



A young girl with short brown hair and a woman with long dark hair are looking through the eyepieces of a white compound microscope. The woman, wearing a dark blue hoodie with 'DMACC' on it, is holding the microscope. They are in a classroom setting with other students and desks in the background. A red and white banner is visible in the background.

A CAMPAIGN FOR
BY DEGREES FOUNDATION

MOVING THE NEEDLE
ON STUDENT SUCCESS





TALENT IS DISTRIBUTED EQUALLY, OPPORTUNITY IS NOT.

That's where By Degrees steps in.

Improving the odds to ensure more students graduate
from high school prepared for their futures.

Dear Friends and Supporters,

We are honored to serve as chairs for By Degrees Foundation's *Moving the Needle on Student Success* campaign.



We are motivated by the belief that education is one of the most powerful tools we have to level the playing field and expand opportunity for all. A strong education creates pathways out of poverty, opens doors to new possibilities, and lays the foundation for economic mobility and civic engagement.

As longtime supporters, we have witnessed firsthand how the partnership between By Degrees and schools, families, and local organizations can transform student outcomes and promote student success. This, along with By Degrees' role in fostering hope, inspiration, and purpose creates a winning formula—because when students believe in their potential and see a future worth striving for, anything becomes possible.

Since 1990, By Degrees has been a consistent and trusted partner to students, families, and Des Moines Public Schools, helping students explore their interests and plan for their futures. With your generosity, we can expand By Degrees' transformative programming, ensuring even more Des Moines students receive the support they need to succeed.

We invite you to join us in this important effort. Together, we will prove our commitment to Des Moines students, their potential, and their right to a bright and successful future.

Gratefully,

MICHELE & STEVE WHITTY

MOVING THE NEEDLE ON STUDENT SUCCESS CHAIRS

CREATING A CULTURE OF HOPE

By Degrees Foundation partners with public schools in diverse and under-resourced neighborhoods to ensure all students have access to the same opportunities, information, and resources they need to be successful. We work to increase high school graduation and postsecondary readiness rates through an expansive, K-12 culture of future-focused planning and saving.

To meet our goals, we engage community partnerships that address socioeconomic barriers. We incorporate postsecondary and career readiness experiences, financial education, and asset building for whole neighborhoods of students.

	BEFORE BY DEGREES	WITH BY DEGREES
Findley Elementary	2013-2014 School Year	2023-2024 School Year
School Performance	Low-performance	Innovation school model
Gallup Hope Index	47%	85%
Harding Middle	2015-2016 School Year	2023-2024 School Year
Students Completing Career Skills Interest Assessment	30%	74%
Students involved in at least one club/activity	20%	86%
North High	2018-2019 School Year	2023-2024 School Year
Students participating in college and career activities	10%	71%

FROM
A DREAM
TO A
REALITY

1990:
DES MOINES
“I HAVE A DREAM”
FOUNDATION
FOUNDED

MOULTON
ELEMENTARY
COHORT
ESTABLISHED

1996:
HOMES OF
OAKRIDGE COHORT
ESTABLISHED

2006:
KING ELEMENTARY
COHORT
ESTABLISHED

2014:
FINDLEY
ELEMENTARY
WHOLE-SCHOOL
MODEL
ESTABLISHED

2016:
HARDING MIDDLE
SCHOOL EXPANSION

2018:
CHANGED NAME
TO BY DEGREES
FOUNDATION

2019:
NORTH HIGH
SCHOOL EXPANSION

EDUCATION IS A COMMUNITY EFFORT



For nearly 20 years, community members have come together to support By Degrees' transformative work through the event Sweet Dreams. The funds raised support programming and show the students our community is invested in their futures.



Community partners make our work possible. By Degrees leverages the investment the community makes through collaborative partnerships. These organizations invest through funding, volunteering, classroom enrichment, and college and career visits.

Accumold • ADM • Ankeny 1st Methodist Church

Des Moines Art Center • Central College • Corteva

Broadlawns • Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden • DMACC

Des Moines Public Library • Drake University

Des Moines Electrical Apprenticeship • Everybody Wins Iowa

ISL Education Lending • John Deere Financial

Girl Scouts • Golden K. Kiwanis Club • Iowa State University

Kemin • Principal Foundation • Scheel's • Shoes that Fit

John Deere Works • John Deere Financial • McGill Junge

University of Iowa Healthcare • University of Iowa

Variety the Children's Charity of Iowa • OPN Architects

Little Book Shop • Molina Healthcare • Project7 Design

Raise the Bar • Simpson College • SitelogIQ

ABC Channel 5 • ClaimDOC • Future Ready Iowa

Grand View University • Iowa College Access Network

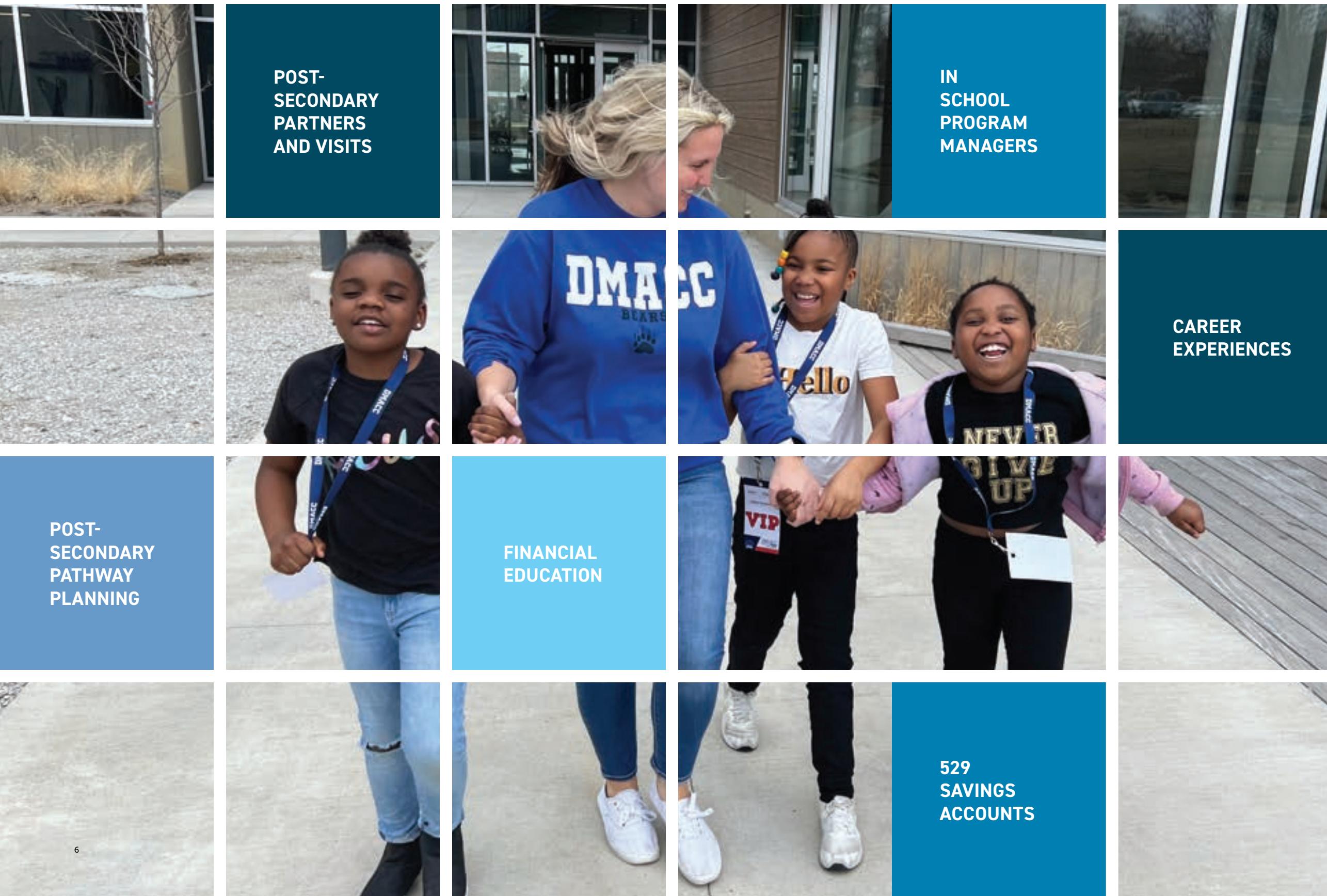
Iowa Public Radio • ISG • Junior Achievement • UnityPoint Health

Nyemaster Goode • Cha Cha's Highland Bakery

PCI Academy America • Plumbers and Steamfitters Union

University of Northern Iowa • YMCA • Mid-Iowa Health Foundation

A FORMULA FOR SUCCESS



Our Students

- Ethnicity
 - 36% Hispanic
 - 25% Black/African American
 - 19% White
 - 12% Asian
 - 7% Multi-Racial
 - 1% Native American
- Eligible for National School Lunch Program: **87%**
- English Language Learners: **32%**
- Eligible for Special Education: **19%**

2,400
students served during the
2024-2025 school year

600+
student 529 savings accounts
opened since 2015

\$375,000
invested in student savings
accounts since 2015

\$5 MILLION GOAL TWO CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

PRIORITY 1:

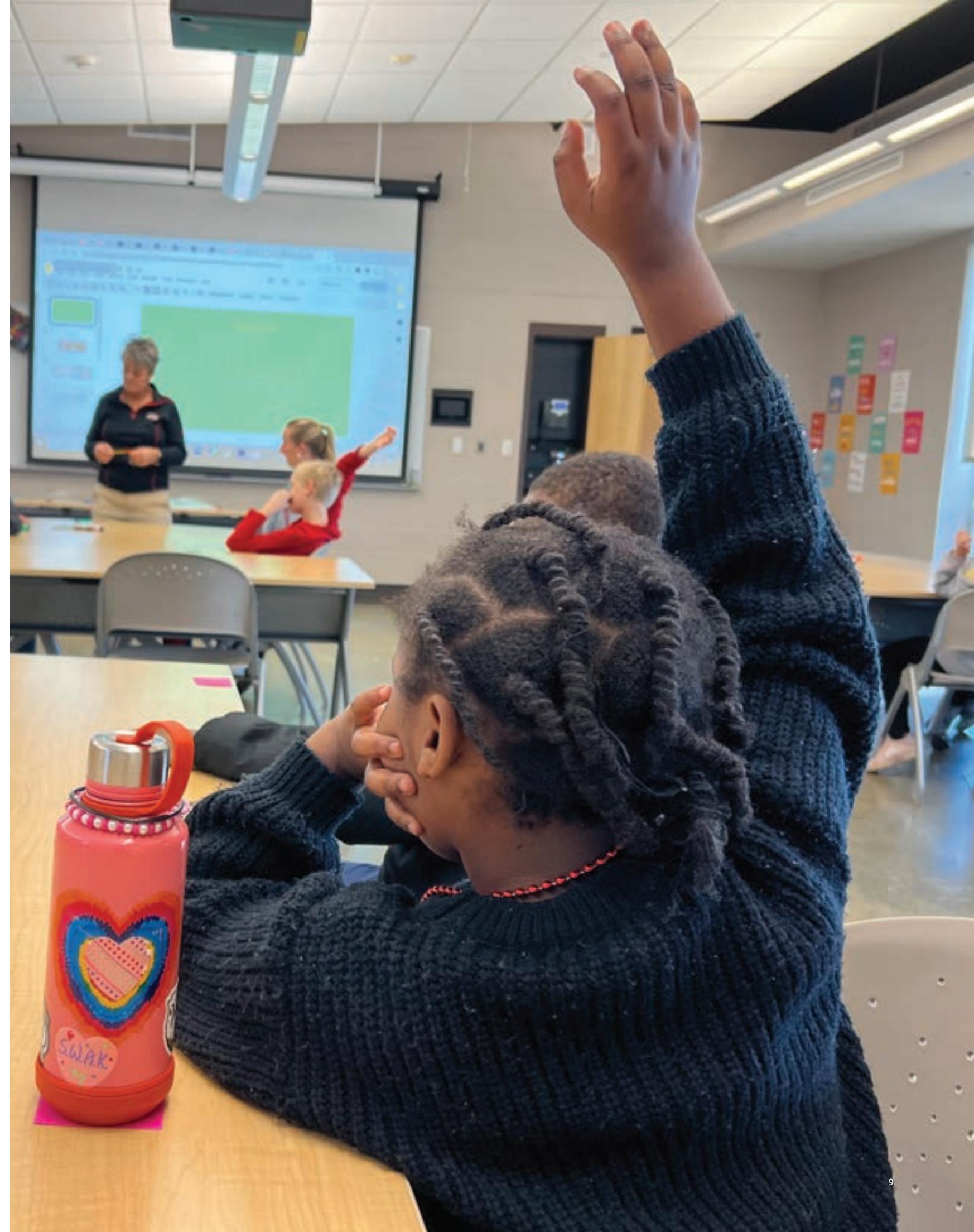
Triple the number of elementary students served annually

\$3 MILLION

PRIORITY 2:

Grow number of individual students with access to 529 savings accounts from 600 to 3,200

\$2 MILLION





PRIORITY 1:
**EXPAND BY DEGREES PROGRAMMING
TO REACH MORE K-5 STUDENTS**

Triple the number of elementary students served annually by our programs from 325 to 1,000.

A hallmark of By Degrees' success is the continuous engagement with students from kindergarten through graduation. Expanding to additional elementary schools ensures more students and families benefit from By Degrees programming at an early age. Following the same successful approach used during our establishment at Findley Elementary in 2014, we will:

- Identify the elementary schools for expansion
- Conduct a needs assessment at identified elementary schools to determine what supports work best in their specific communities
- Hire program staff to:
 - Create and implement solutions to identified needs
 - Establish and manage essential community partnerships that benefit students, families, and teachers
 - Create and deliver postsecondary and career programming

This work sets the foundation for our continued growth at the 7th - 12th grade level in future years.



“From a young age, especially because of being exposed to different careers and different people through By Degrees, I’ve always had in my mind that I was capable of doing what I wanted to do. My goals have always been reinforced by adults and teachers telling me that I can and will be able to achieve my dreams.”

CHAMP-PACIFIQUE MUKIZA
NORTH HIGH CLASS OF 2025



PRIORITY 2: EXPAND 529 SAVINGS ACCOUNT PROGRAM

Grow the number of individual students with access to 529 savings accounts from 600 to 3,200.

Our 529 program is the first asset-building approach of its kind in Iowa. Through it, students can earn up to \$200 annually into their personal accounts from K-12 by meeting various milestones. This program:

- Reduces the widening wealth gap
- Increases student and family engagement
- Strengthens overall financial health

Average account size: \$750

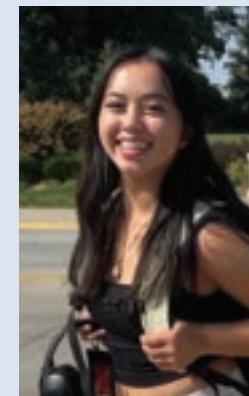
Amount invested in 529 savings accounts since 2015: \$375,000

Opportunities to Earn 529 Investments

- Reading & Math Growth
- Family Attendance at Financial Literacy Night
- Academic Goalsetting
- Career Inventory & Career Day Packet
- 95% Attendance Goal
- Extracurricular Engagement
- 3.5+ Cumulative GPA

Research shows that a student from a low-income background with just \$500 in a 529 account is:

- 3x more likely to attend postsecondary education
- 4x more likely to graduate from postsecondary education



“I am grateful for having a 529 savings account and happy that it has helped me pay off many expenses while attending college.

I remember having the savings account be introduced to me at Findley Elementary.

A significant highlight is being told I would earn milestones from By Degrees by having good grades, which continued to motivate me throughout Harding and North.”

JASMINE MALAVONG

2023 NORTH HIGH GRADUATE, ISU CLASS OF 2027



Gifts of all sizes will help move the needle on student success.

Gifts typically necessary for a \$4.5 million campaign include:

AMOUNT	# NEEDED	TOTAL
\$ 1,000,000	1	\$ 1,000,000
\$ 750,000	1	\$ 750,000
\$ 500,000	2	\$ 1,000,000
\$ 250,000	3	\$ 750,000
\$ 100,000	6	\$ 600,000
\$ 50,000	8	\$ 400,000
\$ 25,000	10	\$ 250,000
\$ 10,000	12	\$ 120,000
\$ 5,000	16	\$ 80,000
\$2,500	20	\$ 50,000
TOTAL		\$ 5 MILLION

WAYS TO GIVE

- One-time donation by cash, check or credit card
- Multi-year commitment payable over 5 years
- Appreciated securities
- Matured bequests
- Donor advised fund at the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines

All campaign donors contributing \$5,000 and above will be acknowledged on signage located in By Degrees partner elementary, middle and high schools as well as on the By Degrees website.

Naming opportunities begin at \$100,000. By Degrees campaign leadership welcomes the opportunity to discuss recognition for leadership gifts.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

2024-25:

650 HARDING MIDDLE STUDENTS HAVE 529 ACCOUNT ACCESS

2025-26:

1400 NORTH HIGH STUDENTS HAVE 529 ACCOUNT ACCESS

2026-27:

300 NEW ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

2028-29:

300 ADDITIONAL ELEMENTARY STUDENTS SERVED

2029-30:

FULL PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT WITH 3,200 TOTAL STUDENTS SERVED

CAMPAIN CABINET	BOARD OF DIRECTORS	STAFF
Joan Middleton	Bryan O'Neill, Chair	Emily Westergaard
Honorary Chair	<i>Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield</i>	CEO
Michele & Steve Whitty	Mondale Smith, Vice Chair	Kahara Hunafa-Addo
Campaign Chairs	<i>AgriSompo International</i>	North High Program Manager
Mary Katherine Nelson	Megan Mortier, Secretary	Heather Isaacson
Lucas Nelson	<i>The Waldinger Corporation</i>	Director of Programs
Pauline Niebur	Justin Greenwood, Treasurer	Billy Kirby
Bryan O'Neill	<i>Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines</i>	Findley Elementary Program Manager
Tom Nucaro	Annie Brandt	Cari Long
Craig Owens	<i>Bank of America</i>	Harding Middle Program Manager
Kathy Stuart	Rod Johnson	Carol Sames
Sabrina Zenor	<i>BLK & Bold</i>	Office Manager
	Joan Middleton	Amanda Shetler
	<i>Community Volunteer</i>	Director of Development
	Everett Miles	Laila Williams
	<i>Principal Financial</i>	Growth & Development Manager
	Matt Moore	
	<i>Sammons Financial Group</i>	
	Mary Katherine Nelson	
	<i>Nyemaster Goode</i>	
	Craig Owens	
	<i>Drake University</i>	
	Derrick Prine	
	<i>Deere and Company</i>	
	Lauren Rasmussen	
	<i>ITA Group</i>	
	Carolyn Reddick	
	<i>The University of Iowa Tippie College of Business</i>	
	Sabrina Zenor	
	<i>Summit Carbon Solutions</i>	



PO BOX 41070, DES MOINES, IA 50311 • 515-650-8230 • INFO@BYDEGREESFOUNDATION.ORG