



 **Spectrum**
of Rockford
PROGRESSIVE SCHOOL
2020 / 2021

ANNUAL REPORT

Thinking, Creating, Reflecting:
Impacting the Future

spectrumschool.org

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A group of children and an adult are walking on a forest path. They are all giving thumbs up. The path is covered in fallen leaves and green plants. The background is filled with trees and foliage.

m School Report

Joy In Learning

For more than 50 years, Spectrum students have gained the confidence to be deeply engaged in learning, work, and communication. They have the skills to think critically and creatively. By understanding how to collaborate and ask questions, they can solve problems in a variety of contexts, applying what they know to what they need to do. Spectrum Students care about their communities, humanity, and the natural environment, and they work to make a positive difference in the world.

From our nature integrated preschool through middle school, Spectrum Progressive Schools creates a community of inspired learners who think, create, reflect, and make an impact. Learning should be purposeful. It allows children to make a positive difference in their own lives, communities, and the world.

Imagination without bounds.

Wonder at their fingertips.

Learning through their lens.

Letter From Board President

Dave Diamond




Dear Spectrum Community:

The Spectrum School Board acts as the school's governing body providing leadership with long-range planning, financial oversight, marketing strategies, and guidance for educational platforms. The Board comprises volunteers with diverse backgrounds, including parents, community leaders, business owners, alumni, and members at large.

The Board's strategic focus for 2021-2024 includes five strategic objectives which provide the foundation for a student's unparalleled learning experience. These objectives include an ongoing examination and understanding of how our school continues offering unique educational services within our community.

(Continued on next page.)





Secondly, the plan consists of a long-range knowledge of the school's facility programming needs – ensuring the physical demands for space keep pace with student enrollment growth. Thirdly, the Board creates operational efficiencies, employing the latest technologies and workflow strategies in education. The objectives also include managing our financial resources reinforcing conservative practices while keeping an eye on the academic sea changes requiring long-term investments. The final strategic focus is on leadership. The Board's most essential function is to encourage and support a collaborative and inclusive culture, embracing and celebrating all aspects of the Spectrum experience.

As President of Spectrum's Board, I have seen first-hand the complex challenges facing families today as they adjust to the health risk and mandates compromising the learning experience. I am incredibly proud of the Spectrum Community and how families, teachers, and staff have rallied, providing creative solutions to the most undesirable situations. Spectrum has always shined when confronted with such adversity, and I believe this indelible mark of resourcefulness is left on each and every student.

**Dave Diamond, President
Spectrum School Board**

January 2022



Attention Spectrum Alumni

We would love to hear from you— let us know how you're doing!
Do you have news to share with us?

Please Connect With Our Alumni Coordinator:

Melissa Prete

m.prete@spectrumschool.org

Follow Spectrum Online:

[facebook.com/SpectrumProgressive](https://www.facebook.com/SpectrumProgressive)

[instagram.com/spectrumprogressive](https://www.instagram.com/spectrumprogressive)

[linkedin.com/company/spectrum-school](https://www.linkedin.com/company/spectrum-school)

Join Spectrum Alumni & Families Group:

[facebook.com/groups/449106955131893](https://www.facebook.com/groups/449106955131893)



2021 - 2022 Board Of Directors



Dave Diamond
President



Charles Barnes



Marci Hallgren



Carole Carbone



Andrew Mertzenich



Dr. Mary Beth Cunat



Alan Robinson



Mary Williams



Dave DeCastris



Melissa Prete



Bob Marske



Beverly Broyles

A Community Of Inspired Learners



Thinking

Knowing HOW to think critically through any situation is necessary for success in life.



Creating

Cultivating creativity helps children bring their unique thoughts, feelings, and identity to the world.



Reflecting

Reflecting allows students to assess the effectiveness of their thinking, work, and interactions.



Making An Impact

Learning should be purposeful. It allows children to make a positive difference in their own lives, communities, and the world.

Letter From The Principal

Spectrum School has been in existence for 54 years. While their brick-and-mortar facility has moved from time to time, their instructional strategy model has remained intact, only wavering based on individual teaching styles. With a published mission of, and I quote, **"To create mindful, self-directed learners for life"**, Spectrum students **"develop the confidence to be deeply engaged in learning, work and communication."** With a learning environment where students set goals, generate intention, learn to research their focused topics, practice their new learnings, explore those topics in depth, and assess their work from beginning to end, Spectrum embodies a learning environment that prepares life-long learners.

In 2020-21, Spectrum demonstrated notable success in its mission through the adoption of a learning framework specifically targeted to fostering student learning autonomy and mindfulness. In a digital age where everyone is on some kind of device, it is imperative we help children manage the constant stimuli, distraction, and even dangers of the digital universe. We aim to foster thoughtful habits and **"unhackable brains"** that maintain intentionality, awareness, self-management, and critical thinking as benchmarks for a child's orientation towards learning and information. Embedding these kinds of opportunities into our already strong project/inquiry based approach makes Spectrum a truly exceptional outlier in how we do school.

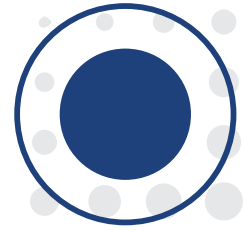
When I consider these pedagogical strengths combined with nature-based outdoor education, play-based approaches, and a deep understanding of and responsiveness to every single child as an individual, I am so grateful for this little slice of heaven that we know as Spectrum.

Dr. Mary Beth Cunat

January 2022



Awards & Recognition



First in State - Complex Academic Competition

Spectrum's Future Problem Solving team won first place in state competition, and competed internationally on the topic of neurotechnology.



Spectrum named **Most Innovative Independent Private School** in Northeast Illinois for the Private Education Awards 2021, hosted by LUXlife. This award symbolizes the hard work, dedication, and effort that private education institutions have applied throughout the challenges faced in the midst of a global pandemic!

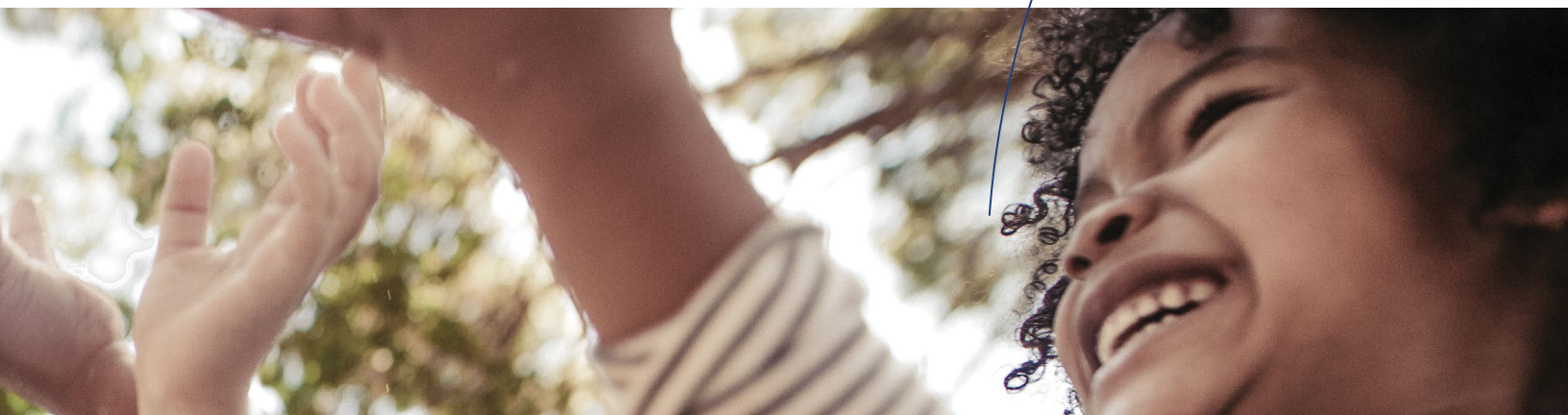
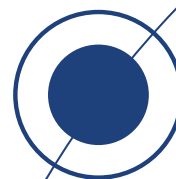




Early Childhood Grant Promotes High Quality Experiences for Young Learners.

Our efforts to include young children stuck at home during the pandemic paid dividends. The various videos, online storytelling, and themed parent resources developed by Spectrum staff not only gave young children connection and learning experiences, they earned a grant from the Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence to further develop and promote our resources.

Principal Mary Beth Cunat placed 5th in an international curriculum competition sponsored by Innovator ASU-GSV for her submission on supporting families of young children during COVID.



Academics

Success Of Spectrum At Home

Much of the narrative in current education literature is about the learning gaps and losses experienced by children during the pandemic. However, we can honestly say that Spectrum staff was prepared, vigilant, and completely capable to provide continued instruction, assessment, and support to both during the shutdown and since reopening in-person instruction in mid-August. Spectrum teachers were able to pivot to virtual instruction for individuals and cohorts as needed during the school year, as well as provide ongoing virtual instruction for children who opted not to return to school during the year. Our Spectrum-y version of virtual learning, **Spectrum at Home**, was of such quality that we received grants and awards based on our programming and are now looking to develop a for-profit online version of Spectrum School to launch beyond our Stateline boundaries!

Graduate Success

Congratulations to our five 2021 graduates, Isaac, Jude, Charlie, Ava, and Lucas. We are proud to send these grads to their respective high schools, ready for the challenges despite COVID challenges. We know that our Spectrum approaches have





taught students how to think, create, reflect, and impact their world. of a new learning environment. We are happy to see they did well on placement tests, despite COVID challenges. We know that our Spectrum approaches have taught students how to think, create, reflect, and impact their world in a new learning environment.

Student Perspective On Multidisciplinary Learning

“I love Spectrum because there is a lot of positivity and creativeness. For example, we got inspired by Les Paul and we made guitars out of materials we had in the classroom. We also did a sound wave experiment because we were wondering how sound waves travel. Everytime I walk in the classroom the creativeness and positivity wash over me!”

~ Creatovator Felix

Middle School School Newspaper & Podcasts

Middle School teacher Aubrey Barnett left Spectrum with a legacy of a weekly newspaper and numerous podcasts with local leaders in business, the arts, and politics. If you are interested in reading or viewing any of this amazing Spectrum work product, please reach out to principal Mary Beth Cunat via email (m.cunat@spectrumschool.org). You will be impressed with what our students have accomplished!

Student Ownership Of Learning

The intermediate cohort "***Creatovators***" designed and implemented a successful online art auction— raising \$1120 for art supplies. The auction was completely designed, promoted, and managed by students in the class. The class created and collected student art, designed all the marketing material, created the website and communications, and ran the auction. The art is displayed online at <https://sites.google.com/student.spectrumschool.org/spectrum-art-auction/home>

World Language Instruction Continues

Principal Mary Beth Cunat leveraged her fluency in Spanish to teach Introductory Spanish to the Middle School this past year. Spanish instruction will continue next year with a blended program (part virtual/part in-person) called "MEG". Middle School students will receive synchronistic lessons from a teacher in Columbia, South America, with Dr. Cunat's "in-person" support. A two-year grant has also allowed us to continue Japanese Instruction; of which its teacher, Keiko Hall, integrates with Japanese culture study and international outreach. Our students regularly connect with pen pals, and via Zoom, as well as with former Spectrum students who are now living in Japan.



Musical Productions Receive National & International Recognition

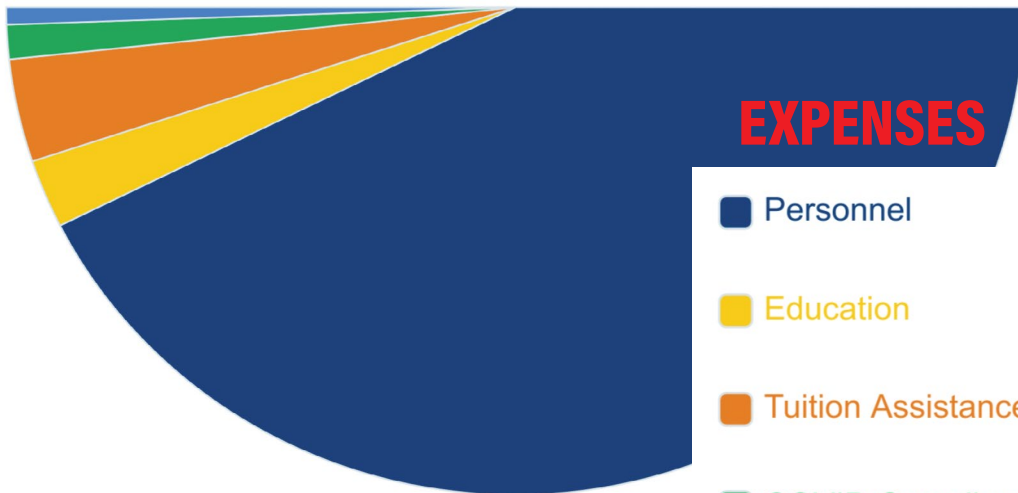
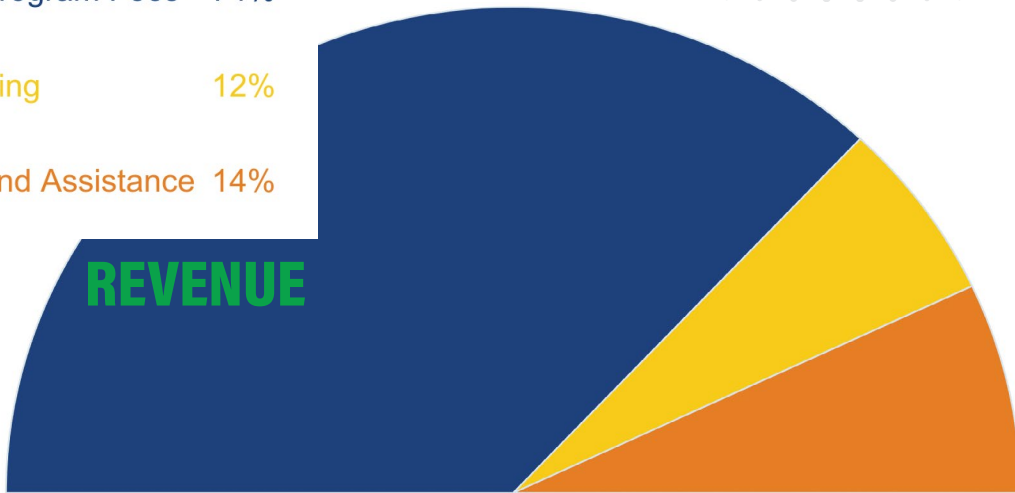
Music teacher Sue Puetz kept the music going despite the pandemic, with videocasts to classrooms, cohort presentations, and innovative schoolwide productions. She received both local recognition through a nomination to the Rockford Area Arts Council for Teacher of the Year, and national recognition for our holiday program called "***The Innovative Elves***" with a story that aired on National Public Radio (NPR).

We even received international recognition with a video made about "***Tacky the Penguin***," with teacher Jacque Lind and our media specialist Rickey Barnett.

Two sets of band concerts and piano recitals also were held, with multiple sessions for smaller audiences to respect social distancing. Spectrum was one of the few places giving live concerts all year, but also excelled at virtual performances like the most recently launched "What a Wonderful World" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzFZ36H-kql>) which was done in sign language and includes acts as a digital yearbook for 2020-21.

Financials

- Tuition/Program Fees 74%
- Fundraising 12%
- Grants and Assistance 14%



- Personnel 85%
- Education 5%
- Tuition Assistance 7%
- COVID Compliance 2%
- Marketing and Development 1%

Enrollment & Fundraising

2020-21 Enrollment: 83 Students / 2021-22 Enrollment: 93 Students

Our GoFundMe campaign raised \$56,000. With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting everyday life, Spectrum's **Journey to Stay Connected and Engaged** GoFundMe campaign was set up to offset the costs of additional staffing, technology, supplies, and cleaning needed to provide a safe and healthy environment of learning.

The generosity of donors, including business leaders, alumni, families, and community partners, supports the people, programs and experiences that make Spectrum Progressive School special: talented teachers, low student:teacher ratios, personalized attention, and individualized learning for every child.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

UP TO \$999

815 Gardens
Chris Alesandrini
Erin Arroyo
Jan Bacino
Liljana Baddour
James and Anne Baldauf
Joan and Thomas Baldauf
Lori Bauerlein
Dave and Ann Boccignone
Jacquelyn Bonavia
JoAnne Bonavia
Julie Breuer
Beverly Broyles
Ann Butler
Carolyn Cadigan
Carole Carbone
Mark and Emily Christensen
Gailene Cowger
Robert Cowger
Angelica Davila
Abby and Brad Davis
Jen Davis
Ryan Davis
Katie and Ryan Davison
Katie Maringer and Dave DeCastris
Deborah DeCastris
Frank DeCastris
Janie and Mario DeCastris
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Wendy Madeck
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Norgard Family
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Carl and Mary Pearson
Sam Perone
Pam Peterson
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Cynthia Pippel
Dorothy Powell
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Connie Reicher
Sherril Reicher
Maggie Rose
Margaret Rennerfeldt
Kimberlee Rogers
Diane Russell
Nicole and Max Ryan
Saif Family
Richard and Bev Shouer
Kristine Smirz
Pamela Stock
Susan Sunday
Chelsey and Ryan Talley
Aaron and Aly Vavra
James Venetucci
Vitucci Family
Wayman Family
Mary Williams
Jim and Sally Wonder
Bob and Cathy Wright
Mindy Joy Young
Antonette Yuccas
Daniel Yuccas
Tommy Yuccas
Rebecca Zajac

\$1,000 - \$4,999

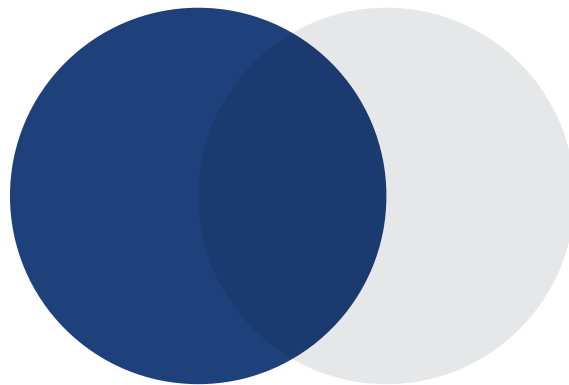
Steve and Lisa Carter
Chiropractic First of Rockford
Dave Diamond
Kerry Ferris
George and Mary Hampilos
Tom and Kelly Kalt
Mierow Family
Carla Milne
Kim-Doan Nguyen
Mike and Joy Oliver
Kevin and Shelley Peifer
Mardonna Rauh
Claire Rotolo

\$5,000 and Up

Harold Baldauf
Dave and Mary Beth Cunat
Dave and Kathy Gill
Barb Japp
Gary Knappenberger
Dr. Alan Shindel
Dr. Morris and Nanci Soriano

Professional Learning & Culture

Spectrum staff is always looking at current best practices. In the 1960s and '70s it was Piaget and Dewey; the 1980s focused on thematic approaches, Howard Gardener, and portfolio assessment; the 1990s through 2000s expanded with Project-based learning before implementing John Spencer and Genius Hour during the 2010s, and in the 2020s we are embedding the Relational Learning Framework.



***"Vintage Innovation,"* By John Spencer**

The teachers put together a culminating presentation to showcase their work and the student work from this book study. See it under 21st Century Learning under the Academics tab on our website.

***"Becoming Einstein's Teacher,"* By Erika Twani** **The Relational Learning Framework**

Increasing capacity by tapping deeply into intrinsic motivation, learning how to learn, and student autonomy. Spectrum still defies letting numbers or age determine what learning success looks like.

The Greatest Fun Run Field Day

"We are celebrating having had in-person instruction all year, pivoting to virtual instruction for individuals and cohorts when necessary," says Spectrum's Financial Director and COVID protocol queen, Marci Hallgren. *"We had very few instances of required quarantine, which we consider a great success."*

Hallgren, who along with key staff and Board members, planned and led the **GREATEST FUN RUN FIELD DAY**. Some of the games included an obstacle course designed by the Middle School students, a Human Ring Toss game, mini-golf, Bozo Buckets, and the Limbo. There will also be a photobooth and lots of hula hooping. *"The GREATEST FUN RUN FIELD DAY event signalled a return to closer to normal,"* says Hallgren, *"which is something for which every school and family has been waiting."*





Twenty-First Century Work: Progressive approaches to education ARE 21st Century, abandoning the factory model from their inception. We focus on thinking, collaborating, problem-solving, creativity, and the learner's experiences of school— not a static curriculum based on a child's age.

SPECTRUM PROGRESSIVE SCHOOL OF ROCKFORD

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