Building Strength: Elevating Student **Athletics**

Across the district, athletics play an essential role in helping students grow as learners, leaders, and teammates.

At the heart of every athletic program lies more than competition. There's confidence, discipline, teamwork — the same qualities that carry students beyond the field, the court, or the weight room and into life. For the Foundation, that's what "impact" truly means: investing in the whole student.

Over the past three years, WASDEF has awarded more than \$37,000 in grants to strengthen the district's athletic programs, investments that build physical, emotional, and community pride. From modern equipment and training resources to the preservation of Williamsport's athletic legacy, each project connects the district's proud past to its promising future.

A \$2,500 donor-supported grant helped purchase a shooting machine for the basketball program, giving student-athletes access to technology that refines technique,



Student-athletes **Tianah Williams** and **Zion Hughes** stand by three grant-funded hydrotherapy units purchased and installed in the spring of 2025. "Our athletes have been thrilled to utilize them," said Andrea Harmon, head athletic trainer. "The ease of use and comfort is remarkable! These units have played a crucial role in recovery and will continue to positively impact our athletes' well-being and performance."



Athletics don't just build stronger teams; they build stronger students and a stronger community. These grants remind our athletes that they're part of something bigger — a tradition worth upholding.

> Sean McCann **WASD Athletic Director**

\$37,884

TO SUPPORT WASD ATHLETIC **PROGRAM**

640+

STUDENT-ATHLETES BENEFITTING

YEARS OF ATHLETIC HISTORY **PRESERVED**

measures progress, and fosters focus. The tool turns daily practice into a lesson in persistence — the kind of growth that builds both stronger players and more confident students.

In the high school Commons, nearly \$10,000 funded the restoration of decades of athletic photographs — honoring generations of Williamsport athletes whose dedication shaped the identity of the Cherry and White. What was once fading history now stands as a living gallery of excellence and community pride, inspiring today's students to carry that legacy forward.

A \$14,500 investment replaced three hydrotherapy units, ensuring that every student-athlete has access to the tools and recovery resources they need to compete safely and sustainably. The upgrade represents more than just equipment — it

reflects a commitment to caring for students' health and long-term well-being.

To complete the effort, an \$8,000 grant launched a comprehensive strength training program that benefits athletes across every sport. Focused on injury prevention, conditioning, and self-improvement, the program teaches students that real strength comes from consistency, perseverance, and shared effort.

Each of these projects speaks to the Foundation's belief that athletics are a vital part of the educational experience, one that teaches leadership, cultivates school pride, and connects generations of Millionaires.

By investing in athletics, WASDEF continues to invest in the full potential of every student, honoring the district's rich history while helping the next generation discover their own strength, both on and off the field.

Culivating Creativity: Investing in **the Arts** That Inspire

From the first notes of orchestra rehearsal to the brushstrokes that brighten a hallway, the performing and visual arts tell the story of who we are as a district and as a community.

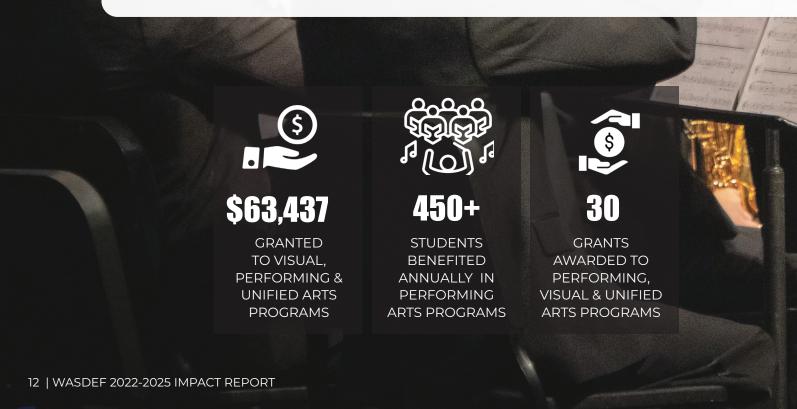


Through the generosity of Foundation donors, those stories continue to flourish, creating spaces where creativity, collaboration, and pride take center stage.

Over the last three years, pass-through contributions and donor-supported grants have strengthened arts education throughout the district, ensuring that students have the tools, experiences, and environments they need to express themselves and grow.

When the WAHS Strolling Strings ensemble traveled to Chicago, their music carried the spirit of Williamsport across state lines, made possible by funding that turned a dream into a transformative learning experience. For many students, the trip offered a first glimpse of performing on a national stage, showcasing not only their talent but the district's tradition of excellence in music.

That same pride was felt closer to home through grants for new orchestra uniforms and instrument replacements, helping maintain the professional standard and quality of the district's performing



arts programs. These investments ensure that every student, regardless of background, can participate fully and confidently in music programs that define the WASD experience.

At the middle school level, the Foundation has supported community garden and courtyard art projects, bringing together art, environmental science, and student collaboration. What began as creative beautification has become a living classroom, a place where students cultivate both their surroundings and their sense of belonging.

In addition, Unified Arts gallery spaces now showcase student work at the middle school, celebrating creativity as an integral part of the educational experience.

Through every brushstroke and note, WASDEF continues to help cultivate creativity, ensuring that the arts remain a vital part of student development.





Foundation support helps inspire student creativity and innovation — from learning in the middle school's outdoor community garden, which encourages knowledge of sustainability and agriculture, to fostering problem-solving and teamwork through the Odyssey of the Mind program, supported in part to help send students to the World Finals in 2023 and 2025.

Inspiring Growth, Expanding Opportunities

Over the last three school years, Foundation classroom grants have empowered educators to bring innovative, student-centered ideas to life in their schools.

The nearly \$20,000 in direct grant funding from WASDEF highlighted here has supported projects that enhance instruction, expand access to resources, and strengthen school communities.

These grants have helped fund hands-on STEM challenges, expand rhythm-based learning in music classrooms, and meet essential needs through initiatives like The Curtin Closet. They've also supported sensory pathways at Jackson Primary School and an e-hallpass system at Williamsport Area Middle School to improve

student support and safety.

Behind each project is a teacher or team of educators with a vision to make learning more engaging and impactful.

With Foundation support and

community generosity, these ideas are transforming classrooms and helping students thrive.



Building Critical Thinkers Through Hands-On STEM Learning

Hands-on STEM challenges are inspiring innovation and problem-solving at Lycoming Valley Intermediate School, thanks to support from a Foundation classroom grant. Students collaborated to design tools for the Sewer Drain Challenge and create functional prosthetic legs, applying engineering design principles in real time. These projects encouraged critical thinking, creativity, and perseverance, giving all learners — especially those who don't always thrive in traditional settings — a chance to shine.

Building Rhythm Skills Through Drumming

Every child now has a drum in hand at Hepburn-Lycoming Primary School to explore rhythm and world music, thanks to Foundation support. Additional tubano drums are expanding access to the Drumming Up the Fun curriculum, which uses a "sound before sight" approach to build rhythm skills. This handson learning experience deepens musical understanding, boosts engagement, and aligns with the district's rhythm instruction goals.





Grant funding through the Foundation and community partnerships is helping to elevate learning opportunities for students across the district. At WAHS, support has enhanced the TV Productions lab with state-of-the-art technology, giving students hands-on, real-world experience in broadcast journalism. At Cochran Primary, funding helped create a STEM library that equips teachers with innovative tools and resources to bring hands-on building, coding, and design experiences directly into their classrooms, deepening student engagement with core curriculum concepts.

Meeting Students' Basic Needs Through The Curtin Closet

The Curtin Closet at Curtin Intermediate School is providing clothing and hygiene essentials to students in need, thanks to Foundation funding received in 2024. Led by teacher Jennifer Larson and supported by colleagues Nenna Sheleman and Caylin Hartley, the initiative has already supported more than 50 students, ensuring they feel prepared and confident to learn. With the grant funding, the team outfitted a dedicated space with racks, shelving, and basic clothing items, supplemented by donations from staff and community members. The closet continues to grow through school-wide drives and fundraising, helping students and families year-round.





RATING A LEGACY OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

The Knade Family's Gift to Shape Student Talent Through Music Education for Generations to Come

Former superintendent Dr. Oscar Knade has long believed that the strength of a school district's music program provides the key to learning and builds not only a lifelong appreciation for the arts in students but also a positive district reputation within the community.

It was with these principles in mind that, in 1972, shortly after Dr. Knade assumed the role as superintendent, he recruited Dr. Kenneth Raessler, then an associate professor and chair of the music department at Gettysburg College, to implement a cohesive K-12 music program at WASD. This new approach would include classroom music as well as vocal and instrumental performance ensembles across all grade levels.

Prior to its reorganization, Dr. Knade recalled the program being disjointed, lacking proficient K-12 leadership, and facing low participation in instrumental groups. Additionally, the strings program stopped after elementary school, which restricted students' musical growth. Parental involvement was also minimal, as there were limited opportunities for community support.

"The Williamsport community deserved better," he said, "and I was determined that our schools would

have a first-rate program."

Now retired since 1992 after a 20-year career as superintendent in the district, Dr. Knade sees the music program's blueprint, developed and implemented over 50 years ago, as a defining achievement for both the district and the community.

His goal now is to help sustain and further its legacy, which has since evolved into a highly respected, stateand nationally recognized program.

To ensure this legacy endures, Dr. Knade and his wife, Shirley, established the Knade Family Endowment for Excellence in Music. The endowment aims to support the program's future in perpetuity, with its first distribution scheduled for 2025.

"We see the endowment fund being used to initiate innovative instructional efforts; expand existing program elements; and support select students' participation in regional, state and/or national music ensembles," Dr. Knade said. "I believe it is fair to say that WASD music programs have been instrumental in the creation and growth of numerous musical organizations in the Greater Williamsport area."



Dr. Knade's vision for a comprehensive K-12 music program is a cornerstone of our district's legacy. This endowment allows us to keep building on that foundation. providing students with unique opportunities to develop their talents beyond the classroom. We are extremely grateful for Dr. **Knade and Shirley's** very generous contribution to our Foundation.

- Dr. Timothy S. Bowers WASD Superintendent



A Tradition of Gratitude and Legacy: **Cherry + White Appreciation Night**

In the fall of 2023, the Foundation introduced something new: an evening to pause, reflect, and celebrate.

The Cherry + White Appreciation Night began as a simple idea — to honor the educators who shape lives and the alumni whose achievements reflect the lasting impact of a Williamsport education. Now held each September, it has grown into a celebration of excellence, weaving together gratitude for the present, pride in the past, and vision for the future.

Honoring the Legacy of Williamsport Alumni

At the heart of each event is a moment of recognition — the induction of Distinguished Alumni whose lives show what's possible when students are inspired to dream.

Over the past three years, honorees have included celebrated artist Frances Tipton Hunter, journalist Joe Person, public servant Ruth Perry Hodge, community advocate Mary Sieminski, and others who have led with distinction in fields spanning the arts, education, athletics, military service, and humanitarian work.

Their stories, grounded in their Williamsport roots, are powerful reminders that learning here can lead anywhere.

Uplifting Educators, Inspiring Innovation

The event is as much about the future as it is about the past. Each year, the Foundation uses this event to celebrate and invest in its educators, awarding thousands of dollars in grants that fuel creativity, innovation, and hands-on learning.

In 2025, the celebration reached a milestone with a competitive \$40,000 Founders Grant for Educational Excellence awarded to Patricia Miller, a high school math teacher. Her "Collaborative Corner" will transform an underused space into a vibrant hub for cross-disciplinary learning,

supporting students and the district's growing Educators Rising program. This kind of educator-led innovation reflects the true spirit of Cherry + White Appreciation Night — honoring the past while investing boldly in what's ahead.

Such an incredible night! The teachers who were there felt a renewed sense of purpose, energy, and appreciation.

- Brooke Nenadal WASD Teacher

Fueling Purpose Through Inspiration

The event has also brought national voices to Williamsport, with keynote speakers like Michael Bonner; Dr. Adolph Brown; and Joyce Abbott, the inspiration behind ABC's *Abbott Elementary*, sharing messages about leadership, resilience, and the joy of teaching.

For many educators, the evening is more than a celebration — it's a recharge. Teachers describe it as "a renewed sense of purpose" and "a reminder of why we do this work." In a profession that demands both heart and endurance, moments like these matter

It is more than an event. It reflects WASDEF's mission to support educational excellence and inspire community investment in public education. Over the past three years, the Foundation has awarded nearly half a million dollars in grants and scholarships, created new opportunities for students, and celebrated the educators and alumni who make the Williamsport story worth telling.





Distinguished Alumni Inductees:

2023

- · Alan Eck '87
- · Ruth Perry Hodge '54
- · Jerah Reeves '16
- · Mary Sieminski '61

- · Francis Tipton Hunter, 1914
- · John Maietta '67
- · Joe Person '88

2025

- · Jim Burget '68
- · Lee '58 & Joanne Fisher '62
- · Barry Harman '57



Harlem Wizards Event Helps Fund Programs, Classroom Innovation

Since their first appearance in Williamsport in 2014, the Harlem Wizards have become a community tradition, bringing energy, laughter, and impact to the Foundation. Over the years, the event has raised a net total of more than \$106,000 to support classroom innovation and student opportunities, drawing average crowds of more than 1,500 people.

2023: A Record-Breaking Return

In 2023, after a five-year hiatus, the Wizards returned to WAHS for their biggest fundraising night yet. Presented by Geisinger, the event raised a net total of \$20,414 — the highest total in the game's history in Williamsport.

The Magic Dome was packed as district staff and community members faced off against the Wizards, with hometown alumnus Mayor **Derek Slaughter '99** and **Chevy Troutman '00** suiting up as that year's celebrity players.

Fueling Innovation and Opportunity

Every ticket sold helps fuel grants and programs that expand learning beyond the district's budget. Since 2023, Wizards events have raised \$54,497.

A Lasting Impact

The Harlem Wizards game has become more than an

Years Hosted	Since 2014
Total Raised (net)	\$106,206
Raised Since 2023	\$54,497
2023 Total (net)	\$20,414
Average Attendance	1,500
Highest Attendance	2,088

event — it's a celebration of community pride, a driver of classroom innovation, and one of the Foundation's most successful fundraisers. Each dollar raised helps remove barriers to learning and opens doors to opportunities that inspire students and strengthen schools.

Powered by Partnership

The success of the Wizards game reflects the strength of community partnerships. In addition to Geisinger's presenting sponsorship, key financial partners included EQT Corporation, Staiman's Recycling, Baker Tilly, C&N, Hudock Capital Group, Woodlands Bank, Horizon Federal Credit Union, Bayada Health Care, and Wegmans.

Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program

The Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program is administered by the state Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) under Act 48. Established in 2001, the program awards tax credits to businesses that make contributions to scholarship organizations and/or educational improvement organizations that are on a list approved and published by DCED.

EITC funds for WASD are held at and administered by the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania (FCFP).

Since 2011, FCFP has awarded more than \$396,000 to WASD for venture or educator-in-residence programs.

How do you direct your company's tax dollars to benefit WASD?

Apply to participate for one or two years to DCED. The tax credit is a 75-percent credit (against taxes owed). However, if a company provides a written two-year commitment of equal funding, the credit becomes 90 percent. Once approved, EITC contributions can be

directed to benefit the district through the program at FCFP.

For more information, visit www.dced.pa.gov and search EITC, or contact the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania at 570-321-1500.

THANK YOU!

Between the 2022-2023 and 2024-2025 school years, the district collectively received more than \$100,000 in EITC contributions through FCFP from the following businesses/corporations:













UPMC HEALTH PLAN

EITC Funding Supports Esports Programming at WASD With a continued focus on preparing students for industries of the future, the Foundation facilitated the receipt of more than \$50,000 in EITC funds to create new esports arenas at both the middle school and high school during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. Equipped with high-powered computers, monitors, ergonomic gaming furniture and PIEA-approved games, these spaces allow students to develop skills in science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) while learning teamwork, communication and sportsmanship through organized competitive gaming. Esports programs are rapidly emerging as training grounds for future careers. Beyond competition, the skills fostered in these environments translate to fields such as cybersecurity, software development, drone operation and even military applications that require strategic thinking, precision and real time decision making. WASDEF 2022-2025 IMPACT REPORT | 2

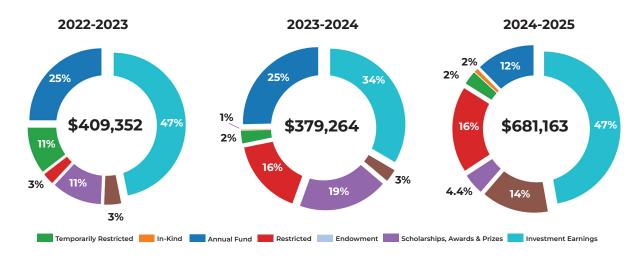
2022-2025 Financials

Revenue

Over the past three fiscal years (July 1, 2022–June 30, 2025), the Foundation experienced meaningful growth fueled by community generosity and careful stewardship. During this period, the Foundation received \$828,796 in community contributions, including individual and business support, special event participation, and in-kind gifts. An additional

\$640,183 in investment earnings strengthened our financial base, ensuring both immediate program impact and long-term sustainability.

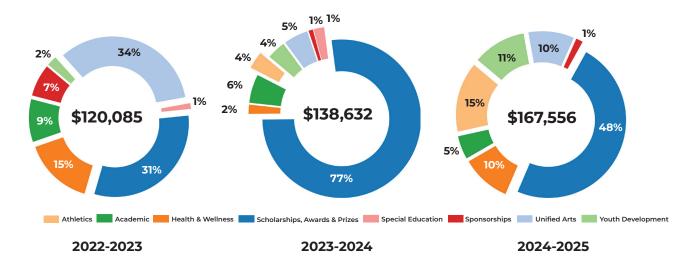
As a result, the Foundation's total assets grew from \$2.49 million in FY23 to \$3.18 million in FY25, reflecting both community trust and responsible financial management.



Grants by Program Area

Likewise, the Foundation **distributed \$426,273 in grants** across a broad range of program areas supporting students, educators, and district priorities. These funds were directed toward classroom innovation, scholarships, student

experiences, and strategic district initiatives
— ensuring that the dollars entrusted to the
Foundation were returned to the school community
in ways that create meaningful, lasting impact.



Our Leadership

2025-2026 Board of Directors



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Dr. Timothy S. Bowers, WASD Superintendent Gregory L. Hayes, Jr., Executive Director



We extend our sincere gratitude to the following individuals for their leadership and service as members of the Foundation's Board of Directors during the reporting period of this publication. These individuals have since rotated off the board: Ed Barone '85, Dr. Brooke Beiter, Susan Dinsmore, Rose-Marie Gross, Jon Mackey, Theresa Montgomery, Lynne Piotrowski, Loriann Rose, Kristin (Jansson) Takach '94, and Patricia Wylie. Their dedication and leadership helped advance the Foundation's mission to expand opportunities and enhance the educational experience for all students.

About the Foundation

The Williamsport Area School District Education Foundation is a recognized nonprofit affiliate of the Williamsport Area School District. Led by a volunteer board, the Foundation facilitates charitable giving and permanent legacies based on individual areas of interest in educational innovation, the arts, athletics, and scholarships.

Since 2004, WASDEF has been supporting students and teachers across the district with the financial resources provided by donors. Since its inception, WASDEF has both raised and allocated more than \$3 million to the district in support of capital projects, innovative programs and initiatives, and scholarships.





















Williamsport Area
School District
Education Foundation

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WASDEducationFoundation.org

