



# Annual Report 2023 Florida



**100%**  
College-Bound



**8**  
Tuition-Free  
Public Schools



**K-3, 6-7**  
Grades



**2,300**  
Students Served

## “Great Place to Work”

IDEA has been recognized as a “Great Place to Work” and received national rankings on *U.S. News & World Report’s* Top High Schools lists and Jay Mathews Challenge Index High School Rankings formerly known as America’s Most Challenging High Schools published in *The Washington Post*.

# Dear Team & Family,

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with excitement and hope for what is to come. Together, we have navigated unprecedented challenges, broken down barriers, and paved the way for a brighter future for each of our scholars. We are grateful for the resiliency and determination of the organization's students, teachers, leaders, and families.

2023 was a year defined by successes, achievements, and a cohesive effort to live out our mission of providing access to college for ALL children. As we look back, we are reminded of the moments that made us smile, laugh, and cheer and of the many outstanding accomplishments of our schools, including:

- IDEA welcomed over 80,000 students and more than 10,700 staff for the first day of school across eleven regions in 4 states.
- Class of 2023 included 1,961 seniors, 10,812 acceptances to colleges and universities, and \$157 million in grants and scholarships.
- 80% of 2023 seniors are first-generation college students
- 19 IDEA high schools, 55 middle schools, and 47 IDEA Elementary schools are ranked among the best in the nation by U.S. News and World Report

- IDEA has achieved 10,000 alumni and met the college matriculation goal for the 10th consecutive year
- IDEA announced new leadership: Jeff Cottrill, CEO and Superintendent; Cody Grindle, President; Ernesto Cantu, Chief Schools Officer; Marlon Shears, Chief Information Officer; Andrea Fernandez, Area Superintendent; and Dr. Dionel Waters, Area Superintendent

Looking ahead, we are filled with joy and optimism and remain deeply committed to our mission, vision, and values. As a Team & Family, we will continue to build upon our academic successes, student achievements, and innovative learning experiences while nurturing a collaborative and thriving community working toward a single mission of college for all.

Let us embrace the possibilities that lie ahead. Thank you for being a vital part of this community.

Sincerely,

*Jeff Cottrill*  
CEO & Superintendent

*Collin Sewell*  
Chair, Board of Directors

## About IDEA Florida



### IDEA Tampa Bay

IDEA Tampa Bay has nearly doubled its enrollment, currently serving 1,659 students at IDEA Hope and IDEA Victory.



### IDEA Jacksonville

IDEA Jacksonville celebrated two ribbon cutting ceremonies this year—for IDEA Bassett in Fall of 2022 and IDEA River Bluff in Spring of 2023.



**IDEA Victory**  
Founded 2021  
K-3 & 6-7



**IDEA Hope**  
Founded 2021  
K-3 & 6-7



**IDEA Bassett**  
Founded 2022  
K-2 & 6



**IDEA River Bluff**  
Founded 2022  
K-2 & 6



IDEA is a goal-oriented and data-driven family of public charter schools, open to all students in grades K–12. Our vision is to serve as the nation’s leader in preparing students for success in college and beyond.



IDEA is held to the same academic standards as traditional public schools and prioritizes the development of the whole child, including character, emotional and physical health, and wellness.



IDEA teachers partner with students and families every step of the way to ensure students are prepared for success in college and life.

## IDEA Jacksonville

# IDEA Principals are Paving the Way

The pathway to school leadership is not always linear and these leaders share their journey into education, what keeps them inspired, and why they remain committed despite the many challenges facing educators today.



### Why do you believe in college for all?

“College for All opens doors for all scholars. When students are equipped with the skills and knowledge to enter college, their mindset shifts. The question now becomes; Where should I go? What college should I choose? vs. Where can I go? What college will accept me?”

**Patricia Jackson** – Founding Principal,  
IDEA Bassett Academy



### What does IDEA bring to Jacksonville, FL?

“IDEA brings a unique blend of academic excellence, rigor, joy, and community. By providing access to high quality instruction and exposure to college as early as kindergarten, we can change students’ lives by providing families with an unrivaled educational experience. Our impact does not stop with the student but continues by helping to create a passion for civic involvement, community activism, and higher earning potential that directly impact generations to come.”

**Clint Rankin** – Founding Principal,  
IDEA River Bluff Academy



### How did your first years in education influence the kind of leader you are today?

“In my first years in education, I worked in New York City at a 6-12 public school in an underserved community that had 100% accepted to college annually. My principal made sure the school had over 15 AP courses, a mandatory Chess course, robotics clubs, every sport possible, and 1-2 counselors per grade level.

As a new teacher, this left a big impression and has guided me as an IDEA school leader for almost ten years. When I became a founding principal in San Antonio, with IDEA in 2013, I focused on creating a school culture like that of my school in NYC. This led my campus to earning an A-rating from the state. This is the same approach I am taking as we launch IDEA River Bluff.”

**Curtis Lawrence** – Founding Principal,  
IDEA River Bluff College Preparatory



### How has your experience as a teacher shaped your leadership style?

“As a teacher, I did not dream that I would be in the principal’s seat 12 years later. As a teacher on the Northside of Jacksonville, I want my students to have resources, have the academic rigor that they need, and I want my administrators to care like I did. I take this with me. My goal is to SEE and VALUE teachers and students and have some fun while doing it.”

**Katoya McCaskill** – Principal,  
IDEA Bassett College Prep



President Profile

# Cody Grindle

Cody’s nearly 14-year tenure with IDEA started in the classroom as an English teacher at IDEA Mission and evolved into technology roles on IDEA’s Information Services Team. Two years ago, he became IDEA’s first Chief Information Officer, leading the transformational work to turn data into information and empower all areas of IDEA with the tools to create value for our students and communities. Cody’s keen insights and creative solutions have influenced nearly every aspect of IDEA’s operations, from students’ daily attendance to family recruitment and our COVID-19 pandemic response.

Previously, Cody was named one of the Top 30 Technologists, Transformers, & Trailblazers by the Center for Digital Education. Cody earned his B.A. in Political Science, Economics, & German at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, earning distinctions for work abroad in Moscow, Russia, and Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany.

As President, Cody oversees chiefs and teams supporting IDEA’s operations, including Information Technology; Advancement; Human Assets; and Operations. A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Cody currently lives in Austin with his wife, Megan, three dogs, and three chickens.

# 133 IDEA Schools Recognized Among the Healthiest in the Nation

IDEA is excited to announce that 120 schools across the nation are among the top schools nationwide to earn a spot on the Alliance for a Healthier Generation 2022 list of “America’s Healthiest Schools” for their commitment to promoting quality nutrition, regular physical activity, and strong wellness policies. Each school met at least four of the following categories:

- Ensuring Family & Community Engagement
  - Nutrition & Food Access
  - Local School Wellness Policy
  - Health Education
  - Physical Education & Activity
- Social Emotional Health
  - Staff Well-Being
  - Tobacco-Free Schools
  - School Health Services

This distinction is a major accomplishment thanks to IDEA’s Healthy Kids Here program. Launched in 2014, Healthy Kids Here is an initiative aimed at making IDEA one of the healthiest school districts in America with three main areas of focus including food, fitness, and instilling healthy habits for the future. With an emphasis on helping students gain a strong foundation of healthy habits, Healthy Kids Here provides students with healthy meals and snacks each day, five campus farm programs that keep schools supplied with delicious, locally grown, organic produce, physical fitness programs to keep scholars healthy and strong, while educating students and families about the importance of proper hygiene and healthy living. Health Aides lead the Healthy Kids Here work on each campus, partnering with the Child Nutrition Program and PE coaches throughout the year to deliver health programming and education.

For nearly 16 years, Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s annual recognition program has honored schools that are implementing best practices that support children’s learning and development, including meeting or exceeding federal standards for nutritious school meals and providing regular opportunities for students and staff to be active throughout the school day. It remains one of the country’s longest-running, nationwide recognition programs honoring schools for achievements in nutrition, physical activity, and wellness policies.

## IDEA Florida Financial Highlights

### Statement of Financial Position

Assets	
Cash	\$9,027,060
Recievables	\$1,869,655
Investments	--
Pre-paid Items	--
Other	\$27,341,142
Net Property & Equipment	--
Total	\$38,237,857

### Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities	\$14,985,705
Payroll Liabilities	--
Long-term Liabilities	\$22,870,311
Net Assets	\$381,841
Total	\$38,237,857

### Statement of Activities

Revenues	
State Funding	\$50,545,048
Federal Funding	\$528,000
Grants & Gifts	\$181,277
Other	--
Total	\$51,254,325

### Expenses

Instructional & School Leadership	\$42,792,064
Operations	\$8,701,656
Administration	--
Fundraising	--
Debt Service	--
Support & Ancillary Services	--
Total	\$51,493,720