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Little Kids Rock is a nonprofit that transforms lives by restoring, expanding, and innovating music education in our schools. We launch free music programs across the country by providing our partner schools with the musical instruments, lessons and teacher training necessary to build or grow their music programming. For 18 years, our culturally sustaining, highly inclusive approach to music education has helped schools build programs that are as diverse as the children they serve.

The 2019-2020 school year started like any other for the team at Little Kids Rock. Beginning in June, our staff was training teachers from schools around the country in order to help them launch new, and vibrant music programs. Participating kids began learning how to play, perform and compose using the musical styles they love, genres like rock, pop, Latin, rap and others.

Things were going really well. We had trained hundreds of teachers, distributed thousands of instruments and launched new programs to serve over eighty-five thousand new students in elementary, middle and high schools in dozens of states. Combined with the work we had done since our founding eighteen years earlier, 2020 would become the year that Little Kids Rock brought the transformational gift of music to our one millionth student.

Then, in March 2020, the pandemic hit our nation and our schools like a meteorite.

Our teachers and our team had to pivot overnight. The majority of our students were forced into on-line learning from home or had to navigate complicated, new hybrid schedules. This is the story of a school year unlike any in our organization’s history. It was a school year when our teachers used the power of music to keep their students close, even when they needed to be apart. It was a school year when our teachers stepped up as emotional first responders for their students. It was a year that reminded us of the many powerful benefits that music brings to our human family, especially to our children.

Introduction: Keeping the Beat During Disruption
The 2019-2020 school year began with a flurry of activity. That’s because much goes into launching new Little Kids Rock programs. Each time that we begin serving a new school, our dedicated staff works to recruit teachers and to train them in our unique and impactful approach to education. We also provide these new teachers with the musical instruments and the lesson materials they need in order to build their programs. Between the start of the school year and the beginning of winter, our team had facilitated the launching of new Little Kids Rock music programs in hundreds of schools across dozens of states. These new programs allowed us to add tens of thousands of new students to our roster.

July through February looked like this...

Our Program Expands
July-March 2020

86,716 New Students Reached
1,004 Teachers Trained
5,556 New Instruments
379 Little Kids Rock Programs Launched in 29 States
As with past years, our significant 2019-2020 program growth was facilitated by the unique way that Little Kids Rock partnered with educators on both the local and national levels.

Our music programs are known by the name we invented for them over a decade ago: modern band. Children in our modern band programs learn to play the popular musical styles they know love. From rock ‘n’ roll to rap, R&B to Latin, pop and more, our modern band classes leverage the cultural capital of today's youth. This helps our schools build music classes that are as diverse as the students they serve.

Our programs utilize the musical instruments and technologies that are common to contemporary popular music: computer, guitar, bass, drums, piano, voice, internet technology, apps, recording hardware and the like. Our programming brings music education into the digital age. The world of music does not stand still and nor should music education.
Once launched with a school district, these modern band programs endure for many years and frequently become a permanent feature in our partner districts’ music programming. Using our training, instruments and curriculum, new Little Kids Rock schools create “seats” in their modern band classes. These seats fill with new students each year as students from each grade graduate. This enables a single teacher to reach many students over time. It also means that our investments and impact compound with each successive year that the program operates.

**Our Program Lasts**

Our program is low cost and high impact. It changes schools, teachers, and kids.
The Stars Aligned

We began sharing the exciting news that we would soon serve our one millionth student at our annual benefit event in NYC on October 10th, 2019. A diverse line-up of stars came out to help us raise the remaining funds we would need. Usher, Wiz Khalifa, Warren Haynes, Steve Miller, Trombone Shorty and Jon Secada were among the luminaries who helped us raise over $1,000,000.

Wiz Khalifa was moved to donate to a Little Kids Rock classroom near his home in LA and also made a generous donation to support our programs in his hometown of Pittsburgh, PA.

Power of Women honoree, Chaka Khan, was sure to use her feature in Variety to show her support of music programs in schools.

Usher was inspired too! His Nancy Lackey Educational Foundation supported the launch of a new chapter of Little Kids Rock in Chattanooga, TN.

Kelly Clarkson, a longtime supporter of Little Kids Rock, starred in Trolls World Tour with fellow musician/actors Justin Timberlake, Anna Kendrick, Chance the Rapper, J Balvin, and many more. Together, the cast helped raise needed funds for music education.
The Year is Disrupted... but Not the Music!
April-July 2020

Just as our dream of reaching our 1,000,000th student came true in March, the nightmare of the COVID-19 struck. It upended our schools across the country. By the thousands, Little Kids Rock teachers took to on-line teaching. Classrooms tuned into Zoom rooms. Making music together was out. Making music using the internet was in. Everything seemed to change overnight.

But not everything had changed.

Music and its power to change our students’ lives remained a constant. The team at Little Kids Rock pivoted immediately to meet the new and pressing needs of our students and teachers during the crisis. We created a series of daily video lessons for students. We donated valuable on-line courses in songwriting and music production. We offered weekly on-line trainings for our teachers to help them teach in on-line and hybrid classrooms. We distributed millions of dollars-worth of badly needed musical equipment and other resources.

Little Kids Rock collaborated with musical luminaries like David Hidalgo of Los Lobos, Trombone Shorty, and many others to perform the Grateful Dead’s "Touch of Grey."
April-July 2020

Using these resources and their own incredible resiliency and creativity, Little Kids Rock teachers across the country didn't miss a beat. They kept music classes running for their 565,804 students at a time when the music meant more than ever. They stepped up and used music to serve as emotional first responders for their students.

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“One thing about music – when it hits you, you feel no pain.”

-Bob Marley
During the pandemic, we were forced to face the challenging fact that over one third of all US students either don’t have the internet in their homes or lack enough bandwidth for on-line learning. That’s why Little Kids Rock teachers like Melissa Morris in Staten Island and Courtney Powers in Philly and SO many others donned masks, gloves and hand sanitizer to safely deliver musical instruments and equipment to children as they sheltered in place in their homes.

All of our teachers have shown us the power that music has to keep their students emotionally close even as they need to stay physically distant. More than ever, our students need music in their lives in order to soothe, console, lift, empower, comfort and inspire them. In uncertain times, the transcendent power of music is a certainty.

Little Kids Rock teacher, Suzanne Spencer, was interviewed on a local news station about her inspiring work to bring music to her students during the pandemic.
“Music will be the forefront of change in the world.”
- Student

“Music is really important, especially now. Because more now than ever positive messages can really help us through these times.”
- Student

“My students and I look forward to jamming every week. The music room is a safe haven.”
- Rossana Parodi, Teacher

“Without Little Kids Rock’s program, Miami-Dade county schools would not have instruments to use with their students. This program has changed our schools for the better, now we can reach even more students to love music.”
- Christy Go, Teacher

“Little Kids Rock's program really allows for student buy-in and input. They select much of the music and have the option to move from instrument to instrument (or voice) based upon their abilities and interest. They know it's their band!”
- Ken Johnson, Teacher

“Music will always be in my heart and follow me wherever I go.”
- Student
A Goal Becomes a Milestone:
We Serve Our 1,000,000th Student!

In 2017, we set ourselves an audacious goal. We would bring music education to our one millionth student by the year 2020. This figure seemed intimidating at first. However, the four years-worth of hard work and an investment of over $20 million dollars which followed put us on a course to hit that goal before the end of the 2019-2020 school year.
In 2014 and 2015 Little Kids Rock collaborated with The Center for Arts Education Research (CAER) at Teachers College, Columbia University, to refine our outcome measurement tools, focusing on both outputs, such as key components of musical aptitude, and psychosocial development. In our 2019-2020 program assessment we studied the impact of our new virtual programming, including curriculum, professional development, community engagement initiatives and other digital tools, and found that these new virtual resources have better equipped Little Kids Rock teachers to engage with their students remotely, and have also contributed to students’ ability to continue learning throughout the pandemic.

Year after year, modern band programs engage young people who may feel underrepresented in school music programs as their culture may not be reflected in what they see and hear in the classroom. As well as playing and performing music by their favorite contemporary artists, students enrolled in modern band classes write original music in collaboration with their peers, fostering community and developing vital teamworking skills, musical ability, confidence, and self-respect.

To measure the impact of our program, each year Little Kids Rock conducts a year-end assessment survey addressing four key efficacy markers:

- **Youth Development**
- **Teacher Development**
- **Youth Musical Development**
- **School Outcomes**
85% of teachers report that since starting Little Kids Rock’s program, students are more engaged in school.

84% of teachers report that Little Kids Rock students are more likely to express themselves.

82% of teachers report improvements in their students’ behavior among students who had previously behaved poorly in school.

81% of teachers report their students having a stronger social bond with their music classmates since participating in the program.

“[Modern band] has created more confidence - especially in students who are more reserved. I’ve noticed big changes in those students.”

Amy Holderness, Teacher, Grades K-5, New York, NY

“This program has been very helpful for many of my students who have experienced trauma. I’ve had several students during our rap unit who get to express their feelings in a healthy way.”

Theresa Daley, Teacher, Grades K-5, Tampa, FL

“It helps me grow as a person [on] the inside and as if I am learning a new language I never heard of.”

Student, 6th Grade, Los Angeles, CA

“I like that I get to communicate with my classmates through music.”

Student, 8th Grade, Newark, NJ
99% of students are motivated to make music since implementing Little Kids Rock’s program.

94% of students feel that they are better at playing a musical instrument since taking Little Kids Rock’s program.

92% of teachers feel that their students will continue playing music after completing Little Kids Rock’s program.

88% of students feel that they are better at improvising since taking Little Kids Rock’s program.

“Kids have found their voice through music. Many families have acquired instruments for their students. Students have reported playing music with and developing relationships with family members through their exposure to the LKR program. The program has definitely been a ‘game changer’ for some of my students!!”

Sara Whittle, Teacher, Grade K-8, Indianapolis, IN

“This program serves as a huge platform for my students to find themselves as musicians. The after-school band that was meeting had students in it from very different backgrounds and musical stories as well as musical abilities, but they were unified, quickly becoming a hub of positivity in our building.”

Britni Bryan, Teacher, Grades K-5, Fruita, CO

“It’s fun to play songs that you enjoy to play with friends. It helps spread our love for music to others.”

Student, 9th Grade, Altadena, CA

“The fact that we get to jam and perform for people is incredible!”

Student, 8th Grade, Newark, NJ
92% of teachers report that since starting Little Kids Rock’s program, they feel more connected to their students.

85% of teachers report that Little Kids Rock’s program has helped them teach genres that are culturally responsive to their students.

90% of teachers report that since starting Little Kids Rock’s program, their teaching has become more student-centered.

80% of teachers feel that Little Kids Rock’s program has provided tools needed to serve a more diverse set of students.

“The free online remote learning that Little Kids Rock provided during the pandemic saved me and got my students taking lessons and playing on their own at home.”

Dorothy Glodo, Teacher, Grade K-8, Chicago, IL

“The Little Kids Rock website and the resources made available to both teachers and students is invaluable. Consistent and high quality teaching videos streamlines the teaching process in the classroom and provides support for practice and continuance outside the classroom. It is part of the glue to creating a community and culture of music for our students, families, teachers, and schools.”

Britni Bryan, Teacher, Grades K-5, Fruita, CO
School Outcomes

Little Kids Rock teachers offer our program for an average of 1.7 hours per week. The average number of students they teach is 200.

100% of teachers would recommend Little Kids Rock’s program to their peers.

77% of teachers report that since starting Little Kids Rock’s program, their students have developed a stronger connection to their school.

69% of teachers have observed improvement in attendance since beginning Little Kids Rock’s program.

65% of teachers report that as a result of having Little Kids Rock’s program, their school environment and/or culture has improved.

“For monthly assemblies, students write songs whose lyrics reflect our units of study. This has not only fostered cooperation between the musically motivated and academically motivated but also allowed expression of cultural pride and individual thought.”

Dorothy Glodo, Teacher, Grade K-8, Chicago, IL

“Little Kids Rock has brought attention and admiration to students from their classmates, and it has made students more supportive of each other and more interested in collaboration.”

Ronda Armstrong, Teacher, Grades K-4, Nashville, TN
Little Kids Rock Goes to College!

Our work bringing highly inclusive, culturally sustaining music education to K-12 students across the US is also having a meaningful impact on how music education is being delivered in music education departments in higher education circles on a national level. In 2020, a diverse set of nearly seventy colleges and universities were utilizing the Little Kids Rock methodology and modern band curriculum in the coursework they offered to their music education majors. We partner with these institutions through our Modern Band Higher Education Fellowship which seeds our democratic approach to music education in the hearts and minds of the next generation of music teachers. A full listing of our Modern Band Fellows can be found here.

Some of our Collegiate Partner Institutions
Where We Serve

Alaska
Petersburg City School District

Arkansas
Texarkana Independent School District

Arizona
Alhambra Elementary School District
Chinle Unified School District
Fowler Elementary School District
Laveen Elementary School District
Marana Unified School District
Pendergast Elementary District
Phoenix Conservatory of Music

California
Anaheim Elementary School District
Aspire Public Schools
Bakersfield City School District
Burbank Unified School District
Capistrano Unified
Carlsbad Unified School District
Centinela Valley Union High School District
Chula Vista Elementary School District
Compton Unified School District
Desert Sands Unified School District
Downey Unified
East side Union High School District
El Monte Union High School District
Evergreen Elementary School District
Fontana Unified School District
Fountain Valley Elementary
Franklin-mckinley Elementary
Fresno Unified School District
Garden Grove School District
Gateway Unified School District
Gilroy Unified School District
Glendale Unified
Hacienda La Puente Unified School District
Hayward Unified School District
Hemet Unified
Hesperia Unified School District
Huntington Beach Union High
Inglewood Unified School District
Irvine Unified School District
KIPP Los Angeles
La Habra City Elementary
La Mesa – Spring Valley Schools
Lodi Unified School District
Los Angeles Unified
Lynwood School District
Magnolia Unified
MANTECA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Marysville Joint Unified School District
Monterey Peninsula Unified School District
Mt. Diablo Unified
Newport-mesa Unified
Oakland Unified School District
Ocean View
Oro Grande School District
Pacifica School District
Pajaro Valley School District
Palm Springs Unified School District
Pasadena Unified School District
Ravenswood City Elementary
Saddleback Valley Unified
San Bernardino City Unified School District
San Diego Unified
San Francisco Unified School District
San Lorenzo Unified School District
San Marcos Unified
Santa Ana Unified School District
Santa Rosa City Schools
Shoreline Unified School District
Stockton Unified School District
Tustin Unified School District
Victor Elementary School District
West Contra Costa Unified School District

Colorado
Academy School District 20
Adams 12 Five Star Schools
Adams 27j School District
Aurora Public Schools
Bookcliff Baptist School
Boulder Valley School District NO. Re2
Buena Vista School District NO. R-31
Cherry Creek School District No. 5
Colorado Springs School District #11
Cripple Creek-victor School District NO. Re-1
Deer Trail School District NO. 26j
Delta County Schools
Denver Public Schools
Douglas County School District
Eagle County School District
Englewood School District NO. 1 In The County Of Arapahoe
Falcon School District No. 49
Fountain School District No. 8
Garfield School District NO. Re-2
Greeley-Evans School District 6
Gunnison Watershed School District RE1J
Jefferson County Public Schools R-1
Lamar School District
Manitou Springs School District No. 14
Mapleton School District
Meeker County Schools
Mesa County Valley School District 51
Moffat County School District RE-1
Morgan County School District
Poudre School District
Pueblo School District
Revere School District
Roaring Fork School District
Salida School District No. R-32
School District NO. 14 In The County of Adams
School District NO. Re-12 In The County of Weld
School District NO. Re-4 Buffalo
St. Vrain Valley School District
State Charter School Institute
Steamboat Springs School District RE-2
Thompson School District
Walsh County Schools
Weld County School District RE-1
Weld County School District Re8
Weld RE-4 School District
Weld RE-5j School District
Weldon Valley School District RE 20J
Wiggins School District
Wray School District

Connecticut
ACES
Ansonia Public Schools
Avon School District
Bethel Public Schools
Bridgeport Public Schools
Bristol Public Schools
Brookfield School District
Brooklyn Schools
Canterbury School District
Chaplin School District
Danbury Public Schools
Derby Public Schools
East Haven Public Schools
Greenwich Public Schools
Hamden Public Schools
Hartford Public Schools
Manchester Public Schools
Meriden Public Schools
Montville School District
Naugatuck Public Schools
New Haven Public Schools
New London Public Schools
Norwalk Public Schools
Norwich School District
Plainfield School District
Plainville School District
Plymouth Public Schools
Pomfret School District
Preston Public Schools
Putnam Connecticut Schools
Regional School District 10
Ridgefield Public Schools
Rocky Hill School District
Sprague School District
Stamford Public School District
Sterling School District
Stonington Public Schools
The Consolidated School District of New Britain
Thompson Public Schools
Missouri
Frontier Schools
Missouri Private School District

Mississippi
Marshall County School District

Montana
Bainville Schools
Billings School District
Evergreen Elementary District #50
Helena Public Schools – HS
Lame Deer Public School District – HS

North Carolina
Christ Covenant School
Cumberland County Schools
Durham Public Schools
Guilford County Schools
North East Carolina Prep School
Onslow County Schools
Peak Charter Academy
Pitt County Schools
Wake County

North Dakota
Fort Yates 4

Nebraska
Minatare Public Schools
St. Patrick’s Catholic School

New Jersey
Asbury Park Public Schools
Atlantic City Board of Education
Camden City Public Schools
Christ The Teacher School
Clifton Public Schools
Cranford Public School District
Dunellen Public Schools
East Orange Schools
Elizabeth Public Schools
Franklin Township Public Schools
Irvington Public Schools
Jersey City Public Schools
Mannington Township School District
Middletown Township School District
Midland Park School District
Millville School District
Montclair Public Schools
Newark Public Schools
New City Kids
Orange Public Schools
Passaic City Public Schools
Paterson Public Schools
Teaneck Public Schools
Trenton Public Schools
Wallington Public Schools
Winslow Township School District
Woodbridge Township School District
Woodcliff Lake School District

New Mexico
Albuquerque Public Schools
Los Lunas Public Schools
Roswell Independent School District
Clark County School District

New York
Bethpage Union Free School District
Bronx Charter School For Better Learning
Candor Central School District
Carmel Central School District
Cortland City School District
Hannibal Central School District
Hastings-On-Hudson UFSD1
Johnson City Central School District
Medina Central School District
Middletown City School District
Mount Vernon City School District
New Rochelle City School District
New Roots Charter School District
New York City Department of Education
Rochester City School District
Scotia-Glenville Central School District
Silver Creek Central Schools
Uniondale Union Free School District
Whitney Point Central School District

Ohio
Cleveland Heights University Heights
School District
Cleveland Municipal
Columbus City Schools
North Olmsted City School District
Parma City
Southern Local School District
Southwest Local School District
Stambaugh Charter Academy District
Stow-Munroe Falls School District
Toledo City
Waynesfield-goshen Local

Oklahoma
Durant Independent School District
Norman Public Schools

Oregon
Eugene School District 4j
Springfield School District 19
Wallowa School District 12

Pennsylvania
Allentown School District
Altoona Area School District
American Paradigm Schools
Apollo-Ridge School District
Armstrong School District
Blairsville-saltsburg School District
Burgettstown Area School District
Butler County Public Schools
Cambria Heights School District
Cameron County School District
Carlisle Area School District
Collegium Cs
Commodore Perry School District
Conrad Weiser Area School District
Crawford Central School District
Curwensville Area School District
Dallas School District
Downingtown Area School District
Dubois Area School District
Elizabethtown Area School District
Ellwood Area City School District
Erie’s Public Schools
Great Valley School District
Greater Johnstown School District
Greater Latrobe School District
Hamburg Area School District
Hempfield School District
Heritage School District
Hinkleytown Mennonite School
Holidayburg Area School District
Indiana Area School District
Juniata Valley School District
Lakeland School District
Lakeview School District
Middletown Area School District
Midland Borough School District 1
Milton Area School District
New Castle School District
North Schuylkill School District
North Star School District
Northeast Bradford School District
Northern Lebanon School District
Octorara Area School District
Palmyra Area School District
Penn Manor School District
Pittsburgh Public Schools
Pottsville Area School District
Punxsutawney Area School District
Purchase Line School District
Ridgeway Area School District
Ringgold School District
Riverside School District
Rochester Area School District
Saint Kilian
St. Edmund’s Academy
Saint Aloysius Academy
Salisbury-Elk Lick School District
School District of Philadelphia
Seneca Valley School District
Shamokin Area School District
Sharpsville Area School District
Southeastern Greene School District
Spring Grove Area School District
State College Area School District
Tulpehocken Area School District
United School District
Upper Dublin School District
Vision Academy Charter School District
West Mifflin Area School District
Williamsport Area School District
Wilmington Area School District
Woodland Hills School District
Wyalusing Area School District

Rhode Island
Newport Public Schools
Providence School District
Warwick School District
Anderson School District 4
Greenwood 51
Spartanburg 7 School District

South Carolina
Charleston Day School

Tennessee
Cheatham County School District
Franklin County School District
Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
Murfreesboro City Schools
Rutherford County Schools
Shelby County School District
Texas
Allen Independent School District
Alvin Independent School District
Arlington Independent School District
Boerne Isd
Dallas Independent School District
DeSoto ISD
Dickinson Independent School District
Eanes ISD
Fort Bend Independent School District
Grand Prairie Independent School District
Harmony Science Acad (San Antonio)
Houston Independent School District
KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program)
La Academia De Estrellas School District
Port Neches-Groves Independent School District
San Antonio Independent School District
Waxahachie Independent School District

Wisconsin
Cudahy School District
First Immanuel
La Crosse School District
Milwaukee Public Schools
School District of Beloit
Waukesha School District
Winneconne Community School District

West Virginia
Kanawha County Schools
Mason County Schools

Wyoming
Uinta County School District #1

Utah
Box Elder School District
Gateway Preparatory Academy
Nebo School District

Virginia
Chesterfield County Public Schools
Fairfax County Public Schools
Petersburg
Rockingham County Public Schools

Vermont
Burke School District
Champlain Valley School District
Concord School District
Enosburgh Town School District
Essex-Westford Educational Community
Unified School District
Orange East Supervisory Union
Oxbow Uhsd #30
Rochester School District
Shaftsbury School District
Williamstown School District

Washington
Central Kitsap School District
Edmonds School District
Franklin Pierce School District
Richland School District
Snohomish School District
Financials

2019-20 was a challenging year by all measures, including financially, but Little Kids Rock weathered the storm and served teachers and students well, despite COVID-19 related disruptions to our history of growing cash revenue and spending.

Little Kids Rock is proud to receive funding from a diverse set of sources. Our largest source of cash revenue (about 80%) is from contributions, including grants from institutions, gifts from corporations, and donations from our Board and many other individuals.

With the onset of the pandemic we saw a decline in giving, and cash revenues for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 declined 23%. At the same time, we were able to pivot and secure sizable amounts of non-cash donations of headphones and digital resources, which we distributed to teachers and students to use in their remote environments. With these non-cash donations included, total revenues in fiscal year 2020 increased 33%.

The decline in cash revenues and the closure of schools across the US due to the pandemic caused us to adjust our spending levels, with temporary suspension of instrument deliveries as well as adjustments to staffing and other expenditures. As a result, cash spending was down about 7% versus the prior fiscal year. When the distribution of non-cash donated items is included, our total reported expenses for the fiscal year increased 47%.

88% of our total fiscal year 2020 expenses were devoted to Program-related activities.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, with continued support from key funders and cautious financial planning, our financial position remains strong, with net assets of $4.4 million as of June 30, 2020.
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College Football Playoff Foundation
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LEGO Community Trust
Les Paul Foundation
Lon V. Smith Foundation
Long Road Foundation
Mattel Children’s Foundation
NAMM Foundation
The Audrey Irmas Foundation for Social Justice
The Crystal Family Foundation
The Goldman Sachs Foundation
The Meyerson Family Foundation
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
The Scoob Trust Foundation
The Shining Saint
The Wildflower Foundation
Turrell Fund
W&S Charitable Foundation