



Read Better Be Better



ANNUAL REPORT

2016-17

We create change by:



Improving
concentration



Encouraging an
active enjoyment
of reading



Helping develop
a deeper
understanding of
what is being read

MISSION

Read Better Be Better helps children improve literacy skills and become better learners.

VISION

A society in which children master the foundational skills necessary to become independent learners.

VALUES

Be Excellent
Be Kind



Letter from the CEO

In the past 3 years, Read Better Be Better has exceeded what we ever thought was possible. It is ultimately humbling to lead an organization whose growth is driven purely by positive impact. The program works, so people want the program. As the leader of the organization, it is a privilege to recognize and record that impact, and to foster opportunities for more people to benefit.

The problem is real, the goal is simple, and the results are stunning.

74% of 4th grade students scoring below the 25th percentile on the National Assessment of Economic Progress are from low-income families. HOWEVER, there is an 89% chance that students who CAN read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade will graduate high school, irrespective of socio-economic status. This shows that if we can help students read at grade level by the end of third grade, we can remove the negative effects of poverty on academic achievement.

All quantifiable data is showing that RBBB has a statistically significant impact on a student's ability to read at grade level: our students outperform their peers by more than 20% on standardized reading tests.

The power is in the program.

My role is simply to enable people to share in this incredible work and reap the reward: RBBB offers middle schoolers the opportunity to change lives through literacy and then invites the whole community to share and celebrate that success. With the critical nature of the problem, the satisfaction of success is all the more infectious.

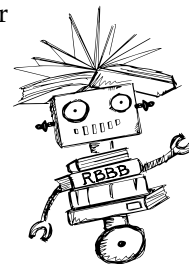
I believe that it is more important than ever for our communities to recognize and celebrate quality public education as the cornerstone of social justice. Our exceptional team are encouraged and supported to promote our values beyond the classroom. A great source of pride has been our ability to empower passionate and informed education advocates. Together, we can commit to excellence.

When I am out in the community, I am so lucky to receive feedback on the impact of Read Better Be Better beyond the Littles and Bigs: from the students' family members who are inspired by their children to read more; to Site Leaders whose paths as educators are informed by their involvement; to volunteers who apply leadership skills and knowledge learned with RBBB in their workplace or as education advocates in their community. On the following pages, we have tried to capture all this and communicate not only the outcomes of our focused mission on 3rd grade reading in the schools, but also the broader impact of our values on the community.

Be Excellent, Be Kind.

"Choice is at the crux of our mission. Whatever judgements we place on what we call 'success', I think we have to understand the privilege of choice. It's not my position to talk about what you want to do with the rest of your life, but let's give you the chance to make that choice yourself ... to be whoever you want to be."

-Sophie Etchart, Founder & CEO, RBBB



Governing Board



Sophie Etchart, Founder/CEO, Read Better Be Better

Sophie was raised and educated in England. She studied at the University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, after which she joined a financial services agency specializing in strategic HR consulting. In 2009 Sophie designed and executed the Private Equity Foundation / Deutsche Bank Leadership Program: a series of instructional workshops and networking events in partnership with INSEAD business school, France. After spending a year on loan to the Private Equity Foundation, Sophie committed to a full transition into the non-profit sector.

Sophie moved to Peru in 2010 to run the education program at SKIP, an international development organization. There, she managed a team of 25 staff and volunteers working with 330 young people aged 3-17. The key component of the program was a comprehension curriculum designed to complement the national public schooling system. This program received a commendation during a site visit by professional contacts at the Bill Gates Foundation.

Sophie met her husband, an Arizona native, in Peru and moved to Phoenix in 2012. She spent 2 years managing the JA BizTown® team at Junior Achievement, with great success. However, this experience lead Sophie to identify a need for basic reading comprehension support. The JA BizTown® program serves over 20,000 students per year, an alarming number of whom had neither the focus nor the foundational skills to obtain the most value from the experience. When the “Move On When Reading” law was announced, she decided that the timing was critical to support those 3rd graders at risk of being kept behind.



Karen J. Ortiz, Ph.D. Vice President & Program Director of Early Childhood Education, Helios Education Foundation

With more than 25 years of experience in early childhood education, Dr. Ortiz's work revolves around deepening early childhood systems to promote literacy for children birth through age eight. In addition to practical experience within school districts and classroom settings, she served as an early childhood policy advisor to Arizona's Governor Janet Napolitano and was Director of the State Board on School Readiness. Dr. Ortiz has helped lead statewide and national initiatives impacting children and their families. She is a graduate of Arizona State University and holds Doctoral and Master degrees in Curriculum and Instruction, Early Childhood Education.



Phong Pham, VP Municipal Finance RBC Capital Markets

Phong Pham is a Vice President at RBC Capital Markets (RBCCM). Phong has more than 19 years of combined Accounting and Finance experience and currently serves as a senior member of RBCCM's K-12 Education and Charter School Finance Group. In his role at RBCCM, Phong has been involved in facilities financing projects totaling over \$2.5 billion for Arizona K-12 school districts and over \$900 million of charter school facilities financings in Arizona, California, Nevada and Indiana. In addition, Phong has also been involved in public financing projects for various state and local governmental entities in Arizona and the southwest. Phong received his BBA in Accounting from Grand Valley State University and is a former Certified Public Accountant with Deloitte & Touche and the Michigan Office of the Auditor General. He currently holds Series 7, 50, 52, and 63 securities licenses.



Jenny Volpe, Executive Director, Make Way for Books

Jenny is Executive Director of Make Way for Books, a Tucson-based nonprofit organization that serves 31,000 children, parents, and educators each year. Jenny is passionate about helping children gain access to quality educational opportunities and believes in the power of literacy to change lives. Jenny holds a bachelor of arts from The University of Chicago and a master's in education from the Johns Hopkins University. Jenny began her educational career as a Teach For America teacher and taught elementary school for five years before entering the educational publishing world and nonprofit sectors.

Program Overview



The Problem

Students who do not read proficiently by 3rd grade are **4X less likely to graduate high school** -Annie E. Casey Foundation

85% of 3rd graders from AZ low-income families are not proficient readers - NAEP

AZ ranks 48th in the US for PreK-12 education.
-US News and World Report



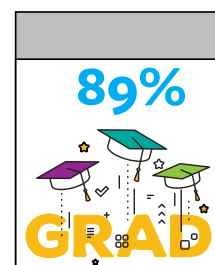
Our Solution

Read Better Be Better is the only nonprofit organization in Arizona that engages youth leaders to help solve the state's literacy crisis.

We train 6-8th grade students to implement a highly structured after-school curriculum for 3rd grade students considered to be at risk of being retained, in compliance with the Arizona State Literacy Plan.

3rd Graders + 8th Graders | 2 x Per Week | 90 Minutes Per Session

GOOD NEWS!



89% of students reading at grade level by the end of 4th grade will graduate high school irrespective of family income.



Traction and Roadmap

Gathered Pilot Data From
64 Students



2015

District-Wide Expansion
1,200 Students



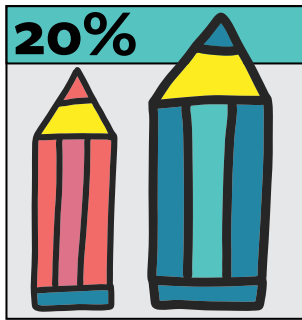
2017

**10 School Districts
6,800 Students**

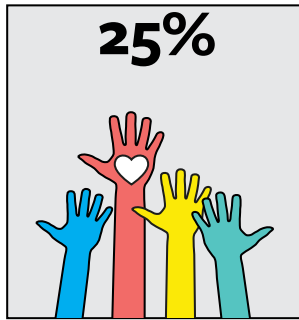


2021

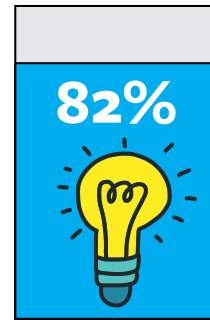
2016-17 Program Highlights



RBBB participants **outperform** non-participating 3rd grade students by **over 20%** on standardized comprehension tests.



25% of 8th grade reading leaders said they **had never volunteered for anything before and would volunteer again** in the future.



82% of 3rd Graders agree or strongly agree they **understand what they read better** than they could before participating in RBBB.

"What a dynamic program that makes a difference in so many ways! The student engagement demonstrated and obvious pride on all of the participants was evident. This is on top of growth in reading abilities- impressive!!"
- Dr. Betsy Hargrove,
Superintendent, Avondale ESD

Fun Facts

Total # Schools



15

Total # Students



625

Total # Stories Read



4,037

Average Attendance



79%

Total Middle School Volunteer Hours

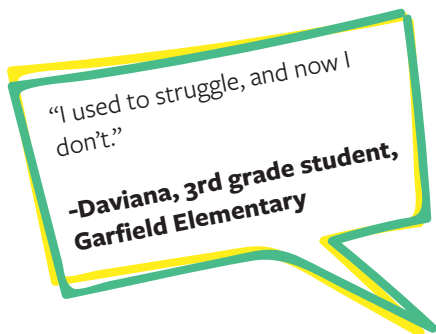


4,522

Sticky Notes



34,403



Julie Robbins, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker at Whittier Elementary School, revealed in an interview with RBBB, "For a child, being a grade-level reader is really important to their social and emotional development," she says. "If a child is behind, we find that they don't want to engage, they don't want to read out loud, and sometimes even their peer connections are affected."

But through Read Better Be Better, she has seen a metamorphosis in students when grade level reading is achieved. They reconnect with not only their academic pursuits but their social lives as well.

"It's amazing when you see a child get on grade level—to see their confidence and their self-esteem build," she says. "They volunteer, they want to speak, and they want to be heard. And that transfers beyond the classroom to the playground, to special areas, and to wanting to participate in after-school activities. They have such social and emotional growth that's linked to their academic achievement."



"Reading Learners in RBBB get the opportunity to work with an older Reading Leader, building a relationship, while improving upon their reading comprehension skills." -Kelsey Pinckney, Program Coordinator, RBBB

"I would hope, above all else, when we talk about children as readers, we think about them loving books before we think about anything else." -Patty Tate, former Superintendent, Osborn ESD

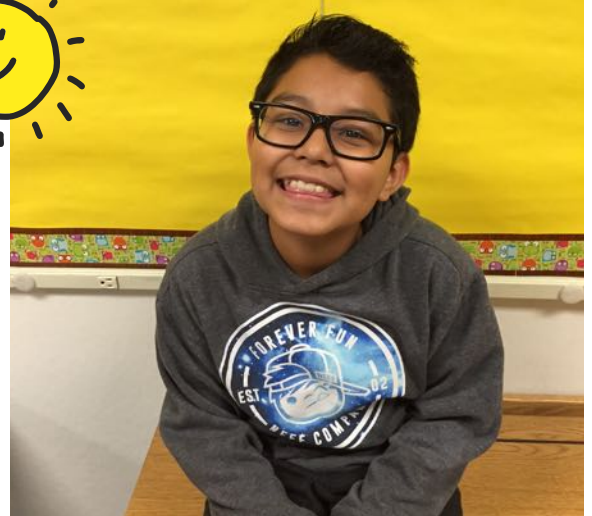


91% of 3rd graders indicate they like coming to Read Better Be Better.



"I didn't just help my little at reading better ... on my tests I used to get 70-75%, but now I get 89 - 98%".

- Vanessa, 7th grade Reading Leader



8th grade Reading Leaders are the backbone of RBBB programming, which is why they become heroes when they make the choice to volunteer their time after school twice a week. Each 3rd grade partner needs their help to reach their full potential.

In helping their partner, Reading Leaders also gain valuable academic and life skills, helping them reach their own potential, as well. Reading Leaders are encouraged to take ownership of their partnership with their Reading Learner and gain an understanding of social responsibility, learning first-hand how their choices affect the people in their community.

RBBB helps middle-schoolers gain confidence in the classroom as well as with peers as they realize just how much they can impact a young life. Your student will also receive a certificate with the number of volunteer hours they logged during their time with RBBB. They also have the opportunity to request a personalized recommendation letter to help them prepare for their future.





School Climate and Culture

"The self-esteem piece, we feel, is a big key to keep a child from not only bullying but becoming a victim of bullying. We've seen that as the students' reading skills develop, they also develop those assertiveness skills that aid the whole child in their development. And well-adjusted kids make for a healthier, happier school culture."

-Julie Robbins, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Whittier Elementary

"There is a stronger sense of community on campus – all the time we hear 'there's my little!' or 'that's my big!'" -Clare Okyere, Principal, Whittier Elementary

Blog Post: [CLICK HERE](#) to read "How Workforce Development Will Help Reduce Arizona's Teacher Shortage."

"There is a stronger sense of community on campus – all the time we hear 'there's my little!' or 'that's my big!'"
- Clare Okyere, Principal
Phoenix Elementary School District

Workforce Development

"Site Leaders have the opportunity to have a feet-on-the-ground, roll-up-your-sleeves experience with children in a safe space. They get the interaction with the children and get to see the impact of the program in very real terms. It hooks them to see the relationship and they think, 'Oh, I had a hand in that. I got to make that happen for these children.' I hope that inspires them."

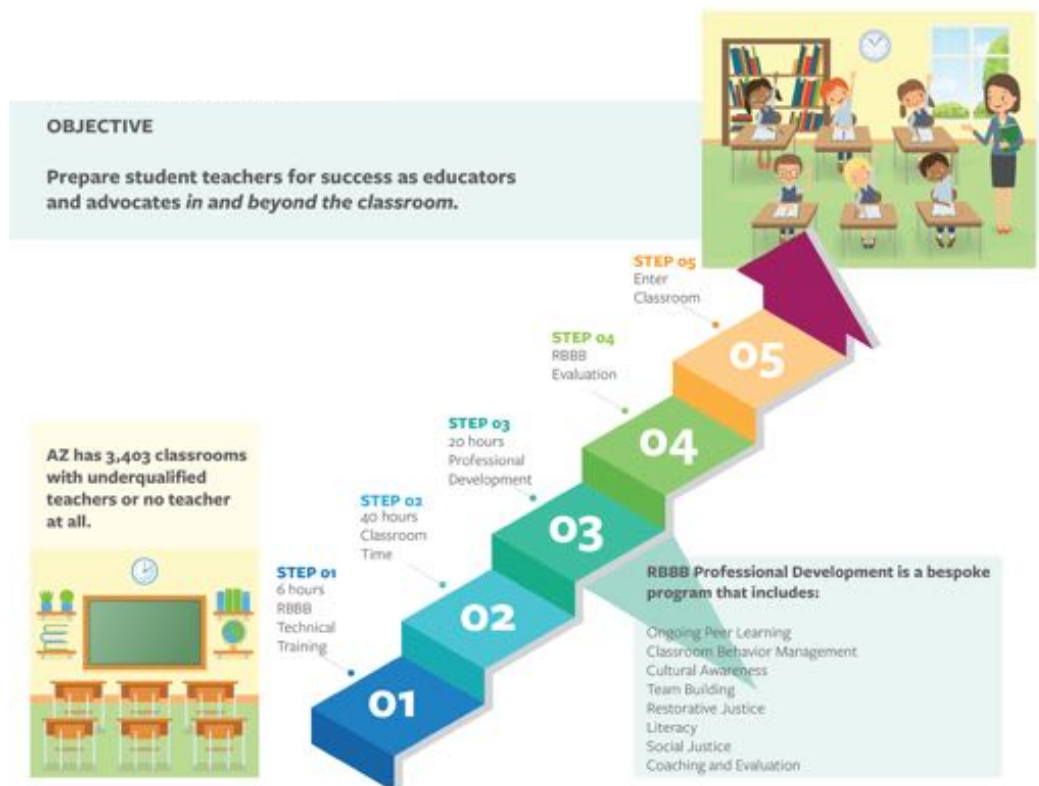
-Patty Tate, former superintendent Osborn ESD

"RBBB has pushed my drive to become a teacher and help those students who are struggling." -Mandy Christiansen, Site Leader with RBBB and Elementary Education student at GCU

"RBBB is contributing to the development of school-aged children as educators, by offering hands-on experience to middle-grade students as Reading Leaders. RBBB is able to be an agent for change; providing the opportunity and encouraging students to create a future pipeline of diverse teachers within their own community." -Brooke Bundrick, Excerpt from Essay 'Grow your Own'

"Read Better Be Better has been part of the reason I've thought about teaching because of being able to work with kids; I've learned new skills to teach them what they like in good ways and talk to them one-on-one." -Ariza, Reading Leader, Whittier Elementary

"Coming to teach and help really brightens my day."
Lazaro, 6th Grade Big, Sunset Elementary

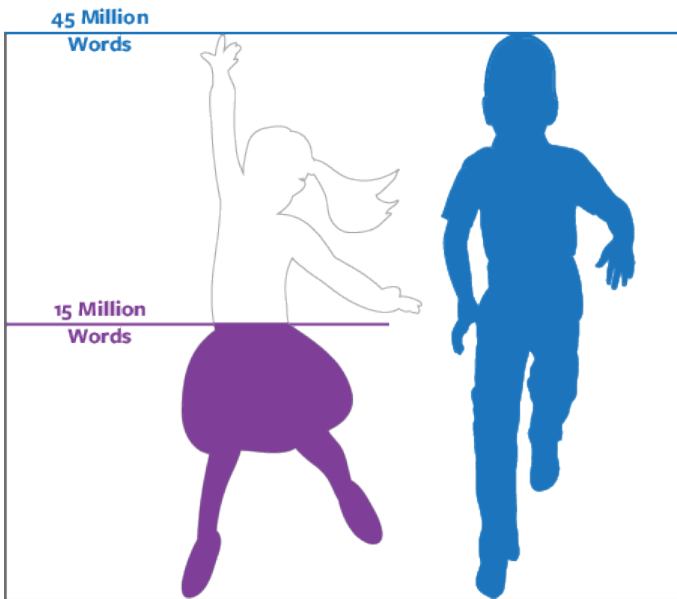


Empowering Families

The Great Divide

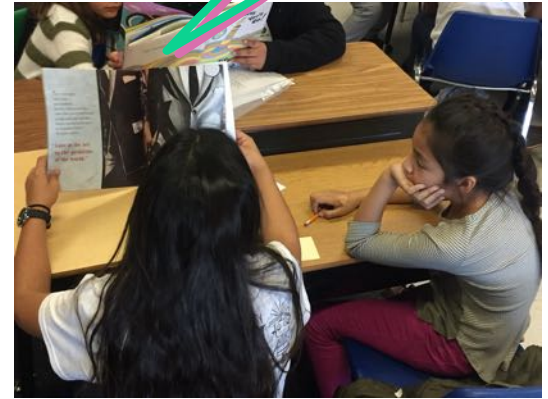
Children born into low-income families hear 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers.

[CLICK HERE to listen to NPR Reporting on the Word Gap](#)



"The results are tangible as you walk around the classroom."

- Jill Rosztoczy
RBBB Site Leader



"I've definitely learned skills from RBBB that I use in my daily life. I have a baby cousin—he's in 2nd grade—and when I talk to him and when he's reading, he sometimes neglects reading. He doesn't want to read but I try to find the fun in it to make him want to read better." -Ariza, Reading Leader, Whittier Elementary

Webinar: [CLICK HERE](#) to listen to "How Business/ Non-Profit Partnerships Make Cents" featuring Sophie from RBBB and Allison Van Dyke, Director of Marketing, Goodmans Interior Structures.

Empowering Companies

The investment in ensuring that students are reading at grade level is important on a statewide level because of its effect on workforce development.

"Income inequality and decreased workplace productivity come about because an adult has difficulty understanding instructions or reading directions or is trying to manage by not highlighting that they're a struggling reader. This can, in many ways, prevent them from creating or accessing a career ladder or for producing more output for the employer they're working for. Read Better Be Better offers a program that not only brings students' reading up to grade level but also creates lifelong learners and a love of reading. -Karen Ortiz, VP, Early Grades Success Initiatives, Helios and Governing Board Member, RBBB

"RBBB has given me management and leadership skills that I use daily." -Rachel Aja, Site Leader, RBBB and Community Volunteer, Cox Communications

"On the surface, we're a furniture company but we want tangible ways that we can make improvements in our community. We want our employees to be a part of something bigger than themselves." -Adam Goodman, CEO, Goodmans Interior Structures

"This position has helped me prepare for future job positions by showing me more diverse situations" -Andrina, Site Leader

Empowering Communities

“I speak out now. I engage educators. I call my senators to explain why they should prioritize education.... I see how solving this crisis will create better communities.”

-Kelsey Pinckney, Program Coordinator, RBBB and Community Advocacy/Social Policy Student at ASU

“In my politically-related position in government and regulatory affairs, RBBB has influenced the way I want to change my community.”

-Rachel Aja, Site Leader, RBBB and Community Volunteer, Government and Regulatory Affairs Manager, Cox Communications

“The program helps children read and I can’t think of anything better that impacts an entire community than having literate people who then are able to make better decisions for themselves, for their families, for their community, for their state, and for the nation,” *-Patty Tate, former Superintendent Osborn ESD*



“Having been a struggling reader myself, I knew the impact a program like this could make on a community and after my first day of training, I knew RBBB was my home.” *-Josselyn, former RBBB District Leader*

“Working with RBBB has shown me that I can make a positive impact in my community.”

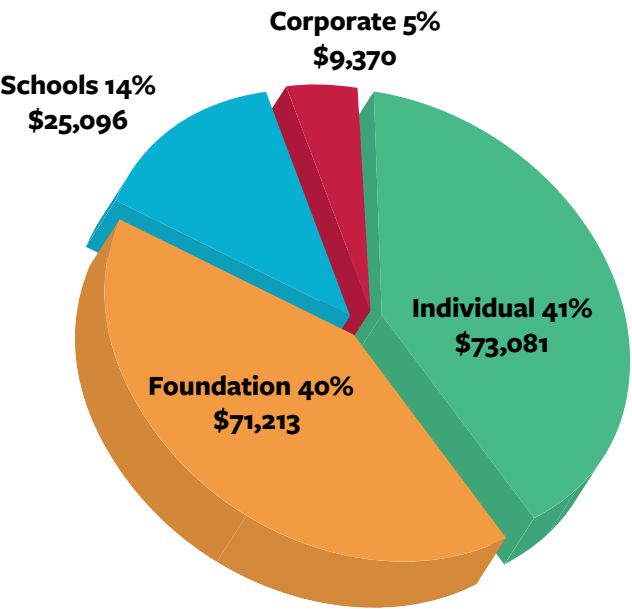
-Fabiola Espinoza, Site Leader RBBB

“I am more aware of the needs of those around me and am more comfortable as a mentor and leader.” *-Tamara Tirado, Elementary School Librarian and RBBB Volunteer*

Statement of Financial Position

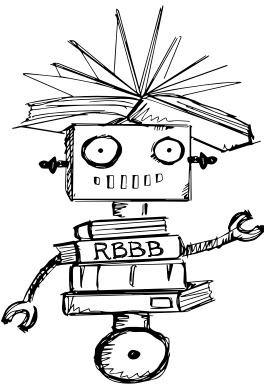
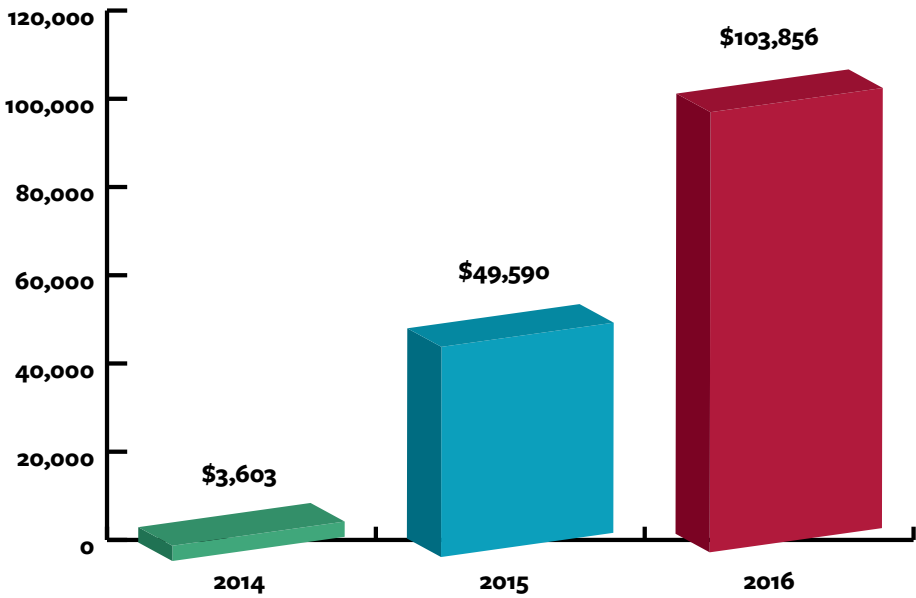
GOAL: Generate 40% of revenue from school contributions by 2020-21 school year

“RBBB is one of the most impressive non-profits I’ve had the privilege of partnering with while at AzCASE.”
- **Melanie McClintock**
Former Executive Director
Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence



Income By Funding Source
TOTAL INCOME
\$178,760

Growth Over Time



Supporters

GOAL: Be recognized among the communities we serve for what we do

Our deepest gratitude to the support and dedication of our community partners, tireless team, and our brilliant volunteers. Thank you for Being Better.



theSteeleFoundation





Read Better Be Better



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