

# Teaching Matters

## 2013-2014 Annual Report



**TEACHING  
MATTERS**

Great teachers.  
Bright futures.



## From the Chairman of the Board and Executive Director



We approach the 20th anniversary of Teaching Matters with pride—knowing that we have been part of the national effort to improve educational outcomes for urban students. We were founded based on a simple but powerful idea. Teaching matters—it's our name and our philosophy. We have seen time and time again there is no single more important school-based factor linked to children's educational success than the quality of the teaching they get.

Unfortunately, education in this country is radically unequal. Children in areas of concentrated poverty continue to face yawning gaps in the quality of education they receive. Millions are leaving school without even basic math and reading skills. Our work is in schools where there's the greatest need and the greatest potential to make a difference. Using our time-tested approach, we help redress one of the most important public policy and justice issues of our time—making sure that all children get the quality instruction that can help them reach their fullest potential.

From 1994 until today, we have collaborated with close to 50,000 educators from 1,800+ schools to improve instruction and school culture with the goal of advancing student achievement. But we didn't do it alone. We are inspired by the teachers we support, who work so doggedly for their students, and we have learned from them. We also recognize the urgent challenges that they encounter each day in the classroom, and are mindful that we have a long way to go. We are indebted to our board, without whom we could not thrive, and every one of our staff and supporters who help us make a difference in the lives of so many young people.

At Teaching Matters, we operate on the philosophy that the best way to strengthen urban public schools is to stand side by side with teachers and principals, and to help build teacher leaders who can support their colleagues. We look forward to increasing our impact in the coming years so that even more children can receive the quality education they deserve.

We are so very grateful for your commitment.

Sincerely,

*Olga Votis*      *Lynette Guastafarro*

Olga Votis,  
Chairman of the Board

Lynette Guastafarro,  
Executive Director

# Tribute to Elizabeth Rohatyn



**“I believe we all have a responsibility to become active in our communities, particularly to ensure the educational advancement of children.”**

**—Elizabeth Rohatyn**

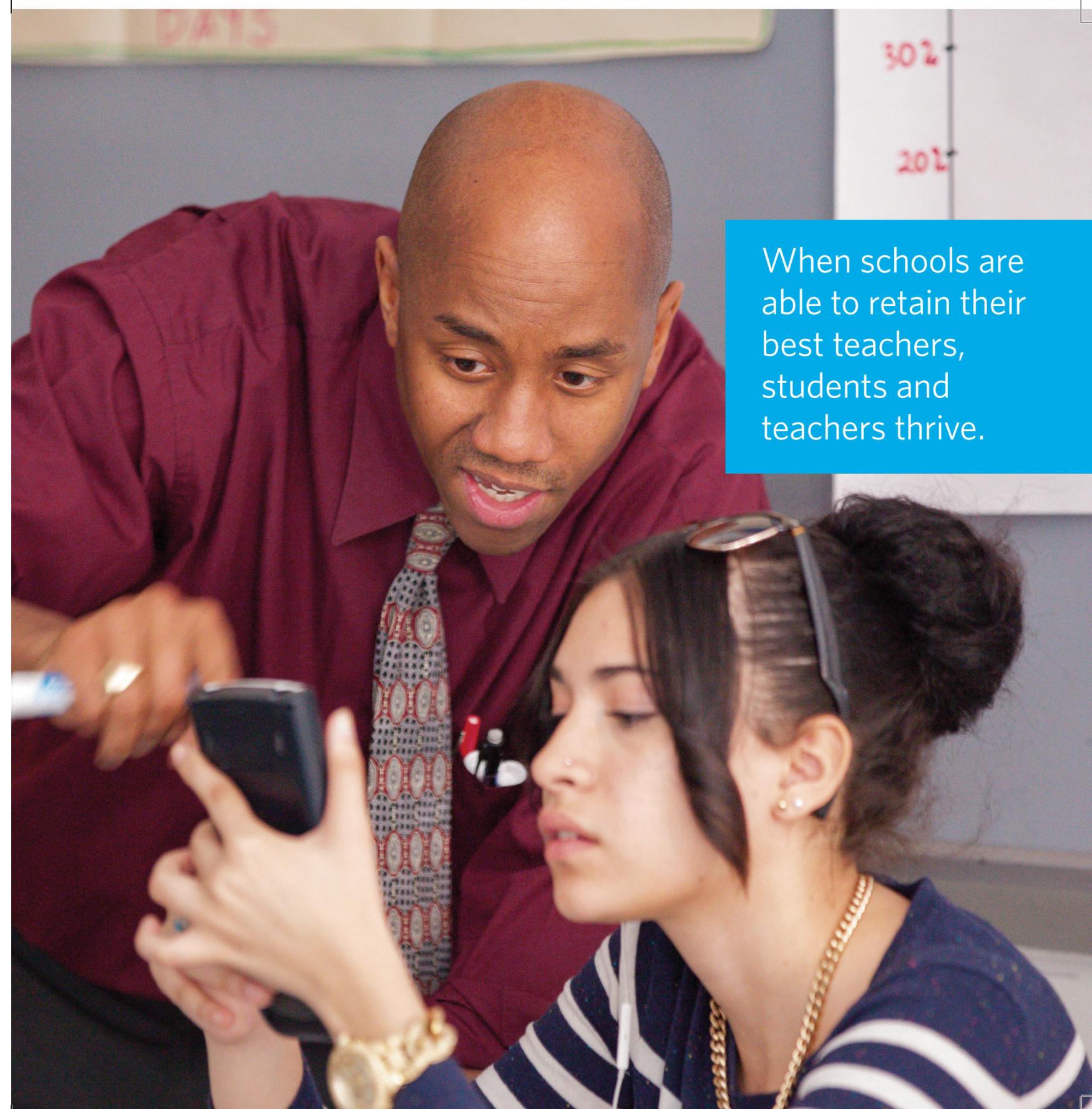
In 1994, Elizabeth Rohatyn founded Teaching Matters to help level the playing field for every child being educated in our urban public schools. She was also at the forefront of helping educators use technology as a tool for teaching and learning. She believed that student success depends squarely on the quality of the teacher in the classroom. As an early champion of this emerging movement, she rallied public interest and private backing for this unsung cause. Today, Teaching Matters is among the top 10 providers of professional development to New York City public schools.

Her devotion to teachers and students has served as an unshakable foundation, enabling the rapid growth

and success of Teaching Matters. Her exemplary work has been widely recognized, and she was awarded an honorary doctorate and President’s Medal by the Bank Street College of Education, which singled out her “commitment to educational excellence.”

Elizabeth Rohatyn epitomizes the very spirit of public service. She was then, and remains, a passionate advocate for teachers and their need for quality professional support. Her dedication to the young people of New York City is an example for us all. We are honored to follow her lead.

— *The board and staff of Teaching Matters*



When schools are able to retain their best teachers, students and teachers thrive.

# Creating Excellence in Education



### Who We Are

Teaching Matters is dedicated to increasing teacher effectiveness, one of the most critical factors in student success. Our services transform how educators work together at urban public schools, helping the most effective teachers develop the skills they need to lead their peers and drive school-wide improvement. We also partner with school leadership to create a work environment that equips teachers to succeed in the classroom.



### Why We Exist

Our mission is to develop and retain great teachers, and measurably increase their ability to give students in urban public schools an excellent education.



### Seizing the Opportunity

Education in this country is at a critical juncture. It is radically unequal. Millions of urban students arrive at school already two years behind, leaving schools with the basic math and reading skills required for their success. Schools need extensive help

starting with the transformation of the professional culture of teaching and the building of teacher effectiveness.

### A 20-Year Retrospective

For the past two decades, Teaching Matters has been committed to promoting real and lasting changes to teacher quality that will foster student success. We have grown from 10 professional developers who provided hands-on teacher training in 25 schools in our first year to four times the staff, providing direct services to thousands of teachers annually.



Our services transform how educators work together at urban public schools and drive school-wide improvement.

# Broad Reach, Big Benefits



During the past year we provided in-depth programming to approximately 1,600 teachers reaching about 23,000 students in over 100 schools—the majority in underserved areas.

We stand out among other groups trying to raise teacher performance because of our commitment to the public interest, and our nearly two decades of experience fighting for urban students' futures.

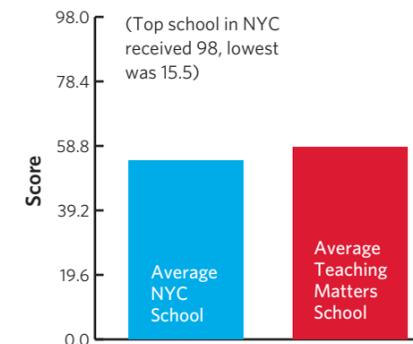
**"Over the last several years, your coaches have helped us transform the school!"**

**— Scott Herman,  
Assistant Principal,  
K228**



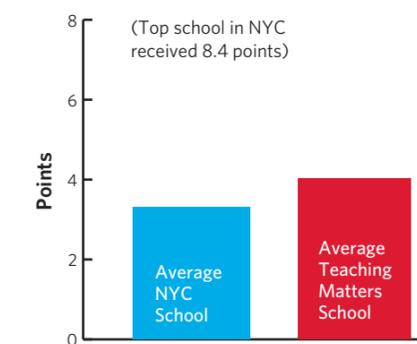
## Overall School Progress

NYC schools receive an overall score that combines their student progress, student achievement and their school's environment.



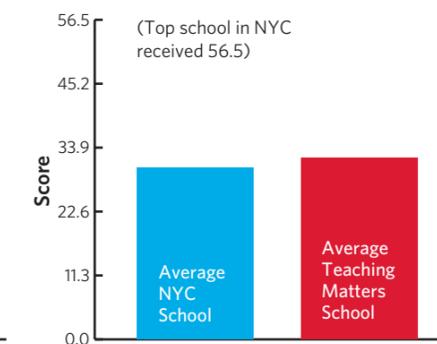
## Closing the Achievement Gap in Urban Schools

NYC schools receive a score for Closing the Achievement Gap when their high-need students make exemplary gains. Teaching Matters schools outperformed the NYC average for closing the achievement gap.



## Student Progress Score

NYC schools receive a score for the progress their students make in math and English Language Arts. Teaching Matters schools showed greater progress than NYC average for improving student progress.



# Implementing the Common Core



Teaching Matters works closely with principals and their teachers to help ease the demanding transition to recently adopted national standards, the Common Core. These nationally consistent measures for college and career readiness create increasing expectations for student proficiency unfamiliar to many teachers, and bring greater rigor to classrooms.

Around the country, educators have been overwhelmed by the need to change how they teach and what is expected of their students. Teaching Matters works alongside schools and teachers to develop and align their lessons, improve their assessment practices, and elevate their teaching.



Two-thirds of teachers participating in year-end focus groups connected our flagship program, Teaching for Impact, to sudden and profound increases in student understanding—citing informal classroom assessments or in-class observations as evidence.

# Programs That Matter



## Teaching for Impact

Teaching Matters partners with schools, networks and school districts to provide high-impact and customized professional development for teachers and leaders. Our team of expert coaches provide in-person support to meet schools' needs and goals. Teaching Matters partnerships are strategically designed for rapidly improving teacher effectiveness across a variety of frameworks and accountability models. Teaching for Impact answers today's growing demand for improved teacher performance and measurable student progress.

## Voices & Choices

Our civics program, Voices & Choices, supports teachers to introduce students to the foundations, issues and responsibilities of democracy and citizenship. Throughout the program, students develop critical-thinking, collaboration and other essential skills. When participating, students present their work in a citywide Civil Rights Summit or Constitution Today Town Meeting, showcasing the results of their learning—and the lessons of civic responsibility.



A recent independent study demonstrated that Teaching Matters' literacy curriculum, Writing Matters, significantly improved the writing success of students. On average, 1,000 6<sup>th</sup> graders improved by nearly 4 percentage points in their writing skills, while some schools posted average gains for their students of over 5 percentage points.



## Writing Matters

Closely aligned to the Common Core State Standards, Writing Matters engages upper elementary and middle students in the writing process. Developed by us over the course of three years with nationally recognized experts, our original content and interactive technology are seamlessly integrated. Students develop their writing skills as they generate ideas and topics, organize, compose, revise and publish their work online.

Founded by Elizabeth Rohatyn  
**1994**

Wrote citywide technology plan for New York City Department of Education  
**1996**

Offered our @School Anytime online platform to 1,000 principals and teachers  
**2001**

Introduced civics program for more than 10,000 students, funded by the NYC Council  
**2003**

Established two secondary schools promoting technology-enriched instruction, reaching more than 10,000 students in 10 years  
**2004**

Honored by Mayor Bloomberg in proclamation recognizing Teaching Matters' Day  
**2005**

Developed a comprehensive middle school writing program  
**2007**

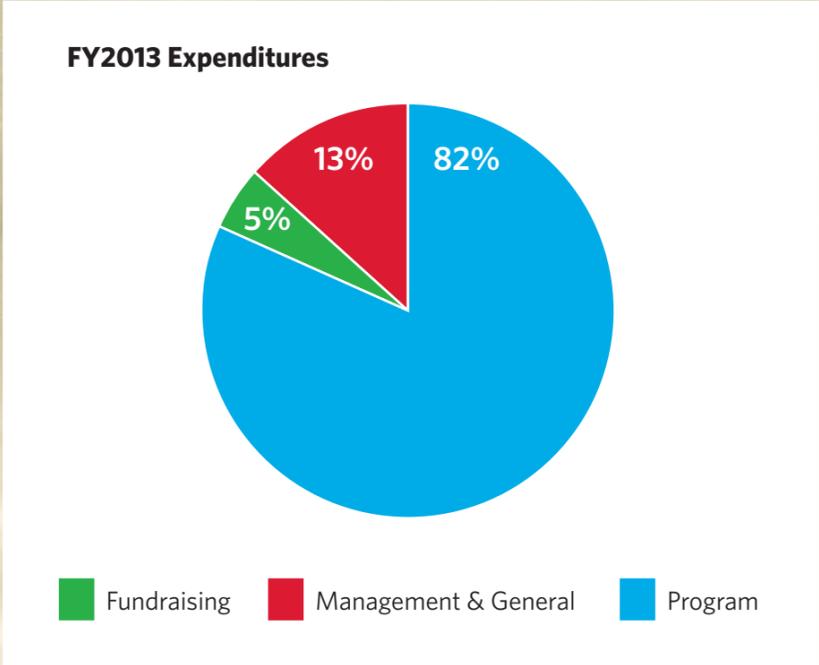
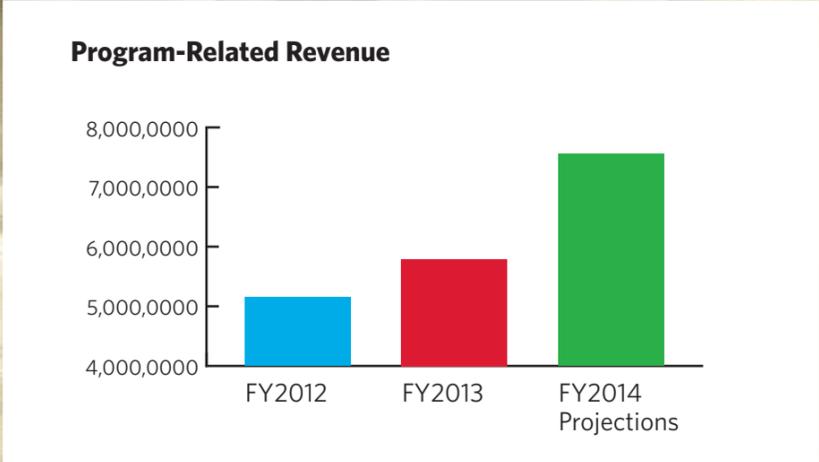
# Increasing Your Impact



**Private philanthropy strengthens our ability to innovate, research and test new designs for teaching and learning.**

Urban school districts are forced to spend millions every year on teacher recruitment. When schools are able to foster and support effective teaching, stability is increased, students benefit, and thousands of dollars are saved and can be invested in critical programs.

Through the generosity of our donors we are able to multiply the impact of public dollars with the private money we raise. 82 percent of our revenue supports program development and our work in schools.



- 2009** Implemented nationally recognized math program citywide
- 2010** Selected by NYC DOE to participate in their largest **Race to the Top** grants, and selected by the Division of Non-Public Schools to lead the professional development support for Title I Teachers at more than 300 schools
- 2011** Launched Elizabeth Rohatyn Prize for Schools Where Teaching Matters
- 2013** Established a Teaching Matters network of 24 pre-K to 12 schools, reaching over 25,000 students
- 2014** Designed K-3 literacy program

# Supporting Queens Middle School 202



Each year our programming benefits more than 20,000 students and their teachers—preparing today’s learners for college and career readiness. At Queens Middle School 202, a total of 78 teachers of Math, English and other subjects are successfully working shoulder to shoulder to look at student work, design common assessments, and use data to improve instruction and student performance.

*Kim Pellegrino, Lead Teacher:* “We were trained by Teaching Matters to build . . . professional learning communities within our grade and help . . . teachers . . . collaborate together [so that] students reach their learning goals and close the learning gaps that we have within each grade. . . [Teaching Matters] taught us how to get . . . teachers thinking outside the box.”

*Stacey Mizrahi, Assistant Principal:* “In school buildings the hardest thing to do is to find time and money. That’s what Teaching Matters has helped me structure: how to use . . . time and money in a more productive way so that teachers can continue to learn and pass that on to their students.”



96% of principals surveyed said that they would recommend Teaching Matters to another school.

# Leading the Way



Teaching Matters has made great strides influencing education and the people who drive it. To continue our mission, we must be actively involved in the conversation, from hosting events on core topics facing education today to developing programs that celebrate the great work of schools that strive for excellence.

## **Elizabeth Rohatyn Prize for Schools Where Teaching Matters**

The aim of the Elizabeth Rohatyn Prize is both to honor schools dedicated to teachers' professional growth, and share replicable strategies to elevate student learning. Each year Teaching Matters awards

\$25,000 to the school with the best strategies to develop, retain and reward effective teachers.

## **New York City Department of Education Partnership Support Organization**

In July 2013, the New York City Department of Education named Teaching Matters a Partnership Support Organization (PSO). We began a network with 24 partnering schools, and now we have an even stronger platform for researching and disseminating best practices in teacher effectiveness. We emphasize data-informed instructional techniques and strategies and shared leadership and accountability.

## **Early Reading Matters Program**

Recognizing the array of early reading challenges faced by teachers in city classrooms, a new K-3 early education component of our teacher effectiveness program is being developed, called "Early Reading Matters." Funded by the New York Community Trust Brooke Astor Fund for New York City Education, this program will improve literacy teaching and learning by deepening teachers' knowledge of high-impact reading strategies and building professional learning communities that foster best practice development and sharing.

## **Annual Champions of Education Luncheon**

Our Annual Champions of Education Luncheon aims to bring influential practice leaders together to discuss critical challenges affecting education today. Past speakers include leaders from the American Federation of Teachers, New York State, Columbia University and prominent members of the international community. Over 200 participants attend each year.

## **Points of Practice Magazine**

Launched in March 2014, Points of Practice is a multimedia e-zine that offers varied perspectives on pressing education concerns. Points of Practice will appear 2-3 times per year, gathering voices from multiple disciplines.



# What the Future Holds



**Schools need extensive help, particularly in urban environments. It starts with transforming the professional culture of teaching.**

For 20 years, Teaching Matters has been—and remains—deeply committed to the students and educators of New York. Now we are extending our geographical scope and capitalizing on work we’ve done here and in schools from Colorado to Georgia to our tri-state neighbors.

Through continuous improvement and our activities, we will develop better ways to enhance leadership support and training, develop programming that serves all education levels, and continue to work closely with educators and policy-makers to help create greater alignment of Common Core curriculum and best practices.



“Our core values fuel our commitment to student success and are evident in all aspects of what we do, from how we’ve designed our services to the way we approach each day of work.”  
—Olga Votis, Chairman, Teaching Matters

# Thank You to Our Supporters

It takes a village to make teaching matter. We would like to thank our esteemed board, council, donors and supporters for heeding the call and helping us make a significant and long-lasting impact in our community.

## Board Members

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Lisa Vertucci, *Executive and Leadership Development Coach*

Elizabeth Rohatyn, *Founder and Chairman Emerita The Felix and Elizabeth Rohatyn Foundation*

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Patricia Farman-Farmaian, *Co-Chair*

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Sonny Kalsi

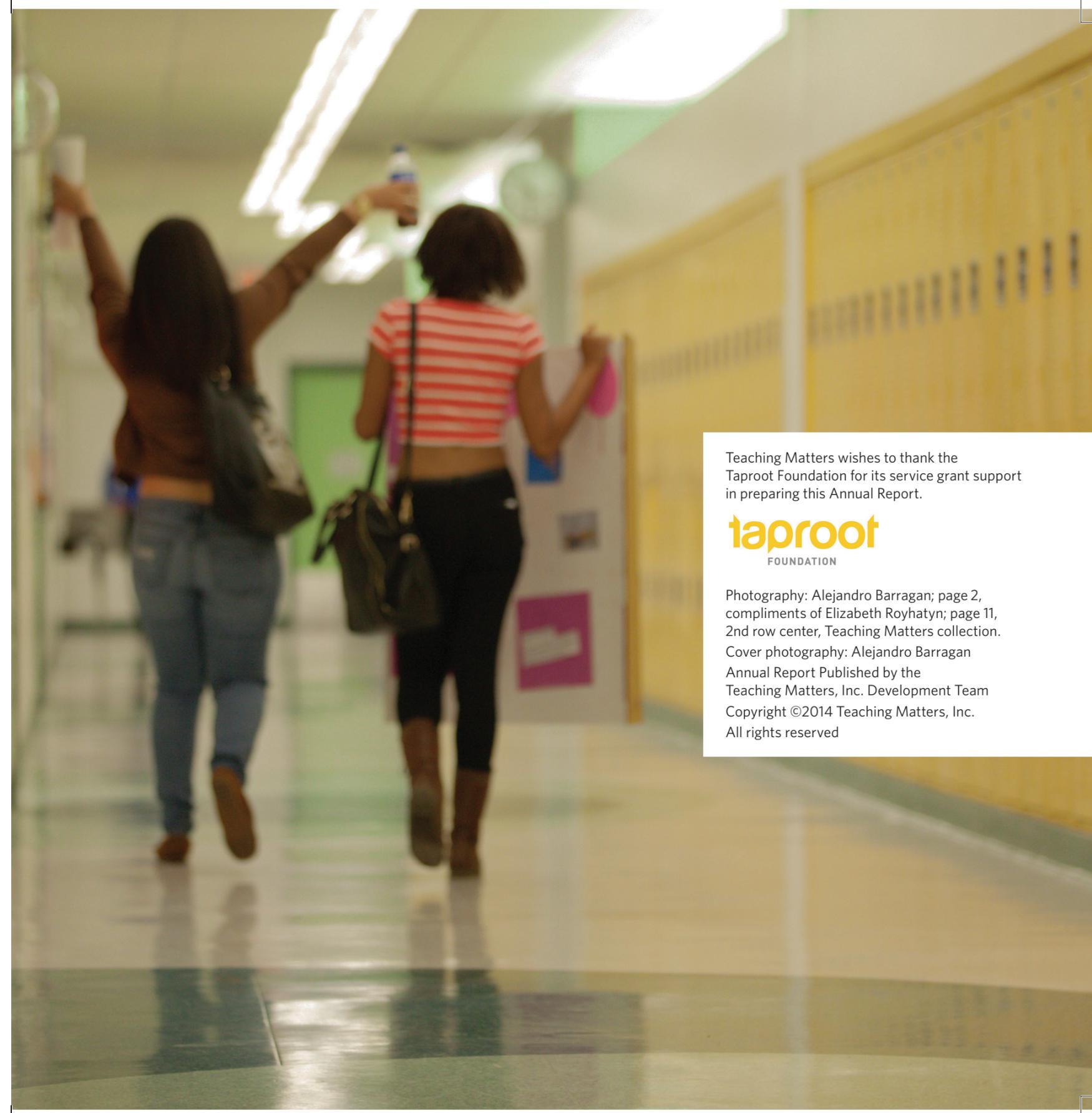
Roxann Taylor

Olga Votis

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Photography: Alejandro Barragan; page 2, compliments of Elizabeth Royhatyn; page 11, 2nd row center, Teaching Matters collection. Cover photography: Alejandro Barragan Annual Report Published by the Teaching Matters, Inc. Development Team Copyright ©2014 Teaching Matters, Inc. All rights reserved





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