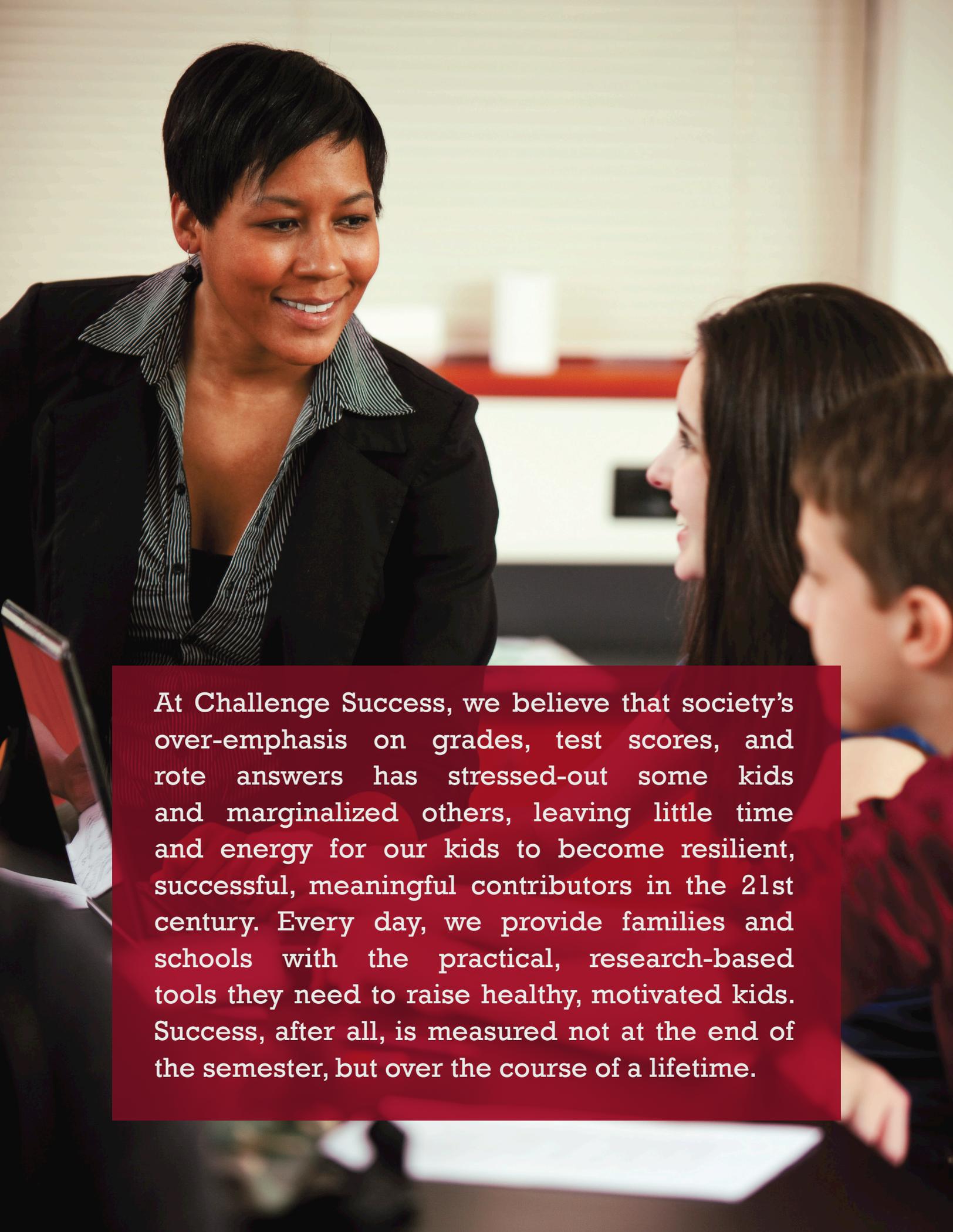


CHALLENGE SUCCESS



Choosing a
Healthy Path to Success

Annual Report 2014

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a black blazer over a striped collared shirt, is smiling and looking towards two children. The children, a girl with long dark hair and a boy with short dark hair, are looking back at her. They appear to be in a classroom or office setting. A red semi-transparent box is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing white text.

At Challenge Success, we believe that society's over-emphasis on grades, test scores, and rote answers has stressed-out some kids and marginalized others, leaving little time and energy for our kids to become resilient, successful, meaningful contributors in the 21st century. Every day, we provide families and schools with the practical, research-based tools they need to raise healthy, motivated kids. Success, after all, is measured not at the end of the semester, but over the course of a lifetime.

Dear Friends,

100+ member schools. 26 conferences. Over 750,000 students, parents and schools' staff. After twelve years of working with schools and families from across the United States and internationally, we are encouraged by what we have accomplished and by the changes that we are seeing.

We founded Challenge Success because, as mental health and education-reform experts, we knew we had to speak out against an increasingly fast-paced world that can rob our children of their childhood and harm them physically and mentally. As more attention has been brought to this issue nationally, awareness of our work has spread, and we are able to spend more time focusing on solutions so that all kids can find their own paths to success.

So what do these solutions look like? We know from research and from our work in the field that not all schools and families are the same, so we shouldn't expect the solutions to be. There are some areas, though, where we see consistent needs. We know that teachers face increasing demands, and without professional development they can have difficulty incorporating new ideas and requirements, like Common Core, into their curriculum. We know that parents want to do what's best for their kids, but they are overwhelmed by conflicting information and frequently unsure of what "best" really means. And we know that kids' voices are sometimes lost in the process of making change, and that's not good for anyone. At Challenge Success, we will continue to honor students' voices as we work to decrease their stress and as we partner with schools and families to provide research-based strategies that increase student well-being and motivation to learn.

2015 promises to be another great year! We are excited to publish our first Challenge Success book, *Overloaded and Underprepared: Strategies for Stronger Schools and Healthy, Successful Kids*, based on the many best practices we have observed. The generosity 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 ensure that all children can achieve their personal best and that no child is overlooked, undervalued, or marginalized.

Sincerely,



Maureen Brown
Executive Director



Charlene Margot
Chairperson, Board of Directors

**CHALLENGE
SUCCESS**



The Challenge

The next generation will face global, economic, and social challenges that we cannot even imagine. What are the skills our children will need in this uncertain future? Above all else, they will need to be creative, collaborative, adaptable and critical thinkers. Our current hyper-focus on grades, individual achievement and rote answers gets in the way of healthy emotional development and a real love of learning, and it also prevents students from acquiring the exact skills that the new global economy demands.

10: the average number of hours of sleep 6- to 13-year-olds need each night. ¹

50% of college students have felt overwhelming anxiety, making it hard to succeed academically. ²

95% of high school juniors and seniors admit to some form of cheating. ³

54% of youth athletes said they have played injured, and 42% said they have hidden or downplayed an injury during a game so they could keep playing. ⁴



“We sometimes see a confusion in school between rigor and load. Students may face an overload of homework, tests, and worksheets, that can lead to stress, boredom, or anxiety, and ultimately prevent kids from learning the material. We work with schools and families to change their practices and help kids balance time for study with other important tasks such as play and family time. This way the entire community benefits from having students who are healthy, motivated, and prepared for life’s challenges.” Denise Pope, Co-Founder

1 National Sleep Foundation. (2015). Children and sleep. Retrieved from: <http://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-topics/children-and-sleep/page/0%2C2/>.

2 American College Health Association. (Spring 2012). American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment II: Reference Group Executive Summary.

3 Galloway, M. K., Conner, J. O., and Pope, D. (2009). Stanford Survey of Adolescent School Experiences. Presentation at Challenge Success May Conference, Stanford, CA.

4 SafeKids Worldwide. (2014). Changing the culture of youth sports. Retrieved from <http://www.safekids.org/research-report/research-report-changing-culture-youth-sports-august-2014>



A Change for the Better

Not long ago, we received an email from a mom who wanted to share what happened when her children left a Challenge Success school.

“My children, enrolled in a Challenge Success school, were extremely happy, well adjusted, and thriving. I then made a huge parental mistake by moving my children out of that environment into another elementary school based on guidance from community members telling me that the school system I was entering was much better.

I couldn't believe how much homework my then 4th grade daughter was assigned at her new school. I was in shock! Parents were coming in after school and taking pictures of the homework assignment board because it wasn't even possible for a 9 year old to write down all of the information. Over the next two years, I watched my fun, outgoing daughter, who had lots of friends and was very creative, wither away. She became almost robotic at home, and her spark was gone. Our nights became a constant battle ground over homework and tests. My son, who was in second grade when he switched schools, did just as poorly in the new environment. He developed extreme

“We simply do not have to choose between our children’s well-being and their success. It is no surprise to learn that happy children are better students, and that the same set of internal skills— self-control, enthusiasm, and a sense of meaning to name a few—promote both emotional health and academic success.” Madeline Levine, Co-Founder

anxiety. The teachers were so rigid and the workload was so overwhelming that the kids were always in a state of panic, afraid of answering a question incorrectly or getting a detention for incomplete work. One evening during winter break, my son had a word search assignment and, after watching him find only 5 words in 20 minutes, I snapped, picked up his paper and threw it in the trash. But when he cried, and said he was going to get in trouble, I gave it back to him to calm him down. Eventually I took my son to a psychiatrist who told me to move my son back to the Challenge Success school. I took his advice very seriously because at that point my 8 year old son was so stressed that he couldn’t swallow and he wouldn’t eat.

And I thought about the time we took our kids to Jackson Hole for a special Teton Village Kids Day, where all local children could ride lifts for free and take lessons and have fun. I thought about how much fun my kids had that day, then thought about our weekends doing hours of homework. I called my former school and worked with them to re-enroll my children over Christmas break. While I still don’t know if the timing was right for them to transition, I felt our family was at a breaking point, and I needed to follow my intuition. I was feeling so much pressure and thought my kids must be feeling it ten times worse. Now our lives have totally changed. We eat dinner as a family, my kids play outside after school, and they tell me all about their days and what they learned. They barely have homework, and when they do, it’s mostly review from class that day. What is interesting is that they are learning so much and having fun while doing it.

When we received the first newsletter from my son’s teacher, my husband and I cried. She welcomed everyone back to school and reminded parents to let their children be kids, noting that the school believes that the time off should be a break. What a difference!

I’ve learned a lot from this experience. I wasted two years of my children’s elementary experience, and I will forever feel guilty about that. I feel like I have a huge weight off my back and hope that my kids continue on this path of happiness. I know the difference that this (Challenge Success) program has made for my family. This is a cause I truly believe in and my children are proof of its success.”



Making Positive Impact on All Facets of Student Life

When you support Challenge Success, you are helping kids develop the academic and emotional skills they need to succeed now and in the future. We help schools and families develop strategies, based on sound educational research, that allow students to maintain a love for learning, a desire to challenge themselves, and a focus on the internal skills and character they need to fully thrive.

Our work encompasses three main areas:
research, school reform, and parent education.



Research

Challenge Success is a research-based organization. Everything we do is based on our own research findings as well as findings from other top researchers in the fields of education, psychology, and medicine. Each year we publish articles in national journals and the popular press to raise awareness of the challenges kids are facing today and to share best practices for overcoming these challenges. We conduct research at our schools to identify areas for improvement and to determine what is and isn't working for the students. These findings form the basis for our best practice recommendations. In our white papers and "Do You Know" segments, we review and analyze recent research on topics like homework, cheating, and AP courses, and offer suggestions for handling these issues at home and at school.

Why does our work matter? We know that schools and parents want up-to-date research to help inform their decisions, but they often don't have the time to sort through all of the data and may not be sure how to interpret what it means in their daily lives. We aggregate the findings from our Challenge Success school surveys and summarize the latest research from the field so it can be put to use immediately and effectively. We have helped schools implement alternative assessments, project-based learning and late start days without negatively affecting standard measures of achievement. A three-year study of 30 Challenge Success schools showed that when schools partner with us over time, they make meaningful long-term changes that can result in positive student outcomes, including a decrease in cheating, an increase in hours of sleep, a greater engagement with learning, and a perception of a caring school climate.



School Reform

At Challenge Success, we partner with schools from across the country to provide practical, research-based solutions to increase student engagement while reducing the undue stress and pressure so many students feel. Research shows that pursuing a narrow definition of success often leaves young people lacking the skills they need most to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Our work encourages educators to create curricula and school programs that value and foster interpersonal and collaborative skills, adaptability and resilience, and the ingenuity and creativity to solve the complex problems our kids will face in the future.

Each year we bring teams of educators, parents, and students to our conferences to hear the latest research on what works in schools and to learn from each other how to bring about lasting change. Throughout the year, schools work with our coaches to improve daily schedules, implement relevant and hands-on projects, consider new assessments, create a caring climate for kids, and educate the community.

We work with students, their parents, and their schools to identify ways to increase engagement in school while reducing undue stress and pressure. We teach students to develop coping skills that will help them navigate through an increasingly complex world. Students participate on Challenge Success school teams as equal members along with educators and parents. They share ideas on how schools can change policies and practices to improve student well-being. Their voices are critical as the teams design and implement plans for school reform.



“When parents are intentional and define success on *their* terms, they can parent out of conviction instead of fear.” Jim Lobdell, Co-Founder

Parent Education

We know that parents want to do what is best for their kids, but knowing what's best isn't always easy. What many of us are doing right now, with the best of intentions, is focusing too much on short-term results instead of raising adults who will ultimately become good people, partners, parents, and workers. Research tells us what children need is emotional support, parental supervision, adequate sleep, healthy eating habits, physical and intellectual challenges, resilience, and time to reflect, play, and plan. With our Challenge Success Parent Education Program, parents benefit from hearing university-based research translated into practical, everyday strategies that they can use to help guide their parenting behavior and raise kids who will thrive. We now offer parenting webinars to reach people around the world and to help them learn best practices on how to handle homework, how to help students choose courses and extracurricular activities, and how to help kids get more sleep.



Year at a Glance

2014 was an exciting year for Challenge Success. Some of our highlights include:

Working with **30 new** and returning schools to reach almost **75,000 students**, faculty and parents

Submitting our first-ever Challenge Success **book** for publication

Completing a **three-year evaluation** of effective Challenge Success schools

Raising nearly **\$400,000** to support our work

Launching a new workshop on **alternative assessment** for schools

Partnering with SmartlyU to deliver **SEL** content to schools and parents

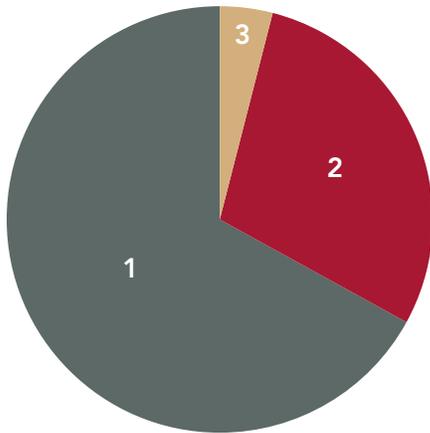
Reaching over **13,000** parents through workshops, presentations, and our live and online parenting courses

Presenting 25 **professional development** workshops to faculty

“Thanks so much for your presentation on ‘Teaching for Engagement’ yesterday at the Challenge Success conference. I have been working for almost 25 years as a teacher and administrator, and found your workshop to be the clearest, most accessible summary of actions that teachers can take, backed up with supporting research that will be very useful for teachers and parents.” Bay Area High-School Principal

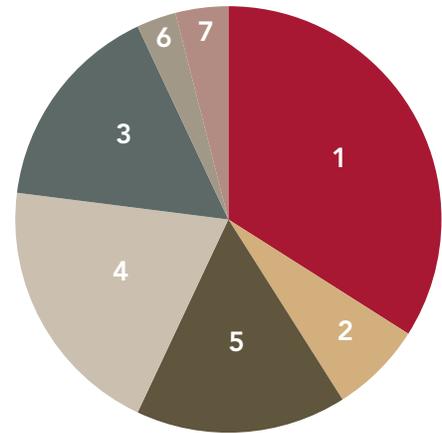
Financial Overview

Revenue



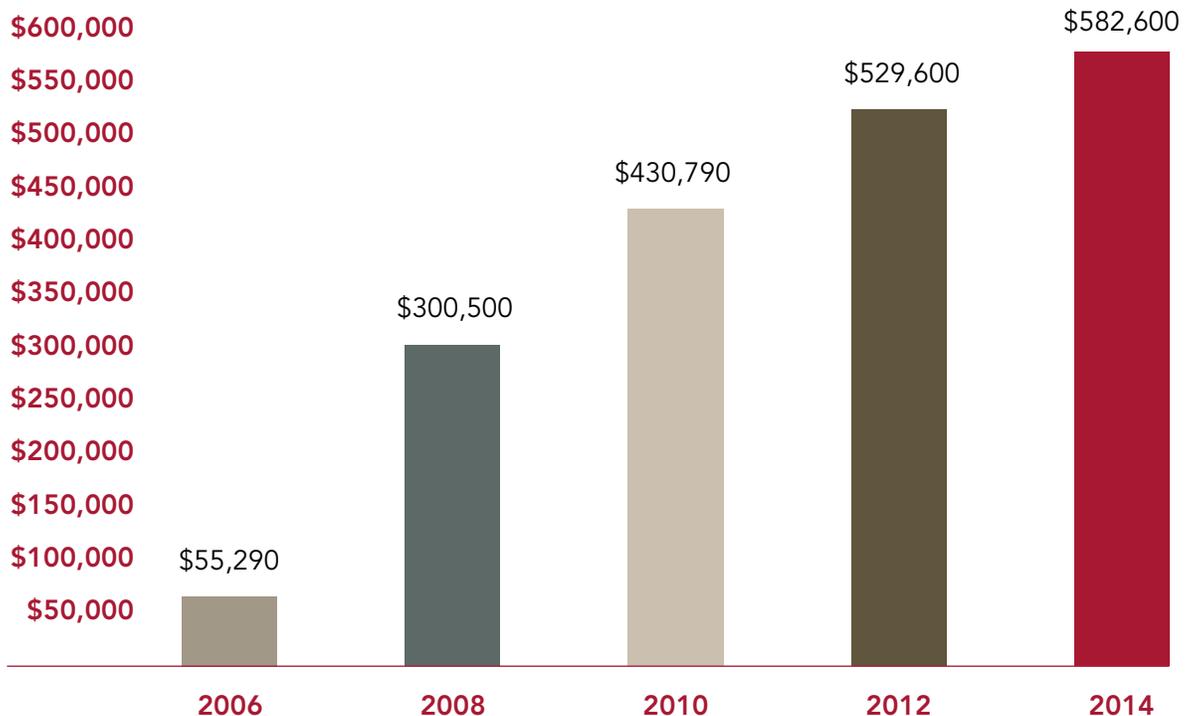
1 Donations	67%	\$392,510
2 Schools' Services	29%	\$168,480
3 Parent Education/ Other	4%	\$21,600
Total	100%	\$582,590

Expenses



1 Schools' Services	34%	\$158,390
2 Parent Education	7%	\$30,480
3 Research	16%	\$77,090
4 Fundraising/Marketing	20%	\$94,900
5 Administration	16%	\$73,378
6 Website/IT	3%	\$15,400
7 Other	4%	\$19,870
Total	100%	\$469,508

Growth in Revenue



“I want to introduce this program to all high schools in San Francisco, so that together we can reduce the stress in students, and find the fun in school. If we do that, we will reduce the achievement gap.” Student Conference Attendee



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Your support allows Challenge Success to broaden its reach nationwide and internationally to schools and families in need of trusted, concrete research and the practical strategies they want to make lasting, positive changes for their kids. Thank you for your help. We couldn't do it without you!