



Boosted Diplomas

Annual Impact Report

2024/25 School Year

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A BIT ABOUT US

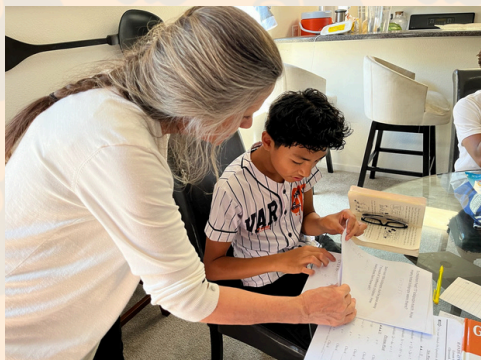
Our Background & Mission

Boosted Diplomas began as a grassroots extension of a local private tutoring company, Boosted Learning, where a few families quietly funded a small number of sessions for students in foster care who otherwise wouldn't have access to support. From those early acts of generosity, a mission took shape: build a program fully dedicated to walking alongside youth navigating systems, instability, and overwhelming odds.

In 2019, Boosted Diplomas officially became a nonprofit focused solely on serving foster and at-risk youth, 1st – 12th grade, with consistent, high-quality tutoring, mentorship, and educational advocacy. Today, we've supported over 280 students across northern Nevada, partnering closely with caseworkers, educators, and families to ensure students not only stay in school but succeed in it.

Our wonderful staff meet students wherever they are: group homes, classrooms, after school programs, treatment centers – and we stay with them as trusted, stable adults through every twist and challenge. Given that the average foster youth experiences up to 10 home or school changes during their educational career, it is paramount that our staff become the most consistent, long-lasting adult in our students' lives ensuring no gap in educational support occurs.

At its core, Boosted Diplomas exists to equip foster and at-risk youth with the tools, resources, and confidence they need to graduate with a diploma in hand and real options ahead. Through consistent academic support, mentorship, and advocacy, we work to close opportunity gaps and ensure each student we serve is prepared not just to cross the graduation stage – but to step into a future full of possibility.



Understanding Our Services

At Boosted Diplomas, every student receives more than academic support – they gain lasting connections with trusted adults who often become the most stable presence in their lives. Through our three primary roles including Educational Advocacy, Tutoring, and Peer Navigation we offer a comprehensive network of care designed to uplift, empower, and encourage our students through every stage of their educational journey.

Educational Advocacy

Educational Advocates (EAs), the foundational pillar of our programming, actively partner with students and their support teams to navigate school systems, advocate for their educational rights (including ensuring foster youth remain at their original school despite placement changes), and provide sustained emotional support. Many of our students experience frequent turnover among the adults in their lives – case workers, foster parents, teachers – creating ongoing disruptions and mistrust. Our EAs intentionally remain paired with their students over multiple years, often becoming one of the most consistent and trusted adults in their lives, closely coordinating with foster families, caseworkers, schools, counselors, and therapists to provide comprehensive care.

Tutoring

Our Tutors offer targeted academic support coupled with steady emotional encouragement, meeting weekly with students throughout the school year. Beyond the immediate academic assistance, tutors build lasting relationships, remaining paired with the same students whenever possible – some for up to four years. This extended consistency offers students vital stability and trust, significantly enhancing their academic performance, self-confidence, and resilience over the long term.

Peer Navigation

Peer Navigators provide vital internal support to our tutoring team, ensuring tutors are well-prepared and informed ahead of each session. They proactively connect with teachers to pinpoint which assignments students are missing, need improvement on, or haven't turned in, and gather these critical materials to pass directly to tutors. Additionally, PNs support our data tracking initiatives by entering grades, add status updates, and more. This behind-the-scenes work equips our tutors with the exact information and resources needed to target specific academic areas efficiently.

2024/25 School Year Overview

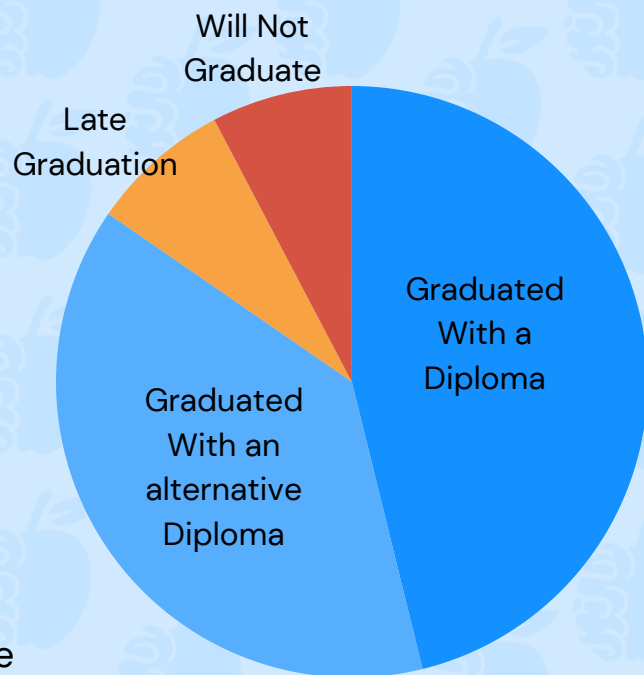
During the 2024/25 school year, Boosted Diplomas **supported 109 youth** across elementary, middle, and high school.

We expanded our reach, deepened our supports, and celebrated major milestones together. Our programming remains rooted in the belief that with the right relationships and responsive services, students impacted by systems and adversity can – and do – thrive.

Graduation Outcomes

We supported 13 juniors and seniors during the 24/25 school year who were eligible to graduate. Of these amazing students, their graduation statuses were:

- **11 graduated (84.6%) 🎉**
 - 6 earned standard diplomas
 - 5 completed HiSET or Adult Diploma pathways – 2 of which were juniors who graduated early
- 1 youth remains on-track for late graduation
- 1 youth was unable to finish due to being on the run



- Boosted Diplomas Graduation Rate
- WCSD Foster Graduation Rate

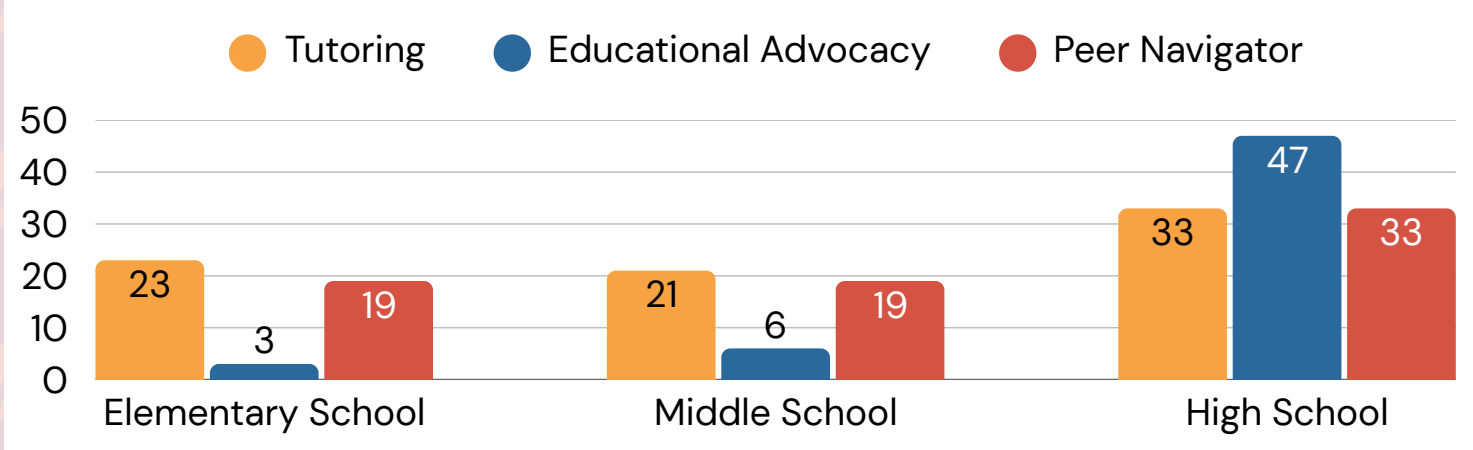


Boosted Diplomas' graduation rate (84.6%) significantly outpaces the **county's average (48.5%)** for foster and at-risk youth pursuing standard diplomas, HiSET, or adult diploma pathways. This highlights the powerful impact of personalized, relationship-driven support in ensuring our students not only graduate but thrive beyond high school.

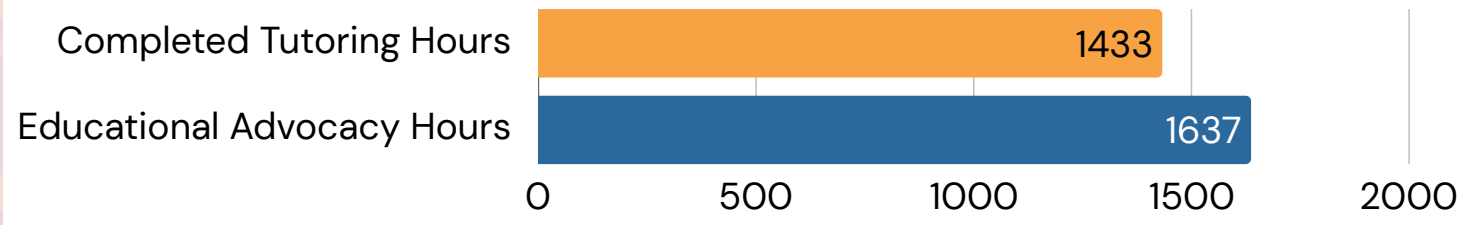
Holistic Support

Among our 109 supported youth, we provided layered, individualized supports:

- **Educational Advocate** (EA) services for **56** youth (51%)
- **Tutoring** services for **77** youth (71%)
- **Peer Navigator** support providing additional tutoring support for **71** youth (65%)



Direct Support Hours Completed



These service hours translated into meaningful academic progress. Of the 109 youth supported, 71 had usable grade data; others pursued HiSET/GED paths or lacked portal access due to placement changes or limited EA/PN engagement. Among those 71, the **class passing rate was 74.9%** – meaning three out of every four classes attempted by our students ended in a passing grade, despite major educational disruptions. Looking more closely at individual performance, we found:

- **18 students (25%) passed every class they took – a 100% success rate 🎓**
- **17 students (24%) passed 80–99% of their classes**
- **21 students (30%) passed 60–79%**
- **15 students (21%) passed fewer than 60%**

This spread reflects the wide spectrum of academic experiences our youth face. While many demonstrated remarkable resilience and achievement, others continue to navigate significant barriers. These insights help us tailor supports and prioritize strategies that lift outcomes for all students. But impact isn't just measured in transcripts...

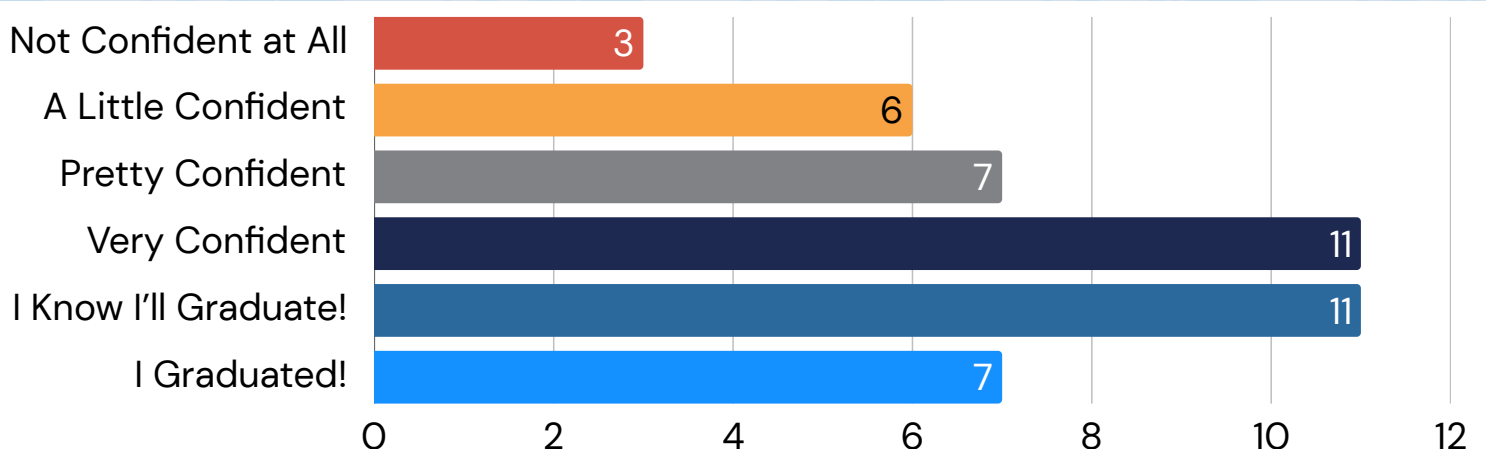
Centering Student Voice

To better understand how our support is landing – and how we can improve – we ask each Educational Advocate (EA)-paired youth to complete a short, voluntary, and anonymous survey at three key points: program entry, mid-year updates, and program exit. These moments of reflection give students a voice in shaping the program designed to support them while offering our team insights that go beyond grades or transcripts.

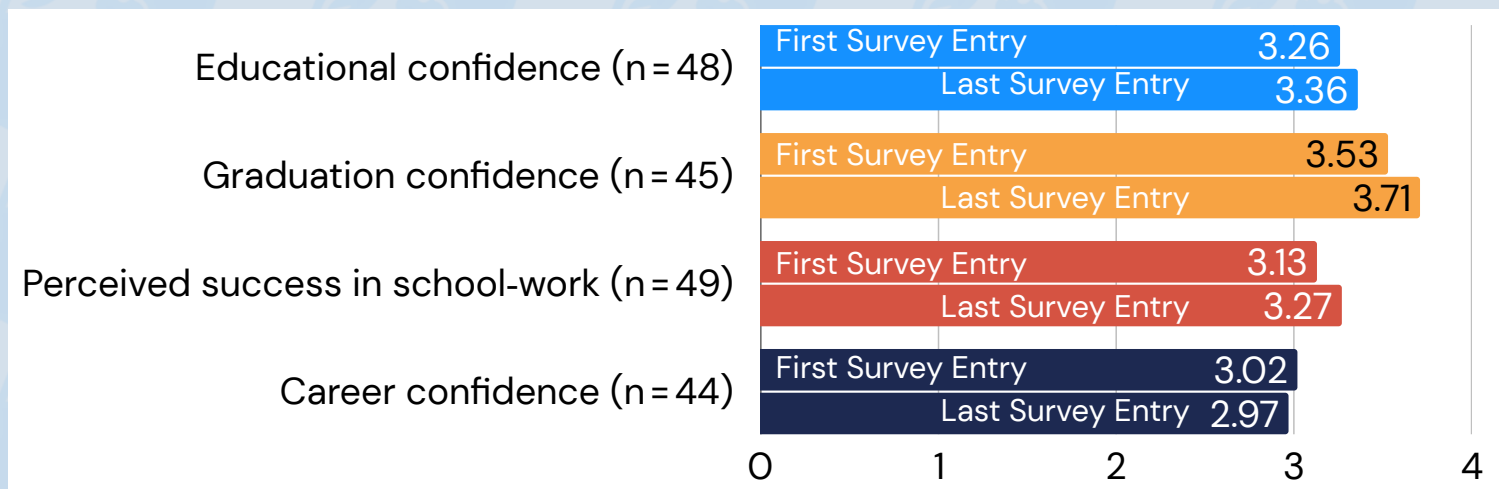
The surveys ask students about:

- Their confidence in reaching educational and career goals
- How supported they feel by the people in their lives
- Their current academic motivation and performance
- An outlook section covering hopes, fears, and expectations for their future

Among the 56 EA-supported youth this year, 88% completed at least one survey, and 45 completed both a baseline and follow-up, allowing us to track change over time. At their most recent check-in, 64% described their graduation confidence level as very confident, certain they'll graduate, or already graduated, 15% felt pretty confident, and 20% reported lower levels of confidence as shown in the figure below.



Survey data revealed modest but meaningful gains in student mindset, with graduation confidence showing the most growth (3.53 to 3.71), and smaller increases in educational confidence and perceived success in schoolwork (shown in the figure below- on page 5). Even these slight improvements reflect important progress in student self-belief – a critical predictor of future success. While career confidence held somewhat steady, the data offers a clear direction for expanding our college and career readiness supports, ensuring students are not only graduating but also prepared to thrive beyond high school.



Student Reflections: Support, Wins & Future Outlooks

Surveyed youth describe a robust safety net of caring adults: roughly two-thirds credit family, foster parents, or social workers; 61% name teachers, and 55% identify friends or school counselors. Importantly, **nearly half highlight their Boosted Diplomas Educational Advocate as a key supporter**, while one in four students single out their BD tutor. Students' words illuminate the impact. Here is just a small handful of the feedback that youth give about the staff we have in place who support them:

- *"Gary helped me pass a class when I was all down and not passing. He's one of the best people I've met. He helps with school and problems outside school."*
- *"Melissa helps with more than education – if I need anything, I can call or text her."*
- *"She's [Kelly] the best in the world. She always supports me. She needs a raise!"*

The outlook section – recently added to our surveys in the Spring '25 semester – asks students to tick any statements that feel true; **hopes** such as "I will have a steady job," "I'll earn a college credential," or **worries** like "I might be homeless," "I'll struggle with mental health," plus **neutral options** (e.g., "not sure what my future looks like").

Weighting every selection for the 27 students who answered at least one outlook item shows **78% lean positive, 7% neutral, and 15% chiefly concerned**. We're looking forward to continuing to capture this new outlook data to better understand student sentiment as we work to provide each student with full wrap around support.

Recognizing both this resilience and existing challenges, Boosted Diplomas is deepening post-secondary transition supports by expanding partnerships with Eddy House, RennerVation Foundation, TMCC, Dean's Future Scholars, and WCHSA Independent Living, ensuring today's progress leads to tomorrow's success.

Expanding Our Impact

This year, Boosted Diplomas focused heavily on program and external growth – deepening our existing supports, launching innovative programs, and creating meaningful new partnerships. We've expanded resources, strengthened community connections, and hosted inspiring events that celebrate our students' milestones and futures. Here are some of the exciting ways we've been driving opportunities forward:

Driven to Achieve: A Car Today, A Future Unlocked

For many youth, a lack of reliable transportation prevents access to education, employment, and vital opportunities. Recognizing this barrier, we launched the Driven to Achieve Car Scholarship – a program designed to put car keys into the hands of young adults committed to achieving educational and vocational goals. Each recipient receives a donated, fully serviced vehicle along with financial support for insurance and maintenance. Our first scholarship awarded this year opened powerful new doors of independence and opportunity, marking an inspiring milestone for our pilot.

Driven to Achieve is powered by our community. Local mechanic shops – Pro 1 Automotive – generously donate time to ensure vehicles are safe and road-ready, while community partners and donors help offset fuel, insurance, and registration costs. Lauren Gibbs, whose donation of her beloved first car sparked this initiative, embodies this collaborative spirit, turning a personal milestone into a lasting impact. As we expand this pilot, we continue building partnerships to remove transportation barriers, ensuring that every student has the opportunity and mobility to drive their own future forward.



Expanding Our Impact (continued)

Strengthening Community Partnerships

Recognizing the value of collaboration, Boosted Diplomas actively partners with local nonprofits and programs to provide comprehensive, wrap-around support for our students – ensuring every youth and their support team are connected with existing community resources. With TMCC, we seamlessly connect our students with their Foster Youth Success Initiative, ensuring they're supported through their college journey. We work hand-in-hand with Washoe County Human Services Agency (WCHSA) caseworkers and Independent Living teams, Eddy House, and RennerVation Foundation's Pave Your Way program to coordinate efforts and align goals, eliminating duplicated services.

Additionally, we're actively building partnerships with Communities in Schools and Dean's Future Scholars, emphasizing clear communication and collaborative support. By tapping into Reno/Sparks' rich network of community resources, we're collectively ensuring that every student receives the most effective support possible – without reinventing the wheel.



Celebrating Our Graduates

In alignment with our emphasis on community partnerships, we introduced a new graduation celebration this year to honor and recognize our students' incredible accomplishments – an event many otherwise wouldn't experience. Thanks to the generous support of the Grand Sierra Resort (GSR), who graciously hosted us in their private bowling lounge, we were able to create an unforgettable and financially feasible evening.

Joined by partners from WCHSA, TMCC, and RennerVation Foundation, students spent the night bowling, laughing, and reflecting on their achievements. As the evening

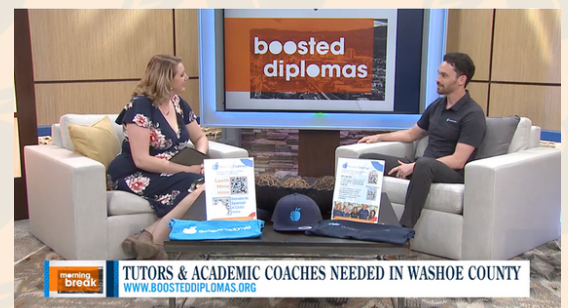
concluded, we overheard one student say, "This was so much fun! I wish tonight would never end." Moments like these reinforce our mission and inspire us to keep celebrating each milestone along our students' journeys. ensuring that every student receives the most effective support possible.



Increasing Community Engagement

This year, Boosted Diplomas focused on raising our profile to build stronger community involvement and attract new supporters. We've proactively shared our story through multiple platforms including two live TV interviews with KOLO 8 and FOX 11, and a live radio segment with Reno Media Group. KOLO 8 further featured two extended stories showcasing our mission and explaining how the community can support our youth.

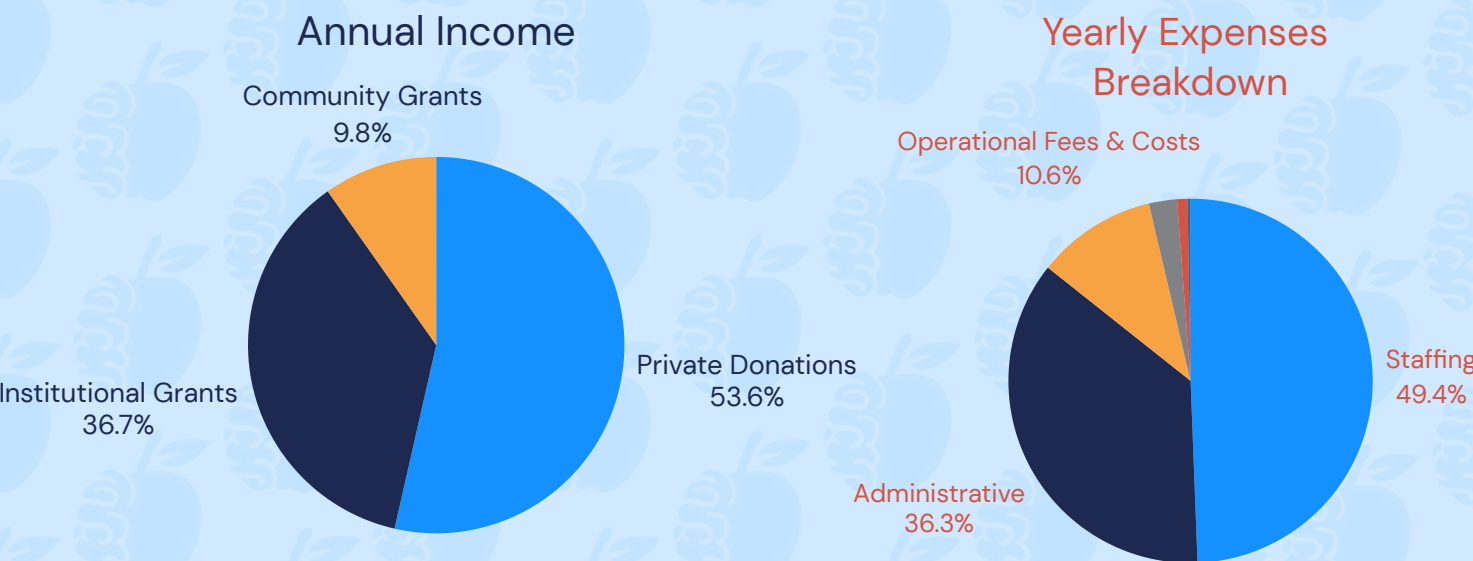
Additionally, we've actively engaged the public through outreach at numerous tabling events, directly connecting with community members and expanding our reach within the Washoe County School District network to grow awareness and deepen our local impact. Moving forward, we'll continue to expand these efforts, ensuring our message reaches even further into the community.



Funding & Financial Overview

In 2024, Boosted Diplomas raised over \$204,500 in grants and private donations, with major support from the Walter S. Johnson Foundation and the Community Foundation of Northern Nevada. Our sold-out Student For A Night fundraiser alone brought in nearly \$90,000 – an exciting milestone in community engagement.

Program expenses totaled approximately \$210,000, with most funding supporting Educational Advocates, Tutors, and Peer Navigators. Moving forward we’re also proud to welcome the Wavedance Fund into our circle of supporters, significantly expanding our capacity for impact this upcoming year and beyond.



Expense Breakdown

Nearly half (49%) of our 2024 spending was dedicated to direct program staffing (Educational Advocates, Tutors, and Peer Navigators) who provide consistent, long-term support to our students. Executive payroll accounted for 36% of total expenses. As a lean nonprofit, our Executive Director takes on a broad range of responsibilities across operations, programming, and development. Based on a data-informed internal estimate, this time is roughly distributed as 70% administrative, 15% fundraising, and 15% direct program support – a reflection of the diverse and hands-on nature of nonprofit leadership at our scale.

The remaining 15% of spending supported core operations, including scheduling staff & tools, software, insurance, fundraising events, and professional services – ensuring the foundation behind our mission remains strong and sustainable.

Challenges & What's Next

While this year brought meaningful growth, we're grounded in the real-world challenges our students and team face which we are actively working towards improving.

Housing instability continues to be a defining barrier. Many students experienced mid-semester placement changes, temporary treatment facility placements, or periods on the run in unsafe environments – all of which disrupt academic focus and consistent engagement.

Data limitations also proved challenging. Of the 109 students served, only 71 had complete grade data. The remaining 38 either pursued alternative credentials (10 students on HiSET or Adult Diploma pathways), lacked consistent portal access due to placement changes, or had limited engagement with Peer Navigators or Educational Advocates.

Caseload demand stretched our team. Educational Advocates each carried up to 15 active students, while Peer Navigators supported as many as 40 tutor-student pairs monthly. These loads underscore the growing need to expand staff while maintaining the personalized support our program is known for.

Transportation access remains a barrier to opportunity. While our Driven to Achieve pilot put one youth behind the wheel, we received several additional inquiries – clear proof that mobility challenges are widespread, not isolated.

Looking ahead, we're focused on two strategic goals:

1. Expand post-secondary readiness and strengthen wraparound support across all grade levels. For older youth, this means increasing college and career prep, deepening partnerships with TMCC, Eddy House, and Dean's Future Scholars, and formalizing a graduation-to-independence track. For students in grades 1–12, we'll expand early academic intervention, coaching, and resilience-building to ensure stability long before graduation.
2. Build internal capacity by improving data systems, adding staff, and developing scalable infrastructure to meet growing demand without sacrificing quality.

These challenges are real, but so is the resilience of our students. With your support, we'll keep showing up, scaling impact, and turning potential into possibility.

A Note of Gratitude

As we close out another impactful year, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who makes Boosted Diplomas possible – our dedicated staff, inspiring students, generous donors, steadfast community partners, and the many stakeholders who believe in this mission. Your trust and support have helped us build something truly meaningful, and I couldn't be more proud of the work we've done together.

This year was especially significant for me personally, as I made the decision to close my private tutoring company, Boosted Learning, after a decade of work. That choice wasn't easy, but it was clear. Boosted Diplomas is where my heart is and it had officially outgrown Boosted Learning. I knew it was time to give this mission my full focus. The needs of foster and at-risk youth in our community are too important to split even a fraction of my attention. Stepping fully into this role has already opened new doors, deepened our impact, and allowed us to dream even bigger for the years ahead.

As we grow and become more rooted in the community, we're more energized than ever for what's to come. We're building something lasting, something that ensures every student has a consistent advocate, access to opportunity, and the belief that their future is worth fighting for.

Thank you for being a part of this journey! We truly appreciate it. To get more involved or to learn more about our graduation celebration, student success stories, Driven to Achieve car scholarship, news features, and more, please visit us at BoostedDiplomas.org.

With sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cooper Richardson', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Cooper Richardson
Executive Director & Co-Founder
Boosted Diplomas

2024/25 SCHOOL YEAR SPONSORS & PARTNERS

Thank you so much to our 2024/25 sponsors and partners who made this year possible. And of course a huge thank you to each and every donor who supported our mission. We appreciate you all more than you know!



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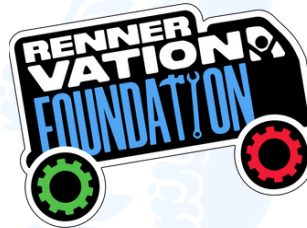
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