While we believe that success can be achieved regardless of socioeconomic background, we know that the roadblocks for our scholars are often challenging to overcome. As I wrote these words last year for the opening letter of our annual report, I had no idea that we would be facing a whole new set of obstacles just a few months later.

When governments across the globe enacted “stay-at-home” orders, it changed the fabric of how we interact within our society. Scholars had to navigate virtual learning, and teachers scrambled to adapt their lesson plans for Zoom, but the temporary closure of thousands of schools disrupted more than day-to-day education. Schools serve as a safety net for many scholars: they act as a gateway to hot meals, special education services, therapy, internet access, and more. Without connection to the physical schools, these safety nets evaporated, and scholars lost these vital services.

It was hard to sleep at night knowing that low-income and under-served scholars struggled to access remote learning. In contrast, scholars in private schools across the country quickly returned to school in-person and affluent families were able to hire personal tutors and create learning pods in their communities.

Regardless of a family’s wealth, each child deserves a high-quality education. If wealthy families could find novel ways to ensure their children continue to receive the educational opportunities that they deserve, then we in the public charter sector needed to do the same thing for our lower-income children.

Uplift took this opportunity not to think outside the box but to break the box and reimagine how we invest in learning to ensure that the scholars we serve didn’t fall behind. We quickly implemented new technologies, distributed thousands of computers and mobile hot spots, enhanced our social and emotional support systems, and implemented health and safety measures that often exceeded CDC guidelines.

As a result, Uplift scholars stayed on track with their learning, and we were able to bring those scholars who wanted an in-person learning experience back to campus weeks before the local large ISDs. We stayed committed to offering an IB learning experience regardless of our medium for lesson delivery. We established standards for our scholars to meet the highest achievement levels while also building in flexibility to ensure an equitable experience for all scholars.

I am so proud of the work our network has done this year and thankful to my colleagues who get creative and worked diligently and collaboratively so we could reach all our scholars. I know it hasn’t been easy but the level of creativity and resilience I witnessed was truly inspiring. We came together not only for our scholars but for the whole Uplift community.

Sincerely,

Yasmin Bhatia
CEO, Uplift Education

"Education is the most important weapon we can use to change the world."
- Nelson Mandela
O U R  C O V ID  R E S P O N S E

This past spring, when schools had to halt in-person classes due to the emerging pandemic, many districts sent teachers and students home for the remainder of the school year without further contact. However, Uplift was up and running within two weeks with a fully operational plan for online learning, and scholars had the needed technology and wraparound services to continue their school year.

When August arrived, we were ready with new systems and processes to fully engage all our scholars in virtual learning. A few weeks later, we welcomed over half of our scholars back for in-person learning to campuses that exceeded CDC guidelines for safety.

The colossal efforts of our teachers and staff put Uplift weeks ahead of other school districts and helped our scholars stay on track.

Choices!
In September, families were given the choice of continuing with virtual learning, returning to campus for in-person learning, or a hybrid of the two. We continue to offer our families these choices today.
The Class of 2020, unlike any other, had to dig deep to reimagine old traditions and develop new ones to make their senior year memorable. Despite their challenges, our seniors set records and broke barriers.

**Virtually the Best Class Ever!**

865 Seniors

- 7100 applications submitted
- 100% college acceptance
- $115 million in scholarships and grants
- 570 different college & university acceptances
- 78% first generation college attendees
- 89% college matriculation
IB FOR ALL, DP FOR ALL

The International Baccalaureate® (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) is recognized and respected by the world’s leading universities. Studies show that students who earn an IB Diploma have higher college acceptance and success rates. The DP focuses on rigorous academic study, within a broad and balanced curriculum, which can prepare students well for employment.

As Uplift continues our “IB For All” initiative, we had a record number of seniors participate in the IB Diploma Programme (DP). Some of our schools offered the full Diploma Programme for the first time, and seniors from nearly every school earned the highly prestigious IB Diploma, guaranteeing them a year of college credit at Texas public colleges and universities. Other scholars were able to earn college credit by doing well on IB exams.

**Earning College Credit**

IB Diploma candidates have the option to earn college credit through their course work and through IB exams. The state of Texas guarantees a minimum of 24 college credit hours at a state college or university for IB Diploma holders.

**Seniors Scoring 4+ on IB Exams and earning college credit**

- **Humanities Exam**: 68%
- **English Exam**: 48%
- **Spanish Exam**: 75%

This year nearly a quarter of seniors in the IB Diploma Programme earned the prestigious IB Diploma.

**98%**

IB participation

**132**

full IB Diplomas Awarded

**81%**

scored 4 or better on one or more IB exams

**over 3,100**

college credit hours earned
CAREER MOVES

In 2018, Uplift made the strategic decision to expand our Road To College program to include career awareness and guidance as well. Now called Road To College & Career, this department is helping us meet our strategic goal for all scholars to earn a college degree and/or a viable career pathway.

We know it’s not enough for our scholars to be college-ready upon graduation, and we also know earning a college degree does not guarantee a job! Uplift has expanded its career services to include career coaching, interview preparation, resume reviews, along with networking and partnerships to provide actual job opportunities.

For those scholars for whom college is not a viable option, we are providing guidance on various licensure or training programs to help those alumni develop marketable skills. We are proud to be helping our graduates see and achieve a future that can have a generational impact.

Post Graduation Decisions for the Class of 2020

- 70% will earn a college degree within six years of graduation.
- 90% will earn an economically viable post-secondary credential and enter a career pathway.

OVER 150 POSITIONS
(Full-Time, Part-Time, and Internships) have been posted on our alumni job board this year which opened in March 2020.

70+ ALUMNI
have received individual career support services this year.

"The Uplift Manager of Career Services gave me some amazing tools when it came to my resume but also great tips and tricks for interviews and how to target the job I want."

–Uplift Williams Alum
Social and Emotional Learning has been a key factor in our Whole Scholar approach for several years, however, 2020 saw our SEL programs expand in ways we would never have imagined.

We leveraged our talented team of nurses and medical experts to support our educators with well-being consultations and self-care resources. These efforts have resulted in lower teacher turnover and helped our staff feel less stressed.

Our mental health clinicians work hand in hand with our health services team to connect with families who receive a positive COVID diagnosis. We help families anticipate potential implications of the diagnosis, such as financial instabilities, mental health concerns, and access to medical care, and provide families with referrals to various community agencies and programs.

For our scholars, we have delivered more than 800,000 hours of social and emotional learning this school year, woven in with our everyday lessons. We have also already helped more than 3,100 scholars deal with stress and anxiety through one-on-one counseling with one of our licensed mental health counselors.

Uplift has invested heavily in building one of the largest school-based clinical mental health teams in the state, and we are proud to be influencing the SEL landscape.
As we enter 2021, we are confidently prepared to provide ALL scholars access to a high-quality college- and career-ready curriculum and current, culturally relevant instructional materials, regardless of the landscape.

With the nuts and bolts of our “new normal” in place, we can turn our focus to the future. We will open a new PK-5th grade feeder school for Uplift Summit International in August, expand Uplift Ascend and Uplift Elevate to include high school, and broaden our Pre Kindergarten reach in the metroplex.

We will continue to fine-tune our work around college and career readiness for all scholars and help them explore their future options. We will continue to pioneer practices of SEL and well-being and broaden how we involve our families in meaningful ways in their child’s education.

Most importantly, we will be continuing and improving our efforts for equity in education across all racial groups in our Uplift community. We have definitive plans for increasing our leadership diversity, developing a more culturally responsive curriculum, and collecting broader feedback to identify additional initiatives.

We are excited about the future and know we can make a difference.
Investing in Uplift Education helps develop globally minded scholars who are college-ready and stay on track to earn a college degree and become leaders in their community. While we have an amazing team of teachers and support staff, we know that our goals cannot be reached without our community of partners and volunteers.

Career Exploration

You can support our Road To College & Career team as they help our scholars and alumni navigate high school, college, and career. Specifically, we are looking for virtual volunteers to support our scholars with career exploration, including:

- Mentors
- Internships
- Speakers
- Business Tours

Invest for Today

Your annual financial investment will be used to continue developing new practices to increase scholar achievement further, and, best of all, we will share those results with others to multiply the impact.

While we have been thrilled with the additional funding that the Texas legislature allocated towards charter schools under HB3, gaps between our budget and the supports we provide continue to exist. Gifts to our annual giving program will help us fund improvements such as:

- Leadership coaching
- Targeted intervention to improve equitable access to success
- Support for alumni through career counseling and scholarships
- Improved delivery of culturally responsive lessons in the classroom

Invest for Tomorrow

We have much to be proud of from the past five years: Uplift Education has grown to serve an additional 6,000 scholars in North Texas while achieving impressive academic and college outcomes. As we look to the next five years, Uplift Education will build on our strengths to transform our scholars’ and families’ lives by becoming a model for excellence in PreK-12th public education. Our future focus will include:

- Becoming an “A” rated district
- Expanding our college and career focus to increase generational impact
- Building out existing schools and improving facilities
- Creating a more equitable and engaged adult culture

To support Uplift Education with your time, talents, or dollars, please visit uplifteducation.org/support

For more information on investing or supporting our network, please contact:

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Without the generosity of our donors, Uplift would not be able to provide an education for the 20,000+ scholars enrolled for 2020-21. We extend our heartfelt thank you to the following donors for their generous 2019-20 gifts and donations over $25K to support Uplift’s mission.