

EXCELLENT TO EXCEPTIONAL  
*strategic plan* **2023-2026**



**PATH TO COLLEGE**  
FELLOWSHIP



# EXPANDING MINDS / IGNITING POTENTIAL

We are creating a world where genius, leadership, and excellence are cultivated in the most overlooked students in our community.

To build this world, it's not enough to strive for excellence. We must strive to be exceptional.

Currently, Path to College students and their success are the exception to the rule.

We are determined to shatter that rule by the force of our commitment and investment in each student who achieves their potential through higher education and breaks the cycle of generational poverty they were born into.

## PATH TO COLLEGE IS NOT ONLY BREAKING THE RULE; WE ARE REWRITING IT.

The Path to College board of directors and staff are excited to present our three-year plan to reach an exceptional level of progress and success in our mission. These strategies will broaden the path for even more students to change their futures and live a better life, which in turn betters the future health, economy and prosperity of all of us.

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## PATH TO COLLEGE IMPACT

Path to College success comes from our fearless resolve to clear the path – removing obstacles of every kind that shut capable students out of higher education.

**We not only need to level the playing field to college — we must fill in the gaps created by decades of resource disparities among classrooms and communities.**

Our new three-year plan lays out the strategic steps necessary to continue knocking down barriers for students who deserve every opportunity to fulfill their potential in life and contribute their best to our future economy and wellbeing.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Students of low socioeconomic status in Palm Beach County enroll in college at a significantly lower rate than their more affluent peers, prolonging disparity among communities. Young people from lower-income families attend schools that are racially and economically segregated and lack the resources for enrichment opportunities available in wealthier neighborhoods.

Our imperative is equal and full development of human potential, and it depends on each student we send into secondary education. College positively recalculates the

future trajectory of these students and the adult communities they will join.

Despite changing perceptions of the value of a college education, college remains the best path to the middle class. “Higher education continues to be an important driver of upward mobility. In fact, young people who begin life from the bottom 20% of family income can rise to the top 20% by age 30 with a college education.” [NCES: Table 302.20]

College graduates overall enjoy greater career opportunities, salaries, health and stability across their lives.

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** COLLEGE GRADUATES ARE LESS LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE UNEMPLOYMENT OR LIVE IN POVERTY, THEREBY BREAKING CYCLES OF DISPARITY IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

## WHY IT WORKS

Our definition of the high-achieving student looks beyond the standard metrics that matter for college entrance: grade point average, activities, and volunteer service. Many of our students are caregivers, translators, and wage earners for their family, pointing to character qualities such as responsibility, grit, courage, and resourcefulness — key indicators of future successful college applicants.

### UNWAVERING SUPPORT, INCREDIBLE COACHING AND THE RIGHT RESOURCES

Path to College Fellows know we have their backs no matter what challenges they face on their upward climb. Our three-year fellowship provides catalysts for achieving college including:

- SAT college entrance test preparation
- Mentoring, internships, and college advising
- Career exposure and exploration
- Business and social skills-building
- Mental wellness and mindfulness training

**70%**  
RECEIVE FULL SCHOLARSHIPS; OTHERS  
RECEIVE **70-90%** COVERAGE

**100%**  
OF OUR STUDENTS ARE ACCEPTED TO FOUR-  
YEAR UNIVERSITIES UPON GRADUATING OUR  
3-YEAR ACADEMIC FELLOWSHIP

**\$58M=**  
ESTIMATED INCREASE IN EARNING  
POTENTIAL ONCE FELLOWS BEGIN  
THEIR CAREERS

**100%**  
LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

**750**  
ADDITIONAL STUDENTS  
SUPPORTED THROUGH  
OUTREACH WORKSHOPS

**\$150K=**  
IN-KIND EXPERT COLLEGE ADVISING  
AND ENTRANCE EXAM TUTORING

**\$4M=**  
SCHOLARSHIPS GRANTED  
TO OUR GRADUATES SO FAR

## OUR PLAN: 3 STRATEGIC GOALS



- 1 STRIVE FOR STEM
- 2 SHINE ON STUDENT SUPPORT
- 3 STAY THE COURSE



# GOAL 1

## Strive for STEM

TO STRIVE IS TO REACH  
CONFIDENTLY TOWARD  
AN UNSEEN FUTURE,  
FACING CHALLENGE  
WITH OPTIMISM  
AND EXPECTATION.



**WE WILL DOUBLE DOWN IN OUR EFFORT TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR COMPETITIVE STEM CAREERS. WHY?** Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education broadens the path to life-changing opportunities.\*

### GROWING JOB MARKETS

The number of STEM jobs continues to rise with a projected growth of 10.5 percent between 2020 and 2030, outpacing other career paths.

### HIGHER SALARIES AND JOB SECURITY

The median salary for STEM workers of all education levels is higher than those in non-STEM fields (\$55,000 vs. \$33,000) with less unemployment in the sector.

### DIGITAL LITERACY

Technology is pervasive across all professions — especially in STEM. Digital skills are essential.

*In Striving for STEM, Path to College is launching generations of scholars and leaders with the skills to evaluate complex information and solve the most urgent problems of our day.*

## STRATEGIC STEPS ON THE PATH

### HIRE EXCELLENCE TO INCREASE EXCELLENCE

- Employ a full-time STEM Director
- Hire a Math Specialist and a Postsecondary Education Readiness Test Coach
- Expand access and program reach through Virtual Learning

### REACH STUDENTS EARLY

- Provide dual enrollment prep workshops to 300 students
- Engage local universities in early course planning and identification of educational gaps; partner with university STEM teaching labs
- Build a fellowship pipeline by reaching 150 students in career exploration camps

### EXPAND STEM ACADEMIC AND CORPORATE PARTNERS

- Expose students to professional leaders and mentors in the STEM field
- Facilitate hands-on exploration of STEM careers and possibilities

\*National Math + Science Initiative



## GOAL 2

### Shine on Student Support

TO SHINE IS TO REMOVE THE  
EXTRANEOUS SO  
THAT TRUE BRILLIANCE  
CAN BE REVEALED TO ALL.



## WE WILL BREAK DOWN BARRIERS TO STUDENT SUCCESS WITH PRINCIPLED INTENTION.

We asked Path to College students to name the biggest barriers to academic support:

- Stigma of acknowledging a mental health need and asking for help
- Inconsistent quality instruction due to teacher shortages
- Absence of connection and engagement in virtual instruction
- Distraction of low-wage, dead-end but necessary jobs

Path to College mentors observed that students often need to prioritize work over study and they are lacking friends who share and support their academic goals.

*To Shine on Student Support, we are creating a culture where asking for any type of help is normalized, where connections with peers and adults are deepened through trust, and where student pre-scholarships to “earn while you learn” are incentivized to ease financial burdens.*

### STRATEGIC STEPS ON THE PATH

#### SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT

- Embed proactive programming and activities for student mental health
- Form partnerships with community mental health providers
- Implement a peer-mediated mental health buddy system

#### SHOW UP FOR EVERY OPPORTUNITY

- Hire Outreach Manager to increase internship, parent, teacher, and coach support
- Improve Partner Apply Team Hire (P.A.T.H.) Internship Program
- Form new partnerships for community-based, in-person programming spaces
- Engage Path to College alumni to deepen sense of community, fellowship and future

#### INVEST TODAY FOR TOMORROW

- Assess student expenses to inform financial gaps
- Increase funding for student pre-scholarships
- Launch the Parent Support Network
- Hire 30 Virtual Coaches to improve the on-line learning experience and generate revenue



# GOAL 3

## Stay the Course

TO STAY THE COURSE IS TO VALUE PAST EFFORT BY INVESTING IN THE SUPPORT STRUCTURES THAT MAINTAIN PLACE AND FOSTER LONG TERM GROWTH.



### WE WILL STRATEGICALLY EXPAND OUR REACH AND RESOURCES TO SUSTAIN GROWTH AND LONG-TERM STABILITY.

In planning for the future of our students and the Path to College cause, we will protect the investments of our community partners, mentors, volunteers, donors, and grantors through planned and deliberate efforts that ensure our successes are sustained.

*We will Stay the Course through an enhanced circle of leadership and advocacy, investments in stakeholder, student and operations support, and ongoing fundraising and philanthropy.*

#### STRATEGIC STEPS ON THE PATH

##### BUILD A BRIDGE

- Form an Advisory Council from the driving industries of Palm Beach County
- Task these leaders to steer our board and executive team

##### INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

- Hire an Administrative Operations Manager
- Invest in the value of our data with a Salesforce Consultant
- Identify software application partners and investments
- Identify a strategic headquarters location with student work space

##### RAISE THE FUTURE

- Publicly launch Path to College’s first Capital Campaign with \$5M goal
- Establish “The Path Fund” annual and monthly giving programs to form a pipeline for larger gifts and generate sustained programming income
- Create a planned giving program
- Fundraise for an operational surplus and endowed funds
- Establish first endowment to produce scholarships and sustainability



# STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

This plan will pave the path for our next three years of critical growth — moving from Excellent to Exceptional.

Path to College was founded to shrink the disparities between well-resourced students and their Title 1 peers who possess the same intelligence and aspirations but carry a double burden with no support. Today we still exist to prevent the loss of this precious and valuable resource – a generation of students who belong at college and deserve the benefits of a high-quality education.

In just under six years, Path to College has developed a successful model **servicing more than 2,000 students** with a staff of three and a small, shared office space within the 1909 business incubator.

**Over the next three years this plan as executed will fuel our ability to serve more students, identify and acquire facilities for staff offices and student work space, create funding reserves to secure vital services, and employ targeted interventions to propel thousands more students through the pipeline into high-paying, in-demand jobs.**

**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE, BOARD LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY OF EDUCATION CHAMPIONS AND STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS YEAR'S SURVEY.**

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