

Impact Report

2024-2025



Creating Opportunities Through Education



Mission

Better Basics empowers children across Alabama by equipping them with foundational academic skills and educational opportunities for lifelong success.

Vision

We envision strong communities with expanded access to education where every child's potential is realized.

Words From Our Executive Director

Dear Better Basics partners and friends,

At Better Basics, we believe education creates opportunity, and this year, we saw that belief in action.

Our Reading Intervention students made extraordinary progress, growing an average of 1 year and 5 months in reading skills in just 20 weeks. Students in our Mathematics Intervention and Ready to Rise programs made similar impressive advances in their academic skills and grade level proficiency. Through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, more than 15,000 children received a free book each month, sparking a love of reading that will last a lifetime. Better Basics distributes books in each of our 12 programs, because access to books in the home is the single greatest predictor of academic success for children. In total, last year, we distributed over 199,000 books across Central Alabama

Each of these numbers represents a brighter future for a child in Alabama. They reflect our mission to empower children with the skills and opportunities they need for lifelong success—and the dedication of our partners, educators, and supporters who make it possible.

Thank you for believing in our vision of strong communities where every child's potential is realized. This tremendous year at Better Basics was possible through dedicated and talented staff, committed volunteers, dynamic Board of Directors, and generous funders- just like you!

Together, we are truly creating opportunities through education.

With gratitude,



Catherine Goudreau
Executive Director



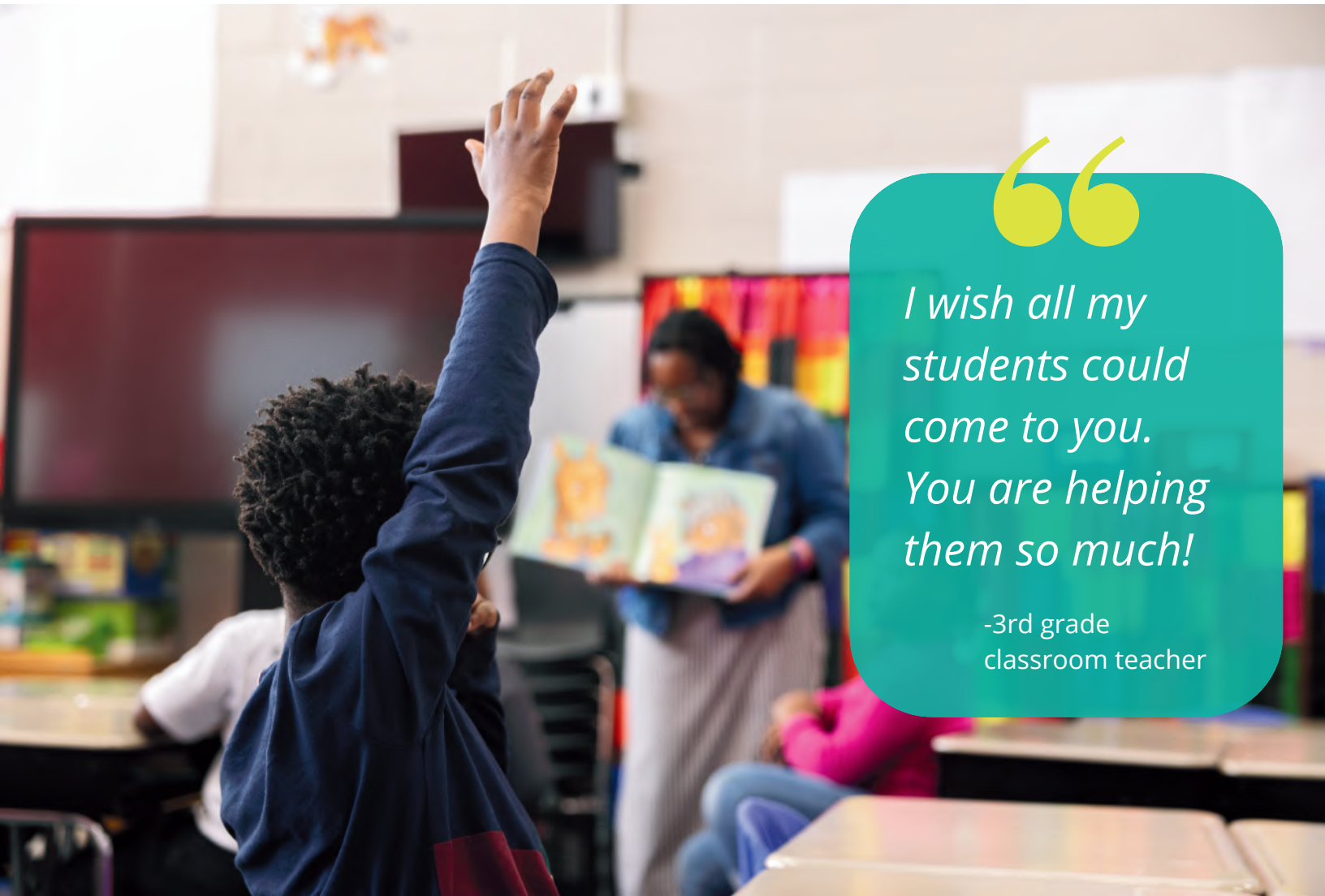
Our Impact

Research shows a clear link between poverty and academic proficiency—as the percentage of students living in poverty increases, proficiency tends to decrease.

The Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP), the state's yearly standardized test, illustrates this challenge. In the school systems we serve, reading proficiency rates are up to 30 percentage points below the state average, and in some areas, math proficiency falls into the single digits, signaling a math crisis that demands early, strategic support.

Through our 12 programs, Better Basics helps close these gaps by providing critical intervention, hands-on enrichment experiences, and by distributing books that bring learning to life both in classrooms and at home.

Education creates opportunity—and for thousands of children across Central Alabama, that opportunity begins with Better Basics.



“

I wish all my students could come to you. You are helping them so much!

-3rd grade classroom teacher



40,229

**total children
served**



199,230

**children's books
distributed**



55,530

**intervention
sessions delivered**



690

volunteers



93

**part-time certified
teachers**

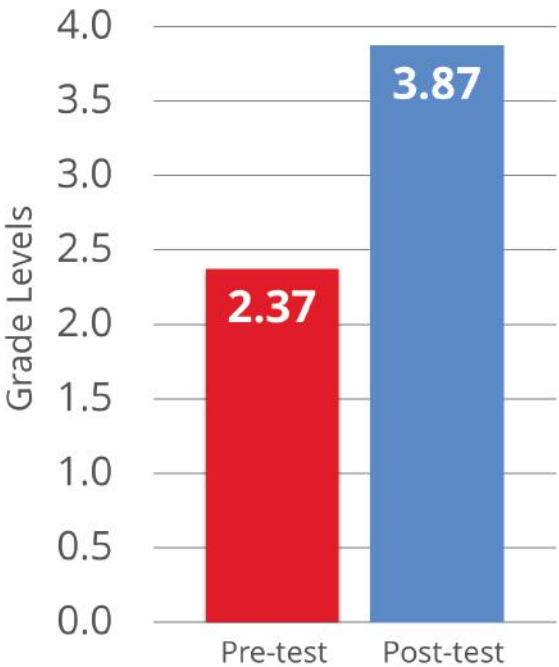
Program Highlights

Reading Intervention

Better Basics’ Reading Intervention program provides small-group, data-driven instruction led by certified teachers, helping students strengthen literacy skills and make measurable progress in just 20 weeks. Last year’s cohort of students grew an average 1 year and 5 month in reading skills.

Delivered on-site during the school day and aligned with the Alabama State Department of Education Academic Standards, Reading Intervention builds foundational skills in phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension through engaging, research-based lessons. Students meet in groups of three to four, receiving individualized instruction three times per week from October through March. Progress is carefully measured using the SORT assessment.

549 Students, Grades 1-4



“

Last year, I was afraid to take the ACAP, but I'm not afraid anymore since I've been coming to your class.

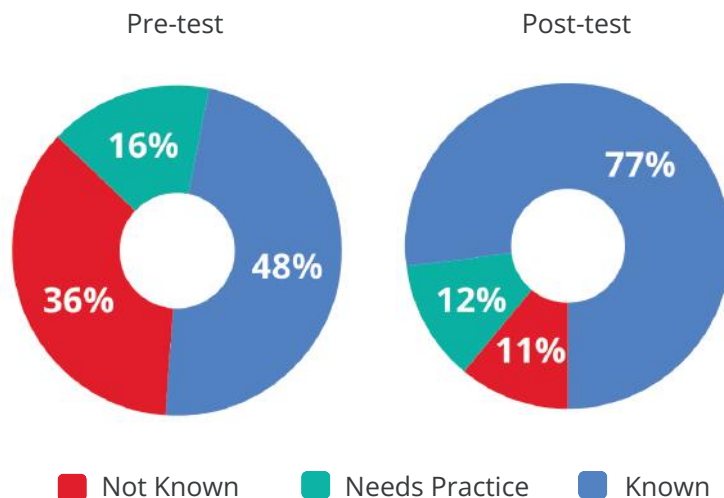
-3rd grade student
Mathematics Intervention



Mathematics Intervention

Better Basics' Mathematics Intervention program provides small-group instruction in core math concepts fully aligned with the Alabama State Department of Education Academic Standards. Led by certified teachers on-site during the school day, students meet three times per week for 20 weeks. Last year's cohort of students increased mastery of critical math skills by 60%.

296 Students, Grades 1-4



Program Highlights

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

As Alabama's largest Local Program Partner, Better Basics funds and administers Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Jefferson and Walker Counties. Through Better Basics, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library provides a free, high-interest book each month to more than 15,000 children from birth to age five. Research shows that children who participate in this program are 30% more prepared for kindergarten and later outperform peers in reading, science, and math.



21st Century Community Learning Centers

Better Basics' 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) serve pre-k through 12th-grade students in Fairfield City, Tarrant City, and Dallas County Schools with afterschool and summer academic and enrichment programming. Last year, more than 420 students participated in our 21st CCLC programs. They benefitted from small-group tutoring, enrichment, ACAP/ACT prep, physical fitness, homework help, and STEM—all designed to promote learning and curiosity in a safe, supportive environment.



Ready to Rise

Ready to Rise prepares rising kindergarteners for school success through engaging, hands-on lessons, building early literacy, science, and math skills. Last year, participants showed a 54% increase in overall kindergarten readiness.



Better Basics Reads

Better Basics Reads is our largest annual volunteer engagement event, bringing the community together to celebrate the joy of reading. This past spring, hundreds of volunteers—including individuals, community groups, and company teams—visited classrooms across five school systems, where each class welcomed a guest reader for a special story time. Each student received a copy of the featured book to take home, building personal libraries and inspiring a lifelong love of reading. This year, we read and distributed books to more than 13,500 students.

“

I wholeheartedly and without reservation recommend this program to anyone who works with the pre-k population and hope we will be selected to participate again next year!

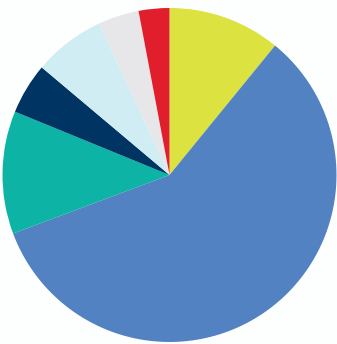
-Ready to Rise Childcare
Center Director



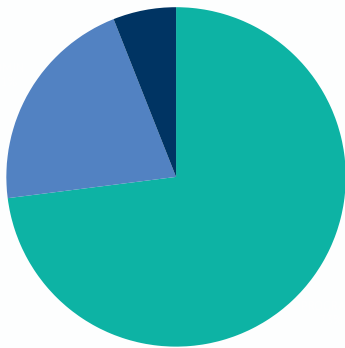
Finances

Income

Government	59%
Grants	12%
Program Fees	11%
Contributions	7%
United Way	5%
Other	4%
Events	3%
Total	\$3,517,522.14



*percentages do not round to 100%



Expenses

Programming	73%
Administrative	21%
Fundraising	6%
Total	\$3,143,724

In 2025, Better Basics earned a 100% rating from Charity Navigator—the highest possible score. This top distinction reflects our commitment to strong financial health, transparency, and accountability.



We are also proud to hold the 2025 Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency, the highest level of recognition awarded by Candid. This distinction ensures donors and partners have the insights they need to give with confidence.



Board of Directors 2025-2026

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Smith System

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Bradley

Carla Jean Whitley
Brasfield & Gorrie

Chase Wright
Spire Energy

Funding Partners

\$10,000+

Alabama Department of Education
Alabama Department of Finance
Alabama Power Foundation
ASH Renovations
Joseph S. Bruno Charitable Foundation
Charles & Estelle Campbell Foundation
Caring Foundation of BCBS of AL
City of Birmingham
Comer Foundation
Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham
Daniel Foundation of Alabama
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Equity Fund
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Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation

Hill Crest Foundation
Independent Presbyterian Church Foundation
Hugh Kaul Foundation
Kinder Morgan Foundation
Robert R. Meyer Foundation
Protective Life Foundation
Regions Foundation
Sanders Family Foundation
Lawrence Sanders Foundation
Solar Quest Foundation, Inc.
Southeastern Grocers Foundation
United Way of Central Alabama
Vulcan Materials Foundation
Walker Area Community Foundation
Susan Mott Webb Charitable Trust

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Altec, Inc.
Amazon Bessemer
AmFirst
Jay Bennett
Lee Benton
Birmingham Kiwanis Foundation
Will & Mary Blalock
Caldwell-Stair Charitable Fund
Church Of Jesus Christ of LDS
Cooper Family Advised Fund
Drummond Company

Hoar Construction
O'Neal Industries
O'Neal Manufacturing Services
Rx Benefits
JT Stephens Foundation
Thompson Foundation
VIVA Health
Ted & Dawn Walton
H Evan & Margaret Shook Zeiger Charitable Fund

\$1,000 - \$4,999

ADP Employee Matching Fund
Alabama Credit Union
Rick & Mary Jane Arendale
AT&T Foundation
Balch & Bingham
Charles E. Ball, Jr.
Casey Bartok Family
Birmingham Jewish Foundation
BMSS Advisors & CPAs
Bradley
Brasfield & Gorrie
Burr Forman
CAPtrust
Shannon Champion
Dotdash Meredith
D Bryan Drummond Fund
Anirban Ghosh
Abigail Harwood Bat Mitzvah
Anna Slive Harwood
Hearst Employee Matching Fund
Jim & Marilyn Henry
Lee Ann & Melvin H Jacobs Foundation
Jemison, Day & Lacy Families
Walker Johnson
Junior League of Birmingham
Kiwanis Club of Mountain
Brook/Homewood

KPMG LLP
Mayfair Advisory Group
Milo's Tea
Mission LLC
Nick's Kids Foundation
Oakworth Capital Bank
Pangea Two
Leah Perez
Protective Employee Matching Fund
Kyle Raburn
Regions Employee Matching Fund
Dr. Robert & Judy Rutstein
Amanda Saint
Joseph Sandner IV
Chris Seaman
Sexton Family Charitable Fund
Eric Siegal
Southern Power
The Speaker Group
Spire Foundation
Stonegate Investment Group
Synovus Bank
Tacala Companies
US Tennis Association
George & Debbie Whitty

“If you want to give a gift, if you want to do something special in this world that affects the lives of children—not just today, but for years and generations to come—support Better Basics.”

-Bernice Jones
Better Basics Teacher of the Year



Community Partners

ABC 33/40 TV
Adah International
AKA Sorority, Inc. (Phi Iota Omega Chapter)
Alabama Power
American Pipe & Supply
AmFirst
Arise, Inc.
Bessemer City Schools
Beyond Just Hoops
Bham Now
Birmingham Business Journal
Birmingham Children's Theater
Birmingham City Schools
Birmingham Museum of Art
Birmingham Retired Teachers
Birthwell Partners
The BJCC
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama
Birmingham Promise
Birmingham Retired Teachers
Brown's Education Consulting, LLC
Bundles of Hope
The Candy J Agency
ChessKids Nation
City of Birmingham - Parks & Recreation
Creative Crochet
Dallas County Schools
Delta Inc. - Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Fairfield City Schools
Habitat for Humanity
Housing Authority of Birmingham District
i3 Academy
Jefferson County Family Resource Center
Jefferson County Housing Authority
Jefferson State Community College
Junior League of Birmingham



KPMG LLP
Learning Excellence Through Tennis
The Literacy Council
Milo's Tea
MindFit Creative Coaching Services
Nathifa Dance
Nothing but Love Homestead LLC
O'Neal Industries
Pillar of Hope Church
PROSPER
Red Mountain Theater
Regions Bank
Restoration Academy
Ross Bridge Church
Rotary Club of Birmingham
Samford University
Sleep in Heavenly Peace
The SMARTPLAY
Owens Modern Manufacturing

Spire Energy
Southern Company
St. Clair County Literacy Council
StoneRiver Company
Tacala Companies
Talladega County Schools
Tarrant City Schools
Tiger Power Team
TMZ Farms
UAB School of Medicine
UAB - Serve 205
Vestavia Hills High School Literacy Club
VIVA Health
WBHM Radio
WBRC Fox 6 TV
Woman of Worth, Inc.
WVTM-TV 13
Youth LEAD





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