



Purpose, Partnership, Progress

IMPACT REPORT

July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 | July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

LETTER TO OUR FRIENDS



Diane Rosenthal
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As we reflect upon the past several years, the Board, staff and students and families whom we serve at Student Advocacy are grateful for your steadfast support. Our organization has remained committed to protecting and advancing the educational rights of all students, especially those with disabilities and those who have experienced adversity in their young lives.

We are proud to present our Impact Report for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years. It describes what we have accomplished together, the incredible progress we have made in helping students obtain educational services, and the growth of our organization. This evolution was led by Jill Bernstein, our immediate past President. We thank Jill for everything that she has helped Student Advocacy accomplish.

PURPOSE. We are the only non-profit organization in our region whose mission is exclusively devoted to providing legal representation on education issues to families from low income and immigrant backgrounds. We are the gateway to educational attainment for the students with whom we work, many who have been historically marginalized because of disabilities, race, ethnicity, immigrant status, sexual orientation, gender identity, interaction with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and more.

When students receive the educational resources and accommodations they need to overcome learning and other challenges, staff observe the following positive outcomes:

INCREASE IN



self-confidence and **belief** in their ability to learn



interest in academics and related **school activities**



ability to **transform challenges** into life lessons that can be applied to future endeavors



knowledge about educational rights, supports and services and how to effectively **self-advocate** for them

(continued on next page)



Karen Blumenthal
Board President

LETTER TO OUR FRIENDS



PARTNERSHIP. We are stronger and more effective when we work together toward a common goal. It is the strength of the partnership we share with each of you – friends, supporters, business and non-profit leaders, government officials, and school personnel - that makes it possible for our team of attorneys and advocates to help students obtain the education supports and services they need to have a successful school experience.

PROGRESS. Our strategic expansion has enhanced our community outreach, increased our financial resources, and diversified our programs and services to better meet the needs of children and youth who struggle academically, socially, and emotionally. During this time, our team:

- provided legal representation for over 1000 students in Westchester and Putnam Counties at no cost to 98% of these families
- successfully obtained educational services that were appropriate for the unique learning needs of the students in 95% of closed cases
- expanded outreach to students in grades Pre-K – 5 who now comprise close to 50% of our student population, making it possible to reach children earlier in their educational journeys when interventions can have a greater and longer lasting impact

PURPOSE, PARTNERSHIP, PROGRESS are our core values. Because of you, we have been able to make a significant impact on the life trajectory of students who receive our services. We are grateful to each of you for helping us to ensure that students with disabilities and those who have experienced adversity not only have equal access to education, but have every opportunity and resource they need to succeed and thrive.

Thank you for being partners with us on this journey.

With sincere appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane".

Diane Rosenthal
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen".

Karen Blumenthal
Board Chair (or President)

OUR MISSION

STUDENT ADVOCACY PROTECTS and **ADVANCES** students' educational rights by providing **LEGAL REPRESENTATION** and counsel to ensure equity and access to school.

OUR VISION

WE BELIEVE THAT ALL YOUTH can realize their **POTENTIAL** if they have **EQUAL ACCESS** to educational resources and opportunities and can learn in a **SAFE** and **SECURE ENVIRONMENT**.

Community Impact:



1000+ STUDENTS SERVED

(represents combined student total for school years 7/1/21- 6/30/22 and 7/1/22 – 6/30/23)

68% male; 32% female

88% from historically underrepresented communities

78% with special education related needs (Westchester County: 17% identified as students with disabilities)

70% of students are in grades Pre-K – 8

83% attend school in districts where **50% or more** of the population is identified as **economically disadvantaged**

Outcomes:

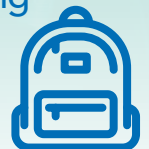
98%

of families receive legal representation & counsel at no cost



95%

of closed cases result in obtaining improved school services that meet students' academic, social and emotional needs



Children are born ready to learn

But not everyone learns in the same way. For four decades, Student Advocacy has been the only organization in Westchester and Putnam Counties whose work and mission are exclusively devoted to providing legal representation on education matters at no cost to families with limited resources.

Student Advocacy works with each child and their family to understand the issues that are coming between the child and their ability to learn. We then make recommendations to school personnel for resources and interventions that address the needs of the whole child, academically, socially, emotionally and at home.

We are focused on helping guide families on how they can identify and address the challenges their children are facing at school. From being at risk of failing or dropping out, to not having the adequate support they require for their behavioral or learning disability, we advocate for children to receive the services they are legally entitled to so they can make progress with their education, move forward in life, and thrive.

Without our services many families would be unable to obtain legal counsel to represent their children on special education related matters. Our team is committed to ensuring that every student who seeks our services receives expert guidance from an attorney or education advocate.

Education transforms lives. Student Advocacy turns hope into promise so every child can achieve their full potential and receive the services they need to succeed in the best possible environment.

STUDENT ADVOCACY MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

Our team is committed to ensuring that every student who seeks our services receives expert guidance from an attorney or education advocate.



1 Any Westchester or Putnam County student enrolled in a public school in grades Pre-k through high school who is struggling academically, socially, emotionally or has a learning or physical disability is entitled to assistance



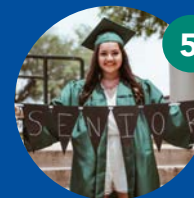
We ensure that all children classified with a disability and those that face learning challenges receive a free appropriate public education



3 We educate families about their child's education rights and how to advocate for them



We advocate for children to receive the educational services that they are legally entitled to

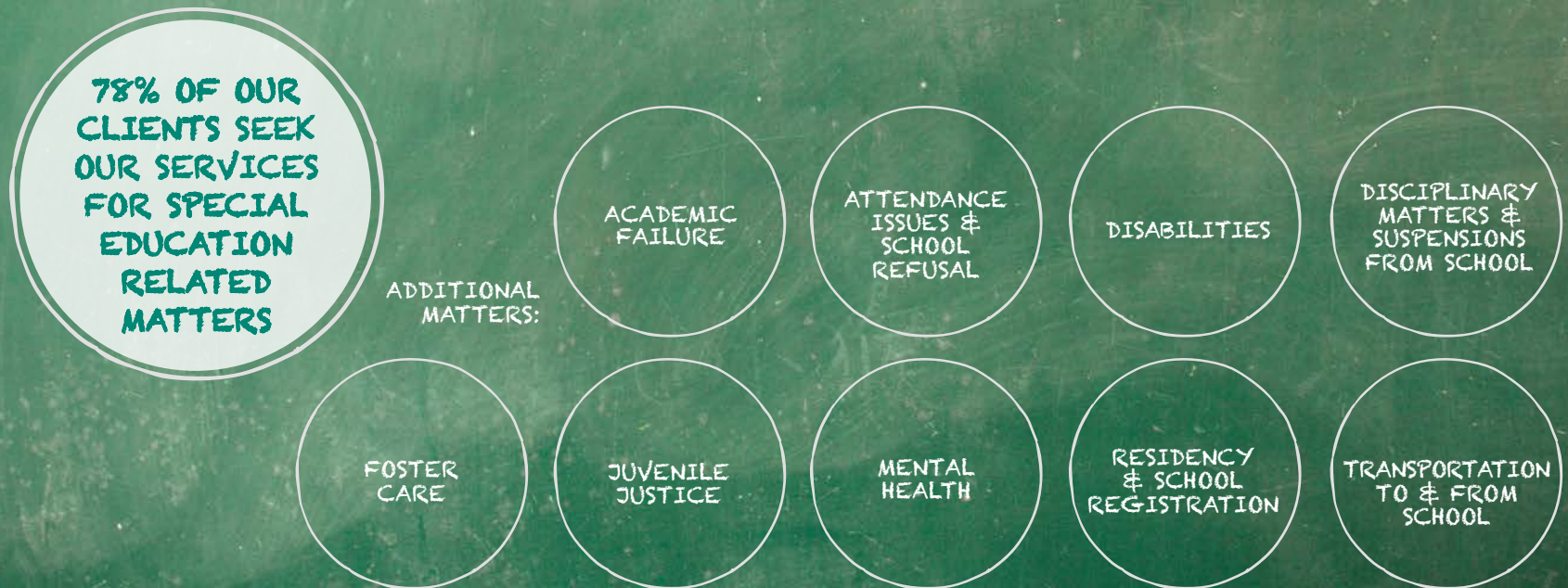


5 We work with families to guide them in helping their child receive the assistance they require to attend school and progress in their education

Challenges our students experience

Students from Pre-K through high school can experience academic, social, or emotional challenges that impact the progress they make with learning. Many of the students we represent have been marginalized because of disabilities, race, ethnicity, immigrant status, sexual orientation, gender identity, interaction with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, mental health issues and more. Student Advocacy supports

and advocates for all students who are excluded from school or denied services that would enable them to learn and eventually graduate. We help families navigate the complexities of the special education system so that they may obtain the educational supports and services their children need to gain confidence in their abilities and fulfill their potential.





Every child has the right to thrive

With the help of our advocacy services, students can obtain the educational supports and services to which they are legally entitled, attend school in a safe and secure learning environment, achieve success, and fulfill their potential.

Our students' achievements include:

- Developing the social skills needed to form positive relationships inside and outside of school
- Participating in school and community activities
- Engaging in healthier lifestyle behaviors
- Remaining in school and graduating
- Acquiring the skills needed to enter the workforce
- Expanding career options



Helping Jeanna transition into high school and succeed

Jeanna, an energetic 8th grader with language delays and physical disabilities, had attended a small school since first grade. Jeanna's mother contacted Student Advocacy when it became necessary to plan Jeanna's transition into high school. She wanted the right school with the specialized supports and services that Jeanna needed to thrive. She was, however, uncertain about whether it should be a small or larger school environment. That's where Student Advocacy stepped in to provide guidance.

Upon recommendation from the Student Advocacy attorney, new evaluations were conducted. After reviewing the evaluations, our attorney advised the family to consider the larger high school in Jeanna's home district as it had all the resources she needed including speech, language and occupational therapy, social skills classes, and counseling.

As a result of our advocacy, Jeanna arrived at her new school eager to learn with the appropriate supports and services in place. Jeanna's mom reports that since changing schools, Jeanna's confidence and communication skills have improved and because she is in her home district, she now has friends in her community. Most importantly, Jeanna is receiving guidance to help her plan her future and is excited about her life beyond high school. She feels positive, assured, and prepared. •

“Thank you for being the voice for our daughter. Because of that, we now have the appropriate educational services for Jeanna.”

Supporting Vincent's reading journey



Vincent struggled with reading throughout kindergarten and first grade. Even though he had an Individual Education Plan (IEP), he was not making progress. His mother wasn't quite sure what to do after she had received conflicting opinions about her son's legal educational entitlements. Her primary questions were, what was preventing Vincent from learning to read and how could he receive the help he needed?

Vincent's mother contacted Student Advocacy for guidance. Her attorney advised that the school district where Vincent is a resident is obligated to deliver a free appropriate public

education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) so Vincent could make progress towards his IEP goals. She also recommended that his mother request that the school district conduct new evaluations.

Vincent's mother agreed with the attorney. She requested the Committee on Special Education (CSE) to convene a Program Review. Based upon these new evaluations, the attorney recommended to the CSE that Vincent required individualized, one-to-one reading instruction provided by a reading specialist. With the help of our advocacy and the new set of evaluations, the CSE approved all the requests and Vincent was finally going to receive the services to which he was legally entitled. Vincent's mother was grateful for our attorney's guidance and knowledge. •

***“You truly care about our children.
We are so happy that Vincent is reading.
He even has a few favorite books.
Thank you for going above and beyond!”***

Forging a future filled with opportunity for Denise

Denise is a determined young woman, who, beginning in kindergarten, was incorrectly placed in life skills classes even though she was capable of learning at a higher level. By the time she was in middle school, Denise was losing interest in school, and her mom began to suspect that she was not in an educational setting that matched her potential. When her mom sought assistance from Student Advocacy, Denise was significantly behind in reading, writing and math.

Once our attorney began working with Denise and her mom, she requested a new set of evaluations from the school district. As a result, it was determined that Denise had been misplaced and could learn at a much higher level. A meeting of the Committee on Special Education was convened, and Denise was moved from her life skills classes to classes where she would be learning alongside students who were on track to graduate with a Regents Diploma. Additional accommodations were also offered to ensure she would be successful in her new placement.

According to Denise's mom, "Equipped with a new education plan, and through sheer grit and determination, Denise has forged a new path for herself. She is involved in the Honors Society Club, working at a local day care center, and taking ballet lessons." And most importantly, Denise graduated

high school this past spring with a Regents Diploma. She is now attending college and envisions her future career as an occupational therapist, helping other children with disabilities. •



Thank you to our donors

Because of your generosity, many more children can access the educational resources they need to gain confidence, remain in school, and envision a future filled with hope and opportunity. Thank you for your dedication, support, and belief in the power of education to transform lives.

The list below represents combined contributions from January 2021 – December 2022.

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Nancy and Lawrence Marcus
Andrea and Fred Marcusa
Marjorie Margolis
Paul Marini
Avra Mark

Linda Markowitz
Suzy Mascitelli
Lauren and Richard Maybaum
Claire Mayer
Maria McGinty
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Margot and Daniel Milberg
Leslie and Dr. Paul Miskovitz
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Virginia and Joe Paretto
Julie and David P. Passman
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Patricia and Timothy Perini
Marjorie and Harry Phillips
Linda and Seth Plattus
Robin and Ted Plonsker
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Heidi and Martin Purzak
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Marvin Rappaport
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Theresa Reeves-Simpson
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Elisa Strauss and Marc Ricks
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Andrea and Dr. Calvin Roberts
Sandy Mayer and Jimmy Roberts
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Helen Rosenberg
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Jacqueline Kay Schlosser
Elizabeth Schutt
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Martin Schwartz
Suzanne Seiden
Judy and Dr. Kenneth Seslowe
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Theresa and John Stratta
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Clarence Williams
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Keri and Andrew Topkins
Rabbis Samantha and
Andrew Trief
Joyce and Carl Turnipseed
Marilyn and Harris Usdan
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Allison Wallach
Anat and Roger Warren
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Ladd Weinberg
Susan and Alan Weisenberg
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Community Services
Jonathan Wetchler and
Jean Singer
Dina Wetchler
Arlene Wexler
Laura and Steven Wexler
Elinor and Paul Wharton
Kerry Whelan-Megly
Malik White
Eric Wiggins
Frank Williams Jr.
Geri and Dr. David Wolf
Sandy Roth and Charles Wolf
Carol and Larry Wolfe
Elise and Terry Workman
Nancy and Russell Zelenetz
Becker/Zimmerman Family
Jill Burger and Craig Zuckerman

Up to \$99

Anonymous (2)
David Katz and Cecilia Absher
Claire Algaba
JoAnn and Evan Allen
Rachel and Robert Bernstein
Fletcher Burnett
Jane and Abby Cahn
Fulvio Calvi
Noelle and Jaimie Caro
Frank Cassaniti
Tina and John Cerar
Liz Colodny
Michael Corwin
A. Dave
Donna DeCecco
Josh Deitch
Shellese Dixon-Rawls

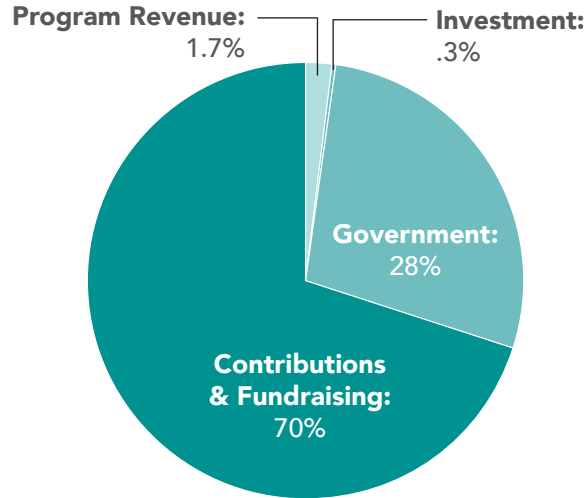
Anita Dorfman
Judy Ellison
Anne and Mark Ellman
Diana Eppolito
Alicia and Ross Feldman
Jeremy Fischman
James Fischman
Brian Fischman and Kate Kim
Amanda Fitzgerald
Lynda Friedman
Deborah Frishman
Ruth Gastel
Cynthia and Richard Gay
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Manika Ghose
Naomi and Dr. Alex Gitterman
Linda Gordon
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Tracy and Marc McCarthy
Kim McCracken
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Alan and Randi Menchel
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Karen and Rob Millman
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Penney and David Parkes
Jody and Robert Rawdin
Ben Romney and Ginger Benlifer
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Julissa Vasquez
Adrienne Vogel
Adler/Walker Family
Ellen Weisberg
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Grace Zandarski
Susan and Daniel Ziskin-Ginsberg

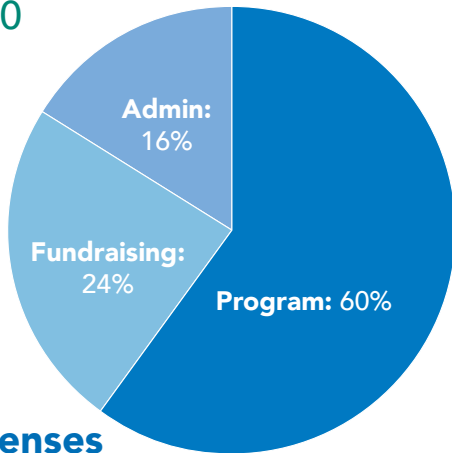
**Donor is deceased
Please excuse any errors or omissions.*

Financials

2021

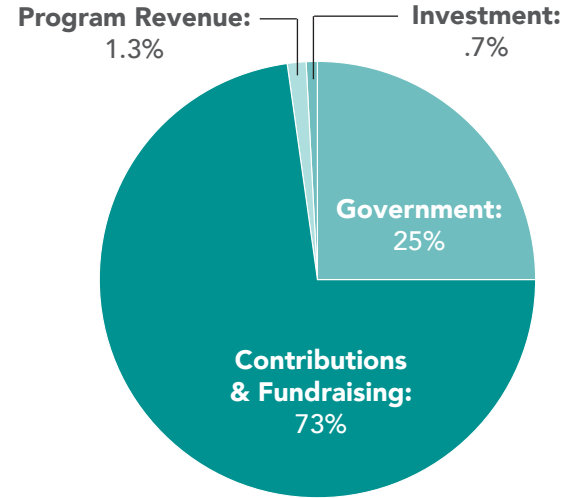


Total Revenue
\$1,397,200

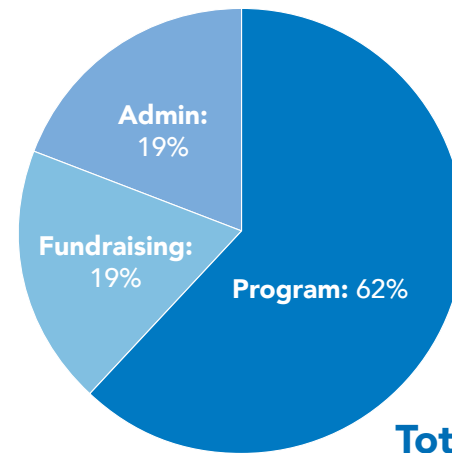


Total Expenses
\$980,288

2022



Total Revenue
\$1,550,009



Total Expenses
\$1,177,981

**Donated services are not included in these charts.
Based on 2021 and 2022 audited financial statements.*

Student Advocacy Board Of Directors 2024

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