



# RISE

Alexander Haas  
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

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

July 30, 2024



from the desk of  
**Jane DiFolco Parker** | Partner

## Board or Bored: The Consequential Role of Nonprofit Boards

According to USAFacts,\* there were 1.97M non-profit organizations operating in the U.S. in 2022. Of those, 1.48M were 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations, according to the IRS. Chances are pretty good that most, if not all of those 1.48M organizations have a board responsible for providing governance, strategic direction, and oversight. Board sizes vary dramatically; but for the sake of argument, let's assume the average board size is 15. (Note that, according to BoardSource, in 2007, the median board size, excluding those for churches, was 15). That means that, collectively, there are more than 22M non-profit board members in this country.

Board members are a tremendous source of expertise, financial support, and contacts. They help to ensure that organizations adhere to their missions, and that they remain accountable to their stakeholders, including the communities they service, their donors, and their beneficiaries. Their collective wisdom helps to steer the organization toward achieving its goals, while maintaining financial stability and legal compliance. Volunteer boards (we hope!) contribute to fundraising efforts and resource mobilization and play an active role in cultivating relationships with donors and other supporters, advocating for the organization's cause, and leveraging their networks to secure funding. In the not-for-profit space, funding is the lifeblood that fuels an organization's ability to fulfill its mission.

As is true in many sectors, non-profit boards face numerous challenges today. The complexities associated with governance are increasingly difficult in a highly regulated environment. Thus, they must remain informed about legal obligations, financial reporting standards and best practices in governance to mitigate risk and maintain public trust. They must respond to demands for increased transparency and accountability that result from intense public scrutiny and regulatory requirements. And, boards must ensure they include diversity of skills, perspectives, and demographics crucial to effective decision-making and representation of the community their organization serves.

Boards can and should be champions for their organizations, notwithstanding the increased complexities associated with serving, standing with them in times of crisis. It was much easier to effectively fulfill the responsibilities of being a board member when the work of non-profits,

especially institutions of higher learning, faced less onerous regulation, and when their work was less politicized. Nevertheless, these roles have seldom been more crucial to the overall health, viability, and positive impact of so many not-for-profit organizations.

What does all of this have to do with our work in philanthropy? Part of our responsibility is to make sure our board members are well-equipped to do their work on behalf of our organizations. Through effective orientation of new board members, ongoing training regarding good governance practices, and clear and transparent reporting and communication, we can keep our board members inspired and motivated to do their consequential work on behalf of our organizations.

The demand for philanthropic support continues to increase, and those of us in the fundraising profession face those demands daily. However, when done well, the investment of our time, effort, and energy in supporting, cultivating, and engaging our board members will generate real return on investment.

*\*USAFacts is a not-for-profit, nonpartisan civic initiative that strives to make government data easy for all Americans to access and understand.*

[Our Team](#)

## A Snapshot of State Independent Schools

We've got new data in from some Independent School State Associations. Let's see what the **Georgia Association of Independent Schools** participating schools report raising in philanthropic funds for data entry year 2023-2024.

School Count 45

Advancement Median Funds Received for '23	\$1,142,361
Median Number of Donors	891
Median Percent Participation by Constituency & Hard Credit Funds Received	
Median % Participation by Parents/Guardians of Current Students	63.0% \$393,659
Median % Participation by Alumni/ae	9.3% \$34,079
Median % Participation by Grandparents of Current Students	14.5% \$65,725
Median % Participation by Parents and Grandparents of Alumni/ae	7.5% \$160,409
Median % Participation by Employees	91.6% \$30,476

Trustees	
Median Number of Trustees	16
Median Hard Credit Funds Received by Trustees	\$35,450
Median Soft Credit Funds Received by Trustees	\$104,600
Funds Received by Purpose ('23)	
Median Funds Received for Current Operations: Unrestricted	\$684,791
Median Funds Received for Current Operations: Restricted	\$116,826
Median Funds Received for Endowment	\$235,530
Median Funds Received for Other Capital Purposes	\$923,467
Median Funds Received for Irrevocable Deferred Gifts at Face Value	\$350,000

[Our LinkedIn](#)

---

## What Gen X & Millennial Leaders Want

For some young people working in nonprofits, their organizations and leaders seem out of touch. Top officials, they believe, are too consumed by their legacy and the hunt for grants. They feel radical change is needed now – in how philanthropy dispenses money, how organizations fight crises, and how staff is managed – but they don't yet have the power or resources to make it happen. They have big ideas, but they're still being treated like kids.

*The Chronicle of Philanthropy* recently spoke with three young nonprofit leaders exploring divides in the country – including a generational divide playing out in organizations across the country. As younger millennials and members of Gen Z, the three have witnessed the effects of multiple crises – the Great Recession, climate change, a pandemic – from an early age. They are eager to do good, but they work in ways that are unfamiliar, even off-putting, to older generations.

Whether this is your generation or not, this insightful read sheds light on understanding how younger colleagues work and what they want from their jobs.

[Go here to read more.](#)

---

[Our Facebook](#)

---

## 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](#)





[www.fundraisingcounsel.com](http://www.fundraisingcounsel.com)  
[info@alexanderhaas.com](mailto:info@alexanderhaas.com)

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