



# 2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT



## Thanks to tremendous support from our families, donors, and partners, 2019–2020 started and ended strong.

When Hill's Board approved a new strategic framework last September, nobody could have foreseen what was to come in March. Like everyone, Hill Learning Center has been challenged in ways we have never been challenged before. Fortunately, our strategic framework—bolstered by your past and ongoing investments—has provided both the foundation and the focus to guide us forward through unprecedented change and uncertainty.

Our strategic framework links our areas of work—**Student Programs**, **Educator Professional Learning**, **Knowledge & Field-Building**, and **Organizational Resilience**—with six key levers for accelerating impact in pursuit of our vision that **ALL children with learning differences and attention challenges receive the instruction and support they need—regardless of where they attend school or whether they have a diagnosis**. Donor support prepared us for this unforeseeable moment in the following ways:

- ◆ Our investments in **technology and the Hill Learning System** equipped us to pivot rapidly and effectively to virtual learning and remote operations;
- ◆ Our prioritization of **diversity, equity, and inclusion** increased our urgency to expand access for students with learning differences and those most at risk of falling further behind, especially during this pandemic;
- ◆ Our focus on **professional development and data and research** positioned us to seize new opportunities presented by the transition to remote learning across the K–12 landscape;
- ◆ Our dedication to strengthening **culture and communications** sustained us through the challenges of continuing to embody our core values to learn, empower, reach, relate, and care as a virtual organization; and
- ◆ YOUR commitment to Hill's **financial and operational strength** prepared us to weather this storm and adapt to new realities, exceeding our 2019–20 fundraising goal with more than \$1.3 million in contributions.

I am especially proud of, and grateful for, how our team has responded. Thanks to their dedication, flexibility, and resourcefulness; your remarkable and steadfast support; and the resilience of our students, educators, and partners, we have continued providing the excellent instruction and support for students, families, and educators for which Hill is known and loved. While new challenges and opportunities present themselves daily, looking back, we can be proud of all that we accomplished, innovated, and learned. The future may still be uncertain, but thanks to all of you, we are confident we are up for the challenge.



With deep gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Anderson".

Beth Anderson  
Executive Director







## You inspired us, supported us, challenged us, and stayed with us.

We can genuinely say this was a year like no other.

We started strong with a new strategic framework, excellent faculty, eager students, a robust tutoring program, new partners and professional learning opportunities, and exceptional support from our funders.

Then COVID-19 changed everything.

As we look back over the last year, one thing is clear: our community pulled together; our faculty,

tutors, and trainers learned new skills and adapted to their new virtual reality; our donors showed unforeseen generosity, loyalty and flexibility; our students and families stayed the course; and educators learned from us as we learned from them when we dived into the world of virtual learning and teaching together.

It was your encouragement, advice, questions, and thoughtful participation that proved invaluable to our ability to pivot, learn, revise, innovate and, ultimately, finish strong.

**Thank you for  
an incredible,  
unforgettable year.**

*A complete list of donors who contributed to Hill Learning Center between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020 is available online at [hillcenter.org/annualreport](https://hillcenter.org/annualreport).*





## Hill is committed to meeting the challenge while pursuing our vision.

While the pandemic has changed so much, some things at Hill are unchangeable: our core values, our mission, and our commitment to the 1 in 5 students who learn differently, regardless of where they attend school.

In 2020–21, as we continue to pursue our vision that all students with learning differences and attention challenges receive the instruction and support they need, we will be emphasizing investments in our technology platforms and online delivery models.

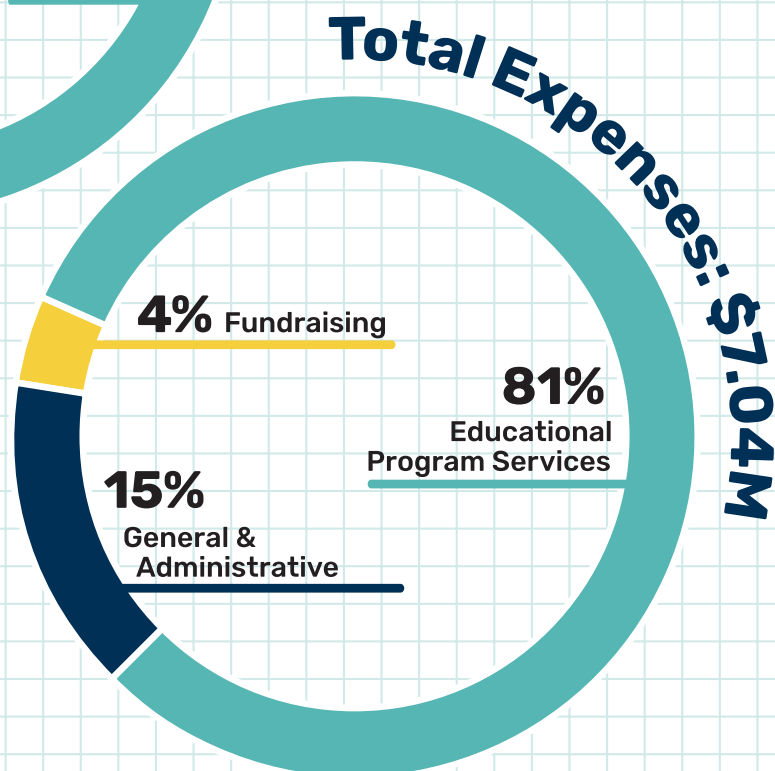
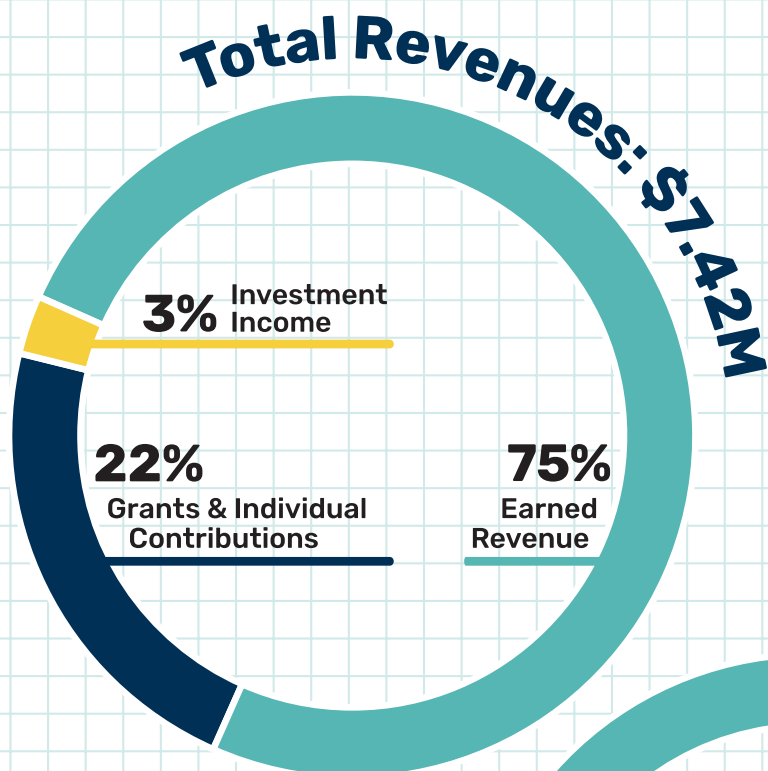
With donor support we will remove barriers to accessing our Hill Reading Achievement Program by eliminating reliance on costly iPads. We will innovate our virtual learning model for students and online trainings for educators.

Along with these investments, Hill will continue to expand our efforts in diversity, equity and inclusion and support our people by investing in remote professional development for our faculty and increased student supports in Hill Virtual School. With your help we are committed to carrying on the culture, care, and community that are the heart of Hill.

**2020–21 will be another challenging year for Hill, and we will continue to rely on your support as we make investments in the success of our students, educators, and partners.**



# YOUR SUPPORT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE



## 2019-20 Revenues

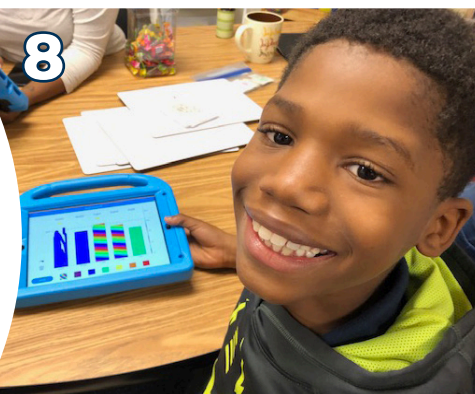
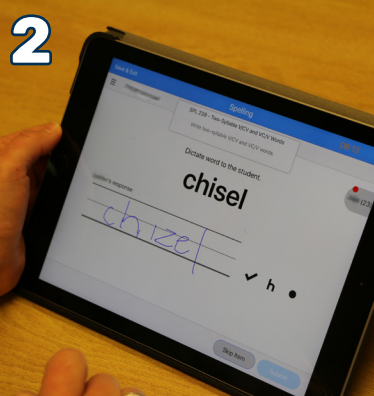
School & Summer Tuition and Fees	\$4,042,131	54%
Tutoring & Teacher Training Fees	\$1,548,346	21%
Grants, Gifts, & Contributions	\$1,600,735	22%
Investment Returns & Misc. Income	\$231,068	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,422,280</b>	

## 2019-20 Expenses

Program Services	\$5,207,869	74%
Student Financial Aid (School)	\$348,090	5%
Technology & Equipment	\$205,510	3%
General & Administrative	\$984,497	14%
Fundraising	\$292,565	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,038,531</b>	

*The figures provided are unaudited. To view final audited financials, go to [hillcenter.org/annualreport](http://hillcenter.org/annualreport).*





## STARTED STRONG AT HILL

1. Hill welcomed Amanda Morin of [understood.org](http://understood.org) for a meaningful conversation on advocating for children at our fall Advocate's Luncheon.
2. We continued our pursuit of improving the HillRAP app by integrating spelling!
3. Alumni Tyler Ekstien ('09) shared with students that he attributes hard work, relationships, and a positive attitude to his success in college—all skills he learned at Hill.
4. Hill trained a new cohort of HillRAP teachers at KIPP Delta in Arkansas—strengthening our partnership and commitment to reaching struggling readers everywhere!
5. Hill staff teams enjoyed a team-building scavenger hunt in July of 2019.
6. Dr. Cheryl Chase visited Hill for a mini-residency—spending time with Hill faculty, conducting a sold-out workshop, and presenting to a packed Community Education Series crowd.
7. Hill Upper School students had the opportunity to speak with LeDerick Horne, a spoken-word poet, motivational speaker, and disability rights advocate, prior to his Community Education Series event that took place at Riverside High School in Durham.  
*Photo by Truitt Avery O'Neal | Durham Public Schools | Office of Public Affairs | [Truitt.O'Neal@dpsnc.net](mailto:Truitt.O'Neal@dpsnc.net)*
8. Achieving goals at KIPP Woodson Park Academy in Atlanta, GA, where HillRAP is being delivered by passionate educators in their Literacy Lab.
9. North Carolina teachers joined leaders from NC DPI for a sold-out workshop at Hill featuring David Kilpatrick, one of the nation's leading experts in the science of reading.
10. We welcomed Grandfriends to our campus for an opportunity to support their courageous learners at Hill.





## STUDENT PROGRAMS

### Expanded Student Access to a Hill Education

Thanks to the support of generous donors, along with income from restricted endowed funds, we have continued to expand access to Hill School, Summer, and Tutoring programs through increased financial aid and funder supported partnerships. Hill School began the year with 176 students, growing to 182 by year's end, even with the transition to remote learning. Although Hill Mile, our largest fundraising event supporting the **Wendy B. Speir Student Financial Aid Fund**, was cancelled due to pandemic mandated social gathering restrictions, you contributed \$230,000 to provide aid to qualified Hill School students, enabling us

to continue our trend of increasing financial aid awards each year. Funders also invested in tutoring partnerships with **YE Smith Elementary, Eastway Elementary**, and the **Boys & Girls Club of Greater Durham and Orange Counties** and supported a pilot project with **Students 2 Scholars**, a nonprofit that helps **Boys & Girls Club** students attend local independent schools. Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, means we must continue to raise dedicated funds to further expand access to Hill's life-changing student programs each year.

**Hill School, Summer, and Tutoring Programs served 995 students, 155 of whom received full or partial financial aid or participated in grant-funded projects in 2019-2020.**





## EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

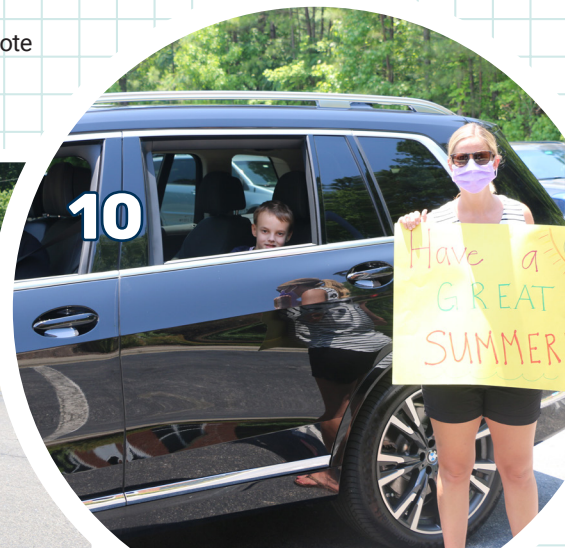
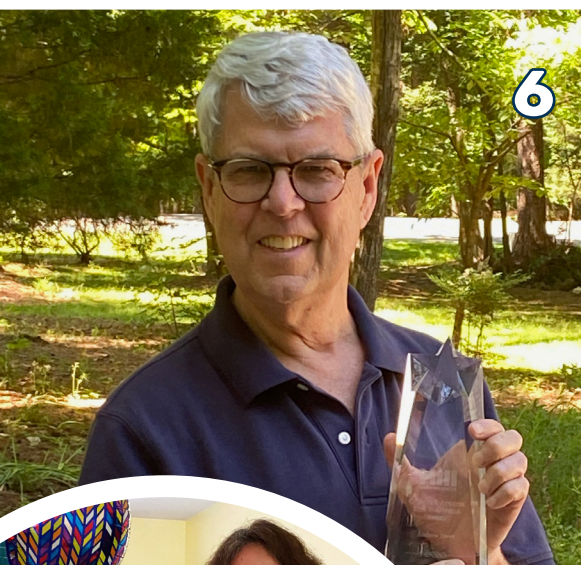
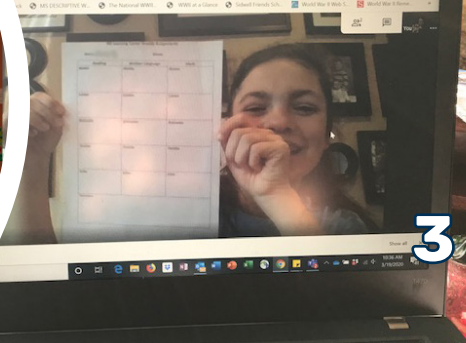
# Training Teachers Everywhere to Reach Students Anywhere

Thanks to the support of generous donors, our professional learning offerings remained strong with 1,112 educators enrolling in Hill trainings to bring proven methods and tools to struggling students across North Carolina and beyond. Through March, we provided \$26,600 in scholarships to 98 educators for in-person trainings, and when the pandemic ended our in-person workshops, Hill offered free online courses to over 1,200 educators, the equivalent of more than \$120,000 in scholarship support.

We also continued to deepen and expand our Hill Reading Achievement Program (HillRAP) partnerships with schools and districts, including new grants and partners in Atlanta, Eastern North Carolina, and New Orleans, bringing the total number of active HillRAP Digital teachers to 625, serving 6,500 students in seven states. More than 200 educators continued using HillRAP with students remotely during the spring, supported by rapid evolution of our software, creative problem-solving, and the dedication of our professional learning and technology teams working alongside committed HillRAP teachers.

**Hill had a record year for supporting teachers with both in-person and virtual trainings, resulting in thousands more students receiving the help they need.**





## FINISHED STRONG AT HOME

1. All smiles when we packed up our offices in March to start our remote operations! Little did we know we'd be operating this way for the foreseeable future.
2. Ms. Shore missed her students so much during virtual learning that she had to fill her dining room with stuffed animals to represent the 4:1 ratio.
3. Learning sure felt different through a screen this spring, but the smiles on our student's faces as they continued to achieve their goals felt great!
4. Hill never misses an opportunity to eat lunch together, whether in-person or virtual! So many positive, smiling faces filled the screen for our end-of-year closing activities.
5. Mrs. Garber's Written Language Class had the incredible opportunity to speak with author Jason Platt, a graphic novelist originally from Durham who is dyslexic.
6. Congratulations to Dr. Andy Short as this year's recipient of the Charles S. Atwater Star Volunteer Award. Andy completed his 8th year of service to the Hill Board of Trustees and has brought wisdom and passion to the work of advancing Hill's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.
7. Congratulations to Antoinette Quatami on celebrating her 20th year at Hill and being awarded the Maskel Methodology Award for her tireless efforts providing teachers, students, and families with unparalleled tech support during remote learning.
8. A Senior Parade was a great way to send the Class of 2020 off to their next great adventures! Each of our 14 seniors had their own spot to take family photos and get well wishes from faculty at a safe distance.
9. & 10. Another first in Hill history - a Summer Send-Off in the parking lot! We loaded trunks with materials, we gave air high-fives, we waved and cheered and showed one another how much we truly care.





## KNOWLEDGE & FIELD BUILDING

### Working Together to Advance the Science of Reading

More than 60% of America's 4th graders cannot read proficiently, disproportionately impacting students of color, those from lower- and middle class backgrounds, and those with learning differences. **This reality is one we cannot ignore.**

Donor support plays a critical role in innovations and new initiatives that bridge education research and instructional practice for students who learn differently.

In 2019–20, Hill launched a suite of literacy micro-credentials to support any educator aiming to identify and meet the needs of struggling readers. We also secured a grant and entered a collaborative partnership to rapidly develop an online Science of Reading course for Teach For America as COVID-19 shifted their summer training for new teachers to a virtual experience. This course introduced 2,800 teachers in low-income communities nationwide to the conceptual models and explicit, research-based practices of reading instruction that benefit all learners, including those with learning differences.

**Philanthropy fueled collaborations with Barksdale Reading Institute, The Reading League, Reading Teacher's Top Ten Tools, and the Right to Read Project, to further advance science-based reading instruction.**





## ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

### Investing in People and Pivoting to Remote Learning

When we left the building for spring break on March 6, 2020, we could not have predicted that we would undergo such an incredible transformation to remote operations and distance learning in just two weeks. Donor supported investments in professional learning, software development, and district and school partnerships allowed Hill to successfully make this transition for our community of learners and educators.

Your ongoing investments in our people and platforms will continue to yield learnings in our current virtual reality while furthering accessibility in the years to come.

The physical closure of our school and training center challenged us to find new solutions, learn new skills, and develop new technologies. We are bringing all we learned forward into 2020–2021 to continue to provide excellent instruction, support, and learning for the communities we serve.

**Thank you for all of your support through these challenging times and for sticking with us into the year ahead.**



# THANKS TO YOU, OUR LOYAL SUPPORTERS.

Genevieve,  
Hill Hero



I am impressed with Hill's approach and the reach it has achieved in **helping all those with learning differences** and the progress the school has made with my granddaughter.

—ELLA KESSLER, HILL SCHOOL GRANDPARENT

Hill represents "the helpers" to so many NC families. So, thank you for being there for them and for being a rock in these unstable times!

—F.M. KIRBY FOUNDATION

It is an honor and pleasure to make this qualified charitable donation in memory of my wife Brenda Walsh Hutchens to the Hill Learning Center. Brenda was very proud of the **outstanding educational experience** that our son, Brad, obtained by attending Hill. Brenda was also a big believer in the mission of the Center and the impact it had on so many students.

—DR. L.H. HUTCHENS, HILL SUPPORTER

It is my great hope that with the Wendy B. Speir Financial Aid Fund and the generosity of donors, and the incredible work of the faculty and staff at Hill, that **one more kid will benefit in the life-altering way that my child did.**

—PAIGE CHANDLER, HILL SCHOOL PARENT

I just wanted to share how grateful I am to everyone at Hill Learning Center that made it possible for interventionists to **continue providing HillRAP services to our students during COVID-19 school closures.** It is a blessing to meet virtually with my students and to have HillRAP be something consistent during this time.

—APRIL DRAKE, INTERVENTION TEACHER  
ALAMANCE-BURLINGTON SCHOOL SYSTEM

Aion, Hill Hero





hillcenter.org

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## Our Mission

Transforming students with learning differences  
into confident, independent learners.