



FOCUS ON STEM EDUCATION

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

Introduction

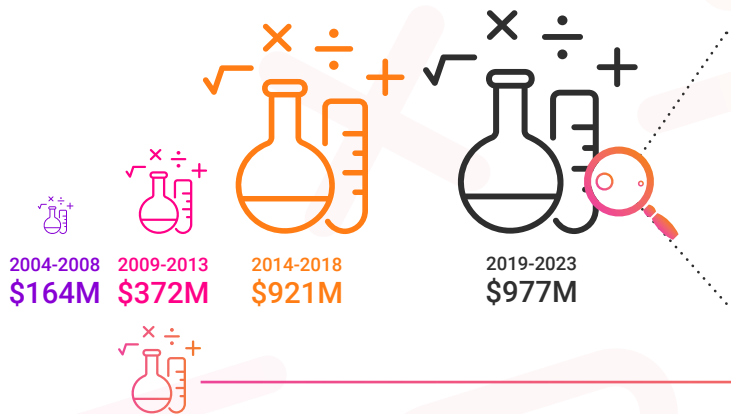
Grantmakers for Education engaged in several projects in the past two years to understand philanthropic priorities, approaches and investments in education, historical and current. By collecting and analyzing new data as well as analyzing data available through a licensed database, we conducted a comprehensive 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.



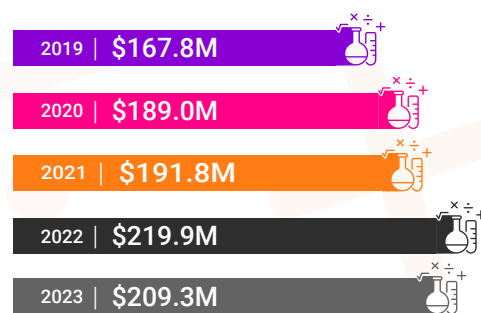
During the past 20 years, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) funding in elementary and secondary education has remained a priority in the U.S. Philanthropic contributions to STEM education have been prompted by the low performance of students in the U.S. compared to other industrialized nations on standardized tests in math and science and the need to bolster U.S. competitiveness in science and technology.

Funding for elementary and secondary STEM education has increased exponentially, from \$164 million in the 2004–2008 period to \$978 million in the 2019–2023 period. Notably, between the 2009–2013 and 2014–2018 periods, philanthropic funding for STEM education more than doubled, increasing from \$372 million to \$ 921 million.

20 Years of Funding for STEM



STEM Education 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/>.

