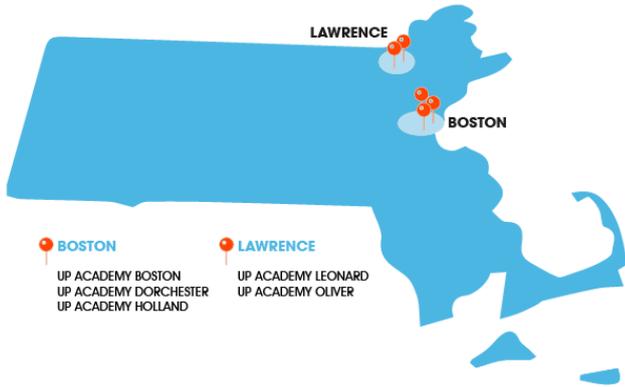




# 2018-2020 IMPACT REPORT

TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS INTO EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

**5  
CAMPUSES**



**2,500+  
STUDENTS**

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### OUR MISSION

UP Education Network (UP) is one of the only organizations in the nation dedicated to tackling the challenges of in-district school turnaround. UP rapidly transforms chronically under-performing district schools into extraordinary schools that sustain high achievement over time.

## DEAR UP CHAMPIONS,

Over the last two years, we have been uplifted and inspired by your investment in our students, families and school communities. Thank you for believing in the power and potential of all students and their right to an equitable public education.

Two years ago, we released a new organizational vision and a strategic plan focused on strengthening our network of schools and ensuring we challenge and support our students in their pursuit of academic, social-emotional, and personal growth.

This new vision was quickly and widely adopted by staff across the network as our **North Star**:

***We transform schools into exceptional learning environments in partnership with families and communities. Students in our schools cultivate sharp minds, share their kind hearts, and explore their path and potential. UP graduates succeed on the path to college and pursue their passions.***

In the following pages we share our progress in the key areas of our strategic plan, including the launch of the UP Leadership Institute, implementation of a rigorous, high-quality English Language Arts curriculum, and a shared approach to social emotional learning.

At the heart of all progress we've made is our partnership with families, the talent and commitment of our staff, and the brilliance of our students, a few of whom we've highlighted in this report.

As we write, we are amidst a public health crisis, a widespread reckoning with racism, and in the thick of launching a school year that brings unprecedented challenges to our ability to serve our students well.

**What do all three of these phenomena have in common?** Each is exposing systemic racial inequities and each has a disproportionately negative effect on people of color. This period of upheaval, pain and hopefully change will have a long lasting impact on the communities we serve. UP's work to address inequities in the public school system and serve as a proof point for what is possible in chronically underinvested communities is now more important than ever.

Thank you for being a partner in this work. We could not do it without you.

### IN PARTNERSHIP,

**VERONICA CONFORME, CEO  
AND MARTY MANNION, BOARD CHAIR**



**2017-2020**

# STRATEGIC PLAN

UP is committed to creating equitable learning environments where every student cultivates their sharp mind, shares their kind heart, and explores their path and potential.

Over the past three years our work has been guided by three “big goals” to realize our vision. As you’ll read below, we’ve made significant progress and witnessed incredible achievements and growth from our schools, scholars and staff. And we are making plans for the future that will ensure UP is a network built to last.



### **GOAL ONE**

## **EQUIP OUR PEOPLE TO TEACH AND LEAD THROUGH CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT.**

In addition to hiring the most qualified employees, we renewed our focus on staff retention and established the UP Leadership Institute (ULI) to provide professional development and a ladder for growth. The ULI takes a “grow your own” approach to people development and consists of three programs: the Model Teacher Program, the Teacher Leader Program and Principal Fellows Program. Now in its third year, the ULI has enrolled more than 40 participants and produced a number of positive outcomes. For the 2019-2020 school year, 60% of Model Teachers moved into a leadership role and 100% of Principal Fellows stepped into a Principal role.



### **GOAL TWO**

## **SOLIDIFY OUR COMMON MODEL WITH RIGOROUS ACADEMICS AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL PROGRAMMING.**

We shifted focus from school-level curriculum to develop a network-wide platform based on social and emotional learning, common curriculum and data-driven interventions focused on restorative practices. Specifically, we participated in the Achievement First Navigator program for English Language Arts and implemented the curriculum across our middle schools. The curriculum brings an increased rigor to our literature coursework, centers student voice in their own learning and encourages our scholars to take more ownership of class discussions. Similarly, we unified our common approach to SEL by rolling out circle based programming and Second Step’s curriculum, which is discussed further in this report.



### **GOAL THREE**

## **BECOME A NETWORK BUILT TO LAST.**

We shifted our focus from rapid expansion to achieving excellence, and from curriculum management to coaching and development of school level expertise. In practice, we instituted a formal system to prioritize our strategic initiatives, and developed a process, both for the organization and individual staff, to set goals for the year with a quarterly assessment to monitor progress. In addition, to be more responsive to school needs, we regionalized several roles on our network team to ensure our schools in Boston and Lawrence receive the contextualized support they need. Regionalized roles now include Academic Coaches, key operations leaders and IT support. By honing our goals and strategic initiatives, addressing shortcomings, and making plans for growth, we are building a responsive and supportive network that can last.

# SHARP MINDS

## STUDENT GROWTH & ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

At UP, we value the opportunity for our scholars to cultivate their sharp minds. We are committed to providing an equitable and holistic education that not only focuses on rigorous academics, but also builds social-emotional skills and develops our scholars' leadership potential. We've witnessed tremendous growth over the past two years across the network, seeing impressive improvement for high needs students like English Learners (EL) and students with disabilities.

As we head into the final year of our strategic plan, we are focusing on elevating our English Language Arts (ELA) and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) work and expect to see impressive growth in literacy and social-emotional outcomes in the years to come.

**+80%**

MCAS Math scores increase 80% from 2018-2019 as measured by Student Growth Percentile (SGP).

**UP ACADEMY OLIVER**

**+22%**

MCAS English Language Arts scores increased 22% from 2018-2019 as measured by SGP.

**UP ACADEMY OLIVER**

**+32pts.**

Students increased 32 percentile points in the SEL skills survey from last year.

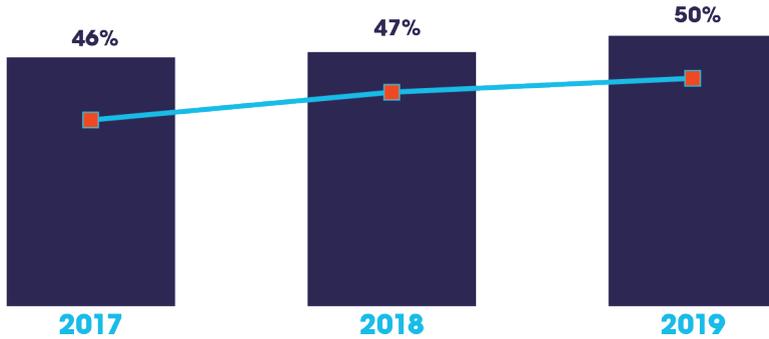
**UP ACADEMY DORCHESTER**

**+32%**

Top middle school in the state for Math growth with 32% increase from the previous year as measured by SGP.

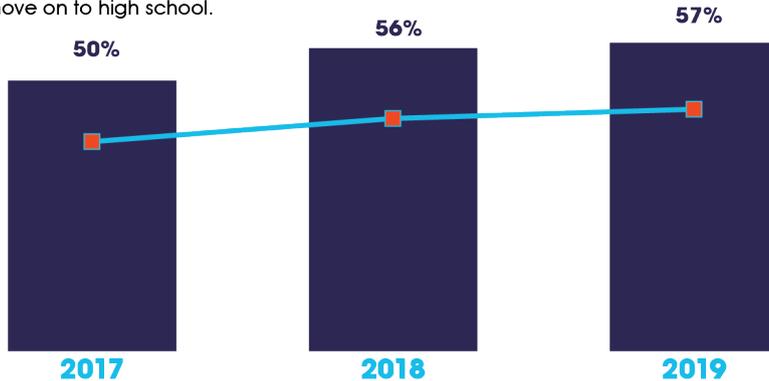
**UP ACADEMY LEONARD**

**8th GRADE MATH STUDENT GROWTH PERCENTILE (SGP) — ALL STUDENTS**



**8th GRADE MATH STUDENT GROWTH PERCENTILE (SGP) — ENGLISH LEARNER (EL) STUDENTS**

We are incredibly proud of growth among student sub-groups. As an example, our 8th Grade English Learners (EL) achieved tremendous growth on MCAS Math scores the past three years. This powerful improvement points to how prepared UP middle school scholars are when they graduate and move on to high school.



“

I am so pleased to say my daughter has truly blossomed in her first year in attendance. She has always enjoyed school, but each one of her teachers has reached her in such a way that she looks forward to going to school and what she will be learning each day.

**CAROL WILLIS-WEBB**  
PARENT OF A 7TH GRADE UP  
ACADEMY BOSTON STUDENT



## TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

# AMONIQUE CUNNINGHAM

Amonique Cunningham was drawn to teaching because growing up she knew what it felt like to be a student and not have a teacher who looked like her. She joined UP Academy Boston as a Teaching Fellow in 2016 through the Sposato Master's program. As a Teaching Fellow, she received training and support to prepare her to become a teacher. In 2017, she was hired full-time as the 8th Grade Math teacher.

Amonique shared, "***Sposato gave me the space and opportunity to grow my practice as a teacher both inside, and outside the walls of UP Academy Boston.***" And Amonique's distinct teaching practice is widely recognized around the school.

One of Amonique's colleagues shared, "***She is an excellent math teacher who delivers content using differentiated methods that caters to all levels of learners within her classroom.***"

Amonique was recognized at UP's annual Summit this year as the recipient of the Excellence in Teaching award for UP Academy Boston. And she's taking on a leadership role in the upcoming school year as the interim Dean of Curriculum and Instruction.

***"I love to see the sparkle and joy that comes when students are successful in class, and the determination and fight I see when the content gets a little tough. Our students are great. Our students are fighters. I owe it to them to hear their stories, to develop and better my practice in order to give them the highest quality of instruction, to respect them for their individual self and to love them."***

**-Amonique Cunningham**



**46%**

Of UP students grew at least 2 levels on the assessment which measures grade-level proficiency.

**NETWORK-WIDE**

**+55pts.**

English Language Learners represented the largest increase in Math scores of all students on the MAP Growth assessment.

**UP ACADEMY LEONARD**

**For 54% of students, English is not their first language**

**15+ languages spoken by our students**

# KIND HEARTS

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Over the last two years, as part of rolling out a new vision for the organization and implementing our strategic plan, we focused on solidifying a common model for social emotional learning.

During the 2019-2020 school year, UP piloted a program in our middle schools called Compass Circles, developed by Valor Collegiate Academy. Compass Circles is a practice that cultivates deep relationships and trust. Upon that foundation, staff and students learn mindfulness techniques, skills for recognizing and managing emotions, navigating conflict and building positive relationships. In our elementary schools, we implemented Open Circle, an evidence-based model developed by Wellesley College that helps students recognize and manage emotions, develop empathy and build successful relationships.

For the 2020-2021 school year, we are rolling out a new SEL curriculum, Second Step, across all UP middle schools. Second Step is an online web-based program that utilizes best practices to guide student discussions around relevant and timely topics like bullying, building self-efficacy and goal setting. In total, across all 5 UP Academy's, scholars received more than 200 hours of SEL instruction last year and we've witnessed meaningful growth. UP Academy Dorchester students increased 32 percentile points on the annual SEL skills survey, Panorama, compared to the year prior, specifically growing more than 9 points in growth mindset and increasing 7 points in self-efficacy.

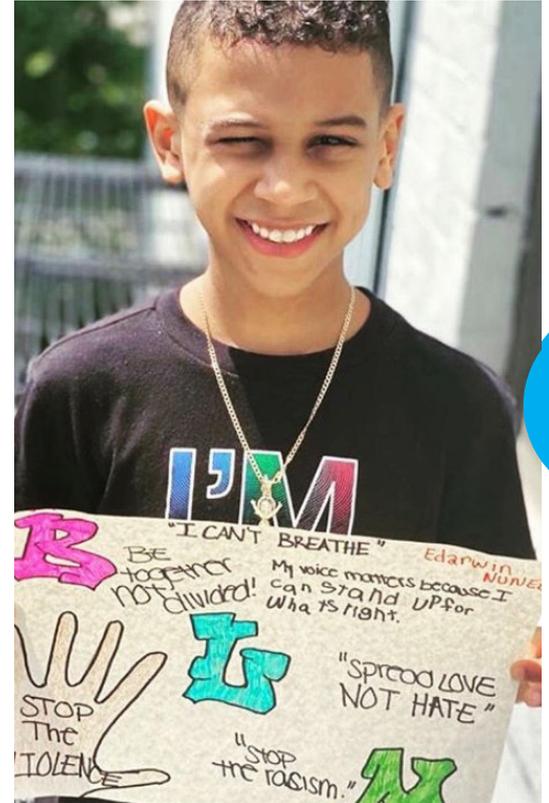


## MEET SKYLAR

UP Academy Holland recognizes and honors the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with week-long activities and discussions. This year, we asked our scholars, "What is your dream?" Skylar has a dream to be a veterinarian!

## BLACK LIVES MATTER

As an organization, we have taken steps to ensure that equity and anti-racism is at the forefront of all we do. And we support our students in becoming active contributors to their communities. Last spring, UP students participated in Black Lives Matter marches, schools held discussions around the movement, and teachers altered their lesson plans to ensure ample time for students to reflect on current events.





**“Coming to this program gives me a chance to practice my skills in being a leader. It’s hard to talk about these issues, but that is what being a leader is. Taking a stand on issues in your school, community or around the world and getting your voice heard among as many people as possible.”**

**-Jayco Garcia  
UP Academy Boston 6th Grader**

## **PATH & POTENTIAL**

At UP, we value the opportunity for our scholars to get involved in causes they care deeply about. That’s why we created the Student Leadership Council, which aims to further strengthen the relationships our students have with their community by further developing their leadership skills.

The SLC brings together more than 30 students from all five UP schools. This select group of students not only spans two school districts, but also crosses geographic boundaries empowering them to become changemakers within their communities. For the final SLC meeting this year, the students were asked to research a problem in their community, make a presentation on the issue and how they would resolve it.



**A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love of learning and that is what the teachers do for the students at UP Academy Boston.**

---

**LORENA RIVERA**  
UP ACADEMY BOSTON, PARENT



**PHOTO**  
Our scholars didn't miss a beat during remote learning last spring.

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

## FAMILIES AS PARTNERS IN SUCCESS

We highly value the collaboration and partnership of working with families to create exceptional schools. We have a dedicated team member at each school who focuses on family and community engagement. And our teachers are motivated to empower their scholars to succeed.

They also recognize how important it is to maintain consistent communication with parents, and make sure that the family knows when students are doing well or if they need extra support. By building relationships and community with students and families, our staff are able to reach their scholars in new ways.



**PHOTO**  
Ashanti and her mother proudly celebrate her Honor Roll accomplishments at the annual UP Academy Boston Honor Roll ceremony in 2019.



**PHOTO**

UAL 7th/8th Grade girls cross country team brought home the championship trophy in 2019

**93%**

Of families received weekly contact from their school/teachers during 3 months of remote learning.

**NETWORK-WIDE**

**40+**

In-person and virtual family and community engagement events held.

**NETWORK-WIDE**

**72% of students & families are economically disadvantaged, almost double the state average**

**84% of students are high-needs**

**15**



#### PHOTO

UP Academy Oliver ESL Teacher, Ms. Leip, and Special Education Paraprofessional, Mr. Ugalde Castro, dropped off books to their students across Lawrence during remote learning.

UP MOVES TO

## REMOTE LEARNING

Like millions across the country, more than 2,500 UP scholars and their families were hit hard by the COVID-19 public health crisis and extended school closures. As a network, we mobilized immediately to deliver the rigorous academic and high-quality social-emotional supports our families have come to know... just from a distance. We prioritized consistent and daily contact with teachers, provided every student with access to technology and ensured families had the resources they needed to thrive.

To enable remote learning in the spring of 2020, we distributed more than 1,500 chromebooks and secured the funding to move to a 1:1 child to device ratio for the 2020-2021 school year.

We also worked with families, the district and local internet service providers to distribute and set up hotspots for families without consistent home internet access. In days, we launched a centralized remote learning website with assignments, videos and virtual instruction guidelines. Teachers quickly transitioned their instruction, from recording and posting lessons online, to holding Zoom classes, they pivoted to ensure no child experienced a lapse in their education. All the while maintaining consistent contact with parents and students.

## KEY LESSONS

While the Spring 2020 brought tremendous disruption to how we teach and support students, there were bright spots. Across our network, 93% of parents and students were contacted weekly by a teacher or staff member. Teachers went above and beyond by dropping off school supplies at students' homes, sending pizza to students when they completed a difficult assignment and texting students daily to make sure they were completing their work. Staff members also delivered masks and hand sanitizer to students in Boston and books to students in Lawrence.

In addition to academic instruction and social-emotional learning programming, we witnessed resounding participation and engagement in virtual extracurricular activities, such as grade-level meetings, physical education, dance classes, and small group based discussions around racial equity and the Black Lives Matter movement.

“

**Malaki's mother says the communication and support have been much stronger from the teachers of her three other school-aged children, all attending Boston Public Schools. Her six-year-old son Micah's kindergarten teacher texts her every day to check in. At the same school, UP Academy Holland, her fifth-grader, Seriah, texts and Facetimes with her teachers regularly.**

---

**THE BOSTON GLOBE**  
REPORTING ON A FORMER UP  
ACADEMY HOLLAND STUDENT &  
HIS SIBLINGS WHO ARE CURRENT  
STUDENTS.

# OUR SUPPORTERS

**JULY 1, 2018 - JUNE 30, 2020**

A special thanks to our generous donors who believe in the potential of all students for supporting the network and our schools.

## **\$100,000+**

Anonymous (2)  
The Barr Foundation  
The Baupost Group, LLC.  
Carnegie Corporation of New York  
Charles Hayden Foundation  
Mannion Family Foundation  
McCance Foundation  
One8 Foundation  
Brian and Stephanie Spector  
Strategic Grant Partners  
Walton Family Foundation  
Wellington Management Foundation

## **\$50,000 - \$99,999**

Cedar Street Foundation  
Anthony DiNovi  
Farhad and Karen Nanji  
Stevens Foundation  
Swensrud Foundation

## **\$25,000- \$49,999**

Kirk Arnold  
Cabot Family Charitable Trust  
Beth and Brian Clymer  
Liberty Mutual Foundation  
Lovett-Woodsum Foundation  
Mifflin Memorial Fund

## **\$10,000- \$24,999**

Michael DeMichele and Elizabeth Shelburne  
Meghan Joyce  
Rebecca and Charlie Ledley  
LeveragED Foundation  
Adam Nebesar

## **\$5,00- \$9,999**

James Berylson  
Rick Burnes  
Veronica Conforme  
Kristin and Paul Marcus  
Smith Family Foundation

## **\$2,500- \$4,999**

Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation  
Dave Johnson  
Scott and Ursula Steele  
Tyton Partners

## **\$500-\$2,499**

Stephen Aborn and Laura Kline  
Eric Almquist  
Dr. Karla Bæhr  
Dean Constant  
Nicole and Kevin Dorn  
Allison Freedman and Alex Gedeon  
Thomas Hoff  
David and Sarah James  
Joanne Jan  
Phillip Kantor and Erika Jones  
Ted Keith  
Salil Kelkar  
Krokidas & Bluestein  
Dianne and Bill Ledingham  
Christian Lehr and Chloe Lee  
Ben and Sarah Lerer  
Chuck Longfield  
Priyanka Mehrotra  
Virginie Perraudin  
Greg Shell  
Barbara Sullivan  
Joe Terino  
Owen Wurzbacher  
Ben Yu

“  
*Every student deserves a high-quality school – where they are known, challenged, and supported. With an unwavering belief in the potential of every young person, UP embraces innovative solutions that transform schools into places where all students thrive.*

**KATE DOBIN**  
SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

# THE BARR FOUNDATION

Since our founding, the Barr Foundation has been a pivotal partner in realizing UP's mission to transform chronically underperforming schools into exceptional learning environments for every student.

Most recently, from 2017 through 2020, the Barr Foundation funded the implementation of our strategic plan which resulted in the launch of the UP Leadership Institute, network wide curricula for social-emotional learning, and more robust family engagement programs.

Because of the Barr Foundation's generous investment and belief in the power and potential of all students, UP has been able to better equip our people to teach and lead, solidify our common school model, and become a network built to last.

Every organization deserves a partner like the Barr Foundation, with shared goals and values, and an approach to grantmaking that prioritizes listening, learning, and the endless potential of all students.



**PHOTO**

From left to right: UP Academy Holland's Rena Stone, Jeremy Lassiter, Arion Mills, Isaac Freeland and Paola Tineo at UP's all-staff Summit in 2019.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

UP Education Network is supported and governed by the UP Education Network Board of Trustees, a group of dynamic, thoughtful leaders who support us in making lasting, impactful change.

**MARTIN MANNION**  
*Board Chair*

Former Managing Director, Summit Partners

**KIRK ARNOLD**  
Former Chief Executive Officer, Data Intensity

**DR. KARLA BROOKS BAEHR**  
Co-Lead, Massachusetts New  
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Managing Director, MFN Partners

**GREG SHELL**  
Managing Director, Bain Capital Double Impact

## YOUNG PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

UP Education Network is also supported by our Young Professional Advisory Board, which is a group of young professionals dedicated to volunteering their time, energy and talents in service of UP Education Network and UP Academy schools.

**STEPHEN ABORN**  
Director, Aborn & Co

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& Portfolio Manager,  
HighSage Ventures

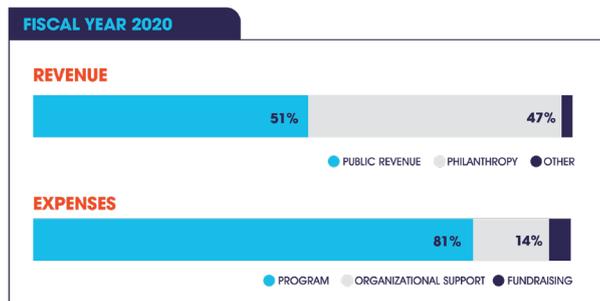
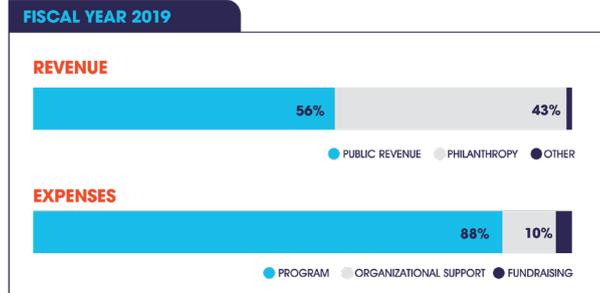
**BEN YU**  
Senior Forecasting Analyst,  
Wayfair

# FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Over the past two years, UP has taken significant steps to reduce our reliance on philanthropy. We have also solidified our common model and identified strategic priorities to ensure we are a network built to last. Your generosity is fueling our mission to transform schools into exceptional learning environments.

	2019	2020*
<b>REVENUE</b>		
PHILANTHROPY	2,756,564	2,770,705
SCHOOL MANAGEMENT	3,638,413	2,996,935
OTHER	62,961	120,500
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$6,457,939</b>	<b>\$5,888,140</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
FUNDRAISING	155,807	247,621
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT	593,320	784,984
PROGRAM	5,450,082	4,534,176
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$6,199,209</b>	<b>\$5,566,781</b>
<b>NET INCOME*</b>	<b>\$258,730</b>	<b>\$321,359</b>

\*FY20 Financials are Unaudited. We ended the year with a surplus largely due to delays in the timing of several significant expenses related to remote learning. Specifically, the expense of computer/device purchases and learning platform purchases both fell in July rather than June as anticipated. We also saw larger than anticipated savings in administrative costs due to staff working entirely remotely.







## LEVEL UP

### POEM FROM AN UP PARENT

**L** is the love that we share with each other  
**E** is the education that I value as a mother  
**V** is for virtual, the new way to grow  
**E** is for excellence that we will continue to sow  
**L** is for lion, hear our roar as  
**UP** Education scholars continue to soar

---

**DAPHNE LOPES**

PARENT OF UAH '16 AND UAB '19 ALUMNI

---

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Boston, MA 02114



[upeducationnetwork.org](http://upeducationnetwork.org)