



CHATHAM
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

2024 Impact REPORT

A look back at an incredible year of supporting excellence in learning, innovation in teaching, and the wonderful world of reading!

From the executive director, a note of

Thanks

It's been six months since I stepped into some very big shoes as CEF's executive director. Yes, I still have a lot to learn—and I'm grateful for your patience and support through this process—but I'm also humbled by the amount of work we're doing together for our students in Chatham.

After years of underfunding, our public schools are facing challenges never faced before—lack of staff, needed updates to buildings, complex testing, reporting, and data collection requirements. **But we're also thriving.** In my short time in this role, I have seen theatrical and musical performances, art shows, athletic events, robotics competitions, spelling bees, young author programs, and more. The quality of the teaching in schools across Chatham is simply unmatched. When budgets and politics are pushing our teachers to their limits—they are responding with an uncommon level of commitment and love for our kids. As a parent of CCS students, I see it everyday, **and I thank you for everything you are doing to support them.**

Your gifts this year have brought excellence and innovation into classrooms and inspired a love of reading in our children that will serve them throughout their lifetimes. We still have a lot to do, so I ask you to continue supporting our work and to continue advocating for our **precious** public school system.



*with
gratitude.
Brittany*



IN 2023-24, THE CHATHAM EDUCATION FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTED \$88,000 FROM DONATIONS AND GRANTS TO CHATHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS IN SUPPORT OF AVID.

CEF Sponsors Top 10% Celebration

On May 17, 2024, Chatham County Schools held an “Evening of Academic Excellence,” celebrating the top 10% of seniors from each of CCS’ high schools. The Chatham Education Foundation sponsored the event which kicked off with light refreshments and a serenade from Seaforth High School’s jazz band, under the direction of the band’s director Mr. Keith Gilbert. “In today’s climate, it’s important to celebrate the success of our public school students,” said Brittany Sandefur, CEF’s executive director. “I wish everyone in Chatham could come see these kids—what they’ve accomplished in their years in school, and their aspirations for what comes next. It’s inspiring.”

Photo courtesy of Chatham County Schools



The funds are being used to train new teachers so that more students can have access to the program; cover tutoring costs; and purchase curriculum materials and supplies.

AVID, which stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a nationally recognized college and career readiness program that CCS Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson proclaims **“disrupts the predictability of who succeeds and who fails.”**

JayLynn Bostic, a Northwood High School graduate, calls the AVID program the backbone of her success. “I would not be where I am today – headed to UNC Charlotte – without the program,” she said.

AVID students learn organizational skills, focused note-taking, and how to collaborate. They also visit colleges and get help with the college application process. The results speak for themselves:

100% of CCS AVID graduates are accepted to a 4-year college, and in 2024, JayLynn and her fellow AVID graduates obtained more than \$18 million in scholarship offers.

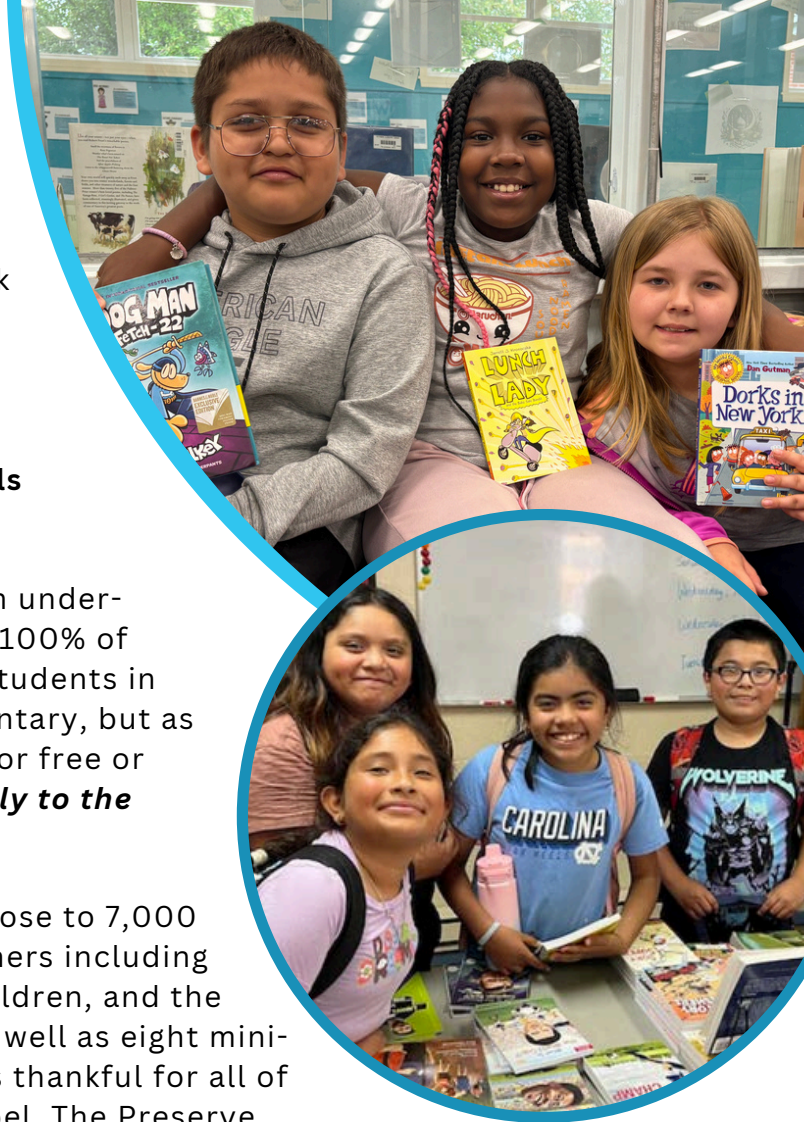
CCS would like to see AVID expanded to all students in all schools, as research shows that when additional students have access to AVID resources and strategies, the more likely they are to continue on to earn a college degree or high-quality credential. CEF knows this is an attainable goal and will continue to fundraise until it comes to fruition.

BOOKS ON BREAK

Since 2016, the Chatham Education Foundation has hosted free book fairs called Books on Break at Chatham County schools in low-income communities. That first year, CEF gave away nearly 5,400 books to students at two elementary schools. **This year, CEF gave away 14,000 books to 2,670 students at seven schools and one neighborhood.**

The neighborhood—called the Nature Trail—is an underserved residential community in which close to 100% of families qualify for free or reduced lunch. The students in the neighborhood attend North Chatham Elementary, but as the majority of students at NCE do not qualify for free or reduced lunch, **CEF brought the program directly to the students living in this neighborhood.**

Through Chatham Reads, CEF also distributed close to 7,000 gently-used books through our community partners including CORA, the Boys & Girls Club, Partnership for Children, and the Chatham County Youth Development Center, as well as eight mini-lending libraries around Chatham County. CEF is thankful for all of those who held book drives including Briar Chapel, The Preserve, Seaforth High School, Northwood High School, 501 Pharmacy and For Garden's Sake. We are also thankful for our 118 volunteers who helped out at our Books on Break events and collected, sorted, inventoried, and distributed thousands of books.



14,000 Books

CEF and Chatham Reads gave away 14,000 books to 2,670 students



\$16.927 in Grants

CEF funded 17 teachers to try something new in their CCS classrooms



\$18 Million

2024 AVID graduates received more than \$18M in scholarship offers

About our year...



Your support fuels this work. Give online and share our story with others.

Thank you to our top-level 2023-24 Business Sponsors:



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Donor support is key to realizing the strategic goals of our ONE Chatham Strategic Plan, helping us foster a thriving, inclusive, and innovative learning community.

-Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson

“If the shelves are a mess, that’s a good thing...”

...said Sheila Creth, a volunteer who keeps the CORA food pantry bookshelves stocked with gently-used books collected by the Chatham Education Foundation. “That means the kids are looking through the books.” In 2023, CEF began a partnership with CORA to provide books for children whose families visit the pantry. At each visit, each child may select one book to take home.



Sheila Creth (right) trains new volunteer Tracy Bailey at CORA.

This initiative began with Shelia who had heard of a similar way of getting books into kids’ hands in New York where she lived previously. “Kids deserve books,” Sheila said, “but sometimes you have to bring the books to where they are, especially if they live in rural places and don’t have easy access to libraries.” Sheila knew CORA was the perfect place to have books available, but it took her a while to find the books. She finally had her “aha moment” while reading Fearington Village’s neighborhood newsletter and learned about McIntyre’s Books and their work with Chatham Reads. When she called Kathy Havens, Chatham Reads program manager at CEF, to suggest the partnership, Sheila was rewarded with, “You made my day!” It didn’t take long to get the program up and running as Chatham Reads always has books on hand. Now every couple of weeks, Sheila visits the pantry to organize and restock the books, ensuring that there are some for every age. She’s also training new volunteers to help keep the bookshelves stocked.

McIntyre’s Books Earns Inaugural CEF Champion Award



In May, at our Invest in Our Future event, the Chatham Education Foundation presented its first inaugural Champion Award to the staff at McIntyre’s Books who have been ardent supporters of CEF and Chatham Reads. Over the years a few things they have done to promote our Books on Break program include creating store displays encouraging customers to purchase and donate books and creating an online wishlist with a 20% discount for any donor purchasing a book.