Wallace's 2021 Annual Report is being published in two installments. This first is our look back at 2021. The second, to be added shortly, will contain our list of program expenditures and commitments.

Designed by José Moreno
2021 IN REVIEW: ADJUSTING TO LIFE DURING A PANDEMIC

- Covid Response
- Efforts in Our Interest Areas
- Arts
- School Leadership
- Learning and Enrichment

NEW PUBLICATIONS AND MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

FIND OUT MORE
Vaccines and new treatments notwithstanding, COVID-19 remained very much a presence in 2021, so like many other institutions The Wallace Foundation developed a modus operandi of adjustment. In other words, we learned to live with the pandemic’s twists and turns.

In Wallace’s three fields of interest—the arts, learning and enrichment, and school leadership—the foundation tried to do two things. One was to continue to respond to the extraordinary needs created by the pandemic. The second was to take stock and proceed wherever possible with the “ordinary,” that is, the foundation’s central business of supporting grantees, managing ongoing initiatives and launching new efforts to advance our mission of fostering equity and improvements in learning and enrichment for young people, and in the arts for everyone.

Wallace responded to the extraordinary needs created by the pandemic, while continuing to support grantees and launch new efforts.

Covid response
The pandemic did not leave any of our focus areas untouched. In education, COVID initially led to mass classroom shutdowns and, later, off-again, on-again hybrid instruction. As time went on, it became increasingly clear that for many young people, remote learning was not an adequate substitute for the in-person kind. Those running summer, afterschool and other out-of-school-time efforts, meanwhile, faced a squeeze. Programs were more needed than ever as a way to help children and families cope with the pandemic, but program providers found themselves competing for needed staff members when better-paying service-industry jobs opened up. For its part, the arts sector saw multiple rounds of seesawing between reopening and cancelling events, postponing or closing.
Our response, supported by more than $10 million in funding designated for COVID efforts, was twofold.

First, we introduced projects to help our fields of interest manage the pandemic realities they were facing. Among our efforts was the establishment of forums in which school district officials and others could learn and share information about how to spend the influx of federal COVID relief dollars into their locales on evidence-based efforts to bolster education. Our American Rescue Plan Strategic Planning Learning Community has been assisting 78 school districts and is focused on, among other things, effective school leadership. The District Summer Learning Network, focusing on how to prepare and run high-quality summer learning programs, got off the ground with an initial set of 45 school districts seeking to make plans for summer 2022.

Second, as an institution dedicated to generating information and ideas, we issued a raft of materials to offer guidance on navigating the crisis. More than one-third of the 24 new reports, videos and other resources posted on Wallace’s website in 2021 were either wholly or partially devoted to COVID response. They ranged from a series of online conversations about the possible future contours of the arts to a set of briefs, for school districts, afterschool programs and other institutions, on considerations for planning for COVID recovery and reopening.

Efforts in our three interest areas
The pandemic did not distract the foundation from pursuing its more conventional work of developing and carrying out efforts to help solve problems in the fields we serve. Indeed, the year saw the kick-off of two major initiatives, one in the arts, the other in school leadership. Both were very much in sync with the foundation’s mission statement, revised in 2020 to call out explicitly the idea of “equity” that had long been implicit in Wallace’s work. Implementation of our major learning and enrichment initiative—focusing on children’s social and emotional learning—continued, albeit with some shifts in response to pandemic needs. In addition, work to plan for a new learning and enrichment initiative got under way.
ARTS

The highlight of 2021 in Wallace’s arts work was the announcement mid-year of a five-year initiative focused on how arts organizations founded by, for and with communities of color create and activate strategies for enhancing their organization’s well-being. That’s a bare-bones description of a venture whose final form, decided on in fall 2021, was a $100 million initiative to involve dozens of arts organizations and related institutions.

It was an effort that took shape only after much reflection and rethinking at the foundation based on what we were hearing and learning from the field. Wallace conducted a literature review and commissioned market research about arts organizations of color, and, perhaps most important, engaged in extended and sometimes difficult conversations with the field, including arts service organizations of color. Wallace had had only limited experience in this sector, and we learned that working in partnership with arts organizations of color, many of which have felt underappreciated and underfunded, required bridgebuilding. This was especially true given skepticism in the field about the intentions and motives of national funders after the anti-racism protests of 2020. In short, we have to work to foster relationships and develop trust.

Another factor weighed into our thinking, too: evidence that arts organizations of color have, on average, smaller budgets than other arts groups—and, thus, are at a distinct disadvantage when large national foundations like Wallace restrict their grant-giving to organizations with relatively large budgets.
All this meant that planning for the effort entailed adopting practices that were unusual for Wallace, such as conducting an open call to solicit proposals from potential grantees and holding virtual “office hours/open houses” to answer questions from interested applicants individually—in part as a way to attract a wider, more diverse pool of potential candidates than we have had in the past.

By October, we had refashioned and expanded the initiative so that, among other things, it would include more arts organizations than we had originally envisioned; invest earlier and more heavily in smaller institutions; and support arts service organizations of color in their research endeavors. “With this initiative, we have taken an approach that seeks both to allow us to learn together with the grantees and to strengthen the sector of arts organizations of color,” said Bahia Ramos, director of arts at Wallace. “Ultimately, we hope the effort will build recognition and understanding of the distinctive contributions made by arts organizations of color—something that will contribute to creating a more equitable arts ecosystem and lift up the nonprofit arts field as a whole.”

**Publications and other resources**

Notable additions to our collection of arts resources in 2021 were two new episodes in our video conversation series, *Reimagining the Future of the Arts*, which we launched in 2020 as a response to the pandemic’s impact on the arts world. In one episode, leaders of arts organizations with deep roots in communities of color discuss what they see as the keys to their success, as well as what they have learned while contending with crises including COVID. The other examines how cultural organizations can adapt to be more responsive to diverse audiences’ needs.
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

The biggest development for Wallace’s education efforts in 2021 was the launch of a $102 million initiative focused on developing school principals who are dedicated to and skillful at promoting equity in education.

The Equity-Centered Pipeline Initiative builds on the work of a number of earlier Wallace ventures, especially the Principal Pipeline Initiative. In that endeavor, six school districts developed what Wallace came to call “comprehensive, aligned principal pipelines”—meaning an approach to developing effective school leadership that comprises and interlocks seven key features, from rigorous standards for the principalship to strong on-the-job support and evaluation. A RAND Corporation study found that such pipelines led to academic benefits for students and were both feasible and affordable for school districts to build.

In the new initiative, each of eight school districts is exploring how to build a comprehensive, aligned pipeline that can produce school leaders capable of advancing the district’s vision of equity. To that end, the districts are working with community organizations, university principal preparation programs and state education agencies. The districts are Baltimore City; Columbus City, Ohio; the District of Columbia; Fresno; Jefferson County (Louisville), Ky.; Portland, Ore.; San Antonio; and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, N.C.

COVID meant extending other Wallace efforts. Most notably, the ESSA Leadership Learning Community, which had worked since 2016 to assist teams from 11 states in developing and implementing plans for use of federal dollars to support effective school leadership efforts, saw its term extended from 2021 to 2022. The pandemic made itself felt, too, in how some of the teams used modest grants that Wallace made available to them in the effort’s final year. The Ohio team, for example, developed a toolkit to help parents better engage with schools, which could prove useful as families continue to cope with the challenges that the health crisis poses to their children’s education.

Publications and other resources
The year 2021 also saw the publication of the first two of a trio of Wallace-commissioned “knowledge syntheses” in which scholars reviewed and digested the evidence in key areas in school leadership. How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research examines principals’ impact on education and the characteristics of effective school leaders; The Role of Assistant Principals: Evidence and Insights for Advancing School Leadership explores topics including how the assistant principal role could be enlisted to foster educational equity, school improvement and principal effectiveness. The third synthesis, on school leader preparation and professional development, was set for release in 2022. Partly in response to the availability of COVID-related federal financial support for education, we also published Strong Pipelines, Strong Principals, a guide to help school district decision-makers understand the federal funding sources that can be tapped to develop sound principal pipelines.
LEARNING AND ENRICHMENT

Launched in 2017, our Partnerships for Social and Emotional Learning Initiative has been exploring whether and how urban schools and out-of-school-time programs can effectively collaborate to support the social and emotional development of elementary school students. Grantee partners in six communities—Boston, Dallas, Denver, Palm Beach County (Fla.), Tacoma and Tulsa—have learned a great deal thus far about establishing partnerships between schools and out-of-school-time programs, building adults’ capacity to support students’ social and emotional learning (SEL), integrating SEL into academic instruction and out-of-school-time activities, and creating a positive culture and climate in school as well as in afterschool, summer and/or other out-of-school-time programs.

Boston-area children were among those who took part in Wallace’s National Summer Learning Project, which is still generating insights for the field. See publications on p. 13.

With other philanthropies, Wallace established a fund to help the out-of-school-time field as it confronted the health crisis.

The initiative communities had to contend with major disruptions caused by COVID-19, and all six pivoted to respond to school closings and re-openings, provide emergency childcare, distribute meals and laptops, and develop new virtual models for school instruction and out-of-school-time programming. Not surprisingly, tending to these and other needs affected implementation of the initiative, delaying some planned activities and accelerating others. Among those on a faster track in 2021 were the adaptation and spread of social and emotional learning practices from the pilot sites that were the focus of the initiative’s early years to the broader community—meant as a partial remedy to the pandemic’s harmful impact on children’s social-emotional well-being.
A pooled fund from a group of foundations aimed to help out-of-school-time efforts in pandemic recovery, while a tool from Every Hour Counts provided out-of-school-time systems with a way to gauge their work.

Pandemic-created needs were the spur to another effort in Learning and Enrichment as well. In 2020, the foundation joined with six other philanthropies to pool money for a $1.5 million fund to assist the out-of-school-time field as it confronted the health crisis. Run under the umbrella of Grantmakers for Education’s Out-of-School Time Impact Group, the Afterschool and Summer Recovery and Opportunity Fund sought to assist national out-of-school-time organizations as they aided program providers in pandemic recovery and school reopening. Funding also went to organizations connected to historically excluded communities, in part to increase their communities’ representation in out-of-school-time policymaking and research. The pooled fund supported a range of projects that came to fruition in 2021, including a guide to equitable hiring and staff development for leaders of out-of-school-time efforts (from the National AfterSchool Association); a conference on re-imagining the future of afterschool programming (from Every Hour Counts, a network of out-of-school-time intermediary organizations); and a film series documenting young people’s experiences with remote learning (from the National Urban League). The other funders were the Bezos Family Foundation, S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, New York Life Foundation, Overdeck Family Foundation, and Susan Crown Exchange.

Finally, Wallace began early information gathering and thinking about possibilities for a new initiative in learning and enrichment, for possible launch in 2023.

Publications and other resources
We released a number of publications and other resources in learning and enrichment in 2021. Navigating Social and Emotional Learning from the Inside Out, a guide to evidence-based social-emotional programs that has been something of a blockbuster by Wallace standards, having garnered more than 200,000 downloads since it was released in 2017, was re-issued in an updated and expanded version. It offers detailed information on 33 pre-K and elementary school programs, describing curriculum content and program highlights.

We also published Every Hour Counts’ Putting Data to Work for Young People, a tool and guidebook to help assess afterschool systems, the programs within them and youth outcomes—in the interest of informing system improvements. And a five-part Wallace podcast explores lessons learned from the Partnerships for Social and Emotional Learning Initiative, with episodes covering themes that surfaced in a RAND study of the effort’s implementation. Topics include the importance of social-emotional learning and the development of adult capacity to promote social and emotional learning.
Dissemination of information and ideas

At the core of Wallace’s work are the efforts by the foundation and its partners to generate knowledge to foster advancements in our fields of interest. That’s the reason we try to measure the reach of our reports and other resources, especially to policymakers, field professionals and other who can effect change.

One measure is citation of our work in the research literature, an indication of our contribution to field discourse and the importance attached to it. In 2021, new citations of Wallace-published materials increased by 2,122, to almost 17,000 total. This was the biggest annual jump since we began tracking citations through Google Scholar more than a decade ago.

Moving Forward

In the context of the many challenges of 2021, we sense there’s a heightened interest in the lessons and evidence we have accumulated over several decades—on issues ranging from the need for effective summer learning programming to the crucial role of principals and the value of scenario planning for arts organizations. We have seen increased attendance at webinars as well as at meetings of our “professional learning communities,” where participants in our initiatives gather with another and, in many cases, experts in their fields to share ideas and information. Thanks to the virtual meeting technologies that have proved invaluable during the health crisis, the school leadership unit, for example, was able to conduct 28 such gatherings in 2021. We are finding that we can draw on our knowledge bank to offer assistance in dealing with the uncertainties of the day.

None of this means we are standing still. We have made a new effort to incorporate into our work efforts in which grantees and researchers jointly develop research questions to be addressed and methods to study them. We also learned much from taking what were, for Wallace, novel approaches to shaping and carrying out initiatives, such as issuing the open call for proposals in the new arts effort. The lessons will likely influence how Wallace designs and implements its endeavors across our fields of interest in the future. Finally, to broaden the range of knowledge products that would be of interest to our readers, we introduced a new series title in the portion of our website where we house our library of reports and other resources. The Considerations title denotes publications that draw mainly on theory or expert knowledge, as opposed to publications based largely on empirical data or syntheses.

One thing stays constant, however: Wallace’s commitment to developing and disseminating credible ideas and information that can help the fields in which we work advance equity and improve. At a time when conversation in the nation has become ever more polarized and heated, that task has become more difficult—and more important than ever.
AFTERSCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL-TIME PROGRAMMING

PUBLICATIONS

Evidence-based Considerations for COVID-19 Reopening and Recovery Planning: Afterschool Coordination Systems to Support Afterschool Programming
Coordinated afterschool systems backed by support of municipal leadership can help young people recover from the damaging impact of the pandemic.

Putting Data to Work for Young People: A Framework for Measurement, Continuous Improvement, and Equitable Systems
This tool and guidebook can help people assess afterschool (out-of-school-time) systems, the programs within them and youth outcomes—in the interest of informing system improvements.

BUILDING AUDIENCES FOR THE ARTS

The Alchemy of High-Performing Arts Organizations, Part II: A Spotlight on Organizations of Color
In the second part of a study examining how high-performing arts organizations achieve financial health, 21 leaders of arts organizations of color report that deep community engagement and high-quality programs were critical to their efforts.

Building Arts Participation Through Transactions, Relationships, or Both
The first chapter of a book based on interviews with professionals and audience members from 85 cultural organizations investigates the interdependence of an organization’s transactional activities and community relationships.

Millennials Are Not a Monolith: Experiences from One Group of Performing Arts Organizations’ Audience-Building Efforts
Strategies to engage millennials in the arts may benefit from accounting for the group’s differences as well as its similarities, according to this brief.

Why Is It Important That We Continue? Some Nonprofit Arts Organizations Rethink Their Value in Challenging Times
Sustainability for nonprofit arts organizations should not be an end itself but rather a means for pursuing mission-related goals, this brief says.

SLIDE PRESENTATIONS

What They Say and What They Do
How can arts organizations use survey data to cultivate new audiences and strengthen bonds with current attendees?

VIDEOS

Reimagining the Future of the Arts: A Conversation Series
In the wake of the pandemic and movement for racial justice, arts researchers and professionals met online beginning in 2020 for recorded discussions in which they shared insights to help inform the response of arts organizations to the months (and years) ahead. In 2021, the episodes were:
Video Replay: What Can the Arts Sector Learn From Arts Organizations of Color About Community Engagement and Financial Health?
Leaders of arts organizations with deep roots in communities of color discuss what they see as the keys to their success, as well as what they have learned while navigating crises including COVID-19.

Video Replay: How Can Arts Organizations Respond to What Communities Need Most?
What are ways in which cultural organizations can adapt to be more responsive to diverse audiences’ needs?

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

PUBLICATIONS

Comments From The Wallace Foundation to the Department of Education on Defining the Term “educators” in Proposed Priorities and Definitions
In a comment letter to the U.S. Department of Education about proposed guidance to school districts on the use of federal American Rescue Plan funds, the foundation discusses defining “educators” as “teachers, principals and other school leaders.”

Effective principals are an essential part of school reopening and learning acceleration.

How Can State Policy Support Local School Districts as They Develop Principal Pipelines?
States can pull a number of policy levers to help school districts develop, support and maintain a large corps of effective school principals, political scientist Paul Manna writes.

How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research
An effective principal’s impact is stronger and broader than previously thought, making it “difficult to envision” a higher return on investment in K-12 education than the cultivation of high-quality school leadership, according to this research synthesis.

Principal Leadership in a Virtual Environment
Education technology experts provide early considerations for how to develop a pipeline of effective, equity-minded principals who have mastered operating in a virtual realm.

Principal Pipeline Self-Study Guide for Districts
This guide by Policy Studies Associates is designed to help school districts take stock of and improve their school leadership policies, processes and structures.

The Role of Assistant Principals: Evidence and Insights for Advancing School Leadership
The number of assistant principals has grown markedly in recent years, and with reconsideration, the AP role could do more to help foster educational equity, school improvement and principal effectiveness, this research synthesis finds.

Strong Pipelines, Strong Principals: A Guide for Leveraging Federal Sources to Fund Principal Pipelines
This guide can help school district decision-makers understand the federal funding sources that can be tapped to develop strong principal pipelines.
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

PUBLICATIONS

Evidence-based Considerations for COVID-19 Reopening and Recovery Planning: The Importance of Adult Skills in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Using opportunities for social and emotional learning can be an important strategy in helping students recover from the effects of the pandemic and in promoting educational equity.

Navigating Social and Emotional Learning from the Inside Out: Looking Inside and Across 33 Leading SEL Programs: A Practical Resource for Schools and OST Providers

This updated and expanded guide to evidence-based SEL programs, by a team from Harvard's Graduate School of Education, offers detailed information on 33 pre-K through elementary school programs, encompassing curriculum content and program highlights.

PODCASTS

The Partnerships for Social and Emotional Learning Podcast

In this five-part series, professionals in schools and out-of-school-time programs share their experiences working together to help children develop social and emotional skills.

- Episode 1 examines the importance of social and emotional learning and the design of Wallace's Partnership for Social and Emotional Learning Initiative, in which schools and out-of-school-time programs work together to build a consistent approach to SEL.
- Episode 2 looks at why building adults’ skills is a starting place for promoting SEL in children.
- Episode 3 explores what it takes for schools and districts, as well as after-school programs and out-of-school-time intermediary organizations, to work together.
- Episode 4 covers how to help schools and out-of-school-time programs adopt SEL instruction.
- Episode 5 describes steps to integrating SEL across settings and what to look for.

SLIDE PRESENTATIONS

Out-of-School Time Programs: Paving the Way for Children to Find Passion, Purpose & Voice

New research, including national surveys of parents, teachers and program providers, sheds light on how these groups perceive the value of out-of-school-time programs in children’s social, emotional and academic development, especially in the wake of the pandemic.
**SUMMER LEARNING**

**PUBLICATIONS**

*Comments from The Wallace Foundation to the Department of Education on Summer Learning and SEL in Proposed Priorities and Definitions*

In a comment letter to the U.S. Department of Education about proposed guidance to school districts on the use of federal American Rescue Plan funds, Wallace discusses clarifying that the term "out-of-school-time settings" refers to programs that occur in the summer, before and after school, in the evenings and on weekends.

*America After 3PM: Time for a Game-Changing Summer, With Opportunity and Growth for All of America’s Youth*

This publication uses data collected before and during the pandemic to assess children’s participation in summer programs, including who has access to them and who is missing out.

*Evidence-based Considerations for COVID-19 Reopening and Recovery Planning: Summer Learning with Academic and Non-Academic Activities*

Summer can be a crucial time to address the pandemic’s impact on young people. Evidence from Wallace’s National Summer Learning Project indicates such programs should be targeted to the needs of participants, have programming linked to desired outcomes, be of sufficient duration and promote strong attendance.

*Summer for All: Building Coordinated Networks to Promote Access to Quality Summer Learning and Enrichment Opportunities Across a Community*

The RAND Corp. looks at how organizations in four cities successfully coordinated efforts to increase access to, and improve the quality of, summer learning opportunities.

**FIND OUT MORE**

Would you like to find out more about The Wallace Foundation? Please visit our website at [www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org), where you can learn about the foundation’s:

- Mission: [http://www.wallacefoundation.org/about-wallace/Pages/Mission.aspx](http://www.wallacefoundation.org/about-wallace/Pages/Mission.aspx)
- How We Work With Grantees: [http://www.wallacefoundation.org/how-we-work/how-we-work-with-grantees/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.wallacefoundation.org/how-we-work/how-we-work-with-grantees/Pages/default.aspx)
- Funding Guidelines: [http://www.wallacefoundation.org/about-wallace/Pages/Funding-Guidelines.aspx](http://www.wallacefoundation.org/about-wallace/Pages/Funding-Guidelines.aspx)
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Our mission is to foster equity and improvements in learning and enrichment for young people, and in the arts for everyone.