



310

Schools Served in  
School Year 20-21

↑ 67%



8,000+

Teachers Trained in  
School Year 20-21

↑ 129%

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# HILL FOR LITERACY

## 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

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120,000+

Children Reached in  
School Year 20-21

↑ 100%



88 cents

of every dollar we spent  
went toward direct  
delivery in schools in  
School Year 20-21

↑ 7%



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

It's safe to say that 2020-21 has been a school year like no other. Districts across the country grappled with the unique challenge of how best to approach teaching their students during a deadly pandemic. Most schools went fully virtual, while some experimented with hybrid models. Finally in the spring, many schools were able to open their doors full time again. And HILL for Literacy was there supporting our schools throughout all the ups and downs and challenges.

Over the last several years, the HILL has invested in technology, preparing to bring our work online in order to expand our reach to any district across the country. This put us in the unique position of being ready to make the pivot to providing robust virtual delivery to our client schools without missing a beat. In summer 2020, we piloted a new virtual summer school program in partnership with the Northshore YMCA and the Manchester-Essex Regional School District. The results were so successful that we expanded that partnership into an afterschool program during the school year as well. We were able to continue our work with both our CK3LI schools in CT and the Northshore PD Group that was newly formed in the previous year. Our new virtual Science of Reading Professional Learning Series took off, reaching over 600 teachers in its first full year of offering. Overall, we found our services to be in such high demand that we had to hire two new facilitators to keep pace.

Another exciting facet of this past year for the HILL was a new partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Education. We worked with 113 schools on needs assessment and literacy planning, and we're looking forward to deeper engagement with them in SY21-22. We're also thrilled to share that, thanks to our expanded Science of Reading Series developed specifically for RI schools, we're now an approved provider of professional learning under the RI Right To Read Act that requires educators to exhibit either proficiency in or awareness of the knowledge and practices of the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy.

With the challenges of the past year behind us, we're looking forward to school year 2021-22. Our commitment to developing the technology to support our schools is only deepening as we plan to expand our pilots of **Roadmap**, our needs assessment and literacy planning tool, and **Continuum**, our online data meeting process that helps teachers pinpoint the right instructional focus for every student, in addition to finishing development on several exciting new components of **HILL Online**. We've been a partner in the Right to Read CT Coalition from the beginning and we're optimistic about the passing of the CT Right to Read Bill and that the establishment of a Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success will come to fruition, ensuring evidence-based literacy practices will become the standard throughout CT in Grades PK-5. And we're delighted that demand for our services is still increasing, and as a result we've hired three new facilitators for the upcoming school year to ensure we can continue providing high quality service to both our current clients and new.

As a nonprofit, our organization's ability to continue operations is due in part to the generous donations of community members and foundations. We don't take the challenge of teaching kids to read lightly: according to the latest NAEP results, 65% of 4th graders fail to read at grade level each year and we know that we can help them even if they aren't in a physical classroom. Your support can have a tangible, meaningful impact on the lives of children in HILL schools. Donations can be made via our website [www.hillforliteracy.org](http://www.hillforliteracy.org) or by contacting the HILL office at 1-888-860-0190.

Best Wishes,



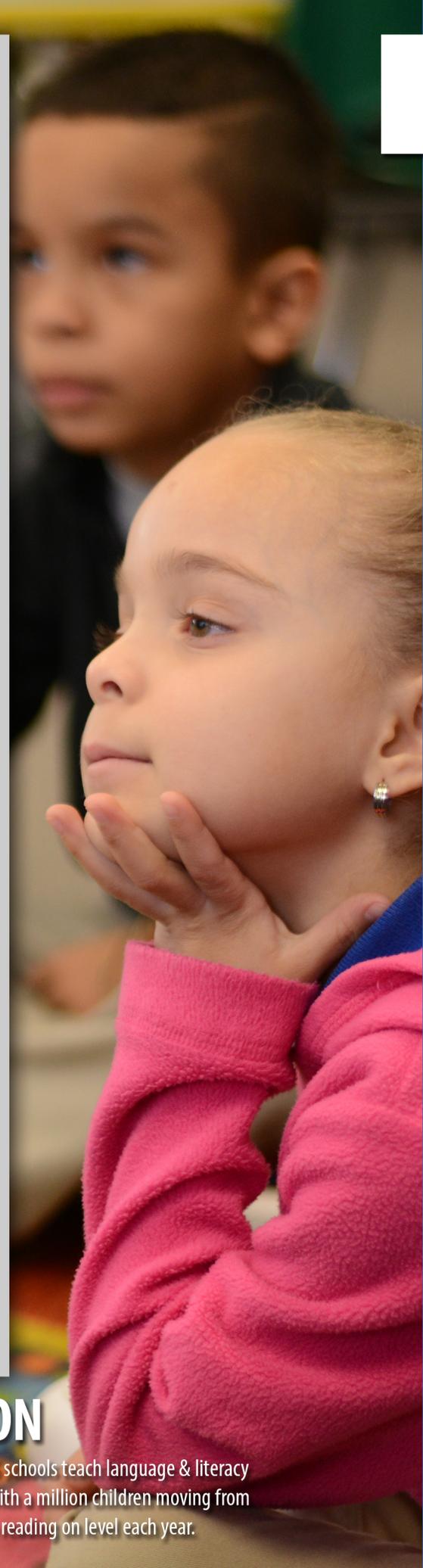
**Darci Burns, Ph.D.**  
*Executive Director*

## MISSION

To guide educators at all levels through the process of creating schools that excel in developing students' language & literacy skills.

## VISION

To help all US schools teach language & literacy effectively, with a million children moving from struggling to reading on level each year.



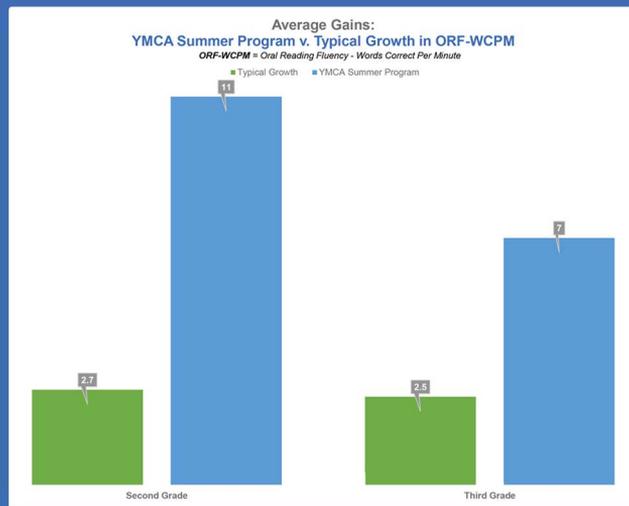
# A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION

## OUR VIRTUAL PIVOT

With many schools going fully virtual or adopting a hybrid virtual/in-person schedule in school year 2020-21, the HILL responded accordingly. Traditionally, our practice has revolved around in-person support, but we quickly adapted our team and content to a virtual environment to meet the changing needs of our clients. In addition to continuing our work with our current schools, we took on many new clients and projects as well, and even hired additional staff to keep pace with the demand.

### Some highlights of our virtual work include:

- expanding our services to Rhode Island in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Education.
- launching a 10-module virtual Science of Reading series.
- working with regional YMCAs to offer critical after-school instruction to students in need, beginning during the summer.
- expanding the YMCA program from 2 schools in 1 district to 15 schools across 3 districts during the school year.



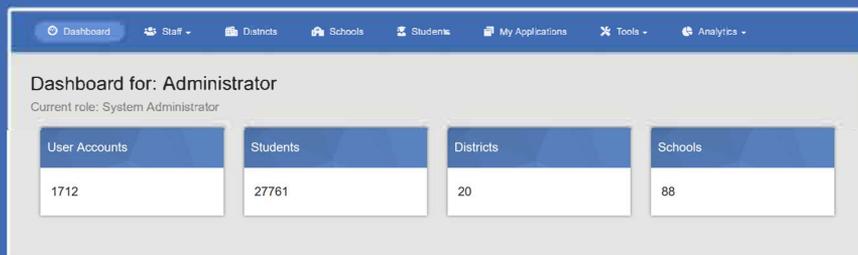
## HILL ONLINE: OUR INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY

HILL for Literacy continues to make strategic investments into HILL Online, which we began piloting last year. In 2020-21, we deployed the application throughout the year in 15 districts in MA, CT, and VT. This resulted in amazing feedback that we are indeed on track to fulfill demand that is growing nationally. HILL Online supported a wide range of initiatives that included:

1. More accurate and detailed needs assessment tools to streamline the data gathering process that informs the strategic work we recommend to districts
2. Improved student assessment data integration and management across multiple platforms
3. Better usage of assessment data to drive more meaningful classroom practice

Our team is now creating an intelligence dashboard for the 2021-22 school year that relates changes in classroom practice with changes in student performance so improved literacy outcomes can be sustained long-term. We're answering the question, "what student assessment data changed from one data cycle to the next and what classroom practice led to those changes?" Our plan is to usher in a much-needed paradigm shift away from purely capturing data to one where new and valuable literacy insights lead to substantially increased learner outcomes.

HILL for Literacy looks forward to working with our existing portfolio while expanding to meet the needs of several new districts next year. These are exciting times, and the organization is pleased to be in a position to invest in innovation and share the benefits with early literacy educators everywhere.



Continuum Dashboard

## INTERESTED? CONTACT US FOR A CONSULTATION

888.860.0190 | [info@hillforliteracy.org](mailto:info@hillforliteracy.org) | [www.hillforliteracy.org](http://www.hillforliteracy.org)

# KEY PARTNERS

Black and Puerto Rican Caucus of the Connecticut General Assembly  
 Center on Teaching and Learning, *University of Oregon*  
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 Commonwealth Learning Online Institute  
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 YMCA of the Northshore

# DONORS

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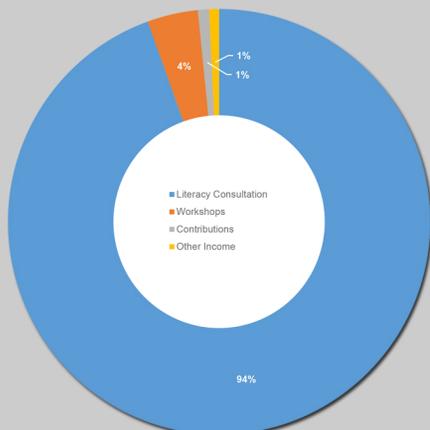
# SCHOOLS

For a complete listing of the 310 HILL schools,  
 please visit our website at:  
[hillforliteracy.org/solution/our-clients/](http://hillforliteracy.org/solution/our-clients/)

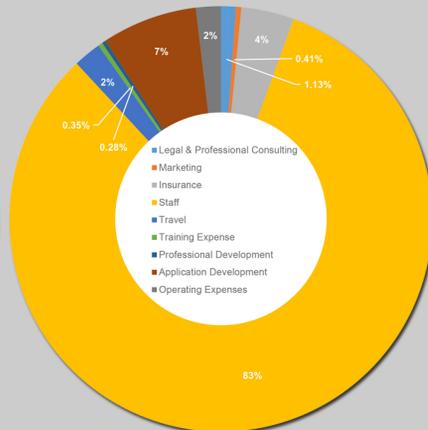
# FINANCIALS

from FY 2019-20 financial audit

## Income



## Expenses



# BOARD

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Laurie LaVallee  
*Clerk*

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Darci Burns, Ph.D.  
 David C. Poole

# STAFF

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## Facilitators

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 Jenna Gampel, M.Ed.  
 Kaitlin Leonard, M.Ed.  
 Diana Malkin, M.Ed., CAGS  
 Kelly Soule, M.A., CAGS  
 Michelle Taylor, M.Ed.  
 Lisa Ziobron, M.A.

## Consultants

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 Stephney Gonzalez  
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 Ashley Oldham, Ph.D.