

· THE ·
YASS
PRIZE

◀ **2022** Looking Back
2023 Pushing Forward ▶

Celebrating Sustainable,
Transformational, Outstanding
& Permissionless Education

Dear Friends:

American education is on the brink. And it can be easy to predict its demise. Open up the recent Nation's Report Card with sorry scores and you'll see what I mean. But we prefer to do what's allegedly hard and instead predict positivity.

It was during the dark days of the COVID lockdowns when Jeanne and I asked each other: What can we do? Too many in education answered that question with too much negativity.

There was some positivity in wealthy suburbs where parents there had the means and the freedom to form learning pods or to hire graduate students to help keep learning going for their children.

Government's answer on the other hand was to double down on pouring more taxpayer dollars into "the system" without giving taxpayers—especially those in urban areas—any say in how their dollars are spent on their kids.

We set out to be positive and established the **Yass Prize for Sustainable, Transformational, Outstanding, and Permissionless education** in fall 2021 to award and amplify one education entrepreneur who kept learning going during school lockdowns, and who initiated wholly new enterprises to serve students and families. We certainly found more than one education innovator we wanted to recognize—a lot more.

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Since 2021, with Caroline managing the work and a growing team, the Yass Prize has identified more than 4,000 education innovators who are delivering for students in unique ways, in different places, and for all kinds of kids for whom their assigned district school was either closed, not working for them—or both.

The applicants are unique and not very well known. They are quietly but mightily doing what's best for their students. The winner that year, the Discovery Science Center of Springfield, Missouri, had turned its museum into a school for students who were not being served by their assigned local schools. The loser that year was a mom on a mission who I liken to a "naughty teenager"—one who simply won't take no for an answer.

Diana Diaz-Harrison founded Arizona Autism Charter Schools in 2014 after her autistic son Sammy's assigned school wasn't meeting his unique learning needs. Diana's first school became the first autism-focused charter school in the western United States. But Diana wasn't awarded the \$1 million Yass Prize—she didn't even make it to the semifinalist round.

But that did not stop Diana. She kept innovating, and it showed. Diana's schools went from serving Sammy and 90 others in 2014 to serving more than 700 students today. Then, it came to her: Diana would take Arizona Autism Charter Schools national. She had her sights set on a national accelerator to establish autism-focused schools in every state across America. Best practices aren't best kept secrets, after all.

Diana re-applied for the \$1 million Yass Prize and won. We were pleased to award her determination and her other-directedness in pursuit of doing what's right for all students.

The Yass Prize in December 2022 awarded more than \$13 million to 64 education entrepreneurs from eight different kinds of learning approaches across 32 states which altogether serve nearly 300,000 students. These hidden heroes of education buck the status quo, focus on kids, and say: "We're not going to do this according to how 'the system' says we should."

There are too many in education who would like it for our heroes to stay hidden. Too many who tell parents to continue to trust "education experts" with their children's education. But those who'd rather keep education static are sounding more and more like a broken record every day. The mission of the Yass Prize will remain focused on honoring and advancing the work of innovators in education who do what's right for their students, and beyond.

For our part, we'll continue to award and amplify the folks who will bring American education back from the brink and toward a new era in education of innovation, personalization, and freedom.



Michael Long of SailFuture speaks at the Yass Prize Finalist Road Show.


Janine Yass



Jeanne Allen
Director, Yass Foundation for
Education & CER Founder



Caroline Allen
Vice President, The Yass Prize

2,700+
Yass Prize
applications

64
Yass Prize
awardees

Over
\$20
million
awarded

49
states
represented

More than
300K
students
impacted

5
STOP for
Arizona
Education
awards

1
Ducey Prize
winner

2022
By the
Numbers

32
accelerator
sessions

8
alumni
grants

23
Forbes
contributor
articles

1+
million
tweet
impressions

28
Chicago
rescue
grants

\$4
million
in alumni
grants

36+
new school
opportunities
created

The Yass Prize and Awardees have been featured in a multitude of media outlets.

Forbes

The Boston Globe

yahoo! news

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Bloomberg

FOX NEWS

AZ
The Arizona Sun Times

NEWS BREAK

abc 15
ARIZONA

WASHINGTON Examiner

TN
The Tennessee Star

KVRR
FARGO • MOORHEAD

around the block, around the world
harlem world

Pittsburgh Parent
MAGAZINE

KTAR
NEWS



“Remember, you are doing the work of civilization. You are planting the seeds of a better world. Despite any bad news, you’re doing great things.

STEVE FORBES

Editor-in-Chief of Forbes

What it means to STOP for education

What we know and believe is that with the right policies in place, a school that's Sustainable, Transformational and Outstanding and can do so without Permission, should grow. We are here to help them.

S is for Sustainable

Sustainable is the core pillar that holds up the rest. That means, simply, that a provider is able to exist without continual philanthropy by utilizing public dollars that fund the entity where students are learning, or they are taking significant and impressive actions on the local, state, or national level for funds to follow students. But education organizations also can become sustainable by creating innovative and sustainable revenue streams (like sales of products or services or partnering with others to support students) so that they do not have to rely on philanthropy.



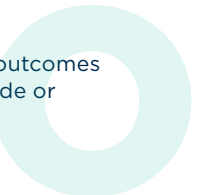
T - Transformational

What does it take to truly transform learning for students? There are a vast array of new approaches, tools and understanding about what works since our current education system was created, that allow us to better serve students in highly individualized, responsive and personalized ways. Schools and providers are transformational when they utilize these 21st century assets to modify the learning environment or they use a tried and true approach more rigorously.



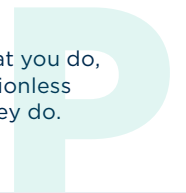
O - Outstanding

Outstanding education providers demonstrate their success first and foremost through the demand of the students and families they serve, the day to day outcomes shown through retention, test scores, activities and awards. But the ultimate measure of success is whether students are persistent, move on to the next grade or school and enter productive careers or higher education pathways.



P - Permissionless

Permissionless means an education that is free to exist and thrive without depending on regulatory bodies. It means the ability to make decisions about what you do, and how you do it - whether you're a founder, a teacher, a parent or a student - without asking permission. Providers that are true to the concept of permissionless education boldly execute on what they know to be right, rather than waiting for a greenlight from a person or entity that has no personal interest in what they do.



Permissionless education environments stem from state policies that give their educators wide latitude to develop and support student needs, which in turn make them sustainable. **That's why we STOP for education!**

Taking a Broad View of Educational Delivery

The Yass Prize is sector agnostic. All students can succeed when they have every opportunity available to them. With access to billions of pieces of information in the 21st century, learning should be ubiquitous, not confined to a classroom or institution that operates largely the same as when it was first conceived. Education entrepreneurs come from all walks of life, and deliver education through a myriad of different approaches.

Transformational education can happen in traditional looking or new forms of public, private and charter schools. Learning happens individually, online, on the ground in small groups, formally, informally. It happens via tech, experiential programs, and much more. The power of integrating all sectors reveals more similarities than differences, and the expansion of education opportunity multiplies. We've seen it happen widely among Yass Prize winners. And we will seize every opportunity to magnify and grow exceptional education opportunities, no matter what the provider type or definition.



The 2021 and 2022 Yass Prize Finalists

Building a Movement

The 32 STOP-enabled semifinalists truly shined during the fast-paced and jam-packed Accelerator in November. From California to Vermont and everywhere in between, education innovators said they “learned how we can do even MORE for our students” with “insight on how we can all continue our journey to change the world.” Another said: “enlightening doesn’t even come close.”

This accelerator drives the community of the Yass Prize into unique conversations with industry experts from the fields of journalism, finance, politics, and beyond, who in turn have solicited the expertise of the Yass Prize cohort. Throughout, the participants at every stage of the competition are fueling new pathways that enable more students to have access to what they deliver, and advocating for change to make it happen for others.

In short, the Yass Prize builds relationships among education innovators and inspires a new kind of activism built around growing **Sustainable, Transformational, Outstanding, and Permissionless education** across the nation.



And now, we are extremely proud to highlight our 2022 Awardees ▼

2022 YASS PRIZE WINNER

Arizona Autism Charter Schools

Phoenix, Arizona

Arizona Autism Charter Schools is the story of a mom on a mission. When Diana Diaz-Harrison's son, Sammy, was diagnosed with autism in 2004, she hoped Sammy's assigned school would meet his unique learning needs. Sadly, it didn't. And there weren't any quality traditional public education options for the one in forty students diagnosed with autism.

With that statistic as her north star, Diana set out to do something about it. She partnered with other parents, grandparents, and professionals to found the school, with the state's strong charter school law as a critical element in her ability to do so successfully. The school's primary tool is use of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) principles to support students' behavioral needs and help them achieve the state instructional standards using an individualized approach to teaching and learning. ABA is backed by the American Academy of Pediatrics as the gold standard treatment for children with autism and related disorders.



FINALIST

Capital Prep Schools

Bridgeport, Connecticut

Capital Prep Schools is an ambitious, Black-led network of public charter schools that is not only seeking to serve 7,000-10,000 students over the next ten years but whose leader is a fearless spokesperson for underserved students across the political, social and racial divides that normally deter most advocates. Focused on the most dangerous communities in the country – the Bronx, Harlem and Bridgeport, CT, Capital Prep Schools have nevertheless graduated 100% of their students regardless of when they begin attending the schools.



FINALIST

Northern Cass School District

Hunter, North Dakota

Among the first to create blended learning models for its students, Northern Cass is reimagining education not only for its students but for all rural districts. The district was featured by the respected “Education Reimagined” as it embarked on an innovative path to ensure every student was given a new path to success with learner agency, providing young learners the opportunity to pursue education in a myriad of ways. Its personalized approach serves students in six rural communities each comprising fewer than 250 people, meeting students where they are and not the other way around. Superintendent Dr. Cory Steiner, bucks the “traditional” moniker developing personalized career pathways for students like medical technicians, nurses, child caretakers, and other in-demand areas for students to help solve problems for those right around them.



FINALIST

Oakmont Education

Akron, Ohio

The mission of Oakmont Education is to find and support students who have dropped out to recover their education with individualized hands-on learning, and skills-based job training. Oakmont provides options in skilled trades such as construction and manufacturing, community wellness like in health care and special education, and business and entrepreneurship like in information technology, retail, and hospitality. Students earn nationally recognized industry credentials while also engaging in hands-on workforce opportunities out in the communities. All of this is made possible by the Ohio Charter School law and other state programs which makes the work sustainable through per pupil funding streams, as well as giving them the flexibility to be transformational and flexible in their approach.





FINALIST

SailFuture

St. Petersburg, Florida

This innovative school model defines transformative learning. With a belief that schools should design themselves around student and family needs and not the other way around, Florida's SailFuture Academy designed a learning environment where students within foster care, in trouble or at risk can gain education and access to employment through paid apprenticeships. This tuition-free entrepreneurship high school leverages project-based learning and paid apprenticeships to prepare students for successful careers by focusing on the maritime business in addition to culinary and construction experiences. Their full project-based curriculum allows students to drive their own education solving real-world problems.



FINALIST

SOAR Academy

Evans, Georgia

Opened in 2011 to address the education deficiencies of a wide array of students especially those with ADHD, Dyslexia, and Autism, SOAR Academy customizes education for each and every child, the antithesis of the 19th century factory model of education that still is the only system available to most US students. With many of their students having huge academic gaps, as much as 2-3 years behind their peers, differentiation is the key for success. Cognitive differences are celebrated and incorporated into the customized curriculum map for each student, which helps teachers get right to the basics of what kids really need. After completing two years or more in SOAR's program, 81 percent of students are reading at grade level.



FINALIST

Rapunzl

Chicago, Illinois

With a free financial literacy curriculum and teaching training program, Rapunzl is helping to bridge the country's economic divide by exposing students from underserved communities and empowering them to view the world as investors and succeed in financial services careers. With the world of finance and the high-returns of Wall Street seeming inaccessible and out of reach for most, co-founders Brian Curcio and Myles Gage met freshman year of high school and built Rapunzl to change this for students. Transitioning from the bank and financial investment industries, they built, broke, and rebuilt an innovative, hybrid financial literacy curriculum in 2018, which has inspired over 35,000 students, over 80% who identify as people of color. By showing students that they can thrive in financial services careers and providing them with the tools to build generational wealth, this cutting edge ed tech program transforms the way students perceive themselves in the world.

FINALIST

unCommon Construction

New Orleans, Louisiana

Offering high school credit in an innovative apprenticeship program, uCC students earn hourly pay and school credit for completing a construction project. Apprentices learn career awareness by being exposed to industry partners and develop professional skills through an “uncommon” work-based learning experience in a real-world classroom. They are awarded an equity scholarship paid for by the revenue from each project. Co-founder Aaron Frumin dropped out of college in 2005, to respond to Hurricane Katrina and eventually was led to think critically about what young people need to thrive immediately following high school, whether their path takes them through college or directly into a fulfilling and sustaining professional life. His journey from Red Cross volunteer, to day laborer led him to discover that the construction site was its own type of classroom in which many of the subjects taught within the walls of a high school including math, social studies, science and visual arts were needed to realize projects. The result of these and subsequent experiences was his founding of uCC in 2015.



FINALIST

Urban Preparatory Academy

Wichita, Kansas

Urban Preparatory Academy is a private, tuition-based, K-8 school that serves all students regardless of the family’s socioeconomic status or their past performance. Pastor Wade Moore came from a background of extreme poverty and adversity to become a leader in the US Army and Boeing Corporation. After purchasing a closed school building in an underserved community, his vision for serving students became a reality in 2014. Ninety percent of the student population – all Title 1 – come from the lowest performing schools in Kansas. They are academically challenged and on their way to special education in the public schools when Urban Prep puts a STOP to that track.



STOP FOR ARIZONA WINNERS

DUCEY PRIZE
WINNER

Science Prep Academy

Phoenix, Arizona

Kino School
Tucson, Arizona

Love Your School
Arizona (state-wide)

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School
Lake Havasu City, Arizona

St. John the Evangelist Catholic School
Tucson, Arizona

St. Mary-Basha Catholic School
Chandler, Arizona





SEMIFINALISTS

Arkansas Lighthouse Charter School
North Little Rock, Arkansas

Black Mothers Forum
Phoenix, Arizona

Brilla Public Charter Schools
Paterson, New Jersey

Build UP
Birmingham, Alabama

Chickasaw City Schools
Chickasaw, Alabama

Coded by Kids
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Da Vinci RISE High
El Segundo, California

Edily
San Francisco, California

Engaged Detroit
Detroit, Michigan

Father Judge High School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

HOPE Ranch Learning Academy
Hudson, Florida

Jumoke Academy Charter School
Hartford, Connecticut

KaiPod Learning
Boston, Massachusetts

Kind Academy
Coral Springs, Florida

Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School
Brooklyn, New York

LIFT Learning
Bristol, Vermont

Mission Achievement and Success Charter School
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Prichard Preparatory School
Whistler, Alabama

Purdue Polytechnic High Schools
Indianapolis, Indiana

RCMA
Immokalee, Florida

Open Sky Education
Waukesha, Wisconsin

The Lab School of Memphis
Memphis, Tennessee

Young Women's Preparatory Network
Dallas, Texas

QUARTERFINALISTS

Atlas Public Schools
St. Louis, Missouri

Austin Achieve Public Schools
Austin, Texas

Brookstone Schools
Charlotte, North Carolina

ClassEquity
Tucson, Arizona

Colossal Academy
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Empower Community High School
Aurora, Colorado

Great Hearts America Microschools
Phoenix, Arizona

Heritage Academy Public Charter School
Jerome, Idaho

I Dream Public Charter School
Washington, D.C.

Jackson Hole Classical Academy
Jackson, Wyoming

Kaimuki Middle School
Honolulu, Hawaii

Lancaster Science Factory
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Latitude Learning Resources
Derry, New Hampshire

Libertas School of Memphis
Memphis, Tennessee

Logos Academy
York, Pennsylvania

Madrona Folk School
Grants Pass, Oregon

Map Academy Charter School
Plymouth, Massachusetts

Milwaukee College Prep
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Mountaineer Homeschool Hub
Morgantown, West Virginia

National Microschooling Center
Las Vegas, Nevada

Neighborhood Schools
Houston, Texas

One City Schools, Inc.
Madison, Wisconsin

One Stone
Boise, Idaho

Prenda
Mesa, Arizona

Rise Hybrid Private Academy
Fredericksburg, Virginia

St. Francis de Sales School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

St. Philip the Apostle Catholic School
Camp Springs, Maryland

The League of Young Inventors
Brooklyn, New York

The Oaks Academy
Indianapolis, Indiana

Trivium Charter School Network
Lompoc, California

Vertex Partnership Academies
The Bronx, New York

Workshop Middle School
Brooklyn, New York

Fueling Growth & Synergies Among Awardees

Rock by Rock X Multiple Awardees

Rock by Rock, a 2021 Yass Prize Finalist, has created a Netflix-like library of projects for K-5 students to engage in authentic, real-world learning experiences. Rock by Rock is partnering with several other Yass awardees to help further their mission of ensuring all students have access to the deeper learning experiences necessary to thrive in our 21st Century economy. **Arizona Autism Charter Schools** is using Rock by Rock projects to support and expand their project-based learning for their elementary students. This will also help Rock by Rock continue to grow their platform with input and feedback from more neurodiverse learners to help them continue to design in ways that meet the needs of all students. Rock by Rock is also working with **Zeta Charter Schools**, **Northern Cass Public Schools**, and **Kind** microschoools to support STEM and project-based learning in their contexts. These collaborations will help reach more students, spread the word on social media, and learn together about how we expand our offerings to meet the needs of students in all settings.

STEMuli

X

HSRA

Teaching the history of hip hop in the **STEMuli** Metaverse provides the opportunity to both engage and assess students' understanding of this pivotal chapter in history. STEMuli, a 2021 Yass Prize awarded EdTech company, in partnership with **High School for the Recording Arts**, has been able to put itself in a position to take advantage of the \$1B California just approved to invest in arts curriculum within the state. Together, STEMuli and HSRA will pilot, iterate, and scale this revolutionary learning experience to other Yass Prize recipients with the goal to eventually scale to the rest of the nation.

Rapunzl

X

STEMuli

X

Young Women's Prep

STEMuli, **Young Women's Preparatory Network**, and **Rapunzl** are working together to create an immersive financial literacy program that engages students through their smartphones, in virtual reality, and ties it together in the classroom. Rapunzl already allows students to simulate stock and crypto portfolios like a real investor; but now they'll also be able to learn-by-doing as they complete tasks such as opening a bank account, cashing a check, and calculating a mortgage—all in a STEMuli-supported virtual world. Young Women's Prep has agreed to pilot this program at 2 campuses, with plans to expand to additional schools in the network. It's really exciting because now students will truly be able to adopt a financial lens to view the world and can develop skills around investing and money management.

Up Next

In 2023, the Yass Prize will impact more communities, more states, more education leaders, and hundreds of thousands more students. We are on the search for our third cohort of innovators and disruptors who are poised to transform education, and join a community of trailblazers who will help you reimagine what success and reach looks like in the most transformational ways.

2023

WINTER

National Road Show—we may be coming to a city near you!



MARCH 27

2023 Yass Prize application launch



JULY 15

Yass Prize application deadline



SEPTEMBER

Quarterfinalists announced



OCTOBER

Semifinalists announced



NOVEMBER

Yass Prize Accelerator



DECEMBER

Finalists & Winner revealed



At least \$20 million to be awarded to dozens of game-changing education providers in 2023!

“How do we spend \$800 billion on education and people are still fighting to be literate. How does that happen?”

JEFF YASS

Founder of the Yass Prize

“You guys are heroes as far as I’m concerned.”

ALYSSA FARAH GRIFFIN

Co-Host on The View & CNN Political Commentator

“It is important to surround yourself with like-minded individuals who foster innovation.”

PHYLLIS LOCKETT

CEO of LEAP Innovations

“You are in a moment in history that we have never seen before. Any of us with a disruptive idea have a shot at trying to prove something.”

RANDALL LANE
Chief Content Officer of Forbes

“We often jump to the what, without thinking WITH the community about the why.”

MICHAEL B. HORN

Author of “From Reopen to Reinvent: (Re)creating School for Every Child”

“Remember, you are doing the work of civilization. You are planting the seeds of a better world, despite any bad news, you’re doing great things.”

STEVE FORBES

Editor-in-Chief of Forbes

“You’ve led, followed, and colored outside the lines—choosing to iterate, innovate, and be humble in knowing there’s always more to learn.”

JEANNE ALLEN

Director, Yass Foundation for Education & CER Founder

“The old me would have said ‘We could never get that.’ The new me? ‘Why NOT us?!’ Y’all are changing mindsets and that is EVERYTHING!”

KENISHA SKAGGS

Founder of SOAR Academy & 2022 Yass Prize Finalist



YassPrize.org