



# BALTIMORE LAB SCHOOL

## **25 Years of Expanding Horizons in Learning**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25**

## ABOUT BALTIMORE LAB SCHOOL

**Baltimore Lab School provides** an exceptional, college and career preparatory education for bright students with learning disabilities in grades 1-12. These disabilities include dyslexia and ADHD, as well as other learning differences. Our innovative, arts-integrated curriculum is experiential and multidisciplinary, specifically designed to help young learners overcome challenges with reading, writing, and math, while preparing them for a rewarding range of college and career choices.

**Baltimore Lab School students explore** the visual and performing arts, participate in outdoor education and athletics, and gain confidence, self-esteem, and self-awareness, in addition to mastering core academics. Students thrive academically and socially in small classes with an exceptionally low teacher-student ratio.

**Every academic teacher at BLS is highly trained** and certified in special education; most of our teachers hold master's degrees. All teachers receive additional training in diagnostic-prescriptive teaching and intensive academic remediation.

**Every Baltimore Lab School student benefits** from progress monitoring through informal assessments and customized academic strategies specifically targeted to their needs. Full-time on-site reading specialists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, clinical social workers, and psychologists are active in the classroom and offer specialized services in individual and small group sessions.

## HEAD OF SCHOOL LETTER

SPACE was our school-wide theme for the 2024-2025 school year. This theme is rooted in the idea that BLS fosters an environment that creates true SPACE for its students and its staff.

Our teachers, staff, and related service providers plan for engaging hands-on, minds-on lessons that inspire our students to think about SPACE (not just the space around them, not just outer space). We want students to engage in mindful SPACES that bring them calm and readiness to learn...SPACES that are communal and support collaboration and connection to others' and their ideas, and future SPACES that allow them to dream about all their possibilities. BLS cherishes the opportunity to partner with our families in igniting thoughtfulness in our students.

The immersion of our students in our SPACE theme gives them opportunity for deeper thinking and reflection. It is also our founder's approach to students with learning differences and ADHD. Sally Smith believed that to improve school success for students who have learning differences and ADHD, the students need to be fully engaged in learning through their social, emotional, and academic selves.

Buzz Aldrin once said, "Exploration is wired into our brains. If we see the horizon, we want to know what's beyond."

As an astronaut, undauntedly exploring outer space and the actual limits of humankind, his quote typifies the daily existence of excellent educators who, by moving students beyond the space they know to new learning and ideas...ultimately move themselves, as well, beyond their own horizons.

Space, therefore, becomes (1) A concept of exploration of existing ideas, (2) An engagement of new and compelling ideas, (3) A safe place to challenge the status quo of our own imaginations and knowledge, and (4) An actual physical place (BLS) where extraordinary experiences that help us learn are front and center.

This year's theme is the embodiment of what makes BLS extraordinary, even in our 25th

"Exploration is wired into our brains. If we see the horizon, we want to know what's beyond."

year. During this milestone anniversary year, our students were immersed in learning just as our founder created. BLS ensures that students make progress as critical thinkers, problem solvers, and effective communicators prepared to face the challenges of college life or the workplace. We strive for students to become responsible self-advocates who know and employ individual strategies for success in college and/or career, and we create an environment focused on students becoming engaged and compassionate global citizens who appreciate and respect the



A toast to the next 25! Steve Buettner raises a glass with faculty, parents, donors and alumni to Baltimore Lab's history of innovative education and our bright future.

differences in others. A graduate of BLS ideally becomes a lifelong learner who continues to seek new opportunities to grow.

On April 26, 2025, BLS teachers, staff, current families, alumni, and our community of supporters gathered together at Mama Koko's, a neighborhood restaurant, to celebrate arriving at our 25th year as an institution dedicated to helping children with learning disabilities thrive. Seeing all the smiles and joy in that space, a community dedicated to helping change the lives of our students, was truly touching. Without the generous contributions of our donors and through foundation and corporate grants, BLS simply could not have made

it to that 25 year milestone and meet our mission for the future. Thank you for your support. Our donors make an extraordinary difference in the lives of our extraordinary students.

This is BLS! Go Dragons!

*Steve Buettner*

STEVE BUETTNER,  
Head of School



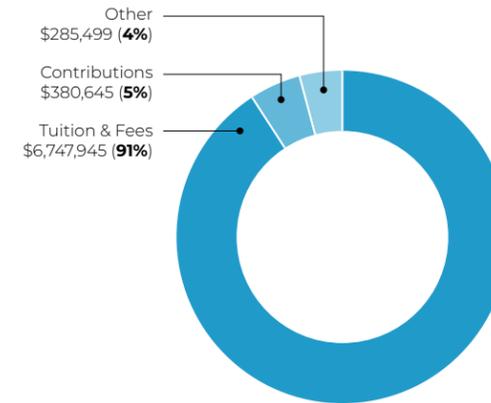
“Seeing all the smiles and joy in that space, a community dedicated to helping change the lives of our students, was truly touching.”



**THE LAB LEGACY** Baltimore Lab School was founded in 2000 as a division of The Lab School of Washington by Sally L. Smith (1929-2007), a pioneer in the field of learning disabilities. She created Baltimore Lab School to provide the same extraordinary opportunities as The Lab School of Washington, which has successfully educated students with learning disabilities since 1967. Sally's groundbreaking research and writing on art as a gateway to learning and her award-winning Academic Club methodology are the heart of Baltimore Lab School's approach to education.

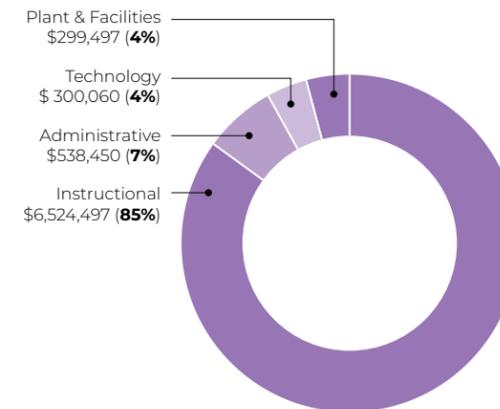
## 2024-2025 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### INCOME \$7,414,089

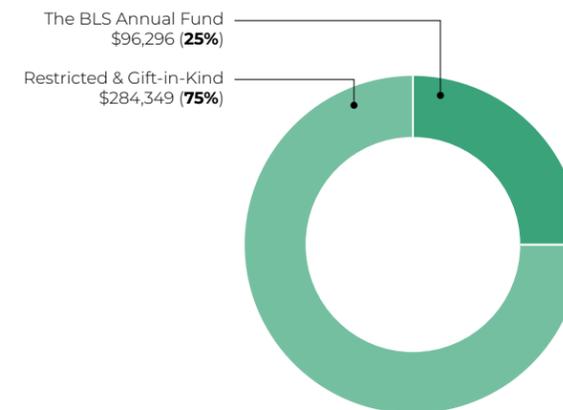


In 2025 Baltimore Lab School received its largest foundation gift in the school's history.

### EXPENSES \$7,662,504



### GIFTS \$380,645



### DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- ARNOLD BAKKER
- JEFFREY BURNETT
- STEVEN HORNSTEIN
- CASSIE MOTZ
- MARLENE RILEY
- ANN SCHULTZ
- LATOYA SUPERVILLE
- TANYA TERRELL

# BLS: 25 YEARS OF CREATING SPACE FOR EVERY LEARNER

From our first classroom to a thriving community of explorers, innovators, and self-advocates.



## Launch Point

Baltimore Lab School is founded as a division of the Lab School of Washington—an internationally respected institution that had already spent more than three decades pioneering innovative, research-based education for students with learning differences. Building on that proven foundation, educator Sally L. Smith brings the Lab School philosophy to Baltimore, creating a new educational space where students are fully seen, supported, and inspired.

2000



## Expanding the Horizon

The school relocates to Roland Avenue, giving students and teachers more room to collaborate, imagine, and grow.

2002



## First Liftoff

Baltimore Lab School celebrates its first graduating class of students ready to navigate new worlds with confidence and self-advocacy.

2008



## Recognized Excellence

Baltimore Lab School earns full accreditation from the Association of Independent Maryland and DC Schools (AIMS) and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools—affirming the school's strength in academic rigor, governance, faculty quality, student support, and long-term institutional sustainability.

2019



## Still Reaching Beyond

Baltimore Lab School celebrates 25 years of creating space for exploration, resilience, and life-long learning.

2025

2000–2002

## First Orbit

BLS opens inside Port Discovery Children's Museum, immersing students in hands-on, exploratory spaces where curiosity leads learning.

2004

## A New Home Base

BLS moves into historic Old Goucher Hall in the Baltimore Charles Village neighborhood, part of the campus of the original Goucher College—an institution itself founded as a groundbreaking women's college dedicated to expanding access, independence, and intellectual freedom. Within these walls shaped by a legacy of progress and possibility, BLS establishes a permanent home for deeper academic, artistic, and social exploration.



2014

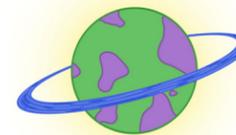
## Charting Our Own Course:

BLS becomes fully independent from the Lab School of Washington, stepping into a bold new era while carrying forward the values, rigor, and innovation that shaped its beginnings.

2022

## Caring for Our Planetary Home:

BLS earns Maryland Green School certification, reflecting a commitment to sustainability and responsible global citizenship.



Progress happens when we create space—for questions, for courage, for imagination, and for one another. For 25 years, Baltimore Lab School has done exactly that: pushing past boundaries, redefining what is possible, and inviting every learner to explore their own potential. And just as our students continue to reach beyond what once felt unreachable, so too does our school—still curious, still courageous, and still boldly expanding the universe of what learning can be.



CREDITS: Space illustrations were co-created by 2025 BLS graduates Lily Leffler Schulman and Tobias Dotson.

# THE BALTIMORE LAB ANNUAL FUND

## 2014 INDEPENDENCE CLUB

Gifts of \$10,000 - 24,999

BGE - Exelon  
 France-Merrick Foundation, Inc.  
 Valerie Howard\*  
 Mary and Daniel Loughran Foundation, Inc

## OLD GOUCHER SOCIETY

Gifts of \$5,000 - \$9,999

B.J. Frederick Foundation  
 Christopher Callaghan & Cassie Motz  
 John McDaniel  
 Chrissy & Eric Miller  
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 Zarren Law Group

## HEAD OF SCHOOL CIRCLE

Gifts of \$2,500 - \$4,999

Dianne Brillhart  
 Steven Hornstein  
 Ravens Foundation  
 Ann & Joe Schultz

## BLUE, GREEN, & PURPLE CLUB

Gifts of \$1,000 - \$2,499

Lori Brady  
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 Robert Medeiros  
 McCormick & Co, Inc.  
 Gerald Momplaisir  
 Judy London Murray & Chester Murray, Jr.  
 Frank Pokorny  
 Gordon Stetz

\*Grandmother to Patrick '13 and Jack Christ



## ACADEMIC CLUB SOCIETY

Gifts of \$500 - \$999

Arnold Bakker  
 Valerie Dudley Cook  
 Regina Fennell  
 Kitsa Padousis  
 Richard & Susan Palmer  
 Bridget & Scott Pekrul  
 Tanya Terrell  
 Holly Wallack  
 Julie Whittacker & William Ritchey  
 Betsy & Shaw Wilgis

## DRAGON CLUB

Gifts of \$250 - \$499

Anonymous  
 Jeff Burnett  
 Jim Burns  
 Jim & Karrie Hunt  
 The Lab School of Washington  
 Sierra S. Riley  
 Marlene & David Riley  
 LaToya Superville

## BALT LAB BENEFACTORS

Gifts of \$100 - \$249

James Aist  
 LaDawn Black  
 Joan Brahim & Nicole McGarvey  
 Matthew Burnett  
 Jonai Coleman-Lassiter  
 Andres Correal  
 Karen Coyle  
 Kent Croft  
 Carl & Lynn Eisgruber  
 Ronald Glassman  
 Jingpeng Gu  
 Maurice Hart  
 Craig & Britta Hoffman  
 Donny & Peggy Hutchinson

Sharon Levine  
 Susanne Levine  
 David Lowe  
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 Catherine & H. George Meredith Jr.  
 Laura E. Parkhurst  
 Lynn Nichols  
 PayPal Giving Fund  
 Beverly & John Puente  
 Sandra Ranno  
 Allie Sacks (in honor of Jake)  
 Vicki Williamson  
 Nicole Tovar  
 Maurice & Beverly Wyatt

## BALT LAB FRIENDS

Gifts of \$1 - \$99

Michelle G. Argent  
 Saadya Barron  
 Christopher Beck  
 Lisa Booth  
 Victoria Campodonico  
 Martia Davis  
 Joe DiBello  
 Janissa Garcia  
 Robyn Geller  
 Rosemary Iktape  
 Kelly & Matt Keesler  
 Joan Kruszon-Adams  
 Lisa Mandell  
 George McGrath  
 Erin Moeller  
 Darlene Mueller  
 Lauren Murphy  
 Jessica Parent  
 Anne Reinhart  
 Denise Schubert  
 Jim Schwartz  
 Christine Tennes

## RESTRICTED & DESIGNATED GIFTS

### DR. ELLEN MCDANIEL FINANCIAL AID FUND

John McDaniel

### SCHOLARSHIP

Holly Wallack

### OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Doug & Betsy Emery

Ravens Play 60 Grant

### FACILITIES & TECHNOLOGY

France-Merrick Foundation

CMIT Solutions

Diana Smith & Greg Stewart

### MENTORSHIP

BGE – Exelon

### LIBRARY BOOKS

Steve Buettner

### 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

James Aist	Valerie Howard
Robin Arnett	Jim & Karrie Hunt
Steve Buettner	Jennifer Kelleher
Elizabeth Bugg	Sharon Levine
Matthew Burnett	Zaneta Lowe
Jim Burns	Lisa Mandell
Christopher Callaghan & Cassie Motz	George McGrath
Victoria Campodonico	Karen McGuire
Kent Croft	Erin Moeller
Joseph DiBello	Judy & Chester Murray, Jr.
Jeffrey England	Steven & Jill Hornstein
Regina Fennell	Craig & Britta Hoffman
Robyn Geller	Scott & Bridget Pekarul
Barbara Gibbs	Frank Pokorny
Thomas Heffernan	Beverly & John Puente
Craig & Britta Hoffman	Allie Sacks
Steven Hornstein	Jim Schwartz

## DRAGON AID

Robin Arnett  
 Todd Bailey  
 Lisa Booth  
 Heather Crowder  
 John Finegan  
 Elizabeth England  
 Stephanie Gavrilis  
 Claire Gonder  
 Jennifer Groves  
 Mat Leffler Schulman  
 Zaneta Lowe  
 Michelle Medeiros  
 Amanda Miller  
 Chester & Judy Murray  
 Anne Reinhart  
 Aprillyn Salgado  
 Heather Stanley

## TRIBUTE GIFTS

### IN MEMORY OF

**Ellen McDaniel**

John McDaniel

**Andy Zvara**

The Lab School of Washington

### IN HONOR OF

**Patti Child**

Jim & Karrie Hunt

**Jake Sacks ('33)**

Allie Sacks

**The BLS Admin Team**

Lauren Murphy



The mural in our lobby depicts our original set of Academic Club courses, a key part of the BLS curriculum. Academic Clubs are themed spaces in which students learn by inhabiting roles of historical cultural leaders, creating hands-on projects that bring a compelling past world to life. The mural is based on the one at the Lab School of Washington, the first school founded by Sally L. Smith.



## Baltimore Lab School. The difference is extraordinary.



## THE JEFFREY AND ELAINE CHRIST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD

Established in 2013 upon the graduation of their son Patrick, this fund honors the Baltimore Lab School teachers who taught him during his twelve years at the school, as well as those who taught his brother Jack. It provides professional development grants to faculty members after they have completed at least five consecutive years of full-time service. Grants may be used for education, travel, or research.



### The 12th Annual Jeffrey and Elaine Christ Professional Development Award was awarded to **Ms. Tara Boucher**

Tara attended Towson University for undergraduate school, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, and then attended Loyola University, where she received her Master's of Education in Literacy. She joined the Baltimore Lab School community in 2015 when she was hired as a Reading Specialist.

Prior to officially joining BLS, Tara was no stranger to our school or our methodologies. She had served as a supervisor for Loyola University undergraduate interns who were placed at BLS for their field experiences. During that time, Tara came to love our school's philosophy and methodology, recognized the amazing work our teachers were doing, and invited some of our arts and special education teachers to guest lecture at Loyola. As that school year was coming to

an end, she happened to discover we had a Reading Specialist position open, decided to take a leap and apply, and has been with us full-time ever since!

In addition to holding a Teaching License from the Maryland State Department of Education with endorsements in the areas of Elementary Education, Special Education, and Reading Specialist, Tara has furthered her knowledge of reading disabilities and literacy instruction by continuously seeking out professional development opportunities. She is trained in numerous research-based reading and literacy intervention programs, such as the Institute for Multi-Sensory Education's Comprehensive Orton-Gillingham and Morphology Plus training, Lindamood-Bell's Seeing Stars

Literacy Program, LiPS Phoneme Sequencing Program, and Visualizing and Verbalizing Language Comprehension and Thinking (or V & V) Program. She has also completed a structured literacy program, a year-long practicum, and took the Knowledge and Practice Exam for Effective Reading Instruction to become certified as a Dyslexia Interventionist through the Center for Effective Reading Instruction, a subsidiary of the International Dyslexia Association. She is a member of the International Literacy Association & State of Maryland Literacy Association, the International Dyslexia Association, and the Center for Effective Reading Instruction. The list of professional learning opportunities that Tara has participated in is far too long to list them all, but a few notable



activities include: attending the State of Maryland Literary Association Conference annually to learn about new research, laws and policies impacting students in Maryland regarding literacy education, and to have the opportunity to engage with other Reading Specialists, Literacy coaches, and experts in the field of literacy acquisition from around the state and country; and participating in the Seeds of Learning Executive Function course, by Tera Sumpter, to better understand the connection between reading and executive function in order to best address the needs of her students.

Tara takes the knowledge she gains through all of the professional learning she participates in and turns right around to then present and provide valuable and meaningful professional

learning opportunities to colleagues both in and out of BLS. These presentations include: presenting at the MANSEF (Maryland Association of Non-public Special Education Facilities) conference on the topic of Language and Literacy, presenting at Loyola University in undergraduate Special Education courses on the topic of Reading Assessments, and presenting to BLS staff throughout each school year on Reading Assessments, Orton Gillingham overviews and refreshers, Phonological Awareness, Guided Reading, Visualizing and Verbalizing and so much more. However, what has truly been most impactful on the BLS community is the hundreds of hours she has spent meeting with teachers and instructional assistants one-on-one in order to guide reading instruction practices within the classroom for all of our students. And as if that

wasn't enough... in her "spare time" outside of school, she does outreach in Baltimore City with kids and families that need support in various ways.

We are incredibly grateful for Tara's knowledge, professionalism, caring, kindness, and dedication to our school community and our students.

### Past Recipients

- LISA LEWIS (2013)
- LAURA PARKHURST (2014)
- AMY WEISHAAR (2015)
- JACKIE LESH (2016)
- DARLENE WHITE (2017)
- MOLLY MEREDITH (2018)
- JOHN MULHERIN (2019)
- KARA WIMERT (2020)
- CARA ENNY (2021)
- JOEL BANOTAI (2022)
- AMY ZBIKOWSKI (2023)
- PATTI CHILD (2024)

## BOARD REPORT

As Baltimore Lab School celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2025, we reflect with deep pride and gratitude for a school that has transformed the lives of students with ADHD, dyslexia, and other learning disabilities. What began as a bold vision has become a thriving community that helps every learner discover new horizons and recognize their own potential.

Baltimore Lab School's strength lies in its distinctive approach: an arts-integrated curriculum that brings learning to life, expert and deeply dedicated teachers, and fully integrated academic and related services like occupational and speech-language therapy and counseling under one roof. Small class sizes and individualized instruction allow each student to build confidence, develop effective strategies, and achieve meaningful academic success.

This year also marks the 11th year since Baltimore Lab School became independent from the Lab School of Washington — a milestone that reflects our school's maturity, stability, and commitment to shaping its own future while staying true to our founding mission that began with innovative educator Sally L Smith close to 60 years ago.

As we honor our past, we are equally focused on our future. Our goal is to grow Baltimore Lab School so that more students can benefit from the extraordinary environment we provide. By expanding access while preserving our personalized, student-centered model, we continue pushing boundaries in how education can serve students with learning differences.

Most importantly, our students leave Baltimore Lab prepared to succeed—in college, in careers, and in life. They graduate as confident self-advocates, creative thinkers, and resilient individuals ready to explore new challenges and opportunities.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you to our donors, families, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends for your unwavering support. Your belief in our mission allows Baltimore Lab School to continue opening doors and creating space for every learner.

With sincere appreciation,

CASSIE MOTZ  
President, Board of Directors  
Baltimore Lab School



### Board of Directors

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Zarren Law Group, LLC, Managing Partner

# THANK YOU

## for supporting Baltimore Lab School

Please consider making your contribution to the 2025-2026 Baltimore Lab Fund today. Gifts must be made by June 30, 2026, to count towards our current fiscal year and featured in the 2026 Annual Report.



To make a gift online,  
please visit:  
[baltimorelabschool.org/  
giving](https://baltimorelabschool.org/giving)



Contributions via check  
should be made payable  
to "Baltimore Lab School"  
and mailed to:

Baltimore Lab School  
c/o Development Office  
2220 Saint Paul Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21218



For information about  
making a gift of stock,  
bequests, and gifts in-  
kind, please email **steve.  
buettner@baltimorelab-  
school.org**

Report reflects donations made between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this report is accurate and complete. We apologize for any errors or omissions and kindly request that you report corrections to Steve Buettner, Head of School.