Vision
We envision a future where a diverse and accessible private school sector becomes the engine for excellence and innovation in American education.

Mission
The Drexel Fund supports entrepreneurs to launch and scale pioneering private schools focused on underserved communities.
Friends,

2019 marked an important year for The Drexel Fund. As we concluded Fund I and prepared to launch Fund II, we were able to gain valuable perspective on the impact of our work and the ways that our partner school leaders, entrepreneurs and funders are changing lives through their work.

This annual report serves to provide insight and information on The Drexel Fund’s programming, investments, and most importantly: our partners. As we begin Fund II, we wanted to take this opportunity to spotlight these visionaries and their schools.

Our three-part model of Seed, Scale, and Strengthen has allowed us to have a front row seat to the work of some of the nation’s most innovative and impactful education leaders and entrepreneurs. We hope that you enjoy learning more about their work and gain a deeper understanding of why The Drexel Fund continues to find ways to support them.

Thank you for your support,

John Eriksen
Managing Partner & Co-Founder

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Funding schools, school networks, and education entrepreneurs

Launched in 2015, The Drexel Fund is a national non-profit venture philanthropy fund that works to increase the number of available seats in high performing private schools serving low- and middle-income families through new growth and replication. In addition to grant funding, The Drexel Fund provides advisory support to school and network members, plays a key role in capturing and sharing best practices, and connects leaders across the private school sector.

The Drexel Fund invests in any state with publicly funded private school choice. Investments are concentrated in five target states that provide the most advantageous environment for new, high-quality, financially sustainable, private schools — Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Ohio and Wisconsin — and six opportunity states that show promise for school growth depending on the school model — Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina and Oklahoma.

2019 marked the end of Fund I, a $21 million fund to support the creation of 8,000 new high-quality, private school seats. We are now launching Fund II, an unparalleled effort to launch and replicate high performing private schools throughout the country.

Our Model

SEED
We SEED new schools by supporting private school founders in the development and launch of new school models that could eventually grow into networks.

SCALE
We SCALE existing high-quality networks and grow high-quality single-site schools into multi-school networks.

STRENGTHEN
We STRENGTHEN the private school market through information sharing and ecosystem-building activities.
We Support the Creation of Schools and Networks That Are:

► High Quality
  • strong, consistent academic results
  • integral approach to character and/or faith development

► Financially Sustainable
  • no more than 15% of operational budget supported by philanthropy

► Scalable and Replicable
  • committed to replication with plans to overcome the obstacles to growth
Our Current Portfolio

The Drexel Fund intentionally focuses on unique and diverse models which show parents, advocates, and funders what is possible in robust policy environments.

Alabama
Build UP

Florida
Academy Prep

Georgia
Cristo Rey Atlanta

Indiana
Alyssum Montessori School
The Oaks Academy

Louisiana
The Good Shepherd School

Nevada
Cristo Rey St. Viator

North Carolina
Fox Flower Montessori School
Hawthorn Montessori School

Oklahoma
Cristo Rey Oklahoma City

Ohio
Azalea Montessori School
Fugees Academy
Julie Billiart Schools
Seton Education Partners

Wisconsin
Bader Hillel High School
Cristo Rey Milwaukee
HOPE Christian Schools
Kingdom Prep
LUMIN Schools
Academy Prep
Lakeland, Florida

Academy Prep is a developing network of tuition-free private schools exclusively serving low-income students and providing them with a rigorous college-preparatory middle school education and ongoing graduate support that prepares and continues to guide them to be competitive in high caliber high schools and universities. Ninety-seven percent of Academy Prep graduates have gone on to complete high school and more than eighty percent attend college. Academy Prep leadership recently developed a strategic growth plan to scale to five campuses in west-central Florida that will eventually serve more than 630 students. Its third campus opened in fall 2019 in Lakeland, Florida.

Bader Hillel High School
Glendale, Wisconsin

Located just north of Milwaukee, Bader Hillel High School is an extension of Bader Hillel Academy, a K-8 Jewish day school run by Lubavitch of Wisconsin. Launched in 2019, Bader Hillel High School serves families who seek a college preparatory high school education alongside a traditional Jewish education. The school has partnered with the Summit Learning Program, an organization providing 380 schools across the United States with the tools, resources, and training to support a rigorous project-based academic program.
Build UP
Birmingham, Alabama

Build Urban Prosperity (Build UP) is a new school model that launched in fall 2018 in Birmingham, Alabama, that is rethinking high school and how to better support skill development that will lead to pathways in the trades. While mastering high school content, students learn carpentry, drywall, electrical, and plumbing skills through renovating duplexes within Birmingham’s Ensley neighborhood. They also learn how to finance, purchase, sell, and care for a home through in-class exercises and paid internships. When students have earned an Associate Degree through Build UP’s six-year program and have enrolled in a four-year college or have obtained a full-time job, they will obtain ownership of one of the duplexes they helped renovate while in school. Build UP CEO, Mark Martin, participated in Drexel’s Founders Program in 2017-18.

Cristo Rey Network
Atlanta, Las Vegas, Miami, Milwaukee, Oklahoma City

In 1996 Father John Foley launched the first Cristo Rey High School in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago. It implemented a rigorous college preparatory curriculum with an innovative Corporate Work Study Program whereby students work five days each month in an entry-level job at a professional company, with the fee for their work being directed to underwrite tuition costs. The Cristo Rey Network (CRN) was founded in 2001 in order to franchise the model nationally. There are now 37 CRN schools serving more than 13,000 exclusively low-income students nationwide. The Drexel Fund has supported the growth and development of five Cristo Rey schools.
Fugees Academy
Columbus, Ohio

Fugees Family was established in Clarkson, Georgia in 2004 as a year-round soccer camp, after school tutoring program, and academic enrichment camp for refugee children. In 2007, Fugees Family launched Fugees Academy as a middle school that now serves 82 students in grades 6-12 representing more than twenty different homelands. Fugees Academy has now developed a network model allowing it to bring its successful model to refugee students nationwide. In fall 2018, the Fugees Academy network launched a new school in Columbus, Ohio, and has plans to open another in Cleveland in 2020.

HOPE Christian Schools
Milwaukee & Racine, Wisconsin

HOPE Christian Schools is a network of eight Christian college-preparatory schools in Milwaukee and Racine, Wisconsin, serving predominantly low-income students. With a mission “rooted in the 3 Cs – Christ. College. Character,” HOPE Christian Schools began with a single elementary school of 47 children on the northwest side of inner-city Milwaukee in 2002. The HOPE network has since opened a high school and six more K-8th grade private schools in Milwaukee and Racine. The Drexel Fund is supporting HOPE Christian Schools’ growth from six to nine schools, serving more than 4,500 students when fully enrolled.
Julie Billiart School
Akron & Lyndhurst, Ohio

Founded by the Sisters of Notre Dame, Julie Billiart Schools – Lyndhurst campus is a Catholic K-8th grade school that has a more than 60-year history of exclusively teaching children with special needs near Cleveland, Ohio. As a school dedicated to children with unique learning and social needs, Julie Billiart serves a wide spectrum of students. Learning disabilities range from mid- to high-functioning autism, ADD/ADHD, traumatic brain injury, hearing impairment, anxiety, and/or speech and language disorders. Due to enthusiastic demand from families, Julie Billiart developed a network and a plan for growth across Northeastern Ohio. Julie Billiart added a new campus in Akron, Ohio in fall 2017 and is planning a third campus in Cleveland to open in fall 2021.

Kingdom Prep Lutheran High School
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Kingdom Prep Lutheran High School is an all-boys school bordering Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with a mission to “Build a brotherhood in Christ, for lives of purpose.” Launched in August 2018, Kingdom Prep is the first all-boys Lutheran school in America. Kingdom Prep emphasizes team building and spiritual development to build a social and spiritual network that supports students through rigorous academic work and the difficulties of adolescence. Kingdom Prep’s President, Kevin Festerling, participated in Drexel’s Founders Program in 2017-18.
Lutheran Urban Mission Initiative, Inc.
Southeastern Wisconsin

In 2002, Lutheran Urban Mission Initiative, Inc. (LUMIN) was created to address the weakened state of Lutheran education in Milwaukee’s urban community. Since that time, the organization has developed a network structure of strong back-office support, a rigorous and consistent academic program, deep character and spiritual formation through a faith-based education program and a comprehensive set of student and family supports. It has grown to a network of five high performing K-8 schools across southeastern Wisconsin serving more than 1,200 low-income students and their families. The Drexel Fund is supporting LUMIN’s growth to seven schools, serving more than 1,800 students when fully enrolled.

Seton Education Partners
Cincinnati, Ohio

Seton Education Partners was founded in 2009 to expand opportunities for parents in underserved communities to choose an academically excellent, character-rich, and—for those who seek it—vibrantly Catholic education. Seton’s Blended Learning Initiative provides thirteen Catholic schools across nine cities with the training and fundraising required to implement a data-driven blended learning program that helps partners improve academics and stabilize finances. Seton is also the management organization for The Brilla Charter Schools Network, which combine a rigorous college prep academic model with an optional after-school Catholic faith formation program. Seton recently secured a groundbreaking relationship with The Archdiocese of Cincinnati to independently operate a Catholic elementary school campus with full operational autonomy. Romero Academy at Resurrection will launch in fall 2020.
The Good Shepherd School
New Orleans, Louisiana

Based on the Nativity model of education—which calls for a rigorous academic program provided through an extended day and year—The Good Shepherd School opened its doors to thirty children in the fall of 2001, growing to a little over 100 students over 15 years. Given a record of academic and operational success, Good Shepherd School engaged in strategic planning in 2016-17 that called for the original campus to move to a new facility that allowed it to triple in size and launched a network structure to support the replication of its successful school model. The Good Shepherd School relocated to its new facility in fall 2018 and the Good Shepherd Mission Network plans to eventually open a second campus to increase its impact.

The Oaks Academy
Indianapolis, Indiana

A small group of individuals who envisioned an excellent Christ-centered education in the inner city of Indianapolis founded The Oaks Academy in 1998 with 53 students at its initial campus. The founders desired to offer a quality Classical education to students across racial and socioeconomic barriers, which they believed would facilitate revitalization in the lives of students, families, and the community at large. As a result of its successful academic program, The Oaks Academy campuses consistently rate among the top schools of any school type – private, charter or traditional district – in the state of Indiana. Due to growing demand, The Oaks Academy opened a second campus, Brookside, in 2012. In 2015, The Oaks Academy opened its middle school campus. All three campuses serve a deliberately diverse racial and socioeconomic mix of students and will reach more than 1,200 students annually when fully enrolled.
Wildflower Schools
Ashland, N.C., Cincinnati, Ohio, and Ft. Wayne, Ind.

Based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Wildflower Schools is an ecosystem of decentralized teacher-led Montessori micro-schools. Wildflower Montessori started in January 2014 as an early childhood education program created by MIT Media Lab professor Sep Kamvar in partnership with two Montessori veterans. Since then, a growing network of teacher leaders has helped start more than two dozen additional Wildflower schools around the country and in Puerto Rico. Wildflower schools are 1-2 room schools located in shops-fronts embedded in neighborhoods. The small scale of each school is meant to allow teacher-leaders to make day-to-day decisions that respond to the needs of the children and school-wide decisions that express their own vision. The Drexel Fund has supported the launch of four Wildflower Schools.
Founders Program

The Drexel Fund Founders Program is a one-year fellowship that helps outstanding leaders already on the path to launching a school continue to plan and open an innovative and effective private school in one of The Drexel Fund’s target states: Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Through the fellowship, school founders develop their school’s education model and engage in the nuts and bolts of their school launch, including board and budget development, market analysis, facility location, student recruitment and staff hiring. Founders create a plan that will make it possible for their school to achieve top-tier results for children while maintaining a sustainable financial model.

“The Founders Program challenged me to think from lenses that I didn’t currently hold, regarding the many facets of educational leadership. It introduced me to new ways of thinking and planning I didn’t understand before the program. It chummed the waters for me to press the gas pedal on a vision I might not have otherwise pursued.”

Kevin Festerling, 2017-18 Fellow
Meet the 2019-2020 Founders Fellows

Kevin Clark
The Ecclesial Schools | Orlando, Florida

A long-time classical educator, Kevin is a passionate advocate for expanding access to private Christian education. His passion led him to found The Ecclesial Schools Initiative in Orlando, Florida. Kevin’s school model is a Christian K-8 classical program focused on nourishing goodness, truth and beauty in a community of faith and learning. The Ecclesial Schools Initiative is dedicated to creating a network of schools that use a combination of public and private funding to educate children from economically diverse backgrounds. Kevin anticipates partnering closely with congregations that will house the schools. His first campus, St. Alban’s School, will launch in the Orlando area in fall 2020.

Egleevelyn Nuñez-Sancristobal
STARS Global Preparatory | Miami, Florida

Eglee, the Founder and Principal at STARS Autism School in Miami, Florida, is an inspirational leader. Under Eglee’s leadership, STARS Autism School has become a professional development academy for teachers, a family support system, and a safe place where students can learn and achieve. Eglee is building on her success as a school developer to design a new school model that will serve cognitively typical students and features community service and service-learning as critical components of students’ lives at school. STARS Global Preparatory will feature partnerships with local businesses and charitable organizations, service learning, civic responsibility, and global awareness initiatives.

Eric N. Oglesbee
South Bend Montessori High School | South Bend, Indiana

After witnessing the powerful effect of Montessori education in his son’s life, Eric changed careers in 2016 to build the Montessori Consortium of the Great Lakes at Good Shepherd Montessori School in South Bend, Indiana. Eric is now focused on launching South Bend Montessori High School (SBMHS), a mixed-income, urban, 60 student high school using the Montessori method to provide a faith-based education that develops the whole person and which prepares students for the next stage of life, whether that is college, trade school, or something else; at least one-third of the seats within the high school will be for low-income families. The school will engage students in real work that allows each person to discover his or her life calling and develop the necessary dispositions needed to thrive in a 21st-century economy.

Ayana Verdi
Verdi EcoSchool | Melbourne, Florida

In 2016, Ayana established Verdi EcoSchool to provide hands-on educational experiences for children in the historic Eau Gallie Arts District in Melbourne, Florida. Originally created to offer enrichment options for homeschool families, the Verdi EcoSchool quickly grew to become the first K-8 urban farm school in the southeastern United States. Ayana is extending her successful K-8 program and is founding a new high school model that incorporates hands-on, immersive learning through practical, real-world internships. The high school will continue to build on the foundations of the original K-8 that emphasize understanding ecology, community partnerships, and individualized learning.
A Look Back: The Impact of Fund I

Over the last four years, The Drexel Fund has provided funding for the development and implementation of multi-year growth plans for new and existing networks of high-performing schools that serve low- and middle-income students; operational funding gaps at brand new, replicable schools; and innovative entrepreneurs planning their school launch through the Fund’s Founders Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Funded Seats</td>
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<td>Low-income Students Served</td>
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<td>Number of Scaling Networks</td>
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<td>Founders Program Participants</td>
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<td>Number of Funded Schools</td>
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<td>Founders Program Stipends</td>
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<td>Planning Grants Awarded</td>
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<tr>
<td>School and Network Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Founders Program Stipends</td>
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<td>Planning Grants</td>
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<td>Average Investment Per Seat</td>
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<td>Public revenue leveraged annually by Drexel grantees</td>
<td><strong>$51.9M</strong></td>
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<td>New public revenue leveraged annually for every dollar Drexel invests</td>
<td><strong>$5.44</strong></td>
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<td>Sources of new seats:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td><strong>88%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seed/Venture</td>
<td><strong>12%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td><strong>86%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Secular</td>
<td><strong>14%</strong></td>
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<td>Schools with a majority of students meeting/exceeding growth goals:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td><strong>85%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td><strong>69%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Scale: 88%
Seed/Venture: 12%
Faith-based: 86%
Secular: 14%

Reading: 85%
Math: 69%
2019 Impact: A Year of Tremendous Growth

In our fourth year of operation, we invested in 1,969 new seats, or 24.6 percent of the total invested seats since our launch. We supported two leaders in our Founders Program and identified four more through our rigorous screen. We hosted a series of school start-up incubator sessions to support and empower education entrepreneurs in Florida and Wisconsin.

Our base of school partners continued to expand and we built new partnerships, particularly within the faith community. An innovative partnership agreement with an Archdiocese will lead to the creation of a network of independently operated Catholic parish schools. A new independent high school was launched to pair Orthodox Judaic instruction with project-based learning. Finally, we supported the flourishing market of micro-schools to encourage the growth of teacher-led micro-Montessori schools targeted at students of diverse economic backgrounds.

“Build UP would not exist absent Drexel’s commitment to and investment in seeing our vision come to fruition. We’ve all had great ideas that we never acted on, but Drexel enabled me to follow my heart, pursue this dream, and create an educational option for low-income youth that is transformational in every sense of the word.”

Mark Martin, Founder, Build UP
Our Vision for the Future

In June 2019, The Drexel Fund launched our four-year $25M Fund II, which will continue to build on our current investments while emphasizing sourcing and supporting early stage entrepreneurs.

Over the next four years, Drexel will:

- Engage 500 new school entrepreneurs
- Train and support 100 new entrepreneurs and recruit 16 Founders Program participants
- Expand 8 quality private school networks
- Create 40 new private schools serving at least 60% low-income students
- Create 10,000 new school seats
- Leverage $65 million annually in public revenue by our portfolio members
The Drexel Fund

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