



PANHANDLE ALLIANCE  
*for* EDUCATION



Promoting  
*excellence*  
in Education.

2020

ANNUAL  
REPORT

# A Message From the President

After kindergarten, I would “work” at my parents’ arts and craft store repackaging beads from bulk bags to counts of 10. From my early years as a “bead counter,” it was my destiny to become a “bean counter” and work for one of the largest public accounting firms in the world. Now, as President and CEO of Litehouse, I’m proud to lead the Panhandle Alliance for Education as its President.

I would not be where I am today without every teacher dedicating their time and energy to my development, from those days in kindergarten through my time at Eastern Washington University.

This reminder is even more critical now with the pandemic, soft school closures, and an overall disruption to the students and staff alike. The need has never been greater to invest in our children’s future, specifically in educating the whole student.

You never know when a student’s moment of influence will occur, and the more we help expose them to positive experiences that round out their academic career, the more likely we help prepare them for success.

The stories that follow will show you how we have done that in the past year with the help of your gifts.

We thank you.  
Kelly Prior



Kelly Prior | President  
Panhandle Alliance For Educaiton



# Board of Directors



## 2020 Annual Board of Directors Meeting:

**Row 1:** Amy Longanecker, Geraldine Lewis, Matt Mire, Heather Lowman, Malia Meschko **Row 2:** Wendy Dunn, Marcia Wilson, Allison Gilmore, Read Tuddenham, Matt Gillis **Row 3:** Tom Albertson, Kelly Prior, Stephanie Nostdahl, Tom Puckett, Julie Reister-Keaton **Row 4:** Chris Blanford, Dick Cvitanich, Mary Weber-Quinn, Caleb Bowman, Shawn Keough **Row 5:** Pierce Smith, Toby McLaughlin, Kendon Perry, Patty Staglund **Missing from photo:** Christian Groenke, Susan Jordan, Joe Williams

# Building Our Partnerships

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION:

Thank you Lighthouse Foods for donating over \$176,499 from the 2019/20 Lighthouse Charity Golf Classic to the Panhandle Alliance for Education. Lighthouse, the name synonymous with freshness & quality, is always striving to create unique dressings that inspire a multitude of chef creations. Their mission: Deliver a memorable eating experience, positively impact the communities we touch, and provide our employee owners opportunities to succeed.

## SPONSORS

### SUMMER SUNSET GALA 2019/20:

We would like to recognize the following local busi-

nesses who generously supported our Summer Sunset Gala with an event sponsorship: Lighthouse Foods, Tomlinson Sotheby's, Trinity at City Beach, Mountain West Bank, Family Health Center, Spires at Schweitzer, and Pend Oreille Insurance.

## GRANTS RECEIVED:

We would like to thank and recognize the generosity of the entities who granted the Panhandle Alliance for Education significant dollars towards the PAFE Mission including: The Equinox Foundation, Avista Foundation, Kissler Family Foundation, Washington Federal Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation, The Idaho Humanities Council, STCU, and Believe in Reading.



# Teacher Grant Highlights



**Sandpoint High School - Counseling and Career Center Team**  
Erricka Brownell, Amanda Skinner, Tavi Brandenburg,  
Shannon Kerrigan, Jeralyn Mire, Sara Gosling, Kendall Lang

shared the cost of the salary before taking over all costs in the fourth year.

Thirteen years later, Mire and her staff have helped countless students formulate plans. "I always advise them to make three plans," Mire said. "The 'reach' (or dream) plan, a 'match plan,' and a 'for-sure' plan. They should think big - always - but just in case the world falls apart, they should have a 'for-sure' plan."

## A FOLLOW-UP: POST-SECONDARY GUIDANCE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

As early as the first year of high school, the pressure is on for students to think about what they want to accomplish and what their best career options might be. Along with academic pressures and high-stakes testing, students also need to navigate post-secondary admissions processes, the scholarship and financial aid application process, and entrance into a competitive job market.

They are also teenagers who tend to live in the present, and don't necessarily know what they want to do with the rest of their lives.

For years, LPOSD was fortunate enough to have volunteer parents that helped students with the decision-making process. But Sandpoint High School counselor Cindy Albertson hoped to elevate the program with a professionally qualified, salaried position dedicated to creating programs that increase students' readiness, competence, and confidence in securing post-secondary college and/or career plans. In 2008, she submitted a grant proposal that would form a collaborative partnership over three years between PAFE and LPOSD to fund a certified career/college guidance counselor. That counselor is Jeralyn Mire.

PAFE funded the first year salary and start-up costs for the program; in the second and third years, LPOSD

Every year, PAFE reviews creative grant applications from teachers seeking funds to elevate the learning experience above and beyond what the school budget can support. The stories that follow are small examples of how PAFE donations have been integral to setting students up for success. Who knows what seeds of inspiration will be sown that will influence their futures!

## LEARNING ABOUT THE BEES

When Randy Wilhelm got into beekeeping, he asked a friend for advice on pricing his honey. She told him he could make about \$5,000 per summer with an investment of \$6,000.

So why are we excited to support his continued program in teaching at-risk students at Lake Pend Oreille Alternative High School on the science and art of beekeeping?

It's not about the profitability of beekeeping, but about learning from the bees and how they work as a colony. It's also about collaboration and working towards something more significant than the individual. Bees are amazing creatures to observe, and there are many things the students can learn from them. They work together to properly and safely smoke and inspect the hive, identify the queen, feed the hive, process honey, and more.

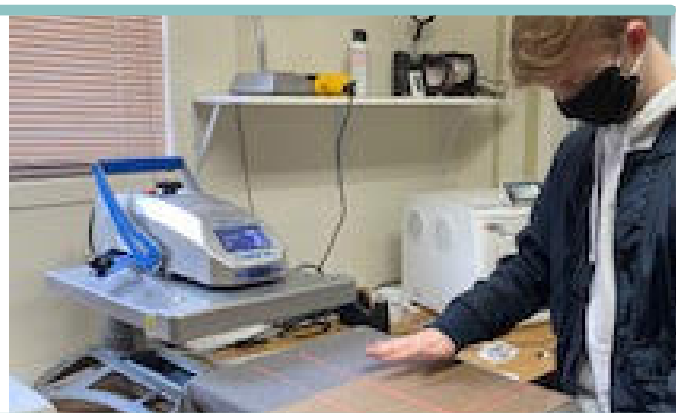
Wilhelm has taught Art and Desktop Publishing for the past 23 years, and also attended elementary school in the same building in which he teaches. As a hobby



**Beekeeping** includes lessons in collaboration at Lake Pend Oreille Alternative High School.



**Kelly Thibodeaux** teaches students at Southside Elementary School to play the fiddle.



**Running a business** helps Sandpoint High School students earn funds for state competitions.

beekeeper with a self-proclaimed obsession in beekeeping, Randy has literally “infected” the school with his passion.

PAFE was able to supply beekeeping suits so students can visit, observe, and do the work needed to nurture a thriving community of bees.

## PLAYING THE FIDDLE: SWAMP ROCK FIDDLE CAMP

Professional musician Kelly Thibodeaux taught 180 students at Southside Elementary School to play the fiddle. In doing so, students learned about Louisiana culture as Southside was transformed into Swamp Rock Fiddle Camp.

Students in kindergarten and first grade were taught three-chord fiddle tunes, while students in grades two through five learned more challenging tunes and techniques. Teachers learned creative ways to introduce instruments, music instruction, and culture to strengthen the music program.

Thibodeaux has exceptional talent in generating enthusiasm in his students, motivating them and making them feel successful. In observing, teachers also learned these techniques.

How does playing the fiddle enrich students' lives? “Not all kids are successful at reading and math, but some shine in music and art,” said Southside Principal Jacques Johnson.

“Doing something outside of academics helps build

confidence. It gets even better during recital week when everyone is given the opportunity to perform for their parents,” Johnson said. “Not only was attendance its highest that week, but we get to see a side of students we don’t otherwise see.”

## RUNNING A PROFITABLE BUSINESS

Nayla Morton wanted to find a way for her CTE students to raise money to attend regional and state competitions.

“Our students are at a disadvantage when it comes to attending state competitions in Boise,” said Morton. “Students there don’t have to raise money but ours do, and it deters some kids from participating.”

Since every club, team, and organization needs T-shirts, they decided to make them - and turned to PAFE in 2018 to purchase the required equipment. The CTE Student-Run Business School allows students to earn funds to pay their way while also learning how to run a profitable business. More than 100 students, including clubs, student council, and advisors, were involved in ordering and designing.

This year the group invested PAFE funds in a sublimation trend box, allowing the business to expand its capabilities. Morton reported they surpassed their estimated ROI for last year, which was good news because they missed out on opportunities due to school closing early. “I am very proud of what the students have accomplished. Keep an eye out for their work on Battle for the Paddle, IronMan, and Powder Puff T-shirts around town!”



# Where Are They Now? CLASS OF 2020

## JAMES GRIFFIN



*"The discipline I received at SHS has helped me succeed."*

J.D. Griffin grew up knowing that he wanted to be a fighter pilot. "My family served in the Air Force and Navy and I always wanted to serve my country," he said. "I was able to marry my fascination with aircraft to that desire and here I am now, on

track to achieve that."

J.D.'s dream was to attend the Air Force Academy, so Sandpoint High School post-secondary counselor Jeralyn Mire helped him format his class schedule with honors and AP classes, secure letters of recommendation, and just in case, she advised him to pursue a "match plan" since getting into the Academy is difficult. That plan was the Navy ROTC, which would help pay tuition, housing, and textbooks.

Both plans required a high GPA upon completion and that he carried a big course load. He recalls SHS teacher Lisa Cessna helping him when he struggled with math. "She'd sit down and patiently explain, even when class was online in the spring," he said.

His "reach" dream didn't pan out, but thankfully he had the ROTC option at the University of Idaho where he is pursuing a civil engineering degree. Lectures and learning are online, but he's staying in shape, studying, and next year he'll reapply to the Academy. Good luck, J.D.!

## TAYLOR JAMES



*"My teachers influenced my ability and desire to do things."*

Taylor is a freshman at the University of Idaho, majoring in political science and international studies. She is interested in a public service position in government, perhaps as an ambassador.

Her path was influenced by her love for politics, international studies, and cultures, along with conversations about politics with her dad and friendships with exchange students on her basketball team. It was because of those international friendships that SHS teacher Conor Baranski's Cultural Anthropology class jumped out at her from the course catalog.

"Mr. Baranski brought many foreign cultures to life for me," she said. "I'll never forget the day we visited a Buddhist Monastery. It's not that often you can study places like this from a small town."

Taylor studied in Denmark as an exchange student - a life-changing experience that shifted her focus to government. "Mr. (Brian) Smith's Government class was a huge influence as well as Mr. (Damien) Gooding's AP History. I just really found history to be fascinating, to see how the past affects the future."

Taylor is thankful for her education. "Having teachers who believe in you helps you believe in yourself."

We can't wait to see where she'll go from here!

## ISABEL EDWARDS



*"These electives helped define my path."*

Isabel loves taking care of people, and knew that she wanted a career in the medical field. She just wasn't sure of the path to take. Fortunately,

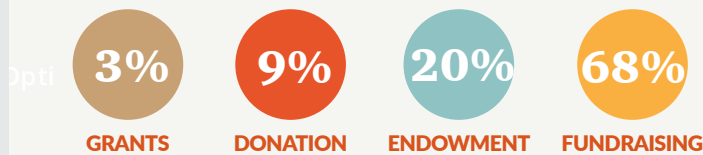
she had the support at LPOSD to guide her. She credits her Diversified Health Occupation class, in the Continuing Technical Education department, for helping to validate her choice. Nurses Trina Kennedy and Elizabeth Smith were both teachers whose stories "gave me a hard look at what life is like in the medical field."

"If I didn't have Anatomy and Physiology, Medical Terminology, I wouldn't have had that taste of what it's like," Isabel said. "These electives helped me define my path."

Isabel is now pursuing a pre-med track at Boise State University. Not only did LPOSD prepare her for a rigorous course load, but it also saved her money. These classes go towards her nursing certification; in fact, she graduated with 13 credits from high school. "I arrived with half of my prerequisites already done."

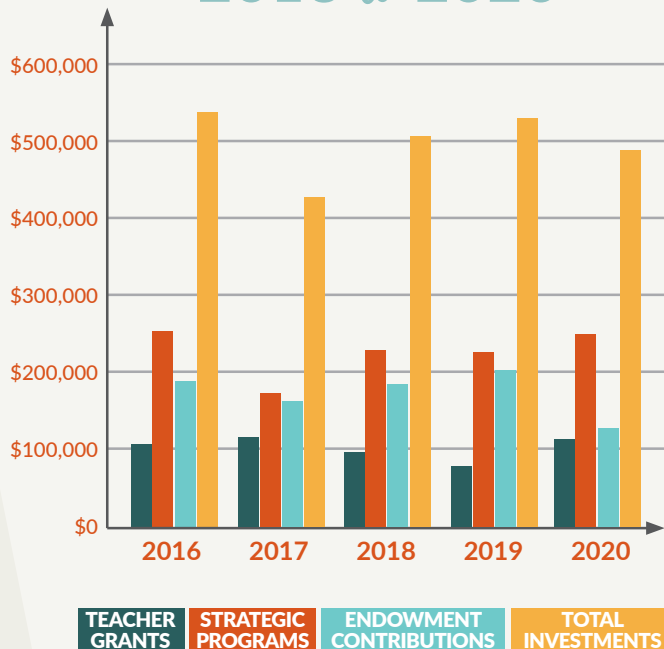
When it comes to personal growth, extracurricular activities are equally important to academics. Isabel played softball from eighth grade to graduation, making varsity her freshman year and also serving as team captain. "Softball opened my eyes to a world bigger than mine," said Isabel. "Coach (Elizabeth) Williams was a huge part of that. She really cares about her team and how it's run, and how everyone interacts with one another. I really miss it."

# Financial Highlights 2020



## PROGRAM & ENDOWMENT INVESTMENTS

2016 to 2020



## GRANTS AWARDED TO TEACHERS SINCE OUR INCEPTION

GRANT YEARS	GRANT AMOUNT	# OF GRANTS
2003	\$35,000	15
2004	\$72,000	34
2005	\$100,000	35
2006	\$100,000	33
2007	\$125,000	51
2008	\$170,000	57
2009	\$147,000	52
2010	\$167,000	65
2011	\$111,000	48
2012	\$77,800	45
2013	\$77,340	41
2014	\$75,000	32
2015	\$100,000	52
2016	\$107,008	46
2017	\$109,320	42
2018	\$102,950	34
2019	\$118,723	44
2020	\$112,926	42
TOTAL:	\$1,908,067	778

# Our Legacy

## SECURING THE FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN

The endowment is a secure financial strategy and ensures savings are invested wisely to produce cash flow for future needs in perpetuity. A portion of revenues are deposited each year into the endowment. Commitment to growing our endowment ensures the permanence of the Panhandle Alliance for Education and our commitment to the children in the Lake Pend Oreille School District.

The endowment now stands at \$3,685,996. Our goal is to reach \$5 million to help fund education in perpetuity.

## HAVE YOU CONSIDERED LEAVING A LEGACY TO THE CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Adding to your will or estate plan is a simple act with exciting consequences. In fact, legacy gifts generate much of the philanthropy that is at work today – right



here in our community. When you leave a charitable bequest you create a personal legacy that endures forever.

For an informative brochure about adding charity to your will, call the Panhandle Alliance for Education at 208-263-7040.



PANHANDLE ALLIANCE  
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*Citizens, businesses and educators building an independent, community-based foundation for public schools.*

## MISSION

Our mission is to promote excellence in education and broad-based community support for the Lake Pend Oreille School District. As an independent organization, we will create and sustain an endowment to provide resources in support of effective teaching, learning and school management.

## ABOUT THE PANHANDLE ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATION

The Panhandle Alliance for Education (PAFE) is the designated education foundation for the Lake Pend Oreille School District #84. PAFE was created in 2003 to promote community and financial support for our students and educators. The State of Idaho's per capita funding for public education ranks 49th among the fifty states in the U.S. There simply are not enough dollars to keep Idaho public schools competitive with the rest of the country. The state is tapped out, and federal funding is a minor player at less than ten percent of the district budget. This discrepancy is a challenge that can only be resolved with individual and local support.

Stories by Lisa Gerber. Design and Layout by Keokee Media + Marketing

Panhandle Alliance for Education • P.O. Box 1675 • Sandpoint, ID 83864 • 208.263.7040

For information contact Marcia Wilson, Executive Director. Or visit our website at [www.Panhandlealliance.org](http://www.Panhandlealliance.org)