



## Building Community Around Financial Aid and Scholarships

Chris Oliver, Chief Advancement Officer  
Presbyterian Day School - Memphis, TN

[www.pdsmemphis.org](http://www.pdsmemphis.org)


1



## What is your role?


- Teacher
- Administrator
- Admissions
- Development Team
- Head of School

2




## Overview

- Providing access to students of varying cultures and incomes and create an inclusive environment.
- Potential long-term impact of these programs
- Best practices around funding and execution of these programs



3



## Context

**Memphis:**

- Has a poverty rate of 21.4%, with a Child Poverty rate of 32.7%.
- Specifically one of the zip codes in Memphis is regularly listed in the top 5 poorest zip codes in the United States.
- Only ONE out of every 13 Public School students in Memphis is fully prepared to enter and complete college.

4



## Two Models





5



## Young Scholars Program



6




## Young Scholars Program

**Specifics:**

- Begin Young Scholars in Junior (4 yo) or Senior (5 yo) kindergarten
- Commitment of 7-8 years from PDS for each young scholar
- Family income needs to be roughly below or around 2 - 3 times the poverty line for the area. (~\$80,000)


7



## New Hope Christian Academy

- PK (3 yo) through 6<sup>th</sup> grade (12 yo) Co-ed, elementary school in a low-income area in Memphis.
- 80% of the families are considered low-income based on the Shelby County (Memphis) poverty rate.
- Almost all of the school consists of “young scholar” families, and their tuition is heavily subsidized through scholarships.
- After 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the school will provide a scholarship for your child to continue learning at another private school in Memphis.


8



## Key Components

- Commitment: both from the school and from the family
- Anonymity: only a handful of our staff know who the Young Scholars are.
- Respect: PDS embraces respecting individuals for who they are.
- Funding: without which, the program would greatly suffer.


9



## Commitment

- PDS asks each entering Young Scholar family to informally commit to attending through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Each Young Scholar family must pay something towards tuition or extracurriculars, but really their part of the contract is engagement in the school.
- Each year, all new students are paired with a buddy family. For do the same with the Young Scholars, and I have asked some families to continue to be a bridge for all new families.

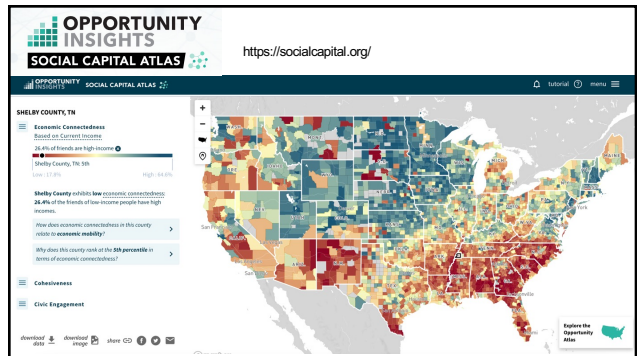
10



## Funding

- PDS raises funding for these boys each year through eight-year commitments or the use of the Young Scholars endowment.
- A donor contributes 45% of the cost of tuition
- The school contributes 45% of the cost of tuition
- The Young Scholar family pays 10% of the cost of tuition
- Additionally, fees for Young Scholars (sports, aftercare, school trips) are heavily discounted, and the families only pay 10-20% of the costs.

11



**OPPORTUNITY INSIGHTS SOCIAL CAPITAL ATLAS** <https://socialcapital.org/>

**SHELBY COUNTY, TN**

**Economic Connectness**  
Based on Current Income

26.4% of households are high-income

Shelby County, TN: 26.4%  
Low: 17.9% High: 34.6%

Shelby County exhibits low economic connectness: 26.4% of the heads of low income people have high incomes.

How does economic connectness in this county relate to economic mobility?

Why does this county rank at the 26th percentile in terms of economic connectness?


**Cohesiveness**

**Civic Engagement**

download | attributed page | share

Explore the Opportunity Atlas

12

 **Impact**

- Cross-Class friendships are a better predictor of upward mobility than the quality of a school.
- These relationships help families or students navigate some parts of life that may be unfamiliar to them.
- The dosage effect, kids who move into these economically diverse neighborhoods at age 2 years old tend to do better than those who move in at 11. Nobody is talking about SAT's or job openings at age 2.


13


 **Impact**

- Friendships - your friends strongly influence how you perceive reality.
  - How you see yourself
  - Shape the world you see
  - Alter our desires
- Entering into a friendship can be a life-altering experience and entering into a friendship with someone different from yourself can be life-transforming.


14

What Is It About Friendships That Is So Powerful?  
Aug 4, 2022



 PDS  
David Brown

15

 **Outcomes**

- Currently 21 Young Scholars across eight grade levels (JK – 6<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Over 16 years, PDS had 58 Young Scholars (including current young scholars).
- Around a 75% completion rate (graduating sixth grade)

16

**Questions?**

coliver@pdsmemphis.org

17