



RISE

Alexander-Haas
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

Results in Independent Schools E-newsletter
Shining a Light on Fundraising

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from the desk of
Shelly Manuel
Associate Partner

Adjusting Behaviors for the Neurodiverse Donor & Staff

I live in a house full of neurodiverse thinkers who see, feel, and experience the world differently than those who approach the world through a “neurotypical” lens. My dyslexic and ADHD family is not alone with approximately 20% of the population living with different wiring in their brains in the form of Autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder) among others. Because I live in a neurodiverse world, I am fascinated by studies that show we can all benefit in a world more accommodating for those who see things and think differently – especially in the workplace. To take that a step further, shouldn’t we as fundraisers keep in mind that 20% of our donors are probably neurodiverse as well?

Just because an individual falls in this category does not mean that they are less than or disabled. Many have high IQs and are extremely bright. Heightened skills, such as pattern recognition, empathy, interpersonal skills, innovation, creativity, and leadership are prevalent among dyslexic thinkers (of which experts say 15 and up to 20% of the population fall into this group). Because these are such critical business skills, 40% of the world’s greatest innovators and entrepreneurs are dyslexic. With that said, it would be safe to assume that some of your best donors are likely dyslexic as well.

What does this mean for us as development professionals? We need to be mindful in our communication. Lengthy emails are probably not going to be read. Those with ADHD and dyslexia often rely on administrative support to keep them organized and on track. Get to know gatekeepers and make sure that you schedule meetings through the proper channels. In designing printed materials and proposals know that text needs to be concise, have visuals and include summaries that hit the highlights.

Something else to consider are meetings and events. If someone struggles with anxiety, simple steps like those listed below can make the difference in whether someone agrees to meet with you or not. However, isn’t it nice to take these steps regardless?

- Provide detailed parking information and where to go once they arrive.

- Include the appropriate attire (if necessary).
- Personally meet guests as they arrive at the door.
- Take away any other anxiety-inducing stressors.

Along those same lines, if you work in an organization, be mindful of your neurodiverse colleagues and those that you are looking to hire. Accommodations can be simple. Quiet workspaces, understanding that a complex CRM system can be overwhelming for someone with ADHD, so they may need more time with meeting notes or voice-to-text technology, or even some admin support. Try not to get frustrated if a colleague doesn't have the same work schedule as you do. You never know what they are struggling with. Anxiety, depression, OCD, etc. can be crippling at times, and we are not to judge others.

Finally remember, divergent thinking generates multiple ideas or solutions to a problem. Creative problem-solving is a good thing. Ernst & Young did a research study that showed that many of the future workplace skills perfectly align with those that you find in individuals with dyslexia. LinkedIn has added dyslexic thinking as a skill. If we can all see these differences as talents as opposed to disabilities or hindrances, make accommodations, and approach every donor and colleague with grace and understanding, the possibilities are endless.

Please welcome Shelly to our team.

[Read all about our new Partner here.](#)

Our Team

A Snapshot of State Independent Schools

Let's look at some Independent School State Associations and examine what participating schools raise in philanthropic funds. Here are the stats for **South Carolina** (Palmetto Association of Independent Schools).

School Count 12

Advancement Median Funds Received for '22	\$1,366,622
Median Number of Donors	803
Median Percent Participation by Constituency & Hard Credit Funds Received	
Median % Participation by Parents/Guardians of Current Students	60.4% \$354,456
Median % Participation by Alumni/ae	11.2% \$102,392
Median % Participation by Grandparents of Current Students	14.0% \$88,583
Median % Participation by Parents and Grandparents of Alumni/ae	8.8% \$91,042
Median % Participation by Employees	99.0% \$27,746

Trustees	
Median Number of Trustees	17
Median Hard Credit Funds Received by Trustees	\$68,832
Median Soft Credit Funds Received by Trustees	\$63,747
Funds Received by Purpose ('22)	
Median Funds Received for Current Operations: Unrestricted	\$526,751
Median Funds Received for Current Operations: Restricted	\$182,171
Median Funds Received for Endowment	\$82,785
Median Funds Received for Other Capital Purposes	\$801,308
Median Funds Received for Irrevocable Deferred Gifts at Face Value	\$0

[Data from NAIS Facts at a Glance.](#)

[Our LinkedIn](#)

Grant Makers Add Students' Mental Health to Priorities

Amid growing concerns about a mental-health crisis sweeping the nation's schoolchildren that the U.S. surgeon general has called "unprecedented," education grant makers may be increasingly changing the way they aid young people.

A survey of 142 foundations by *Grantmakers for Education* in late 2022 and early 2023 shows:

- 62% of grant makers are providing support to nonprofits, schools and other groups that help children learn important coping and social skills. These types of grants commanded support from one-third of grant makers in 2018.
- 62% are providing support for mental-health care that is tailored to help people who have faced significant struggles in their lives.

While different foundations responded in each year of the survey, Grantmakers for Education said the size of the foundations was comparable enough to provide solid comparisons. Still, the survey size was too small to say the trend is true across all grant makers.

Among the other issues commanding a significant share of foundation attention:

- Helping educational institutions grow or expand (77%)
- Supporting professional development and training for teachers, school leaders, and other education professionals (61%)
- Providing support for public policy and advocacy (55%)

COP, 9-29

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Are Nonprofit Salaries Keeping Up With Inflation?

The median pay for fundraisers grew 6.4% in 2022 – shy of the 8% increase in the cost-of-living last year. According to *Candid's* annual pay report, median compensation for top

officials climbed 3.2% in 2021 to \$129,000, up from \$125,000 in 2020. Inflation, meanwhile, climbed 4.7% that year. This ends a long run when pay ran ahead of inflation. From 2017 to 2021, median compensation was up 6% when adjusted for growth in the cost of living over the four years.

Other findings from Candid's report:

- Median executive compensation at the largest groups – those with annual revenues of more than \$50 million – was \$293,000. At the smallest organizations, whose revenues were under \$250,000, median pay was \$43,000.
- Executives in the Northeast earned the highest salaries – a median of \$140,000. Those in the Midwest earned the least, a median of \$111,000.
- Pay for women executives continued its decade-long creep upward. For every dollar men made, women made a median 67 cents in 2011 and 73 cents in 2021.
- Another trend that continued: Women represented the majority of CEOs at smaller organizations but less than one-third of CEOs at the largest groups.

[More here.](#) COP 8-8

We Know Independent Schools

For more than 35 years, Alexander Haas has been a fixture in the nonprofit community. We are honored to have worked with so many remarkable independent schools, both secular and non-secular, across the country that help mold today's adolescents into tomorrow's leaders. Take a look at our list of independent school clients, past and present.

[Our Clients](#)

A Fresh Approach to Fundraising

Our services aren't cookie cutter. We don't operate with a boilerplate, merely changing names and locations. We craft each and every service we provide to match your organization's unique needs, wants and abilities. We work hard and expect you to do the same. Together we can help you transform your institution, your fundraising, and the community you serve.

Whether your need is in Capital Campaign, Annual Fund Campaign, Major Gifts, Leadership Annual Giving, Planned Giving or all of the above, we take a fresh approach to nonprofit fundraising.

[Our Services](#)



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www.fundraisingcounsel.com
info@alexanderhaas.com

Piedmont Place | 3520 Piedmont Place NE, Suite 450 |
Atlanta GA 30305-1512 | 404.525.7575

