



FOCUS ON LITERACY

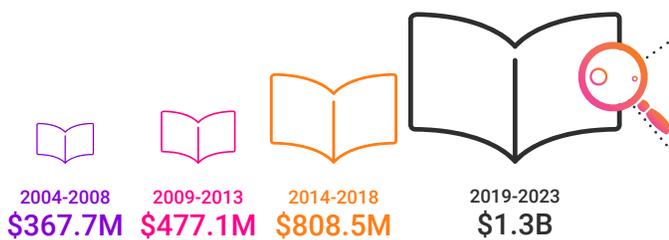
RESEARCH BRIEF SERIES: TWENTY YEARS OF EDUCATION FUNDING IN THE U.S.

Grantmakers for Education engaged in several projects in the past two years to understand philanthropic priorities, approaches and investments in education, historical and current. By collecting and analyzing new data as well as analyzing data available through a licensed database, we conducted a comprehensive scan. This research brief is produced as part of this scan and is one of a series that shares information on giving patterns in education over the past twenty years among foundations and other grantmakers, from 2003 to 2023. Giving data was sourced from Candid's Foundation Directory. The analysis presented in this brief was conducted over a six-month period in 2024 and 2025.

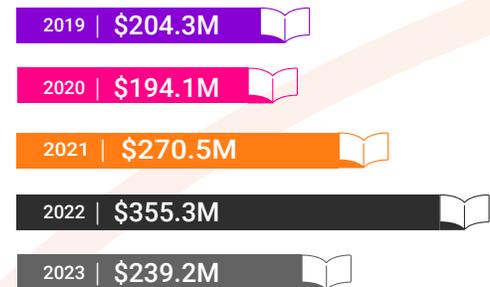


The stagnant reading scores of students across the U.S., particularly the significant decline during the COVID-19 pandemic, have profoundly impacted literacy trends and education. Accordingly, philanthropic support for literacy education in elementary and secondary education has steadily increased during the past 20 years. Literacy funding grew significantly between the 2004–2008 and 2019–2023 periods, rising from \$367.7 million to \$1.3 trillion. Notably, from 2019 to 2023, funding for literacy increased by over 50%, rising from \$204.3 million to \$329.2 million.

20 Years of Funding for Literacy



Literacy Funding Over the Last Five Years (2019-2023)



As the leading network for education philanthropy, Grantmakers for Education offers an unparalleled platform for learning, collaboration and influence – backed by front-line sector research, exclusive insights and a vibrant community of peers. We believe in the value of philanthropy as a catalytic partner in creating a just world. For more information, please contact us at information@edfunders.org.

Giving data was sourced from Candid's licensed database, *Foundation Directory Online*. According to Candid, data are "compiled from IRS information returns, grantmaker web sites, annual reports, printed application guidelines, the philanthropic press and various other sources. In all, Candid's editorial staff continually monitors more than 35 diverse information sources" and frequently updates the database. A full description of the Foundation Directory's sources may be found here: <https://help.candid.org/s/article/Where-does-Candid-get-its-data>. The classification system Candid employs for coding grants may be found here: <https://taxonomy.candid.org/>.

