



DREAM

BENDING THE ARC

2024 - 2028 STRATEGIC PLAN



Introduction

OUR CHALLENGE

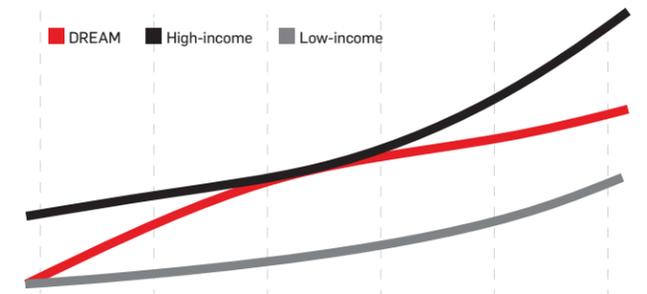
Inequity is a generational problem that requires a generational solution.

Five years ago, DREAM made a big bet—that greater investment in extended-day, extended-year, whole-child instruction would further transform the life trajectories of our students. So we integrated high-quality education with award-winning afterschool and summer learning programs to deliver our Grow the Whole Child model.

That commitment has resulted in outcomes across the PK-12 continuum that outpace the majority of DREAM's public school district and charter school peers. With student achievement accelerating and high school graduation and college acceptance rates at 100%, DREAM has mitigated the effects of Covid learning loss. This data tells us we made the right move. DREAM's approach is working.

But it's not enough. Over the past quarter century, high-performing charter schools have made significant progress in closing the K-12 achievement gap. Despite that, average college persistence and bachelor's completion rates for charter school graduates—including DREAM—remain significantly lower than those of affluent peers. Wide disparities persist in long-term earnings for these young people, with the average salary for our alumni at age 25 falling below a New York City living wage.

So while DREAM students are closing the achievement gap by 12th grade, they are not keeping pace with their more affluent peers after college and into adulthood.



DREAM's Strategic Plan is our blueprint for realizing the long-term potential of the children we serve and the communities where we work. It will mean an even deeper investment in people and places—starting in early childhood and continuing through early adulthood—to ensure that the gains our students make in school endure as they move on to college and into fulfilling careers. These investments will compound over time to give our alumni the skills, opportunities, and access they need to reach their fullest potential.

DREAM's growth over the next five years will be oriented toward excellence and sustainability in supporting long-term outcomes for youth—building toward a just future in which every child can influence and lead generational change, **bending the arc toward equity.**



ABOUT DREAM

On an abandoned lot in East Harlem, DREAM was born.

Then known as Harlem RBI, DREAM was founded in 1991 when a group of volunteers transformed an abandoned, garbage-strewn lot into two baseball diamonds for the youth of East Harlem, establishing themselves on what *The New York Times* once called “the worst block in NYC.” Those first volunteers knew that having a safe place to play in this community was no small thing. They knew that the children and families of East Harlem deserved more.

As we grew over time, DREAM evolved to address the greater needs of our community—like low literacy and high school graduation rates—through our summer and afterschool enrichment program. The results showed promise. Graduation rates improved, college acceptance rates increased, and a large majority of our kids avoided summer learning loss. But we soon learned that confining our work to out-of-school time was not enough.

MISSION

DREAM ensures that all young people recognize their potential and realize their dreams. We level the playing field in our schools and communities by investing in the whole child from early childhood to early adulthood.

VISION

We envision a just future where every single child, from every single zip code, can influence and lead generational change.

Leveraging our community roots, DREAM built the first new public school in East Harlem in 50 years—an extended-day, extended-year school that evolved to serve students from age 4 to 24 through integrated afterschool, summer, and postsecondary programming. And we didn't stop there.

As our approach showed promise, we grew to serve more students in more communities. Over three decades later, we serve nearly 3,000 youth across three sites in East Harlem and the Bronx through a network of free, inclusive DREAM Charter Schools and postsecondary programming.

DREAM today exists in response to generations of underinvestment in our communities. We are building a world where every child can achieve—no matter where they start, and no matter what they dream.

DREAM 2018 → DREAM 2023 → DREAM 2028



1 Permanent campus



2 Permanent campuses



3 Permanent campuses



800 Students in Grades PK-10



1,800 Students in Grades PK-12



2,800 Students in Grades PK-12



170 Graduates of our schools & programs



600 Graduates of our schools & programs



1,000 Graduates of our schools & programs



200 Full-time employees



360 Full-time employees



525 Full-time employees



\$30M Annual operating budget



\$66M Annual operating budget



\$100M Annual operating budget

The DREAM Difference

ALL IN FOR ALL KIDS

DREAM grows the whole child—and we grow *all* children.

What We Do

GROW THE WHOLE CHILD

DREAM's Grow the Whole Child educational model is based on four pillars that drive transformative change for youth:

- Rigorous academics
- Social-emotional learning
- Deep care for a child's physical and mental health and wellness
- Commitment to family and community engagement

Every DREAM student and alum, from Pre-K through age 24, receives holistic support, year-round, both in and out of the classroom. DREAM starts early and runs long, in extended-day, extended-year schools, with approximately 600 annual hours of afterschool programming; 300 hours of summer programming; and up to six years of formal postsecondary supports for DREAM alumni, known as Legends.

What We Believe

ALL KIDS CAN

DREAM's work is fueled by the belief that every child—no matter their strengths or challenges—has the right and ability to thrive. We live that belief daily through inclusive practices: classrooms built around small group and individual instruction, two teachers per classroom, deep family partnerships, AP classes for all, college visits, and one-on-one college access counseling.

That work matters for:

- The nearly one-third of DREAM students who have special needs
- The 9 in 10 DREAM students who live below the poverty line
- The 7 in 10 DREAM Charter High School seniors who are first-generation college students



"I have my own apartment, my own car, and amazing friends I met in college. I am able to travel the world. I have a career I love where I get to pay it forward. I have created the stability that 6-year-old Jasmine always wanted.

This organization showed me that my biggest, wildest dreams are possible."

Jasmine Milles, DREAM Legend and 2022 Robin Hood Hero

Our Strategy

BENDING THE ARC

DREAM's growth over the next five years will be oriented toward excellence and sustainability in supporting long-term outcomes for youth—building toward a just future in which our alumni influence and lead generational change.

Grow Our Impact

Provide an excellent education with access to a wide breadth of experiences that give students agency over their own learning and futures.

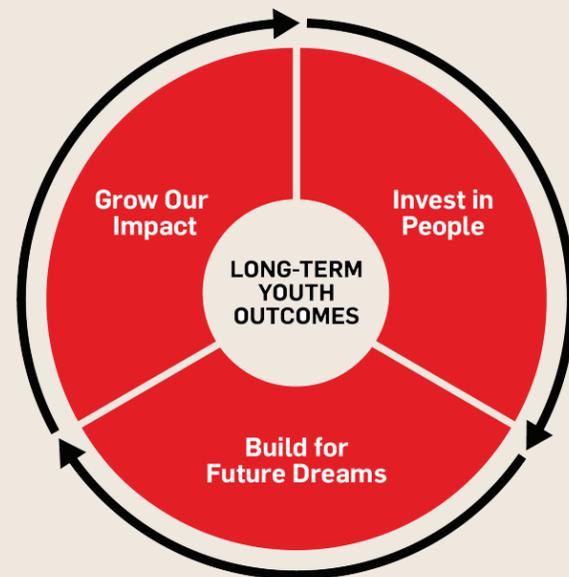
Invest in People

Surround youth with consistent, long-term relationships with adults and peers in and out of the classroom.

Build for Future Dreams

Ensure a financially strong and sustainable organization that remains responsive to student and family needs over the long term.

DREAM envisions a future where our graduates not only lead the organization as our CEOs, teachers, coaches, donors, and board members—but where DREAM Legends are leaders in every space where generational change happens. Legends won't just build a better, stronger DREAM—they'll build a better, stronger world.



Benchmarks for Success

DREAM will measure progress in these four areas to become an excellent, enduring organization positioned to drive even greater impact.

STUDENTS

K-8 ELA and Math proficiency

High school graduation
and college readiness

Social-emotional growth and proficiency

ALUMNI

College and postsecondary completion

Early career outcomes

Personal and professional fulfillment

TALENT

Staff engagement and retention

Robust leadership pipelines

Alumni career pathways within DREAM

RESOURCES

Accelerated growth in all
donor categories

Sustained, multi-year funding

Balance sheet strength

Our Strategic Initiatives

BENDING THE ARC

DREAM's growth over the next five years will be oriented toward excellence and sustainability in supporting long-term outcomes for youth—building toward a just future in which alumni influence and lead generational change.

GROW OUR IMPACT

Provide an excellent education with access to a wide breadth of experiences that give students agency over their own learning and futures.

1. Accelerate student learning

Deepen high-quality curriculum and instruction to accelerate learning and achievement for *all* students, with a special focus on STEM, special education, and intervention.

2. High School 2.0

Evolve and strengthen DREAM's rigorous and robust high school program that prepares students for college and beyond.

3. Enrichment = engagement

Expand elective and extracurricular offerings in the arts, athletics, and technology—in tandem with mental health and wellness supports—to provide young people with opportunities to explore their interests and be part of a team during the school day, afterschool, and summer.

4. Career connections

Build a series of career exploration supports that result in meaningful high school and postsecondary work experiences for students and alumni.

OUTCOMES

- A robust PK-12 STEM program anchored in dedicated teaching roles, curriculum, and external partnerships.
- New partnerships with community and nonprofit organizations to provide an expanded set of electives and extracurriculars.
- 80% of DREAM students are proficient in ELA and Math.
- 80% of DREAM students achieve social-emotional proficiency and/or growth.
- 90% of college-bound DREAM alumni achieve first to second-year college persistence.
- 60% of DREAM alumni earn a bachelor's degree within six years, on par with affluent peers.
- DREAM alumni salaries are, on average, at or above the New York City median income for adults age 25.

INVEST IN PEOPLE

Surround youth with consistent, long-term relationships with adults and peers in and out of the classroom.

5. Developing our team

Develop a talent strategy to attract, grow, and retain high-performing staff that reflect the diversity of the communities DREAM serves, ensuring that employees are equipped with the right skills to grow from within.

6. Family and community partnerships

Deepen DREAM's partnership with families and community-based organizations to support student learning outcomes and ensure the health and prosperity of our families and communities.

OUTCOMES

- Equitable outcomes for DREAM staff by race and gender.
- A compelling employee experience that supports achieving an 80% staff retention rate and net promoter score of 10 or greater.
- Well-defined leadership pipelines that result in a majority of leadership roles being filled through internal promotions.
- The growth of alumni career pathways that result in 20% of DREAM roles being filled by Legends.
- Increased family involvement in students' education and new partnerships with community organizations to provide families with supportive social services.

BUILD FOR FUTURE DREAMS

Ensure a financially strong and sustainable organization that remains responsive to student and family needs over the long term.

7. Smart systems

Fortify DREAM's network infrastructure to deliver services effectively and efficiently to staff and schools.

8. Equipped and empowered teams

Create a knowledge management system that allows for impactful methods of identifying, organizing, storing, and disseminating information among teams.

9. Equitable investments for equitable outcomes

Build a best-in-class major gifts program and organizational financing to support DREAM for generations to come.

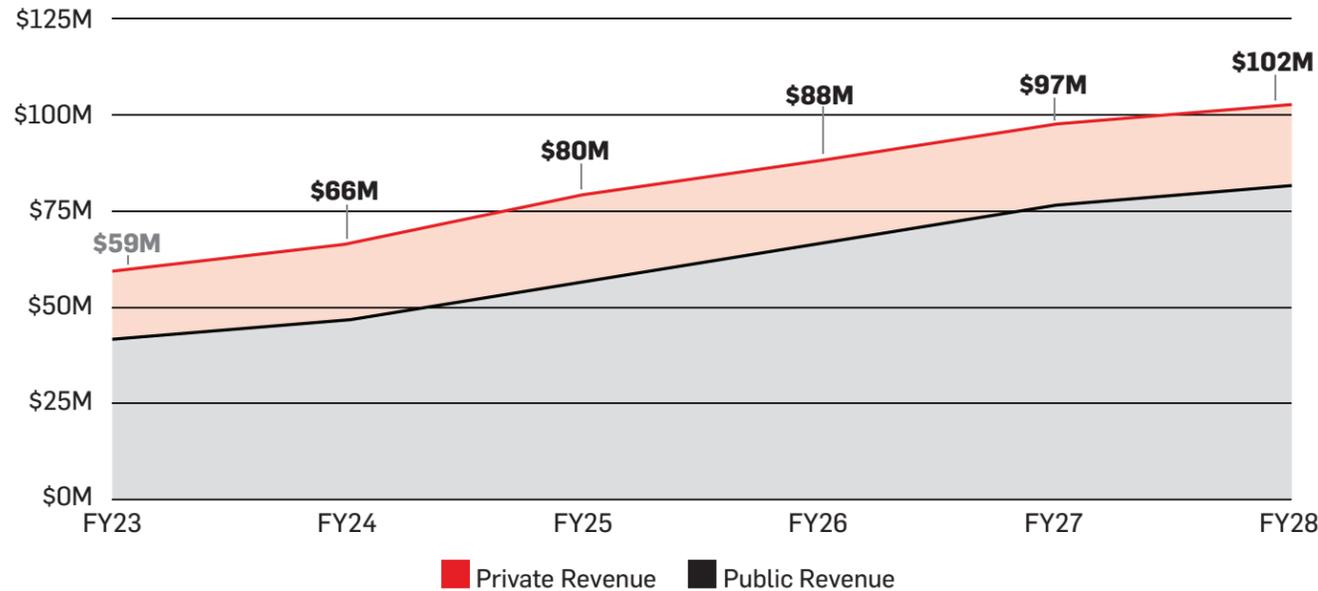
OUTCOMES

- Strengthened systems and increased business efficiencies that support DREAM in serving 1,000 additional young people and over 500 staff members at scale over the next five years.
- \$20M in private revenue raised annually.
- Balance sheet strength as measured by liquid unreserved net assets.

FINANCIALS

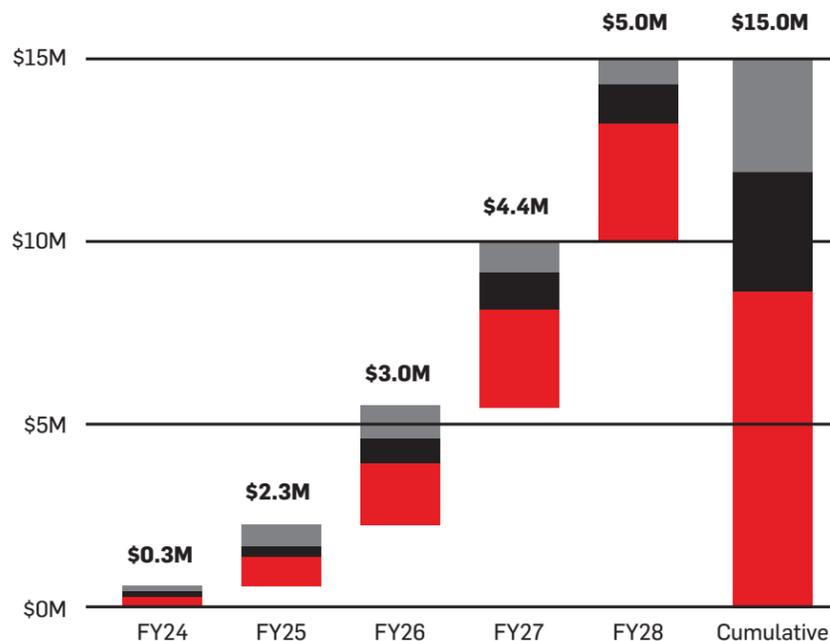
In order to realize our strategic objectives, DREAM's annual operating budget will grow from \$66M to more than \$100M over the next five years. With seven fully grown schools at three campuses by FY28, public funding will grow to represent **80%** of total operating revenue.

DREAM 5-Year Operating Financials



Overview of New Strategic Plan Investments

Implementing DREAM's Strategic Plan will require \$15M in new investments over the next five years.



Bending the arc means:

Build for Future Dreams

Ensuring DREAM is built to last

Invest in People

Making long-term investments in our staff, families, and communities

Grow Our Impact

A differential investment in preparing a generation of young people equipped to change the world

PHILANTHROPY MAKES THE DREAM DIFFERENCE POSSIBLE.

To continue scaling our **Grow the Whole Child** model and executing on our strategic priorities, **\$105M** in cumulative private revenue is required over the next five years.

If we can agree that all kids—no matter their zip code—need the same things to grow up healthy, strong, and happy and to thrive as adults, the next question is inevitable: **What is the cost of equity?**

Today, it is private philanthropy—in combination with significant public funding—that allows DREAM to provide an extended-day, extended-year PK-12 education and a constellation of supports for kids 4 to 24 and their families. We are unapologetic about this, because the reality is that public dollars alone do not cover the cost of what low-income Black and brown students need and deserve.

Private funding supports the same opportunities and resources that affluent families provide their own children to set them up for success.

20% Private Funding

Pre-K

Afterschool & Summer Learning

Mental Health & Counseling

Athletics, Health, & Wellness

From-Scratch Food & Nutrition

Family Support & Engagement

College Access & Scholarships

Postsecondary Counseling

& Career Pathways

80% Public Funding

A future where our students are the changemakers of tomorrow depends not only on our collective efforts, but also the compounding financial investments that we make today.

WHAT WE'RE BUILDING

This Strategic Plan has a five-year horizon, but DREAM's vision is generational. A just future—where every single child, from every single zip code, can influence and lead change—will require extraordinary commitment, talent, and resources. And it will be led by DREAM's own young people, who will determine what DREAM is and can be for our community.

This Strategic Plan is a blueprint for how DREAM becomes excellent in all that we do, ensuring that our student outcomes are on par with affluent peers and our organization is ready for our next big dream to drive transformational impact for children and families.

As we build toward that future, our community has identified three areas of opportunity for future growth:

- **Eliminating structural barriers:** Children can only thrive in and out of the classroom if their basic needs are met. Ensuring our families have what they need could include providing housing and healthcare, food and economic assistance, career services, or early childhood supports from birth to age 3.
- **Scaling up while scaling in:** All families deserve equitable access to high-quality education. If DREAM's Grow the Whole Child model is delivering on its promise, scaling our work is not just an opportunity, it is an obligation: to grow more DREAM schools, more DREAM spaces, and more DREAM communities.
- **Forging political power:** Political and community action are necessary to dismantle structural inequities. Our families know best what their children and community need to succeed, and our role is to amplify student and family voice to advance policies that lead to equitable outcomes for all.

All too often, we shrink our vision for the future—settling for what's possible, rather than what's necessary. But our young people—and the world—need and deserve more.

Together, we are bending the arc toward equity for every child, every family, every community. We are building something that doesn't exist anywhere else.

We hope you'll join us.





DREAM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Vik Sawhney, Chair
The Blackstone Group

Peter Daneker, Vice-Chair
CSP Partners LLC

Karim Assef
Bank of America
Merrill Lynch

Hank Azaria

David S. Blitzler
The Blackstone Group

Porter Braswell
Jopwell

David Cohen

Jennifer Dalven
American Civil Liberties Union

Jason DeLand
Anomaly

Dr. Joan Fallon
Curemark

David Flannery
Vista Equity Partners

Eric Grossman
Morgan Stanley

Michele Joerg
Stefanie Katzman
S. Katzman Produce

Bobby Le Blanc
ONEX

Chris Leonard
Deutsche Bank

Curtis Martin
NY Jets

Alden Millard
Simpson Thacher & Bartlett

Colbert Narcisse
TIAA

Matt Nord
Apollo Global Management

Vered Rabia
Skadden

Tony Reagins
Major League Baseball

Kenneth Rosh
Fried Frank

Jeff Samberg
Acadia Woods Partners

Yesenia Scheker Izquierdo
KPMG

Robert Sheehan
Skadden

David Sobotka
Binghamton Rumble Ponies

Jamie B.W. Stecher

Don Truesdale
Ardea Partners

Gregg Walker
Muller & Monroe

Diana Weiss
PwC

DREAM CHARTER SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ashish Doshi, Chair
XN

Zainab Ali
Charter School Growth Fund

Peter Daneker
CSP Partners LLC

Michele Joerg

Adam Miller
Kauff Laton Miller LLP

Don C. Sawyer III
Fairfield University

Vicki Zubovic
Khan Academy

DREAM AMBASSADORS

Vilas Kuchinad, Chair
Bank of America
Merrill Lynch

Emily Stecher, Chair
Pretium

Jaylen Amaker
DREAM Alum
U.S. Court of Appeals for the
Second Circuit

Stephen Bellwood
Cushman & Wakefield

Matt Berdoff
Hudson Structured Capital Management

Lear Beyer
Wells Fargo

Meghan Bracken
KPMG

Tasia Burroughs
Columbia Business School

Alex Condon
BlackRock

Justin Curtis
Taconic Capital

Omar Eissa
Bank of America
Merrill Lynch

Valerie Fabbro
Funko

Michael Fife
Ladder Capital

Adam Fisher
78 Youth Sports

Andy Grabowski
Blackstone

Connor Hale
McKinsey

Michael Hollander
Uber

Charlie Howe
Brookfield Properties

Coimbra Jackson
Perkins Coie

Humayra Kabir
Vista Credit Partners

Brian Kelly
Soroban Capital Partners

Zach Levitt
ONEX

Jake Lipton
Wallbrook

Ryan Malloy
Franklin Templeton

Michael Moutenot
MasterCard Worldwide

Tom O'Neill
The Blackstone Group

Anthony Pardo
Major League Baseball

Marc Pillemer
Blue Owl

Cole Potamkin
Potamkin Companies

Guy Potvin
Millennium Management

Michael Reiss
Axiom Law

Steven Santoro
Morgan Stanley

Rachel Skelly
Celonis

Nick Thorne
Basno

Kevin Widmaier
BBR Partners

Zhao Yang
OIC

DREAM ALUMNI COUNCIL

Jaylen Amaker, Co-Chair
U.S. Court of Appeals for the
Second Circuit

Maria Gerena, Co-Chair
Asphalt Green

Abigail Castillo
Crowe

David Cruz
Carey Limousine

Kelly Hernandez
Capital One Financial

Amanda Irizarry
Concrete Rose Capital

Rachell Jorge
City Air HVAC

Jason Medina
Washington DC Metropolitan
Police Department

Jose Mejia
BetMGM

Arianna Mendez
Chelsea Piers

Jason Perez
DREAM

Jaret Perez
DREAM

Louise Phillips
DREAM

Robert Saltares
Laureus

Nydia Sanchez
New York Police Department

Justina Sharrock-Brown
Stanley M. Isaacs
Neighborhood Center

Albert Tirado
FDNY

Dominick Torres
Inherited Stories

Amanda Yopez
Spotify

Natalia Yulfo
KIPP NYC College Prep
High School

"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.





wearedream.org

1991 Second Avenue New York, NY 10029

212-722-1608 info@wearedream.org



[@wearedream](https://www.instagram.com/wearedream)