History at a Glance:

2003  
Stressed Out Students (SOS) Project founded at Stanford Graduate School of Education (GSE)

2008  
SOS relaunched as Challenge Success

2011  
Challenge Success incorporated as a 501(c)(3) and maintains its affiliation with Stanford GSE
Challenge Success partners with schools and families to provide kids with the academic, social, and emotional skills needed to succeed now and in the future. We recognize that our current fast-paced, high-pressure culture works against much of what we know about healthy child development and effective education. Our society’s overemphasis on grades, test scores, and performance has resulted in a lack of attention to other components of a successful life — the ability to be independent, adaptable, ethical, and engaged critical thinkers. Our work promotes the need for a balanced childhood and helps to foster healthy, motivated learners.

Dear Friends,

2015 has been another banner year for Challenge Success! From our hands-on work with schools and families, to the research we conduct on their progress, we know that real and sustainable change is possible. Schools can take action to reduce stress for students — and faculty — while still maintaining rigor and high standards. Parents can ensure healthier habits for kids while preserving important playtime, downtime, and family time. Our new By The Numbers page, in this Annual Report, incorporates the results of our three-year evaluation to show the impact of our work.

One of the highlights of the year was the publication of our first book, Overloaded and Underprepared: Strategies for Stronger Schools and Healthy, Successful Kids. It incorporates many of the best practices we have observed and presents straightforward steps that every school can take to move towards a more engaging learning experience for all students. Thousands of copies have already been sold, and we have heard from schools all over the country that have utilized the tools and activities in our book. These schools are initiating important dialogue and community conversations by employing professional development for new curricula, bell schedules, and assessment policies, and implementing thoughtful, consistent parent education. We know that sustainable policy changes are more likely to happen when all stakeholders — students, parents, and educators — work together to implement changes that align with best practices.

2016 promises to be another exciting year! We are pleased to launch more online workshops for parents and educators so that we can reach an ever-growing audience. The generosity and commitment of our donors, advisors, staff, and volunteers allows us to continue our work, and we are grateful for your support. We simply can’t succeed without your help, and we can’t thank you enough for all that you do for Challenge Success. Together we can work towards a brighter future in which no child is overloaded, underprepared, or undervalued.

Maureen Brown
Executive Director

Charlene Mangot
Chairperson, Board of Directors

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Since 2003 we have informed, engaged, and served almost 800,000 people in 130+ school communities. We reached schools and families in:

**By The Numbers**

We Provided:

- 70,000+ student surveys
- 13 research papers
- 26 school conferences
- 100+ professional development workshops
- 15 parent education courses
- 300+ parent education presentations
- 85+ parent education videos

Our Schools Made These Changes:

- Reduced homework and busywork
- Changed school schedule/added late starts
- Implemented project-based learning
- Started student wellness programs
- Modified grading and assessment practices
- Launched advisories and tutorials for students

As a Result:

- Kids got more sleep
- Kids cheated less
- Kids engaged in learning
- Kids worried less
- Kids felt supported by teachers
- Kids performed just as well or better in school

This Matters Because:

- Most kids don’t get enough sleep. High school students need 9 hours and only get about 6.5hrs.
- 95% of high school and 90% of middle school kids admit to cheating.
- 1.2 Million kids drop out of U.S. high schools.
- 25% of adolescents are depressed.
- 50% of college students say they feel overwhelming anxiety.

Students with helicopter parents are less open to new ideas and more vulnerable, anxious, and depressed and

Students perform better, are more motivated and engaged in school, and are more likely to persevere when they feel connected and supported.
Reflections On Our Work with Challenge Success

By John G. Smith
Headmaster, Dover-Sherborn Public High School

A couple of years ago when I learned about Challenge Success, it piqued my curiosity. I was often disheartened to see students in my own schools who were academically capable, but under such pressure that they were unable to keep up with both internal and external expectations. While some stress is naturally part of the human condition, the amount of stress facing some 14-18 year-olds has reached levels that cannot be sustained.

Thinking back to my own education, there were certainly times when the work piled up and study crunch-time became intense, yet I recall having more personal time to complete my work and still have time to just be a kid. Increased educational testing mandates from the state and federal government, more students than ever applying to colleges and universities, enhanced athletic and extracurricular opportunities, and the pressure to compete within a global society have created greater pressure for students to be the best. As a result of this intense pressure, some students are unable to meet these unrealistic expectations.

I am a firm believer that all students have something valuable to offer their schools and to our society. It is time that we examine how to allow children to express those talents to make their experiences both meaningful and enjoyable.

Our work with Challenge Success has given our school the opportunity to look at all of our decision making through the lens of maintaining rigor and high standards for learning while providing balance to the educational experience for the students at Dover-Sherborn. Whether it is the development of new engaging courses, creating greater student choice in regard to graduation requirements, offering flexible testing schedules for students, and reducing some of the prerequisites for students to access our courses — all of these decisions have come about as the result of our work with Challenge Success.

Since change can be difficult, major adjustments do not happen overnight — but we are creating a culture now where we constantly ask ourselves some important questions: Is this good for our students? Is this reasonable for our students? Will these changes allow our students to enjoy their educational experience?

Parents, teachers, and administrators across our two communities are collaborating and engaging in critical conversations about the health and well-being of our most precious asset, our children. I am proud that Dover-Sherborn is taking a strong stance on this issue, and I truly feel we are — and will continue to be — making a difference in the lives of our students.

“I am a firm believer that all students have something valuable to offer their schools and to our society. It is time that we examine how to allow children to express those talents to make their experiences both meaningful and enjoyable.”
“Our schools are producing fragile, stressed-out students who achieve at high levels but at a high cost. Any administrator who recognizes this problem but doesn’t know where to begin should read Overloaded and Underprepared. It is too easy to blame the college process or demanding parents. We, as school leaders, re-create our schools every fall, and we are responsible for creating healthy learning environments. This book gave my faculty and me a road map, as well as the encouragement to ask the tough questions of ourselves and our community.”

Elizabeth Perry, Head of Upper School, St. Lukes School, Connecticut

$729,200

Growth in Revenue

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

$448,000

$529,600

$583,900

$582,600

$729,200

Financial Overview

*Numbers reflect the combined balance of 501(c)(3) funds and the limited net earnings from the Challenge Success project at the Stanford Graduate School of Education.
Your support allows Challenge Success to broaden its reach and partner with families and educators to implement strategies for healthy, engaged kids and stronger schools. Thank you for your help. We couldn’t do it without you!

We believe that success is measured over the course of a lifetime, not at the end of a semester.