



OUR SISTERS' SCHOOL
Annual Report | 2022

Class of 2011 - Class of 2022

Public Secondary Schools

Bristol County Agricultural High School
 City on a Hill Charter School*
 Dartmouth High School
 Fairhaven High School
 Greater New Bedford Regional
 Vocational-Technical High School
 JobCorps: Chicopee Campus
 New Bedford High School**
 Old Rochester Regional High School
 Taunton High School
 Westport High School

Colleges and Universities

Amherst College
 Barry University
 Bates College
 Bennington College
 Boston College
 Boston University
 Brandeis University
 Bridgewater State University
 Bristol Community College
 Brown University
 Bunker Hill Community College
 California State University, Fullerton
 Cape Cod Community College
 Clark University
 Curry College
 Dean College
 Emmanuel College
 Endicott College
 Fashion Institute of Technology
 Fisher College
 Framingham State University
 Franciscan University of Steubenville
 Lasell University
 Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and
 Health Sciences
 Mt. Ida College*
 New England Institute of Technology
 Nichols College
 Northeastern University
 Pennsylvania State University
 Pomona College
 Roger Williams University
 Ross University
 Salem State University
 Salve Regina University
 Spelman College

Stonehill College
 Suffolk University
 UMass Amherst
 UMass Boston
 UMass Dartmouth
 University of New Hampshire
 University of Pittsburgh
 University of Southern California
 University of Tampa
 Wagner College
 Wentworth Institute of Technology
 Yale University

* Now closed
 ** Includes the Academy of Honors at
 New Bedford High School

Independent Secondary Schools

Bishop Stang High School
 Dana Hall School
 Eagle Rock School
 Falmouth Academy
 The Hotchkiss School
 Lincoln School
 Loomis Chaffee School
 Marianapolis Preparatory School
 Masters Regional Academy*
 Milton Academy
 Noble and Greenough School
 Phillips Academy Andover
 Providence Country Day School
 Rosary High School
 St. Andrew's School
 St. George's School
 Tabor Academy
 Westover School
 The Wheeler School



Left to right: Alison Coolidge Boreiko, Sarah Herman, Martha Sullivan

OSS is now in its 15th year, and it's fascinating to think back to the world as it was in 2008. The global financial crisis and Barack Obama's election were the most memorable events, but other milestones may better mark time. For example, the show *Breaking Bad* premiered that year. Lady Gaga's debut album came out. George Carlin, Paul Newman, and Eartha Kitt died. Michael Phelps, Usain Bolt, and Danica Patrick broke records. WALL-E was a summer hit. Google launched the first Android device. And the pioneer OSS graduating class was born.

OSS is now a fixture in our community. Folks easily recognize our students and their sky-blue knit shirts. They see the confident smiles, kindness, and determination. They're moved by the girls' artistry and achievements. They hear about the paths our graduates (163 and counting) are carving with passion and purpose.

School visitors and volunteers regularly tell us how they wish they'd attended a school like OSS. "Magic" is the word they often use, and we always smile and nod when they do. It is magic, though not in a "waving the wand" type of way. It's more like the magic of a symphony, where the natural talent, hard work, and extreme focus of many individuals are aligned and united, creating - or perhaps unleashing - something amazing.

In this annual report, we take a look at one of the core principles upon which OSS was founded - the benefit and impact of an all-girls education, and how it unleashes power and potential, one student at a time.

As always, we thank you deeply for making this important work possible.

Sincerely,

Sarah Herman

Sarah Herman
 Head of School

Alison R. Coolidge

Alison Coolidge Boreiko
 Co-president
 Board of Trustees

Martha Sullivan

Martha Sullivan
 Co-president
 Board of Trustees



Alison Coolidge Boreiko, an OSS trustee for more than a decade, has spent much of that time serving as the board's co-president. With the 2022-23 school year, Alison turns over that role to long-time educator and former Dartmouth High School principal, Kerry Lynch. Alison, who remains on the board, has been a talented and tireless worker on the School's behalf since its earliest days. The OSS board, staff, and community appreciate and thank Alison for her countless, and continuing, contributions to the School's success.



Hasiba and Ms. Wohl, Academic Dean

The Freedom to Learn

In the fall of 2021, after the Taliban reclaimed control of Afghanistan, only boys were allowed to return to school. At the same time, girls at OSS settled into their new school year. Our seventh- and eighth-grade humanities students studied immigration and refugees, including the events in Afghanistan. When they learned that five Afghani refugee families planned to resettle in our area, the students sent welcome cards via local support organizations.

At one of those organizations, OSS was already top of mind. When Helena DaSilva Hughes, president of the Immigrants' Assistance Center, met 15-year-old Hasiba and her Afghani family, she immediately thought of Our Sisters' School. Few might have made a connection between OSS and a non-English-speaking high-school student. Yet for Helena, one of the School's founding trustees, it couldn't have been more obvious. *"I knew how great it would be for her to have the unique support that OSS provides. And, culturally, I knew her family would embrace the idea of an all-girls school."* Helena suggested we host Hasiba for the rest of the school year, helping her acclimate before her transition to public school. Knowing we could provide Hasiba a safe, supportive experience and benefit our students as well, we agreed.

In January, we welcomed Hasiba with a beautiful orientation crafted by our teachers and students. They created instructional materials to help her learn and always made sure she was included during lunch and free times. A student family assisted with transportation and OSS volunteers Gale Schultz and Pam Cole leveraged translation apps, puzzles, and games to successfully connect and instruct.

Just a month later, Hasiba's family decided to move to a larger Islamic community in California. Although her final day at OSS was emotional, Hasiba's time with us was enlightening and uplifting for all. Before she left, Hasiba captured her thoughts on paper in her native language. Translated, it reads in part: *"A teacher is a light on the path of every student. With you, I have learned how to thrive. Without you, I would never be doing all that I am now able to do. I will always be thankful."*

We, too, are thankful to have known Hasiba. We were inspired by her positivity, resilience, love of learning, and her unique appreciation for girls' education.



The Power of an All-Girls Education

"It's a privilege to be in a school that cares so much about uplifting young women...I get to dream big and dream alongside my students, so not only do I get to work to uplift girls, I get to do it in a way that allows them to take space and honor themselves."

Ms. Eugenio, Creativity Director,
Art & STEAM Instructor

"OSS has made me more confident... not just personally but academically too...I'm comfortable in my own self and in my own feelings, like honoring my own emotions."

Allison '23

"It definitely gave me more confidence in myself because of all the girls around me, they show me what I'm actually capable of.."

Amari '25

There's a fascinating debate among scientists about differences in male and female brains. While most accept that certain skills, learning styles, and traits often cluster by gender, they disagree on the relative contributions of nature and nurture. Similarly, there's debate over gender-segregated education. Studies show that girls and boys can better focus on academics without co-ed distraction. They are also shown to benefit from more interaction with same-sex role models and less exposure to gender stereotypes. However, some advocates worry that gender-segregation dodges educational equity rather than tackles it.

These are fair questions that deserve to be answered. Until they are, however, we're left with the facts of our current reality: *single-sex schools offer profound advantages, especially to girls.*

Self-Confidence vs. Self-Consciousness

Compared to their co-educated peers, graduates of all-girls schools are more likely to perform better academically, have stronger study habits, and score higher on measures of academic habits of mind. They're more likely to show interest in pursuing math, science or technology, have higher levels of science self-confidence, and consider themselves critical thinkers. Girls' school graduates are also more likely to demonstrate civic engagement and involvement in political activities.

"When girls have a safe, stimulating environment - especially one that's curated to support them - they can more fully focus, learn, and grow," explains OSS Head of School Sarah Herman.

At OSS, that curation begins before classes even start. New students attend a Community Core Days retreat where they get to know each other, practice working and learning together, and explore the School's core values and social-emotional learning curriculum.

"Academic achievement can't be separated from motivation and resilience," Ms. Herman says. *"And success requires teamwork, leadership, and planning. Our students develop these skills right alongside their academics."*

Those who know OSS know how deeply we embed social emotional learning in everything we do. They also know how much our graduates appreciate and rely on these skills. Yet not everyone knows that middle school is a critical time to develop these competencies.

The Precipice of Change

Studies have shown that puberty, like infancy, is a period of unusually high brain plasticity. During this time, our experiences shape our unique cortical circuitry in ways that will last a lifetime. Puberty is also the time when our emotional, sensation-seeking, and peer-influenced limbic system kicks into high gear. It fills us with conflict, urging us to become something new while still fitting in; compelling us to re-imagine who we are and will become. Yet this happens more than a decade before we acquire the judgment and impulse control of a mature prefrontal cortex. This timing mismatch may be nature's way of helping us fully adapt to our surroundings.

"It's a time of promise and peril," Ms. Herman says, *"It's why we want girls to be in a safe, supportive space, belong to an inspiring, encouraging community, and be focused on learning how to make their way in this world."*

Students' days at OSS are filled with experiences intentionally designed to fulfill their need to explore, experiment, partner, and grow - all in the context of academic and personal challenge. These experiences impart and reinforce the mindsets, skills, habits, and tools that will help girls lead healthy, positive, self-defined lives.

"My journey at OSS was like a marathon. You know it'll be long, but then you show up and you're like 'Oh, this is harder than I thought!' Now I'm finishing the final sprint, and as a prize I am handed...myself. The version I wanted to be all along. OSS is like a gem-making machine... and I'm coming out like a diamond!"

Anyis Mendes '22



OSS students with Ms. Eugenio, Creativity Director, Art & STEAM Instructor



The Proof of the Pudding

Recently, during the recording of a student podcast, several OSS students discussed what it's like to attend an all-girls school. Their consensus was that it's *"weird but beneficial."* For instance, they agreed, it's weird that you're with the same small group of girls all day, every day, through all four years of school. The beneficial part? You learn how to connect and co-exist, even with people you wouldn't have chosen as friends. The podcasters also expressed agreement and appreciation that the School focuses on *"getting out of your own comfort zone"* rather than the more typical *"I'm better than you"* type of competition.

Another area of conversation initially surprised us. Since our earliest days, graduates have largely shared

a common view of how their time at OSS impacted them. Some would say they found their voice or their power, while others would talk about gaining strength or losing insecurity. The theme has always been consistent: *my time at OSS gave me confidence.* Our podcasters, however, were having none of that! When asked whether OSS helped her gain confidence, one girl answered, *"I was born with it!"*

You know what? We don't disagree. And it is our hope and our mission that such confidence feels so inherent and natural, that not one of our students can even imagine herself without it.

The Girls' School Advantage

Research* reveals that girls' school students are more likely to exhibit:

- Greater Cultural Competency
- Stronger Community Involvement
- Increased Civic and Political Engagement
- Stronger Voices
- Stronger Leadership Skills
- More Self-Confidence
- Higher Academic Achievement
- Greater Interest and Confidence in STEM
- Higher Aspirations
- Preparation for the Real World

*International Coalition of Girls' Schools

Lessons From History

In 1873, Harvard Medical School professor Edmund H. Clarke published Sex in Education: Or, A Fair Chance for the Girls. Dr. Clarke asserted that subjecting girls to the same rigorous scholarship as boys degraded their health and fertility. After 17 printings, his popular publication was finally discredited by research from what is now the American Association for University Women.

AAUW released another landmark study in the 1990s, over a century later. It found that teachers were unconsciously giving girls less attention, less praise,

less effective feedback, and less detailed instruction than boys, with African American girls receiving the least of all. It also showed girls' confidence and sense of agency deteriorating through their middle- and high-school years.

The decades since have seen improvements. However, implicit bias about gender, race, and class remains strong and influential. At OSS, we know that constant reflection and skilled, deliberate effort are essential to displacing limiting cultural beliefs that continue to stifle many students' potential.

Volunteers

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers and our students' families, for the gift of your valuable time and efforts.

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- Governance Committee

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- Marcy Wintrub

“STEAM has helped me grow as a person and helps me understand real world problems better. It shows me that there is a way to make things better. I just think it's amazing that I get to practice skills in middle school that will let me make a difference in the future. STEAM to me is more than building, it is something that could build a better future for me and everyone after me.”

Daishaly '23



Gifts-in-Kind

OSS is grateful for the many forms of donations that help support our students and the School.

- Susan Alves
- Christine Ash
- Attorney General's Office
Southeastern MA
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- Victoria Pope & Joel Brenner
- Rainonoi's Pizza



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- Bridgewater State University
- Buttonwood Park Zoological
Society
- Buy Black NB
- Carabiner's Climbing and Fitness
- The Communal Space
- Community Boating Center
- Dartmouth Cultural Council
- DATMA (Design Art Technology
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- EeBoo
- Entrepreneurship for All
- FIRST LEGO League
- Green Light for Girls
- International Coalition of Girls'
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(Newport Division)
- New Bedford Art Museum
- New Bedford Fishing Heritage
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- New Bedford Historical Society
- New Bedford Research & Robotics
- New Bedford Whaling Museum
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- Operation Clean Sweep
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- ThinkGive
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- YWCA Southeastern MA
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- Zephyr Educational Foundation



Thank You

*for generously supporting
our students and OSS.*

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

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*“STEAM class has helped
me build my thinking skills
to solve challenges and
problems in our world.”*

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Karen & Christopher Main
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Beth & Carmine Martignetti
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Massachusetts Cultural Council
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Sandra Montour
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Kruger
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Nunes & Charrier LLC
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Bobbie & Chip O'Hare
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OSS Class of 2023
OSS Class of 2024
OSS Class of 2025
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Linda & Louis Othote
Regina Pakradooni
Margaret Palmer
Jill & Thomas Pappas
Laurie Paquette
Leslie Paquette
June Park
Thomas H. and Letitia Landry Parker
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Partners Village Store
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Tracy Pennoyer & John Auchincloss
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Cordelia & James Russell
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Susan Schlesinger & Rick Guidelli
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Sensata Technologies Foundation
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Pamela Spatz
Genevieve & Steven Spiegel
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St. Anne's Credit Union
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Blair & Clifford Tracy
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H. A. Trumbull
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Joan Underwood
George Unhoch*
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Anna van Heeckeren & Edward
Baker

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Angela Vasconcellos
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Charlotte & Herbert Wagner
Wagner Family, The Weatherlow
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Marion & Henry Wainer
Marjorie Waite & Neal Weiss
Marjorie Walder, in memory of
June Pina
Ellen & Laurence Walsh
Anna Waring
Elizabeth Waring
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Ellen & Donald Watson
Susan & Keith Watson, Alfred
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Ariana Wohl
Women's Foundation of Boston
Allison & George Wood
Margaret Wool & Vincent Mor
Emma York
Abby & John Yozell
Mary Zane
Morgan Zere

Peter Berg Fund
This memorial fund was established by Peter's family, friends, and classmates to honor his commitment and interest in supporting OSS students and graduates.

Anonymous (2)
The Acebes Family
Whitney Beals
Thomas Berg
Rhea Brooks
Nathaniel Butler
Suzan & Christopher Burns
Suzanne Champion & Ray Carvey
Diane & Donald Chiofaro
Kara Chmielewski
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Lynn & Harry O'Mealia
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The Parrot Family
Katrine Stevens
Marjorie & Donald Swift
Randi Von Steinwehr & Charles
Whipple
Kathleen Wattles

In Memory of Betty Fabian
Gale & Tom Beaton
Jan Bergeron
Ellen & Edward Carlson
Betsy Lawrence
Carlene LeBlanc
Carol Marini

True North Legacy Society
OSS is deeply grateful to those who are remembering the School in their estate plans.

Lisa Schmid Alvord & Joel Alvord
Talbot Baker Jr.
Alison Coolidge Boreiko & Tom
Boreiko
Laurie & Hal Curtis
Janet Egan
Linda & Peter Fenton
Bunny Garnick
Georgie & Mark Goulding
Sarah Herman
Donna Jeffers
Nancy & Edward Kurtz
Betsy Lawrence
Martha & Michael Sullivan
Deborah Williams

**deceased*

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of this report. Please accept our apologies and let us know of any errors at 508.994.1255 or email ggoulding@oursistersschool.org.



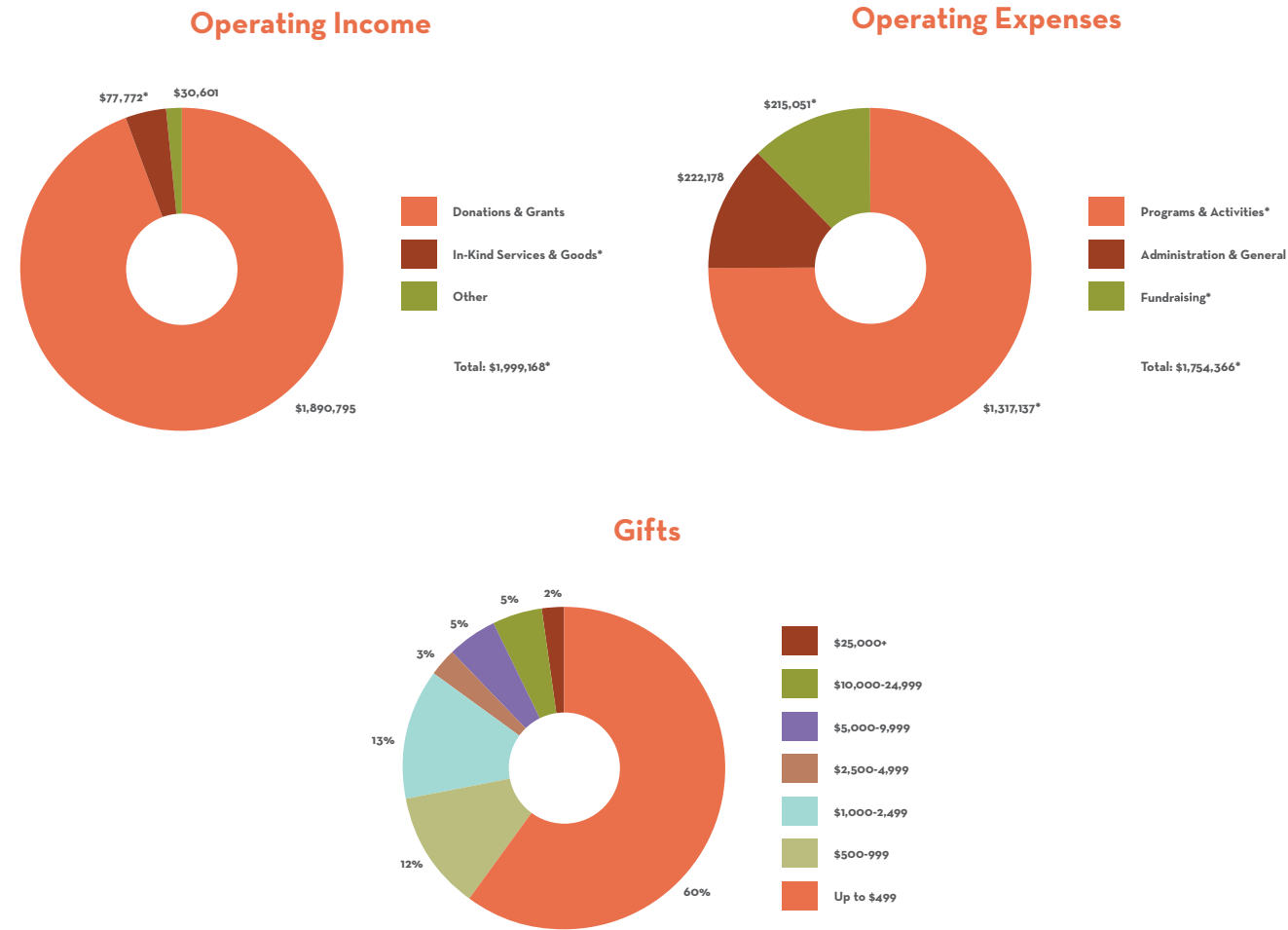


In Memoriam

June Pina was an admired and dedicated educator in New Bedford. After a long career at William H. Carney Academy, she continued to serve our community after retirement by joining OSS as one of its first lead teachers. From 2008 to 2014, June recruited new students, guided young teachers on their career paths, and was an extraordinary advocate for OSS girls and the youth of New Bedford. She passed away on November 1, 2021.

Fiscal Year 2022 Financial Summary

We send our deep gratitude to all of our generous supporters. As a single-sex school in Massachusetts, OSS is not eligible for state funding or charter status. We rely solely on the support of our friends, our community, and grants from foundations and corporations. We continue to focus on investing in our people and programs, and ensuring the future security of our beloved school for our students.



*Includes volunteer services valued at \$64,091
Note: unaudited figures; gifts to sustainability fund not included



Our mission, as an independent, tuition-free, non-sectarian middle school, is to educate and inspire economically disadvantaged girls from the New Bedford area. Our Sisters' School empowers students to step into the future with valuable life skills and a mindset of achievement and excellence by providing a safe, supportive and academically challenging environment.

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Linda Hobbs

FY 2023 Board of Trustees

Left to right:
Seated: Young Un, Alice Flint, Martha Sullivan, Marcy Wintrub, Faith Morningstar, Bill Prescott

Standing: Joe McDonough, Jane Reynolds, Kate Dabney (Founding Trustee), Lisa Schmid Alvord (Founding Chair Emerita), Mary Berg, Serge Moniz P'19, Kerry Lynch, Merita Hopkins, Alison Coolidge Boreiko, Pam Beck, Tony Jaccaci, Rayana Grace

Not pictured: Angie Fenton P'11, '17, Kim Francis, Betsy Kellogg, Per Lofberg, Christina Turner





Our Sisters' School
145 Brownell Avenue, New Bedford, MA 02740
508.994.1255 / www.oursistersschool.org
Address Service Requested

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Why “Our Sisters”?

Our school’s name honors the bravery of the women known as “sister sailors” who boldly headed out to sea from New Bedford’s harbor during the city’s whaling days. Like these women, OSS students courageously embark on a voyage in a challenging academic environment carefully crafted to support them as they discover and achieve their greatest potential, while finding true north on their moral compass.

Support The OSS Fund

We are grateful for your generosity – you help make it possible for OSS girls to receive an extraordinary education and transformative opportunities. We will continue to stay true to our core values of *Excellence, Community, Civic Engagement* and *Leadership*. Thank you for joining us on this rewarding journey. To discuss how you can help OSS, please contact Georgie Goulding, Director of Advancement, at 508.994.1255 or ggoulding@oursistersschool.org.

Planning Ahead with True North

Make a gift that will help secure OSS’s future and prepare our students to live lives of consequence. Join the *True North Legacy Society* by naming OSS as a beneficiary in your estate planning, while meeting your current financial and philanthropic goals with tax benefits. You will make a lasting contribution to educating students and nurturing human potential.

Anti-Racism Statement

At Our Sisters’ School, we are committed to an inclusive and diverse community, dedicated to our core values of *Excellence, Community, Civic Engagement, and Leadership*. We condemn all forms of racism – individual, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic. We will be diligent in identifying, discussing, and challenging issues of race and ethnicity to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our work, including student, staff, volunteer, and trustee recruitment, anti-racist curriculum development, and community engagement. We pledge to address any inequities we discover, using just and fair practices to yield a better understanding of ourselves and our school.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Our Sisters’ School, Inc. admits girls as students to the School regardless of their race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic and other school administered programs.

Our Sisters’ School, Inc. employs personnel of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, religion, creed, and sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges and activities generally accorded or made available to personnel at the School.



Many thanks to K&A Photography, Kate T. Parker and OSS staff for the photography.