Duke Ellington School of the Arts

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

Nurturing and inspiring passion for arts and learning
WHAT’S INSIDE

ELLINGTON FUND
- Letter from Ari Q. Fitzgerald, President
- Ellington Fund SY21-22 Scholarships

DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS PROJECT (DESAP)
- Letter from Amber Golden, President

DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
- Letter from Sandi M. Logan, Principal
- Our Students, School and Results
- Arts as Activism
- Out of the Shadows: MS & TDP
- Students Making an Impact

DONORS FY21-22

BOARD MEMBERS AND LEADERSHIP

STAFF IN MEMORIAM

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Designed by Tyler Hoyle | Jackie Love-Baker

Front Cover: Right Photo: Nina Wright and Ayonlah Carter at Dumbarton Oaks for their Senior MS Internship (Museum Studies, 2022). Left Photo: String Ensemble with Director Kieron Irving.
Dear Ellington Fund Supporters,

Many of you have asked why the Ellington Fund exists. I can answer your question! The Ellington Fund, a self-sustaining charitable organization, was created in 1979 to help fill the substantial gap between DC Public School funding and the cost of a world-class arts education for the District’s underserved youth. It is an expensive investment (despite a contractual obligation, DCPS refuses to pay for Ellington’s arts faculty), but worth it. Just read Principal Logan’s letter and this Annual Report to see the proof.

I do have good news to share. In the past year, we raised over $1.8 million toward closing that gap and in support the arts at Ellington! Our funding came from a variety of sources, including the Casey Endowment Fund, the Denyce Graves (Vocal Music, 1981) Endowment Fund, non-DCPS departments within the District government, private foundations, corporations, and individuals like yourselves. We were fortunate to have held an amazing event this year with Dave Chappelle (Theatre, 1991), Grammy and Emmy-winning comedian and actor. Ellington’s Radical Elite opened the show with a crowd-pleasing performance, followed by video remarks by Corey Hawkins (Theatre, 2006) and Maimouna Youssef “Mumu Fresh” (Vocal Music, 2002) who sang a soulful hymn infused with rap. Jazz legend Wynton Marsalis, who in the past has headlined fund-raising events in support of Ellington, followed later with a tribute to Dave Chappelle, which was followed by a very memorable performance by Chappelle himself. With support from many of you, we raised nearly half a million dollars at the event.

Besides giving a cash grant to the school, the Ellington Fund distributes college scholarships to graduating seniors so they can pursue their dreams of becoming professional artists. Our scholarships are funded by endowments from the family of our co-founder Peggy Cooper Cafritz, the family of Todd Eckhardt, the family of Lauren Michaud (Visual Arts, 1998), and others. This year, we added a new scholarship funded by author and staff writer at The Atlantic, Adam Serwer (Theatre, 2001), which he named for his parents, Daniel and Jacqueline Serwer.

Lastly and most importantly, thank you for your support. Without the generosity of donors like you, we would not be able to invest in what we believe is the most life-changing and impactful school in the nation!

Sincerely,

Ari Q. Fitzgerald
ELLINGTON FUND COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS
$60,000+ IN AWARDS FOR DESA GRADUATING SENIORS

EF Scholarships

— $30,000 —
Cafritz Family

— $3,500 to $5,050 —
Jay Berman
Todd Eckhardt Family
Lauren Michaud Family
Janet B. Rubin
Daniel & Jacquelyn Serwer
Wade Family

— $750 to $2,000 —
Ellington School Spirit
Jim Mayo
Spirit of Ellington

Over the past year or so I wrote a bestseller and helped organize a union, but giving back to the institution that made my life possible is probably the thing I did that I’m most proud of.
—Adam Serwer
(Theatre, 2001)
Dear DESA Fans,

Many of you may know me as the SHADE President/Co-President but today I am writing as the new President of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Project, also known as DESAP. DESAP is a public-private partnership created over 20 years ago to ensure that DESA is able to offer a successful dual arts-academic curriculum that uses the District’s artist and cultural resources to the fullest. The DESAP partners – The George Washington University, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, DC Public Schools, and The Ellington Fund – offer educational and curriculum guidance, student internships, performance venues, financial support, legal advice, advocacy, and more to ensure that DESA is a unique place for talented students to thrive, regardless of their background or ability to pay.

As we near DESA’s 50th Anniversary in 2024, I am looking forward to working with our DESAP partners, school administration and staff, parents, students, alumni, and other Ellington community members to continue the amazing success that DESA has had for nearly 50 years!

Sincerely,

Amber Golden

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Did you know?

DESA had over 75 in-person events in 2021-22.

75+ Master Classes, Performances, Showcases, Concerts, and Exhibits
Dear Ellington Community,

What a year! Our students continued to shine despite the pandemic with performances and exhibits at the White House, Nationals Stadium, National Gallery of Arts, Kennedy Center, and National Airport (find more details throughout this report). Our co-founders, Peggy Cooper-Cafritz (1947-2018) and Mike Malone (1943-2006) would be very proud!

In March, our Vocal Music and Instrumental students performed the lost works of William Dawson, a Black composer, with PostClassical Ensemble. The *Washington Post* wrote that "Ellington School chorus [was] led with finesse and attuned attention by Monique Spells," and went on to praise the "talented (and amply staffed) DESA student orchestra." This year we focused on the theme "**Arts as Activism**" to expand on our objective to uplift conversations around artistic freedom and artistic responsibility. In May we hosted our first "Arts as Activism Festival" and successfully brought together DC cultural leaders, alumni, and our student-artists to discuss LGBTQ+ Rights, Black Lives Matter, Immigration Rights, and Go Go and Gentrification in DC. We are already looking forward to next year’s Festival.

In June, our seniors finished up their four years at Ellington with a **98.5%** graduation rate with all graduating seniors being accepted to college!

We are also proud that **our recent alumnus are using their DESA skills to make an impact on the world.** Amiri Nash (Instrumental Music, 2020) and Sage Dolan-Sandrino (2019) are both starring in episodes of Disney Plus’s Growing Up, a docu-series on the difficulties teens face today. Link to episodes [here](#). We are also excited to watch Jayme Lawson (Theatre, 2014) become the first black Batgirl and star in the recently-released *Woman King*, a historical African epic with Viola Davis.

Thank you for allowing me to share how unique and special Ellington is. We look forward to seeing you at our student performances and exhibits as we continue to reopen with DESA spirit!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

**Sandi M. Logan, M.Ed.**  
Principal and Head of School  
Nurturing and inspiring passion for arts and learning
OUR STUDENTS

ARTISTICALLY TALENTED

- Have diverse backgrounds
  27% are at-risk
  80% are Black or Brown

- Have varying academic abilities
  20% entering 2+ years below grade level

- Come from all wards in the District
  48% reside in underserved wards 5, 7, and 8

DESA's Jazz Combo (Instrumental Music) L to R: José André Montano (2024), Elijah Woodward (2022), Hakeem Bristow (2022), Kevin Kearney (2023), Cyrus Baygents (2023), Edwin Miranda Fuentes (2023), and Rain Graham (2023) with Reginald Cyntje, Director of Jazz Studies
OUR SCHOOL
ARTISTIC & ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

8 ARTS DEPARTMENTS

DANCE
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC
LITERARY MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS
MUSEUM STUDIES
TECHNICAL DESIGN & PRODUCTION
THEATRE
VISUAL ARTS
VOCAL MUSIC

15 HOURS PER WEEK

Our extended-day (8:30am - 4:55pm) college preparatory academic education and pre-professional arts program includes 15+ hours per week of training. Our students earn an official arts endorsement in addition to a DCPS diploma.

Locke Randall (MS, 2025), Dest’n Montague, Christian Pree, Jaquan Williams (LMC, 2025, 2024, 2022 respectively) behind the scenes at LMC’s Showcase: "Intimacy"
OUR RESULTS LIFE-CHANGING

98.5% 2022 Graduation Rate (DCPS average 68%)
100% 2022 College Acceptance Rate
$9 MIL College Scholarships Earned by 2022 Graduates
TOP 15% of U.S. Public High Schools (U.S. News & Report 2022)

A 4-star DCPS school and the ONLY public arts high school in the District

Vocal Music students perform in "ON BROADWAY" (April 2022).
ARTS AS ACTIVISM
Creating the Next Generation of Change-Makers

DESA’s Arts as Activism Festival was a week-long event in May to highlight the significant contributions of artists and cultural leaders LGBTQ+ Rights, GoGo & Gentrification, Black Lives Matter, and Immigrant Rights. The Festival brought together bright minds, cultural leaders, and professional artists to provide students with the framework to rise up and use their voice to help build a stronger society.

Nia Alsop (Vocal Music, 2022) performing RISE UP by Andra Day for AAA Festival.

Princess Brown (LMC, 2024), performing her moving spoken word piece about being BLACK in American society.
Alexander Berko (Visual Arts, 2025) won 1st place for his poster which is now on display at the National Airport along with the posters of 2nd place winner Ana Gonzalez-Galvan (Visual Arts, 2025), 3rd place winner Leah Schenbaum (Visual Arts, 2025), and 5 other DESA students.

Excuse me for having a unique name
Excuse me for speaking my native tongue
Excuse me for not being able to go back to my own country
IT’S YOUR FAULT I DON’T KNOW WHICH ONE

—Zephyr Henderson (LMC, 2025)
OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Museum Studies and Technical Design & Production are the ONLY such programs for high school students in the U.S. MS prepares students to curate exhibits that showcases diverse perspectives while TDP readies students to be the backbone of the entertainment industry. You might not see these artists in the headlines but they are nonetheless POWERFUL.

Technical Design and Production students at creating fashion design.

Next page, Right: Museum Studies students curating an exhibit at DESA under the watchful eye of MS Chair Marta Reid Stewart.
CREATING, CURATING, CONSTRUCTING......
While only in high school, our students are making an impact with their artistic talents and service to the community. In October 2022, Asha Haddox-Rossiter (Vocal Music, 2022), pictured below on ACCESS HOLLYWOOD, was named the National Youth of the Year for the Boys and Girls Clubs. In September 2022, Matthew Crittenden (Dance, 2023) was awarded the Mayor’s Award for Excellence in Performing Arts (right), the youngest winner ever. In May 2022, Jan Mollazade (Visual Arts, 2023) and Alexander Berko (Visual Arts, 2025) pose with PBS and NBC News Anchor Yamiche Alcindor at The Smithsonian Afro-Atlantics Exhibit.

"I was a quiet kid and . . . pretty mellow. I thought I wanted to be a visual artist, and it’s at [DESA] that I realized I’m a musician. I felt safe being who I was, and I was surrounded with materials and an environment that fed my mind and made me want to pursue a creative life.

- Singer Meshell Ndegeocello (Vocal Music, 1986), 2021 Grammy winner

Micah Rashada (Instrumental Music, 2022) was chosen to perform with the U.S. Army Orchestra for the Fort McNair for the Collective Regional Training of the U.S. Army Reserve Trial Defense Service on May 20, 2022.
THANK YOU TO OUR FY21-22 SUPPORTERS!

— $150,000 or more —
Casey Endowment Fund | DC Comm. on the Arts & Humanities

— $50,000 to $100,000 —
Denyce Graves Endowment Fund
PepsiCo, Inc.
Sacks Family Foundation
SK Corporation

— $20,000 to $49,999 —
Anonymous
Bernstein Family Foundation
DC Housing Finance Agency
GEICO
Kimsey Foundation
Mary & Daniel Loughran Foundation
Miner Anderson Family Foundation

—

Susan Ruth Campbell Estate
Dave Chappelle
Adam Serwer

Ari Q. Fitzgerald & Maria Carmona
It is performances like Duke Ellington's that have allowed Twelve Angry Jurors to stand the test of time. Their incredible characterization as individuals and as an ensemble created an unforgettable production that brought to light the importance of integrity and humilty amongst a group of twelve angry strangers. —The Cappies

— $10,000 to $19,999 —

Annette M. & Theodore N. Lerner Family Foundation | Lee’s Flowers and Cards Shop
Nathan Cummings Foundation | Mayor’s Office on LGBTQ Comm. Affairs
Richard Eaton Foundation | S&R Foundation | Saberhagen Family Fund | Saks Fifth Avenue
T-Mobile US, Inc. | The George Washington University | The Gersh Agency

Yousef Al Otaiba & Dima AlFaham | Anna Aurelio | Dr. Eliot & Sally Battle | Cornelius Coakley
Brenda G. Morris and Terek Green | Judith R. Randal | Sylvia Davis White

Photo is of DESA's "12 ANGRY JURORS" Theatre production, which ran from April 7-9, 2022.
We would not be able to offer a world-class arts program without our supporters.
—Ari Q. Fitzgerald

$5,000 TO $9,999
Anthony & Anna L. Carozza Foundation
Community Foundation
DC Office on Cable, TV, Movies & Entertainment
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United Supreme Council Char. Found.
Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts

$1,000 to $4,999
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Brown Advisory Charitable Foundation
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Western High School: Class of 1968

Anonymous
Charles Barber | Laure M. Berlinerblau
Jack Biltis | Wouter Bos
Renata K. Cooper | Linda Y. Cureton
Lawrence Devron | Gary & Eileen Eckhardt
Reina Feny | Bernard Fulton
Carolyn Gorman | David Gottlieb
Sherri Blount Gray
Margaret A. Gripper-Crawford
Sally Hunsberger
Valerie Jordan Jones Jonathan Kahan
Amy Kauffman & Ken Weinstein
Prue Larocca | Eileen Leahy
Philip Lewis | Lisa Munsat | Ron McNeil
Ann O’Hanlon | Jose Ortiz
Paulette Rucker | Susan E. Ruffini
W.A. Russell | Princess W. Taylor
Brian Williams | Davey S. Yarborough
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SUPPORTING DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS SINCE 1979

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Sandi M. Logan, M.Ed, Principal & Head of School
Katitia Baptiste (Jonathan Pitts, IM, 2024), SHADE Co-President

Saquoya Gorham (LMC, 2023), the DC 2021 Poetry Aloud Champion, performed poetry for President Joe Biden and U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona at the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Sept. 2021).
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Kay Twomey, Secretary

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EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
Sandi M. Logan, M.Ed, Principal & Head of School
Katitia Batiste, SHADE Co-President

PARTNERS IN SUPPORTING THE ARTS FOR OVER 20 YEARS
The John F. Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts,
The George Washington University,
Ellington Fund, and DC Public Schools
2021-2022 Williams Opera Prize winner, Alyssa Richardson (Vocal Music, 2022), performed at the 2022 White House Easter Egg Roll and sang the National Anthem at the National Stadium for a Spring game.
LOCAL SCHOOL & TEACHER ADVISORY TEAM
CHAIR & STAFF REP: Crystal Sylvia
TEACHER REPS: Megan Crowley | Thom Woodward (Parent of Elijah, IM, 2022)
PARENT REPS: Melody Knowles, Ph.D (Johnny Knight, IM, 2024)
Stephanie Sexton (Shire, IM, 2025) | Jessica Wodatch (Alice, Theatre, 2025)
COMMUNITY REP: Howard Wilson (Sydney, Vocal Music, 2020)
ELLINGTON FUND: Jackie Love-Baker, Esq., Director of Development
DESA: Sandi M. Logan, M.Ed, Principal & Head of School
Lisa Jones, Assistant Principal | Lee Jackson, Director of Finance

SHADE PARENT LEADERSHIP
Katitia Baptiste (Jonathan Pitts, IM, 2024), Co-Pres.
Doreen Blue (Jacob Allen Hodges, LMC, 2025), Vice Pres. (Advocacy)
Crissy Crittenden (Matthew, Dance, 2023) Vice Pres. (Membership)
Tynika Strayhorn (Morgan, Dance, 2023), Secretary
I didn’t understand what the world looked like and the change I could make through my art until I went to Ellington.”

- Sammy Rabinowitz
(Instrumental Music, 2022)