

# RootED

Funding great schools.  
Rooted in community.

**2021-22 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT**





# Welcome from RootED Denver

As we reflect on the work funded and supported in 2021-22, it is remarkable to see the measurable and profound impact our partners in education have had on students, families, educators and communities in the Denver Metro Area.

Since our founding, RootED Denver has provided funding and strategic support to autonomous schools, community-based organizations, and special initiatives and programs that, like us, are deeply committed to partnering with students, families, educators and communities to co-create learning environments and experiences that advance racial equity, and are culturally responsive, rigorous, and effective.

This is consistent with **our mission, vision and values** and **our guiding principles**. This is what informs our work day in and day out, year after year.

Throughout our annual impact report, you'll learn more about some of the innovative work we are

proud to be a part of, and how that work aligns with our values.

In particular, this past year, we had the opportunity to provide support to charter school leaders who came together to advocate for their students, families, educators and communities.

In support of these charter leaders, we developed an asset map, which was designed to help leaders better understand the priorities of advocacy and community-based organizations, and learn about the school-based services those organizations provide.

The asset map has been essential at providing information about opportunities for charter networks and school leaders to partner with advocacy and community-based organizations. Those partnerships will help charter schools develop and improve strategies that—among other things—advance racial justice, create new postsecondary pathways for students, provide leadership opportunities for immigrant and refugee students, and help families who are experiencing food insecurity.

Additionally, last year, RootED partnered with the **Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO)** at Stanford University to share an analysis



of Colorado assessment data that shows Denver’s diverse family of schools—including traditional, innovation, innovation zone and charter schools—helped students make stronger learning gains than their peers statewide.

The pre-pandemic data has the potential to be extremely impactful, and may inform how Denver schools help students recover from the lost learning opportunities and learning disruptions during the last two years. Looking forward, we can use this data—and the data our partners have gathered from recent interim assessments, educator and community surveys, and recent Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) results—to better understand how we recapture academic gains for our students, and how we meet the unique challenges our schools, educators, families and kids are facing.

As you continue to read our annual impact report, you’ll learn more about several of the autonomous schools, community-based organizations and special initiatives and programs we’ve invested in. You’ll see the deep commitment our partners share in ensuring every child in Denver has the opportunity and support to achieve success in school and in their postsecondary journeys.



**Dr. Brenda J. Allen**

RootED Board Chair and Professor Emerita



**Patrick Donovan**

RootED Managing Partner



**Watch Dr.Allen’s Welcome Video on our Annual Report Webpage**

# Our Team

## **Advocates. Educators. Volunteers. Leaders.**

Members of our team and board of directors have dedicated their lives to improving education and support for Denver's students in and beyond the classroom.

Each person brings unique talent, value and perspective to guide and amplify our work, and all are deeply committed to our mission: To invest in community-driven organizations, schools and strategies that advance racial equity in education —

to ensure that all Denver Public Schools students receive a high-quality education that recognizes and values individual and community strengths and cultural differences, enabling students to attain academic achievement, personal growth, and college and career success.

## **MEET THE ROOTED DENVER TEAM**



**Pat Donovan**  
Managing Partner



**Ashley Martinez-Doublin**  
Director of Operations



**Latia Henderson**  
Partner, Communications &  
Strategic Initiatives



**Victoria Scott-Haynes**  
Partner, Community  
Relations & Administration



**Ambar Suero**  
Partner, Community  
Partnerships & Advocacy

# Our Team

## MEET THE ROOTED DENVER BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Brenda J. Allen, Ph.D.**

RootED Board Chair  
Professor Emerita



**Erin Brown**

RootED Board Member  
President of Community  
Investment and Impact,  
The Colorado Health  
Foundation



**Luis de la Fuente, Ph.D.**

RootED Board Member



**Ethan Gray**

RootED Board Member  
Partner with The City Fund



**Dwight Jones**

RootED Board Member



**Jesus Salazar**

RootED Board Secretary  
Co-founder, President, and  
CEO of Prosono



**Looking for the full Annual Report experience?**

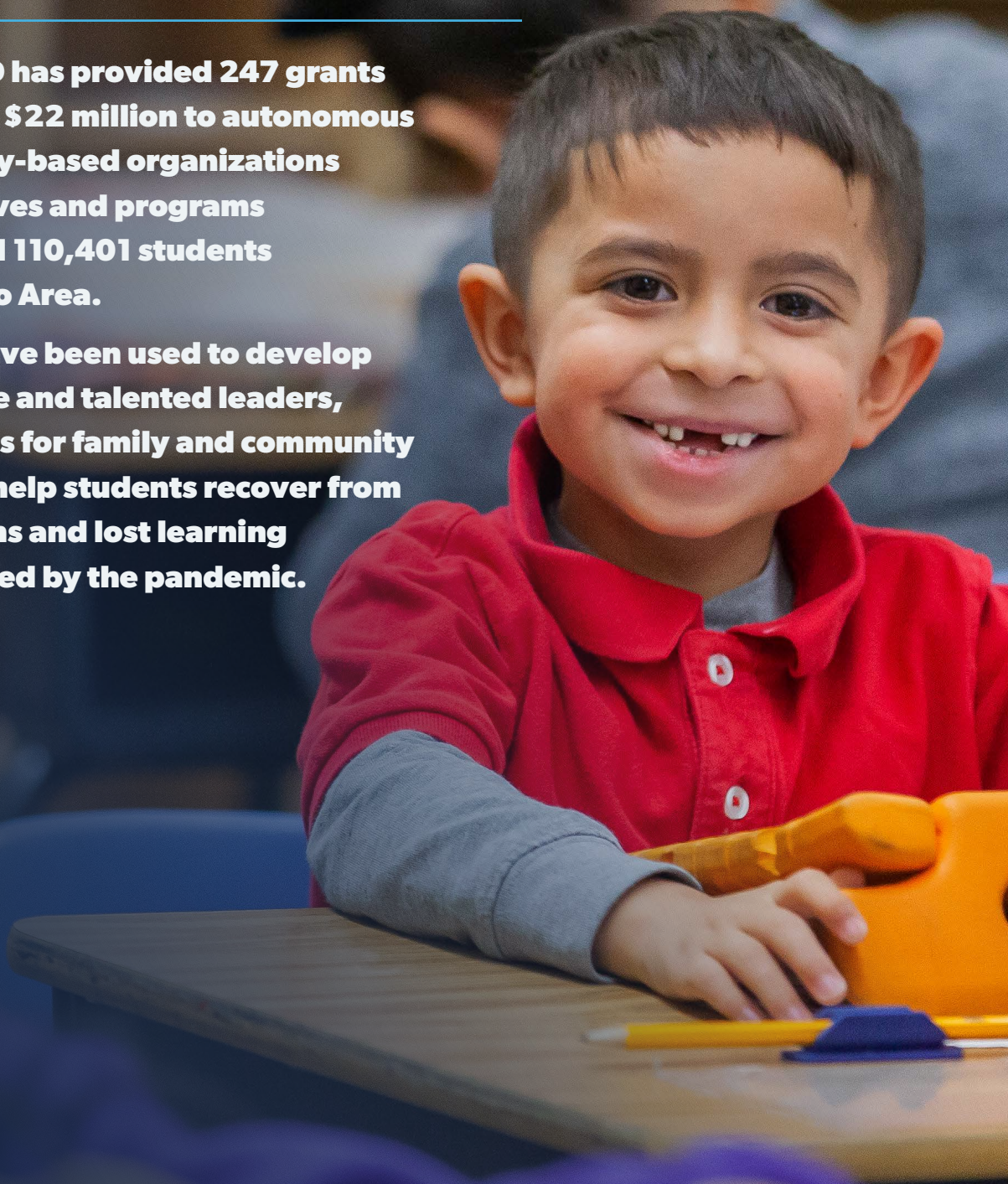
Click the globe icon anywhere in this report to visit our Annual Report Webpage.

# Our Impact

---

**Since 2018, RootED has provided 247 grants totaling more than \$22 million to autonomous schools, community-based organizations and special initiatives and programs that have impacted 110,401 students in the Denver Metro Area.**

**Awarded grants have been used to develop pipelines of diverse and talented leaders, prioritize strategies for family and community engagement, and help students recover from learning disruptions and lost learning opportunities caused by the pandemic.**



# STUDENTS IMPACTED BY ROOTED

---

**56.80%**

Hispanic

---

**15.57%**

Black  
(Not Hispanic)

---

**15.37%**

White  
(Not Hispanic)

---

**4.69%**

Multiple  
Races

---

**2.68%**

Asian

---

**1.52%**

American Indian/  
Alaskan

---

**1.37%**

Native Hawaiian  
or Other

---

**83%**

**of autonomous school  
students served by RootED**  
identify as a person of color

**67%**

of all autonomous school  
students served by RootED  
**receive meal benefits through  
the Free and Reduced  
Meal Benefit Program**

# 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR

---

## TOTAL NUMBER OF **CHARTER SCHOOLS** SERVED

**5**

TOTAL  
**CMOs**

**35**

TOTAL  
**Schools**

**17%**

OF ALL  
**DPS Schools**

## TOTAL NUMBER OF **SINGLE SITE SCHOOLS** SERVED

**23**

TOTAL  
**Schools**

**11%**

OF ALL  
**DPS Schools**

## TOTAL NUMBER OF **INNOVATION ZONE SCHOOLS** SERVED

**3**

TOTAL  
**Zones**

**14**

TOTAL  
**Schools**

**7%**

OF ALL  
**DPS Schools**

## GRANTS GIVEN TO BIPOC-LED ORGANIZATIONS

**28**

TOTAL # OF  
**Grants**

**48%**

**Total Grants  
Given From  
2021-2022**

**\$1.9M**

**Total Grant  
Dollars from  
2021-2022**

**51%**

**Total Grant  
Dollars from  
2021-2022**

## ROOTED DENVER DEMOGRAPHICS



**80%**

Percentage of the  
**RootED Staff** that  
identify as a person  
of color

**83%**

Percentage of the  
**RootED board of  
directors** identify  
as a person of color

# COMMUNITY CONNECTION

## Recentering Families: The Family Engagement Collaborative Elevates School and Family Partnerships

The Family Engagement Collaborative is working to reframe family engagement with a more intentional emphasis on partnership.

The pilot cohort—leaning heavily on a model created by the Flamboyant Foundation in Washington, D.C.—created space for Denver educators to develop, share and advance strategies to meaningfully partner with families, and create inclusive spaces in their schools.

“School districts and schools see this as a need now more than ever,” said Trace Faust, a senior project director at the Keystone Policy Center. “The pandemic has exacerbated everything we’ve known is challenging for families and students, particularly those in marginalized communities. We didn’t have to sell the value of the Family Engagement Collaborative—our educators told us how needed it was.”

Forty-five teachers, school leaders and school support team members participated in the inaugural Family Engagement Collaborative cohort, which was developed by Climb Higher Colorado, now a program of the Keystone Policy Center. RootED Denver provided grant funds to cover the cost of administering the program and to provide a stipend to educators to participate in the professional development opportunity.

The participants came from traditional, charter and innovation schools across the city, and during the four-month program, educators attended six sessions.

[Read the Full Story](#)



**“As a whole, the entire Family Engagement Collaborative experience reinvigorated my passion for family engagement and empowered me to make changes within my own classroom to model for the rest of the school and network.”**

**JAMISON WILLIAMS**

*Pre-kindergarten teacher at Rocky Mountain Prep’s Berkeley Campus*

# OUR PARTNERS IN ACTION

## Shoot for the Moon: Moonshot edVentures Creates Space for Leaders of Color, Women, Nonbinary and LGBTQIA Educators to Innovate and Co-create

For many Moonshot edVentures fellows and alumni, the program's emphasis on developing diverse leaders—particularly people of color, women, and people who identify as nonbinary or LGBTQIA—has been deeply impactful.

It was certainly powerful for Tatenda Blessing Muchiriri, who was born in Zimbabwe and identifies as queer. He had long been one of the few Black teachers or the only Black teacher in the schools where he taught. There were many times he didn't feel seen or celebrated.

So, to be in the Moonshot Fellowship with other leaders of color was exhilarating and validating, he said.

"It was so exciting to be in a space with other people who were thinking about ways we can explore our identities as teachers and leaders and Black, Indigenous people of color," Muchiriri said. "Moonshot gave us an opportunity to create spaces where we're celebrated and affirmed, and where we don't stand out and we're not othered."

**Over the last six years, Moonshot—a RootED grantee—has developed a pipeline of diverse and talented leaders who share a common goal: to co-create with families and communities top-quality schools and education programs.**

[Read the Full Story](#)



**"After more than six years, we have fellows impacting more than 5,000 students every year. That's 5,000 students in the Denver metro area each year who are spending time in learning environments created for them, by them."**

**KAT LING**

*Chief executive officer of Moonshot*

**38%**

Total Grants  
Given to  
**Community  
Driven Change**

# MEET THREE MOONSHOT FELLOWS

Learn more about Moonshot Fellows Luis Antezana, Branta Lockett and Tatenda Blessing Muchiriri all of which are leading organizations that are now also RootED grantees:



## Luis Antezana

In 2021, when a federal court ordered the Biden Administration to stop approving new Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) applications, Luis Antezana had to pivot.

At the time, Juntos2College, the program Antezana founded in 2019 and grew through the Moonshot Fellowship in 2020, was helping two dozen families prepare DACA applications. With a sudden end to that work—a core service provided by Juntos2College—Antezana shifted the program's immediate focus.

Now, the program's flagship service, DACA Works, helps people granted DACA work permits learn how to accurately renew and submit their permits. Accurate and timely renewals are critical to a family's ability to continue to generate income.

[Read the Full Profile](#)



## Branta Lockett

When Branta Lockett started the Moonshot fellowship, she planned to open a school that focused on arts-integration. Through her work in education and activism and her community outreach, she quickly recognized a more urgent need.

She saw that Black youth were underserved by Denver schools, and that they were disproportionately disciplined and more harshly disciplined when compared to their white peers.

She knew Black youth in the Denver Metro area needed a space where they would feel loved, valued, safe and free. She began working in the Moonshot fellowship to develop a framework for the 5280 Freedom School.

[Read the Full Profile](#)



## Tatenda Blessings Muchiriri

During the Moonshot Fellowship, Tatenda Blessing Muchiriri planned to open a new Montessori school to serve primarily Black and brown families in Denver.

When the fellowship ended, Moonshot's emphasis on centering community had resonated so deeply with Muchiriri that he thought harder about how to best serve families of color.

The school model would require families to travel to a brick-and-mortar building to benefit from Montessori learning—what if, instead, he brought Montessori programs to them, in their communities? That, he thought, would truly center families and kids.

From that, Montessori on Wheels was born.

[Read the Full Profile](#)

# SPOTLIGHT ON OUR SCHOOLS

## On the Rise: RiseUp Community School Supports Students with Innovative Focus on Postsecondary Options

RiseUp Community School is helping families and students dream—and heal—by providing a restorative school environment that helps students explore postsecondary options beyond higher education.

As an alternative charter school that serves roughly 120 students ages 15-21, with more than 80% eligible for free or reduced meal benefits and roughly 90% identifying as Black, Indigenous or Latinx, RiseUp does much more than help students recover credits to earn a diploma. It goes beyond that to provide support for students who have been harmed or underserved by systems in other schools. Some have been expelled or threatened with expulsion, and others have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out.

RiseUp provides those students with a path to graduation and an opportunity to identify postsecondary paths that align with their interests and talents.

**“Our goal is that our students are happy—however they define happiness,”** said Karen Ikegami, the principal at RiseUp. **“After high school, they’re going to have to do something, so let’s make that something they really want to do.”**

Some people believe alternative schools provide an easier path for students to graduate, Ikegami said, and that isn’t true. RiseUp’s courses are rigorous, and in addition to the core curriculum, students are challenged to engage in courses that help them explore postsecondary paths.

[Read the Full Story](#)



**“It’s incredible to see a student—whose narrative of themselves was that school just wasn’t for them—graduate and be so excited about that next step and know that what we’re giving them at RiseUp has prepared them for that. It happens every day here.”**

**KAREN IKEGAMI**

*Principal at RiseUp*

**110,401**

Total # of Students  
impacted since  
**our founding  
in 2018**

# INNOVATION IN DENVER

## Q&A: How Cole Arts & Science Academy Centers Families

Cole Arts & Science Academy's core beliefs and school culture emphasize the importance of family and community partnership.

The school—an innovation school in the **Luminary Learning Network** innovation zone—uses its autonomy to be responsive to the needs of families, who are engaged in the drafting of innovation plans and help guide Cole's vision.

"A true community school begins with the trust of our families," said Brandon Shields, who taught for several years at Cole and served on the Luminary Learning Network's Teacher Council in 2021-22.

Now, Shields is the dean of student services for the school, and works closely on family and community partnership. He shared more about why Cole invests in the work and the strategies the school and its educators use to support families, develop trust and establish effective communication.

[Read the Full Story](#)



**"Our families and community know best of their needs and it is our responsibility to listen. The stronger the bond between the school and its stakeholders, the more reflective the school will be of its community which will ultimately lead to more success and student achievement."**

**BRANDON SHIELDS**

*Dean of student services | Cole Arts & Science Academy*

**14**

i-Zone schools  
served from  
2021-2022



# PEACE COLLECTIVE

By centering the lived experiences of people of color, the PEACE Collective is developing a coalition of leaders to advance racial equity in public schools in the Denver Metro Area.

The collective—named for its values of Power, Equity, Accountability, Collectivism and Education—is composed of leaders of color in grassroots education and social justice organizations.

They have come together to activate communities of color and amplify conversations about equity and quality in public education.

As part of the PEACE Collective's work, it established action items to guide its advocacy in the 2021-22 school year. It also published the findings of a year-long study on equity and quality in Denver Public Schools, and recommendations for a systemic approach to racial justice in the district.

The Community Views on Quality and Education report included information gathered through 200 community surveys and 28 English and Spanish community interviews with 92 total participants, largely families, students, alumni and educators from Black, brown and Indigenous communities.

That guided some of the PEACE Collective's most impactful work during the last year.

Its members hosted a series of town hall events, including an Education 101 series for community members to learn and ask questions about local education issues. The series also included leaders from Denver Public Schools and Aurora Public Schools to provide updates on changes within the districts, declining enrollment, or student learning gaps.

During the town halls, more than 40 community members gathered to engage in thoughtful discussions about equity in education and community engagement, and they were provided tools and support to self-advocate in their own public school districts.

Among its other areas of focus, the collective also provided resources for mental health support for families and students. Find links to the PEACE Collective's Education 101 webinars and a presentation for school board candidates on the Community Views on Quality and Equity Education Report to the right.

## Education Town Halls

Over 40 community members had an opportunity to engage in thoughtful discussions focused on equity in education, community engagement and call to action that equip community members with the tools to do self advocacy.



**Declining Enrollment**



**Quality and Equity in Education/ Student Mental Health**

## Other PEACE Collective Gatherings

### Candidate Forum-Montbello Highschool

Led by YAASPA youth presenting the Quality and Equity in Education Report

### PEACE Collective Year End Recap



## GRANT MAKING HIGHLIGHTS



**Total** dollar amount of grants **given since 2018**

**\$22,900,257**

**247**

**Total # of**  
grants given since 2018

**57**

**Total # of grants given**  
2021-22

**\$3,765,100**

**Total amount of grants given in 2021-22**

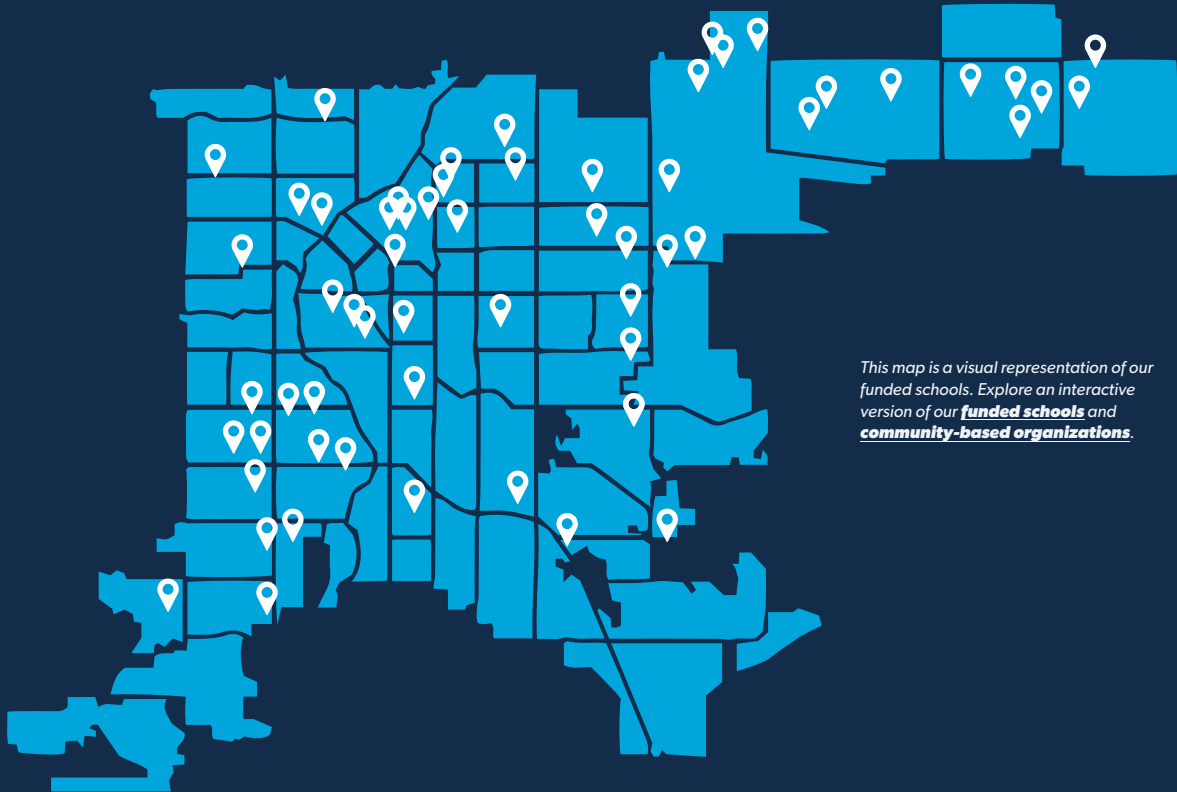


# 2021-22 ROOTED GRANTEES

Explore a full list of our grantees.

A Queer Endeavor  
African Leadership Group  
American Indian Academy  
BLM 5280 Freedom School  
Boardhawk  
Climb Higher Colorado  
Colorado Latino Leadership Advocacy and  
Research Organization (CLLARO)  
Colorado Association for Bilingual Education  
(CABE)  
Colorado Association of Charter Authorizers  
(CACSA)  
Colorado Education Initiative  
Colorado Food Cluster  
Colorado Succeeds  
CEO Funding Collaborative  
Compass Academy  
Denver African American Philanthropist  
(DAAP)  
Denver Public Schools  
Denver Public Schools CELT  
DPS Foundation  
University of Denver  
Ednium  
Education Reform Now (ERN)

Faithbridge  
Generation Teach  
Juntos 2 College  
Keystone Policy Center  
Latino Education Coalition  
League of Charter Schools  
Lyra  
Montbello Organizing Committee  
Montessori on Wheels  
Moonshot  
Odyssey  
Our Turn  
Radical Arts Academy of Denver (RAAD)  
Radian  
Relay  
Rocky Mountain Prep (RMP)  
School Board Partners  
Stand for Children  
STRIVE Prep  
Teach for America  
Transform Education Now (TEN)  
University of CColorado Denver  
Vega  
Youth Roots



*This map is a visual representation of our funded schools. Explore an interactive version of our **funded schools** and **community-based organizations**.*

# BE INFORMED AND INVOLVED

## Subscribe to RootED Denver's monthly newsletter and follow us on social media.

In our newsletter and across our social media channels, RootED shares important news and updates about Denver Public Schools, and the schools, community-based organizations and programs we fund. Our channels also celebrate the measurable and profound impact our education partners are having on students, families, educators and communities in the Denver Metro Area.

RootED updates & news



## Learn more about the schools, community-based organizations and programs RootED Denver funds.

RootED's partners are deeply committed to partnering with students, families, educators and communities to co-create learning environments and experiences that advance racial equity, and are culturally responsive, rigorous, and effective. You'll find a complete list of [autonomous schools](#) and [community-based organizations](#) we support on our website. Visit their web pages, engage with them on social media, and support the work they're doing to advance our shared vision of equity and opportunity for all Denver Public Schools students.

Community-based orgs

Autonomous schools

## Attend local school board meetings.

Each year, state and local school boards engage in discussions and vote on matters that affect our students, families, educators and communities. In 2022-23, the Denver Public Schools Board of Education is expected to discuss and decide on charter renewal applications, early start times for schools, and strategies to address declining enrollment in our schools, just to name a few urgent agenda items. [Learn more about the Denver Public Schools Board of Education](#) and use [BoardDocs](#) to see agendas for the board meetings, to sign up for public comment, and to watch meetings live.

Learn about DPS BOE

