

2023



BLUUM

LET LEARNING GROW

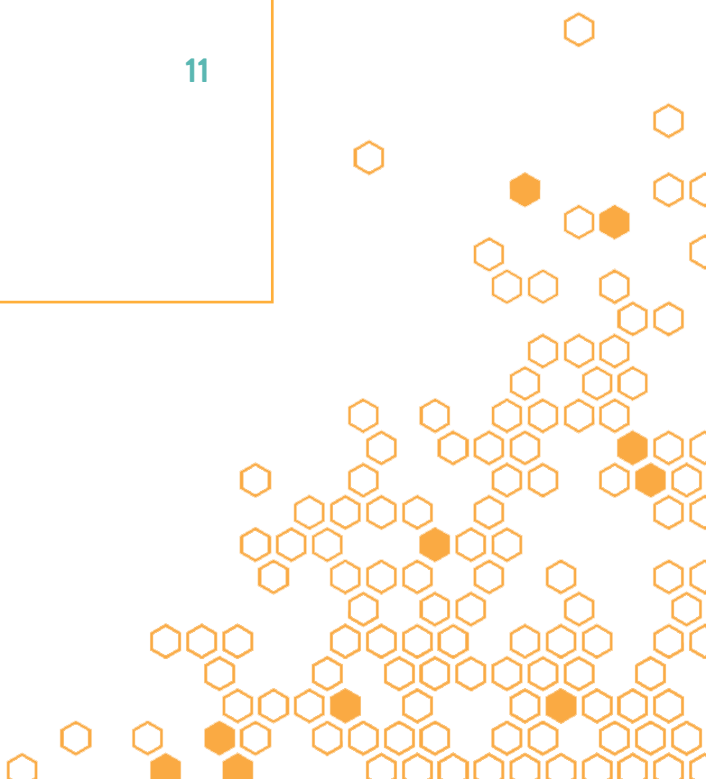
ANNUAL REPORT





TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT BLUUM	3
BLUUM PARTNER SCHOOLS	4
INVESTMENT SUMMARY	5
INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS	6
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT	7
TALENT JOINING OUR RANKS	8
IDAHO NEW SCHOOL FELLOW	9
BUILDING ON SUCCESS	10
OUR INFLUENCE	11



ABOUT BLUUM

BLUUM WORKS WITH IDAHO EDUCATORS, SCHOOL OPERATORS, COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LEADERS, FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PHILANTHROPY AND FAMILIES TO HELP PLAN, LAUNCH AND SUPPORT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS MORE GENERALLY. IN IDAHO, THIS WORK HAS BOOMED OVER THE LAST DECADE AS OUR STATE'S POPULATION, AND ESPECIALLY OUR STUDENT POPULATION, HAS GROWN RAPIDLY.

WE BELIEVE

... that school choice helps families, children, and educators achieve more and do better.

WE ARE COMMITTED

...to ensuring that Idaho's children reach their fullest potential by cultivating great leaders and innovative schools.

ABOUT BLUUM

Bluum is a nonprofit organization helping Idaho become a national model for how to maximize learning opportunities for children and families.

Bluum empowers and supports educators who take risks and put children first by:

- » Developing innovative leaders;
- » Growing successful school models;
- » Sharing research and learning innovations;
- » Providing school support and management help.

BLUUM 2023 PARTNERS



J.A. and KATHRYN
ALBERTSON FAMILY
FOUNDATION



PIPER | SANDLER



BLUUM PARTNER SCHOOLS BY COMMUNITY (2014-23)

From the rolling farmland of the Palouse Prairie to the far reaches of forested mountains, Bluum has supported 40 schools since 2014 in varied communities throughout our great state.

40 Schools
22 Communities
Charter | District | Parochial



INVESTMENT SUMMARY

2015–2023



INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS

IN 2023, BLUUM SUPPORTED THE OPENING OF TWO NEW PARTNER SCHOOLS. WE ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE GROUNDBREAKING FOR TWO ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS SET TO LAUNCH IN 2024.

Gem Prep Twin Falls, a K-5 school, opened in August, expanding yearly to serve 574 students in K-12. Promise Academy, which opened in the Idaho Youth Ranch Residential Center for Healing & Resilience, addresses severe mental health trauma for statewide students. Authorized by the Middleton School District, it will serve 64 residentially-based students at full enrollment.

In August, groundbreaking occurred for Idaho Novus Classical Academy in Eagle, part of the American Classical Schools of Idaho network, led by Idaho New School Fellows, Vincent Kane and Bruce Sims. Opening with K-6 and expanding annually to K-12, at full enrollment the school aims to educate 702 students. The school broke ground in 2023 on land donated by the developers of the Avimor community in Eagle.

Elevate Academy Idaho Falls, a year-round 6th-12th grade Career Technical Public Charter School, broke ground in June of 2023. Set to open in 2024, it will be the 4th Elevate Academy joining network partners in Caldwell, Nampa, and Post Falls. At full enrollment, the school will serve 488 at-risk students with the goal of engaging, inspiring, and igniting new passions in students. Elevate Academy will introduce them to career and technical programs like welding, fabrication, construction, machining, marketing, culinary arts, medical arts, and more. Idaho New School Fellow Logan Waetje will lead the school.

“

488

at-risk students will be served at Elevate Academy Idaho Falls.

Idaho New School Fellow, Logan Waetje will lead a team that **engages, inspires, and ignites new passions for students.**

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Groundbreaking at Elevate Academy Idaho Falls

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

BLUUM, WITH FUNDING SUPPORT FROM THE J.A. AND KATHRYN ALBERTSON FAMILY FOUNDATION (JKAF), HAS BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH ITS PARTNER SCHOOLS ON AN NWEA MAP ASSESSMENT CONSORTIUM. BELOW IS A SNAPSHOT.

“

75 %

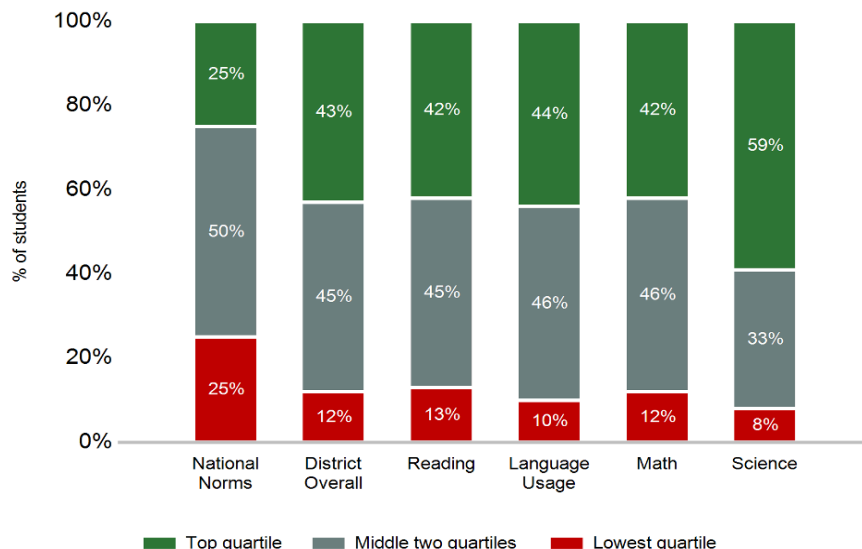
of students in Bluum partner schools had **achievement and high growth**; no schools had both low achievement and low growth.

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There are three primary reasons for this work with a nationally-normed assessment. First, provide real-time assessment data for school improvement supports from in-school academic teams and/or from Bluum. Second, provide a snapshot for Bluum, JKAF, and other interested partners on how our portfolio of school partners are performing academically and alert us to challenges and/or opportunities. Third, provide evidence to facility financing partners and lenders that the schools they invest in are truly helping students learn.

In summary for spring 2022 to spring 2023, 75 percent of students in Bluum partner schools had achievement and high growth; no schools had both low achievement and low growth. Forty-three percent of students in Bluum partner schools scored in the top quartile, a larger proportion than is typical nationally (25 percent). Forty-five percent of students scored in the middle two quartiles of performance, a typical proportion nationally is 50 percent. Twelve percent scored in the lowest quartile, a smaller portion that is typical nationally (25 percent).

BLUUM PARTNER SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOVE & BELOW AVERAGE



mapGROWTH™

TALENT JOINING OUR RANKS

BLUUM'S SECRET SAUCE IS IN OUR ABILITY TO ATTRACT AND RECRUIT OUR NATION'S BEST TALENT COMMITTED TO IDAHO'S STUDENTS AND FAMILIES.

In 2023, Bluum added three new members to our team. Veteran Idaho educator Mike Caldwell joined Bluum as Director of Academic Development and District Outreach. Mike has over 25 years of service in education and has served as a teacher, administrator, and program director. He recently served as the principal of Bishop Kelly High School in Boise from 2014 to 2023. Prior to Bishop Kelly, Mike was a member of the executive team at the Idaho Digital Learning Alliance where he served as Director of Development from 2008 to 2014. Mike grew up in a small rural Idaho town and has established himself as a prominent and well-respected forward thinker, innovator, and problem solver.



Sarah Meskin also joined the Bluum team as the Director of Communications. Sarah earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration along with double minors in Nonprofit Management and Human Resources at Boise State University. She was born and raised in Danville, California, where she spent many of her younger years volunteering for several educational nonprofits through the National Charity League. During her time at Boise State University, she worked with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital as a philanthropic coordinator.



Cory joined Bluum as the Finance & Operations Manager. He comes with 15 years' experience in budget and finance from various industries including healthcare, federal civil service (Military), and Real Estate Mortgages. He attended Southwestern Oklahoma State University, earning his bachelors in Business Management. Cory has always had a heart for kids and education as he is the son of a retired school teacher.



IDAHO NEW SCHOOL FELLOW

ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS LED BY BLUUM IS THE IDAHO NEW SCHOOL FELLOWSHIP. THE PROGRAM LAUNCHED IN 2016, AND SINCE THAT TIME, WE HAVE SUPPORTED 24 FELLOWS.



Dr. Jacob Francom is our newest fellow, a first-rate educator coming from Montana. Dr. Francom will serve as the founding principal of the North Idaho Classical Academy (NICA) in Bonners Ferry, which is expected to open in 2025. NICA is part of the American Classical Schools-Idaho (ACS-I) network, aligned with Hillsdale College's Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI). NICA, at full-enrollment, will serve 360 K-12 Idaho students.

Dr. Francom brings a wealth of experience to NICA, with his previous work educating at-risk youth in a Montana school. He received his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Montana in 2009 and his Master of Arts in Russian from the University of Arizona in 2006. He has actively contributed to multiple accrediting bodies' boards, allowing him to conduct international professional development and accreditation visits for the past decade. This diverse exposure to global education systems equips him to connect with NICA's curriculum and establish a successful learning environment for his students.

In Montana, Dr. Francom also held the position of the longest-standing superintendent in his region. During his career, he has been awarded Montana Educational Leader of the Year and Montana Principal of the Year. His decision to take the helm at NICA surprised many who know of his outstanding service to students in Montana. His strong belief in classical models of education like ACS-I and BCSI led him to collaborate with Idaho New School Fellow alumni Stephen Lambert, Clinton Condra, Vincent Kane, and Bruce Sims to learn the intricacies of launching a Classical Academy charter school in the Gem State. Classical academies, known for their emphasis on character education, deeply integrate virtues into the curriculum and culture, which is mainly why he decided to transition towards taking part in the development of NICA.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

IN 2023, THE US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (USDOE) AWARDED BLUUM A \$24.8 MILLION FEDERAL CHARTER SCHOOL (CSP) GRANT. THIS HIGHLY COMPETITIVE GRANT BUILDS ON BLUUM'S PREVIOUS \$22 MILLION CSP GRANT EXPERIENCE; WHICH WRAPPED UP IN SEPTEMBER AFTER FIVE YEARS WITH THE CREATION OF 25 NEW PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS, THREE EXPANSIONS, AND ALMOST 11,500 NEW STUDENT SEATS.



Building on Success for Future Excellence (2023-2028) expands on the successes, systems, and lessons learned from Idaho's previous CSP grant award. We seek to continue expanding opportunities for Gem State students to attend excellent public charter schools that meet and exceed state academic standards for all students. Critically important to the success of our efforts is the continuing and ongoing support of the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation. Other key partners in this effort include the Idaho State Department of Education, the Idaho State Board of Education and the Idaho Public Charter School Commission.

Our Building on Success for Future Excellence grant has three primary objectives:

- » Increase the number of quality Idaho charter school seats by no less than 5,900 students, especially for our most educationally disadvantaged and rural students through start-up, replication or expansion;
- » Support quality authorizing in Idaho while disseminating and supporting best authorizer practices statewide; and
- » Evaluate and disseminate widely the successes and lessons of high-quality charter schools to impact the broader education system.

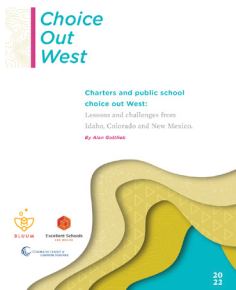


Governor Brad Little visits students at Sage International Charter School (Boise)

OUR INFLUENCE

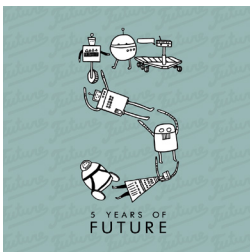
2023 WAS A BANNER YEAR. THE BLUUM TEAM PRESENTED AT MORE THAN A DOZEN NATIONAL CONFERENCES, PUBLISHED THREE REPORTS, AND WAS HIGHLIGHTED ACROSS OVER A DOZEN MEDIA OUTLETS.

Choice Out West



The report, “Choice Out West: Lessons and challenges from Idaho, Colorado, and New Mexico,” highlights the successes and challenges in expanding and innovating Idaho’s charter school sector. Despite positive efforts, rapid population growth poses complex challenges in providing quality public school choice seats for K-12 students. Drawing on over 25 years of charter school experience in three Western States, the report shares insights from interviews with experts and data analysis, offering lessons learned and areas for improvement. Commissioned by Bluum in Idaho, the Colorado League of Charter Schools, and Excellent Schools New Mexico, the report focuses on enhancing education for students and families.

5 Years of Future Public School



As Future Public School marks its 5th anniversary, we reflect on the school’s journey and the formation of key partnerships. We dive into the deliberate efforts of the team to establish an intentional culture that withstood the challenges posed by COVID. Additionally, we explore the vision for the future. We take immense pride in Idaho New School Fellow Amanda Cox and her team, celebrating all that they have accomplished throughout the years.

Here to Stay



This study, “Here to Stay,” dives into the interdependence of Idaho’s success and that of its Hispanic families in economic, social, and educational aspects. Building on the insights from the 2016 study, “Hispanic Parents Speak Out,” conducted by the same research team for Bluum, the report aims to inform Idaho’s leaders in designing policies. It provides an opportunity for leaders to listen to Hispanic parents, share their experiences with public schools, and articulate their goals for their children. The goal is to capture their voices effectively so that future policies and practices can better meet the needs of Hispanic parents and children in Idaho.



SCAN ME



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